

Shettima lauds impacts of Nigerians abroad on global economy **PAGE 3**

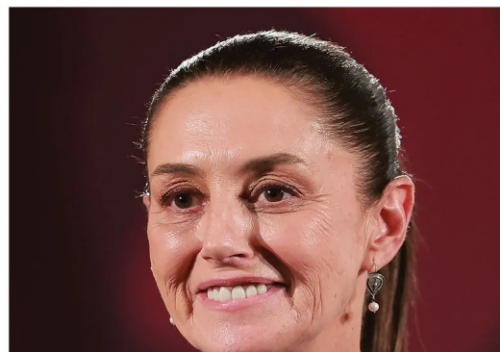


German President, Steinmeier begins 3-day visit to Nigeria today **PAGE 5**



The New Daily Prime

2024 Time's Person of the Year: Trump, Kamala, Netanyahu make shortlist **PAGES 20 & 21**



Gunmen abduct over 50 women, girls in Zamfara **PAGE 2**



Gen Oluyede assumes office as 24th COAS **PAGE 6**

WORLD

Trump to pardon 'Capitol rioters' on day one **PAGE 22**

ENTERTAINMENT

At movie premiere, Funke Akindele, Eniola Badmus reignite friendship **PAGE 15**

Four Nigerians arrested with 39kg of Cocaine in Saudi Arabia **PAGE 9**

Gunmen abduct over 50 women, girls in Zamfara

By Dave Oludare Oso

Gunmen suspected to be bandits have unleashed an attack on Kakin Dawa village, a district in Gidan Goga, Maradun Local Government Area, Zamfara State.

NEW DAILY PRIME gathered that the hoodlums abducted over 50 women and children in the attack.

According to a community member, the gunmen stormed the village at about 1:30 am on Sunday with sophisticated weapons, moving from house to house.

“Everyone started running because the armed bandits have been targeting our village; later we discovered that more than 50 of our women were abducted,” he said.



He added that the kidnapped victims included young girls and married women.

He appealed to the federal and the Zamfara State governments to deploy more military and security personnel to the axis to engage the

terrorists.

However, efforts to get the reaction of State police command spokesman, ASP Yazid Abubakar was not successful as of the time of filing this report.

NAFDAC warns against consumption of fake drinks

By New Daily Prime

A timely warning has come from the Director General of NAFDAC, Prof. Moji Adeyeye, as she warned Nigerians against the consumption of fake and adulterated drinks, especially during the Christmas and new year seasons.

Adeyeye, who gave the warning when she featured at the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) Forum in Abuja at the weekend.

She said the proliferation of fake and adulterated drinks, food and drugs in the country had affected the health of many Nigerians.



stop patronising roadside drug stores, stressing that most of their storage facilities were poor and the medicines fake.

corner store or just somebody that has a kiosk or hawks around. Go to a pharmacy store to buy medicine,” she added.

Adeyeye also urged Nigerians to

“Do not buy medicines in the

Shettima lauds impacts of Nigerians abroad on global economy

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has lauded the significant contributions of Nigerians abroad to the global economy, emphasising their role as economic drivers and global ambassadors excelling in various fields.

Stanley Nkwocha, Shettima's spokesperson in a statement on his X page today said, the Vice President stated this at the 10th Annual National Migration Dialogue with theme "Beyond Borders: Celebrating Migrants' Legacy, Protecting Their Rights" held at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Shettima stressed the dual essence of migration—its benefits and associated challenges and revealed that in 2022, Nigeria accounted for \$21.9 billion in diaspora remittances, representing 64 per cent of total remittances in West Africa.

"Beyond financial remittances, Nigerian migrants are excelling in technology, medicine, sports, and the creative arts. Startups founded by Nigerians in the diaspora attracted over \$800 million in investments in 2022, showcasing their transformative potential," Shettima said.

While highlighting the achievements, the Vice President also addressed irregular migration, noting that over 10,000 Nigerians detained for migration offences were repatriated in 2024.

He urged for coordinated efforts to tackle such challenges while maximizing migration's economic potential.

Shettima reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to addressing migration challenges.



He cited President Bola Tinubu's pledge at the United Nations General Assembly to uphold the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM).

He praised ongoing efforts such as the review of Nigeria's National Migration Policy, enhanced border management technologies, and innovative initiatives by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), including electronic gates at airports, e-passports, and streamlined visa processes.

He also identified collaborations with international agencies, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as factors advancing migration governance.

In the same vein, the federal commissioner for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons, Tijani Ahmed, emphasised the need to align policies with global

standards to protect migrants' rights.

Similarly, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairperson of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, highlighted the diaspora's contributions to global economies and urged measures to reduce irregular migration.

Mohammed Ladan, Director General of the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, stressed that migrants are entitled to fundamental human rights and commended Nigerians abroad for their resilience and excellence.

Nigeria is set to take leadership of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, also known as the Rabat Process, in January 2025. This leadership position, according to Mojisola Sodeinde, representative of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, underscores Nigeria's growing role in global migration discourse.

Nigeria inspired Ghana's electoral process, says INEC

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has said Ghana's decision to decentralize its electoral system was inspired by Nigeria's success in managing constituency election results.

While commending the smooth conduct of the election, INEC chairman, Prof Mahmood Yakubu observed that until the last election in Ghana, all parliamentary and presidential results were sent to the headquarters of the Electoral Commission in Accra for announcement.

The election was won by President-elect of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama.

Mahama won the election after his main opponent, Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, conceded defeat.

The defeat in Saturday's election ended two terms in power for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under President Nana Akufo-Addo.

For the 2024 presidential election, Ghana adopted a decentralized system, allowing constituency-level officers to



announce parliamentary results locally while only presidential results were sent to Accra.

Yakubu, who monitored the election believed that Ghana's approach to managing results at the constituency level was inspired by Nigeria, adding that the process improved the efficiency of the election.

The INEC chief said, "Although Ghana is not a federal system, it learnt from Nigeria where you have returning officers, who

announce results for parliamentary elections in the various constituencies around the country.

"In Nigeria, this is what we have done and they borrowed a leaf from us, and this is the second time they are implementing that. That is why the declaration of the presidential election result was a lot faster than it used to be in the past."

German President, Steinmeier begins three-day visit to Nigeria today

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The President of Germany, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, will visit Nigeria for an official three-day trip from December 10 to 12, 2024, according to a statement from the German Embassy in Abuja.

NEW DAILY PRIME learnt that the visit is part of ongoing high-level exchanges between Nigeria and Germany, marking the third engagement since President Bola Tinubu assumed office.

Steinmeier will be accompanied by senior executives and board members from leading German companies specializing in IT, high-tech, and energy, underscoring Germany's growing interest in Nigerian investment opportunities.

During his stay, he will hold discussions with President Tinubu and Dr. Alieu Omar Touray, President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission.

The German President will also travel to Lagos, where he plans to engage with notable cultural figures, including Dr. Nike Okundaye of the Nike Art Gallery and Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka.

In addition, Steinmeier will interact with business representatives, explore a start-up hub, and tour Lagos to gain insight into the city's urban development challenges.

A statement from the German Embassy described the visit as an opportunity to enhance bilateral ties,



deepen economic partnerships, and celebrate cultural connections between the two nations.

The statement reads: "German Embassy in Nigeria is pleased to announce the visit of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Nigeria on the 10th to 12th of December 2024.

"The visit aims to underline the strength of Nigeria-Germany relations and to mark Germany's appreciation of Nigeria.

"Following the visit of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to Nigeria in October 2023 and the visit of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to Germany in November 2023, President Steinmeier's visit is the third exchange between both countries on the level of head of state or government since President Tinubu's inauguration.

"This high frequency of visits is proof

of the close relations between both countries and the serious interest of Germany in Nigeria. It is also evidence of a willingness to work together as strategic partners – an obvious fit, as both countries share striking commonalities, including being the strongest economy and the most populous country on their respective continents.

"President Steinmeier will be accompanied by a business delegation of CEOs and high-ranking board members of some of Germany's most successful companies in the fields of IT, hightech and energy – an indication of the rising interest of German businesses in opportunities to invest in Nigeria.

"While in the country, President Steinmeier will meet with President Tinubu as well as with the President of the Commission of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), His Excellency Dr. Alieu Omar Touray.

Gen Oluyede assumes office as 24th COAS

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Nigerian Army on Monday performed a symbolic lowering and hoisting of the command flag at Army Headquarters as Lt.-Gen. Olufemi Oluyede assumed command as the 24th Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

NEW DAILY PRIME recalls that President Bola Tinubu appointed Oluyede on October 30 in an acting capacity following the death of his predecessor, Lt.-Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja.

On November 1, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Christopher Musa, handed him the insignia of office in an unusual fashion, in accordance with the Armed Forces Act.

The symbolic lowering and hoisting of the command flag, which signifies the beginning of his tenure, came after the Senate and House of



Representatives confirmed his appointment.

Until his appointment, Oluyede served as the 56th Commander of the elite Infantry Corps of the Nigerian Army, based in Jaji, Kaduna.

The 56-year-old Oluyede and Lagbaja

were coursemates and members of the 39th Regular Course of the Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA).

He was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1992, effective from 1987, and rose to the rank of Major General in September 2020.

Court grants Dele Farotimi N50m bail

By Dave Oludare Oso

Beleaguered human rights lawyer, Dele Farotimi, has been granted bail by the Ekiti State High Court.

The court granted Farotimi bail in the sum of N50 million, with a surety of the same amount on Monday morning.

The court ruled that the surety must possess a landed property and adjourned the matter to January 29, 2025, for further proceedings.

Farotimi was taken to court by Chief Afe Babalola, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, after being arrested by operatives of the Ekiti State Police Command.

Babalola, 95, accused Farotimi of



defaming him in a book titled 'Nigeria and Its Criminal Justice System'.

The arrest sparked outrage across the

country, prompting civil society organizations and the Nigerian Bar Association to call for the activist's release.

Obi links Nigeria's underdevelopment to corruption

By Friday Omosola

The 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, has decried corruption as the primary obstacle to Nigeria's development.

Obi made this assertion on his X (formerly Twitter) page today while marking the International Anti-Corruption Day, a day he described as holding profound lessons for Nigeria.

Highlighting the pervasive nature of corruption in the country, the former Anambra State Governor lamented its crippling effects on governance, the economy, and social cohesion.

"For years, Nigeria has been burdened by a sickening level of corruption at all levels and across all arms of government," he said.

Citing a report by the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Obi agreed that corruption has brought Nigeria to its knees, both economically and socially.

He outlined how corruption manifests in various ways, including lack of transparency in budgeting, misappropriation of public funds, contract inflation, bribery, favoritism, and toll-gating.

The 63-year-old expressed sadness over Nigeria's corruption perception index ranking of 145 out of 180 countries, emphasizing the urgent need for action.

"We are today ranked among the 11 worst-ruled African nations in the last 10 years. This discourages good



governance and serves as clogs the wheels of national development," he stated.

He further highlighted shocking financial irregularities uncovered by the Auditor-General of the Federation, noting that a staggering N3.403 trillion was unaccounted for in some government ministries, departments, and agencies for the financial year ending December 2021.

"This amount is bigger than 20 per cent of our national budget for that year," Obi said, describing it as a troubling indicator of the endemic corruption plaguing the nation.

He also criticised the government's rising debt profile, which he said was fueled by a relentless appetite for loans without accountability or visible investments.

According to him, "There are no visible impacts of these loans on the

economy, suggesting they were misappropriated or consumed."

Calling for decisive action, Obi urged Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies to focus on pressing issues such as oil theft, budget padding, and bribery while ensuring that culprits face justice.

"A day like this provides an opportunity for leaders to eschew corrupt practices and for citizens to stand against corruption in all forms," he remarked.

Reaffirming his commitment to fighting corruption, Obi stressed the importance of exemplary leadership.

"In any organisation or nation where leaders are not corrupt, corruption reduces by over 60 per cent, and fighting the remainder becomes manageable," he said.

Japa: UK issued Nigerians 300,000 visas in recent years – Envoy

By Agency Reporter

The British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery has said the United Kingdom has granted approximately 300,000 new visas to Nigerians in the last two years, highlighting the growing ties between the two nations.

Montgomery, who spoke on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Monday, countered claims of harsh UK immigration policies, stating that Nigerians have greatly benefited from the country's post-Brexit visa reforms.

The envoy said, "I have to contest this picture because the UK in the last couple of years has granted around 300,000 new visas to Nigerians which far exceeds any other visa relationship which Nigeria has with any other country."

He emphasized that post-Brexit migration policies have positively impacted Nigerians, with the UK becoming a primary destination for work and migration visas.

He added, "The trends have been really positive post-Brexit. Nigeria has been a major beneficiary of the post-Brexit migration visa rules."

Nigeria now accounts for about 10% of all visas issued by the UK within this period.



Montgomery praised the contributions of Nigerians in the UK, particularly in sectors like social care, describing their role as "incredibly important."

The envoy said, "And if you look at say the number of people getting work visas in the UK, these people play an incredibly important role in certain sectors, particularly our social care sector."

Although the number of student visas has declined, Montgomery reaffirmed the UK's commitment to fostering a strong bilateral relationship through its visa policies, stating that no other country offers Nigeria such opportunities.

"So, I would like to emphasize how huge the relationship is. It

outstrips any other visa relationship that Nigeria has with any other single country in my understanding," he revealed.

Addressing concerns about visa approvals, the envoy assured Nigerians that the process is straightforward for those who provide the right documentation.

"If you apply with the right documentation and the right evidence, the approval rate is very high.

"The number of people getting work visas that go to the UK has gone from something like 10 to 20,000 in about six, seven years ago to 80-90,000 a year in the last two years – last year and this year," he added.

Four Nigerians arrested with 39kg of Cocaine in Saudi Arabia

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Saudi authorities have arrested four Nigerian nationals with 39 kilogrammes of cocaine Saudi Arabia.

The unnamed Nigerians were arrested by the General Directorate of Narcotics Control while distributing the drugs from their hideouts in Jeddah, the Saudi Press Agency reported on Saturday, December 7, 2024.

Authorities recently made several drug-related arrests and confiscations across the Kingdom,

Border Guard patrols in Jazan intercepted 270 kg of qat in Al-Aridah and 126 kg in Al-Dayer.

They also arrested a citizen in Al-



Dayer with qat in his vehicle.

The directorate also arrested a Pakistani in the Eastern Province for selling methamphetamine, also known as shabu.

Preliminary legal procedures have been completed, and all seized items

have been handed to the relevant authorities.

Security authorities reiterated their call for the public to report any information about drug smuggling or selling.

36 kidnapped victims rescued in Kebbi

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Kebbi State Police Command has rescued 36 kidnapped victims along the Mairairai/Bena road in Danko/Wasagu Local Government Area of Kebbi State.

This was contained in a statement issued by the police spokesman, Nafiu Abubakar on Monday.

According to the statement, gunmen in large numbers barricaded Mairairai/Bena road on December 8, 2024, and kidnapped 36 people who were coming back from their respective farms.

The police said upon receipt of the report, a combined team of the Police, Army and vigilante



mobilised to the scene and engaged the bandits in a gun duel, overpowered them, forcing them to escape into the forest with gunshot

wounds.

The police said they rescued the 36 victims unhurt and they have since been reunited with their families.

The Commissioner of Police, Bello Sani, commended the officers' bravery, resilience, and professionalism and urged them to be more committed to not making Kebbi State a safe haven for criminals.

The police commissioner equally charged the officers and other security agencies operating in the area to intensify synergy among them to decisively deal with the bandits and other unscrupulous elements.

FRSC boss orders prosecution of woman in viral assault video

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Malam Shehu Mohammed, has directed an in-depth investigation and immediate prosecution of a motorist who allegedly assaulted an FRSC personnel in Lagos.

The Corps Public Education Officer (CPEO), Mr. Olusegun Ogungbemide, announced the directive in a statement on Monday in Abuja.

Mohammed expressed concern over the increasing cases of assaults on FRSC officials performing their lawful duties. He stated that such acts are “totally uncalled for.”

The incident, which happened in November along the Oko-Ado section of the Lekki-Epe Expressway in Lagos, involved a Toyota Corolla with registration number EPE 690 HH.

According to Ogungbemide, the patrol team flagged down the vehicle at about 3:54 p.m. for a seatbelt violation.

Upon inspection, it was discovered that the vehicle’s registration papers had expired in December 2022, which led to its impoundment.

While the driver complied with the enforcement process, a female passenger in the vehicle reportedly became confrontational.

The statement described her actions as verbally and physically abusive, and escalated to the point of creating a scene in an attempt to gain sympathy from bystanders.



“When her verbal threats and disruptive behaviour failed, she resorted to physical assault, as documented in a viral video,” the statement said.

The corps spokesperson stated that the passenger continued her aggressive conduct even after the vehicle was impounded at the Lekki Command.

Efforts to de-escalate the situation proved unsuccessful, which prompted the involvement of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of Ajah Police Station.

Subsequently, the police arrested both the passenger and the driver for further investigation.

“She assaulted the personnel all the way from the point of arrest and refused to put an end to it even when the vehicle was finally impounded in the Lekki Command.

“When all efforts to bring her to calmness did not yield desired results, the Unit Commander engaged the Divisional Police Officer, Ajah Police Station.

“They swiftly deployed a team of men to arrest the lady and the driver for further investigation,” Ogungbemide said.

Commending the Lekki Unit Command team for their professionalism and civility in handling the incident, Mohammed said, “Their response represents the ideals of the Corps, even in the face of provocation.”

The Corps Marshal called on the public to address grievances through proper administrative channels or legal actions rather than resorting to violence. He warned that any form of assault against FRSC personnel would no longer be tolerated.

“This case will be pursued to ensure justice is served, to serve as a deterrent to other violent road users,” Mohammed added.

The FRSC reiterated its commitment to enforcing road safety laws while upholding the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.

Peter Obi visits Afe Babalola; Dele Farotimi in Ekiti prison

By Dave Oludare Oso

Former presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, on Monday, met with senior lawyer, Chief Afe Babalola, SAN, in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

The former governor of Anambra State had pleaded with Babalola to have mercy and consider the “situation” of human rights lawyer, Dele Farotimi, who is at the Ekiti prison.

The legal luminary has come under intense criticisms since he petitioned the Nigerian police to arrest Farotimi, with Nigerians locally and in the diaspora already set for a mega protest to force the release of the detained activist cum lawyer.

Obi, who came from Lagos to Ekiti State on Monday, reportedly had



“indepth discussions” with Babalola including on Farotimi’s matter, and sources who were at the meeting confirmed that the former governor rather begged the legal luminary.

Farotimi had appeared before the court on Monday following charges brought against him by Afe Babalola

SAN under the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act, 2015.

A social media user, DrMo posted on X on Monday, “Today, Mr. @PeterObi travelled from Lagos to Ekiti State, dedicating the entire day to meaningful engagements. He visited

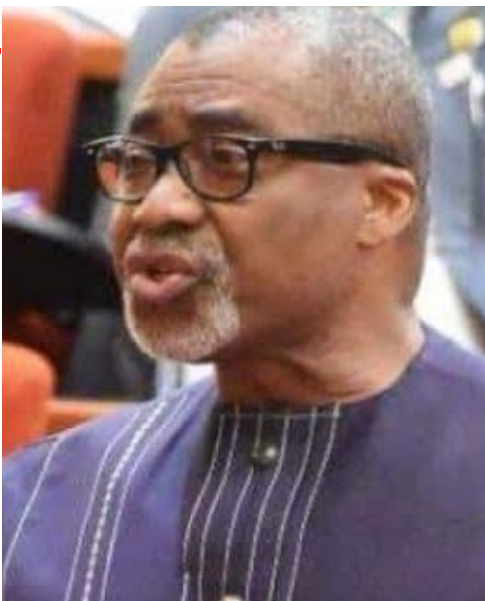
South-East Senators declare position on Tax Reform Bills

By Dave Oludare Oso

Members of the South East Caucus in the Senate have insisted that they must consult with their constituents before taking a position on President Bola Tinubu’s Tax Reform Bills currently undergoing legislative process at both Chambers of the National Assembly,

“As much as the entire senators from South East , are not against the tax reform bills before both chambers of the National Assembly for consideration , we want wider consultations to be carried out on them.

”Specifically, we need to consult with our constituents across the 15 senatorial districts in the zone , with



our state governments and other critical stakeholders,” leader of the caucus, Sen. Enyinnaya Abaribe told journalists on Monday.

He spoke after a closed-door meeting of Senators from the South – Eastern States.

Abaribe said senators from the zone have read through the bills and want to share their knowledge with other stakeholders from the south east.

He said this will ensure a much more equitable framework in the bills that will eventually be passed.

”We are not against the bills but need to consult with our people,” he said.

The tax reforms bills, comprised of the Nigeria Tax Bill 2024, Nigeria Tax Administration Bill 2024 , Joint

I'll still run for Lagos governor in 2027 – Rhodes-Vivour

By Friday Omosola

Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, the Labour Party's gubernatorial candidate in the 2023 Lagos State election, has declared his intention to contest for the same slot in 2027.

Rhodes-Vivour, who emerged as the runner-up in the 2023 race, losing to incumbent Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of the All Progressives Congress (APC), disclosed this during an interview on 'Gold Room', hosted by actress Iyabo Ojo.

Reflecting on his political journey, Rhodes-Vivour, who contested as the People's Democratic Party candidate for Lagos West in the 2019 senatorial election, stated that he and his party were addressing the shortcomings that affected their performance in the last polls.

He emphasised his commitment to presenting a stronger campaign and fostering a more robust political structure for the party ahead of the 2027 elections.

He said: "By God's grace, I will run for the governorship polls again in 2027. We are working. We gained a lot of traction and saw our mistakes. We saw the loopholes created, and we're working on that. I think the biggest mistake that has happened in Lagos politics is after elections, the opposition goes quiet. That is not happening this time.

"We're in people's faces. We're doing our best in terms of health outreaches. We have a micro health insurance plan that we're taking all across the state where people can get treatment of up to N6,000 for free. And just being up-to-date in



current affairs and holding the government accountable, calling out when the government is spending our monies in extravagant ways, regardless of the suffering that Nigerians are dealing with."

Furthermore, the 41-year-old politician stressed the importance of holding Governor Sanwo-Olu accountable, stressing that the state government must prioritise transparency and ensure the efficient utilization of public funds.

Moreover, Rhodes-Vivour tackled the recurring narrative about his Igbo heritage, highlighting that anyone who challenges President Bola Tinubu's political dominance in Lagos often has their Yoruba identity questioned or stripped.

He further stated that Tinubu does not embody a true representation of Yoruba values or identity.

"Firstly, anybody that questions the hegemony of Bola Ahmed Tinubu or the Action Congress of Nigeria

(ACN) always has their Yoruba identity questioned or taken from them. I don't even think he (Tinubu) is a good representative of their ethnicity.

"I don't believe he can epitomise the Yoruba people compared to the likes of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. We practice an Agberocracy — it's about violence — who can spend the most money, who can manipulate and tell lies the most, propaganda. For me, as a culture, if this is who we are looking at as our representative, we've fallen very badly", he added.

Furthermore, he refuted claims that Peter Obi is planning to leave the party to align with the PDP ahead of the 2027 presidential election.

He emphasised that Obi is actively working to rectify the shortcomings identified during the 2023 presidential election.

Ways to avoid Brain Rot and keep healthy

By New Daily Prime

Have you ever felt tired mentally and physically after scrolling your phone for a long period of time? If so, you are at risk of “Brain Rot” which can cause a negative effect on your brain, leaving your brain dull and placing it under stress.

Brain rot, what it means

Brain rot simply means when the brain reduces its mental or intellectual appropriate state of functioning as a result of long-term exposure to visual content on your screen.

The word “Brain Rot” was acknowledged by Oxford University Press, publishers of the Oxford English Dictionary, dominating the Word of the Year for 2024.

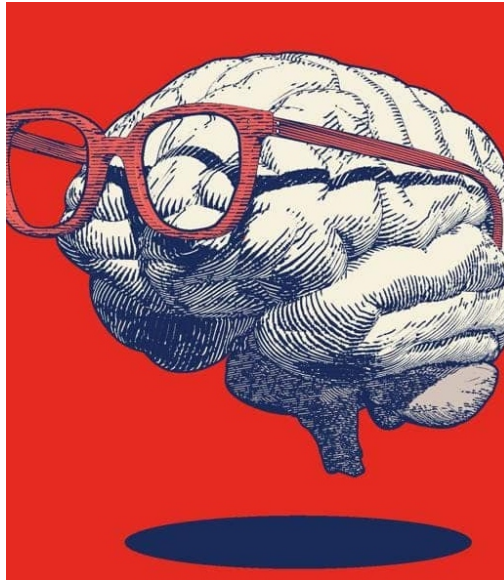
Dr. Siddharth Warriar, a neurologist, explained that there are different examples of brain rot, and they are zombies scrolling (lost of feelings, thoughts, and emotions), compulsive video gaming (addicted and submerged by the contents of the game), doom scrolling (engulfed with negative news trends), and social media addiction (when your attention is constantly fused to social space).

Effect of Brain Rot on You

Brain rot causes harm to your mental health after being fed with multiple exposures of endless visual content. These exposures impact your life and health without you knowing. Your dopamine levels trigger your limbic system, and it makes you a vegetable in limbic loops.

How to keep your brain healthy and save it from brain rot

Remember that your brain is your best friend, always with you and working with you and not on another body. It is necessary to keep your brain healthy and save it from the recent brain silent killer. Adopting these strategies, you can nurture your brain, enhance your mood, and keep your mind sharp for



years to come.

Practice psychological well-being: Engaging in various tasks helps prevent brain rot, and avoiding horror or eyesore scenes that will put you under threat or fear should be mandatory to help keep your brain healthy and improve psychological performance.

Nourish Your Brain with the Right Foods The foods you eat directly impact your brain’s health and your overall mood. Avoid “junk foods” and mindless eating habits, which can contribute to “brain rot.” Instead, focus on nutrient-rich choices:

Proteins like meat, poultry, dairy, cheese, and eggs provide essential amino acids for neurotransmitter production and help stabilise blood sugar.

Omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon, mackerel, tuna, and sardines support mood regulation and cognitive function.

Vitamin B is crucial for brain health and can be sourced from eggs, whole grains, fish, avocados, and citrus fruits.

Vitamin D acts as a natural mood stabiliser and is essential for mental well-being.

Boost Blood Flow Through Physical Activity

A sedentary lifestyle can harm brain health, so regular exercise is key. Physical activity improves circulation to the brain, reducing the risk of memory loss and cognitive decline. Incorporate activities like walking, aerobics, or stretching into your routine to keep both body and mind sharp.

Prioritise Quality Sleep Sleep deprivation can impair brain function, leading to forgetfulness, poor concentration, and difficulty managing stress. Adequate rest is essential for mental clarity and resilience. A well-rested brain is better equipped to handle challenges and maintain focus.

Expand Your Perspective

Shifting your mindset can help you manage stress and avoid “brain rot.” Instead of focusing narrowly on challenges, adopt a broader view to identify opportunities and solutions. Reframe setbacks as learning experiences and cultivate a big-picture outlook to enhance creativity and problem-solving skills.

Practice Mindfulness Mindfulness techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing, can reduce stress and improve focus. Regular mindfulness practice lowers cortisol levels and helps you stay calm even in difficult situations. A consistent mindfulness routine enhances mental clarity and reduces errors.

Embrace Mental Stimulation and Novelty Keeping your brain engaged with new experiences helps maintain cognitive flexibility and creativity. Activities like solving puzzles, reading, or learning new skills strengthen neural pathways and slow cognitive decline. Step out of your comfort zone to foster adaptive thinking and innovation.

Actress Lolo 1 opens up on love, life, parenthood

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Omotunde Adebowale, popularly known as Lolo 1, has shared insights about her personal life, career, and expectations in relationships.

The actress and media personality, famous for her role as 'Adaku' in the hit TV series Jenifa, revealed her openness to potential suitors during a recent episode of Oyinmomo.

At 47, Lolo 1 stands as a proud single mother of four, fully committed to providing for her children without external help. Despite her openness about some aspects of her life, she remained discreet about the paternity of her children.

"I am the father and mother of my children," she declared with pride, adding, "It is challenging to do what I do, but I cannot say it is easy."

Independent and strong-willed

Known for her resilience, Adebowale emphasized her financial independence. She distanced herself from stereotypes that tie women's success to men. "Some people rely on men for money, but I am not one of them. I earn from what I do, and I take pride in my work," she said.

Her determination to provide for her family is a cornerstone of her life. Balancing her roles as a media professional and a single parent has not been without hurdles, but she continues to push through.

Lolo 1 also reflected on her upbringing in a polygamous household, which shaped her perspective on relationships. "I cannot be a co-wife. I grew up in a polygamous family, and it is not for me," she stated firmly.

Unique taste in partners



When it comes to relationships, Adebowale's preferences are anything but conventional. She admitted to having what she describes as a "weird" taste in men, favouring those with "long hair and earrings." Her sense of style and personality extend into her romantic ideals.

"If I were born in ancient times, I would have married a Sango worshipper," she joked, referencing the Yoruba deity associated with thunder. She added, "I appreciate someone who is visually appealing. My taste is different. It is not just about being God-fearing."

Her ideal partner must also match her cosmopolitan lifestyle. Lolo 1 described herself as "bougie" and a fan of fine dining. "You cannot take me out to eat Àmàlà. I am a fine dining girl. If you want to court me, you need to have experienced the world," she said with a laugh.

Despite her distinct preferences, she assured listeners that her heart remains open. "I am single, but the door is not totally locked. Whoever is smart can try the door; maybe it will open," she hinted.

Survivor's spirit

Lolo 1's resilience extends beyond her personal and professional life. In 2021, she and her four children survived a

harrowing car accident. The experience underscored her strength and determination to keep moving forward for her family.

Balancing humour and strength

Throughout her career, Adebowale has charmed audiences with her humour and relatability, both on screen and on the radio. As a presenter and actress, she has built a brand rooted in authenticity and resilience.

Her journey, however, is not just about the laughter she brings to her audience. It's also about the lessons she shares through her experiences as a single parent, a survivor, and a woman who knows her worth.

Conclusion

Omotunde Adebowale, or Lolo 1, is more than a media personality. She is a woman who embodies independence, strength, and the courage to embrace life on her terms. From her unique tastes in men to her commitment to her children, Lolo 1 remains unapologetically herself.

As she continues to inspire with her story, she also reminds us of the importance of authenticity, resilience, and keeping one's heart open even if only slightly.

At movie premiere, Funke Akindele, Eniola Badmus reignite friendship

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

A video of Nollywood stars Funke Akindele and Eniola Badmus reconnecting at a recent movie premiere has set social media abuzz. Once celebrated for their close bond, but the duo's relationship was alleged to have gone awry in recent years. However, their joyful reunion has left fans speculating about a rekindled friendship.

Friendship once loved by many

Funke Akindele and Eniola Badmus are household names in Nollywood, known for their comedic chemistry and undeniable talent. They starred together in hit movies like *Omo Ghetto*, a blockbuster that cemented Funke Akindele's reputation as a top-notch filmmaker. Their closeness extended beyond the screen, making them one of Nollywood's most admired duo.

However, over time, their once-vibrant friendship appeared to hit a rough patch. Fans noticed they were no longer as frequently seen together, and speculation about a fallout began to circulate.

In a previous interview, Funke Akindele shed light on her relationship with Eniola Badmus. She dismissed rumours of animosity, attributing their reduced interaction to their busy schedules.

"Eniola makes me laugh so much," Funke said, smiling as she reminisced. "She cracks me up. I love spending time with her, but life happens. We've both been busy with our individual projects. Still, I remain cordial with her and everyone else."

This statement reassured fans to some extent, though many hoped for a visible renewal of their bond.



The viral reunion

The recent movie premiere turned out to be the perfect setting for Funke and Eniola to reconnect publicly. A video clip showing the two laughing, chatting, and enjoying each other's company quickly made its way online. In one heart-warming moment from the video, Eniola Badmus is seen helping Funke wipe her sweat, a small but touching gesture that fans called "friendship goals." The clip, which spread across Instagram and Twitter, sparked a wave of nostalgia among Nollywood lovers.

Fans React

Social media went frenzy with reactions as fans shared their excitement. Many reminisced about the duo's iconic performances in movies like *Jenifa* and *Omo Ghetto*.

One Instagram user, @candinana2022, wrote, "Only the real ones remember Gbogbo Bigz Girlzzz from the OG *Jenifa*!" Another fan, @jewel_collectionz, gushed, "See her helping her to clean her sweat. Friendship goals!"

The comments section of Eniola's Instagram story, where she posted snippets of the event, was filled with messages of joy and admiration.

Celebration of friendship

This unexpected reunion reminds fans of the beauty of long-lasting friendships, even when life gets in the way. Funke and Eniola's laughter and camaraderie at the premiere stood as a testament to their enduring bond.

As fans continue to hope for more collaborations between the two, this moment at the premiere has reignited fond memories of their iconic work together. Whether or not this signals a deeper reconnection, one thing is clear: their chemistry, both on and off-screen, is undeniable.

Moving forward

Both Funke Akindele and Eniola Badmus remain powerhouses in Nollywood, with thriving careers and massive fan bases. Funke, known for her directing and producing prowess, continues to deliver blockbusters, while Eniola remains a beloved actress and social media personality.

While the video of their reunion has fans celebrating, it also serves as a gentle reminder that friendships, no matter how strained, can be mended. With this public display of camaraderie, fans are eager to see what's next for these two stars.

The premiere may have been about showcasing Funke's latest project, but for many, the highlight was the rekindling of a cherished friendship.

Davido meets royalty at Owerri hotel opening celebration

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music star David Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, wasted no time after a performance in Lagos. Hours later, he boarded a private jet to Owerri, Imo State, alongside his close friend and socialite, Pascal Chibuikwe Okechukwu, famously known as Cubana Chiefpriest. The two friends were heading to celebrate the grand opening of Chiefpriest's new hotel -a significant event that drew attention from fans and dignitaries alike.

Private jet journey sparks excitement

In a video shared by an excited Chiefpriest, Davido was seen in high spirits with the crew on the private jet bound for Owerri. The energy was palpable, and fans online were quick to react to the bond between the duo. This wasn't just another business trip; it was a celebration of friendship, culture, and achievement.

Hero's welcome in Owerri

On arrival, Davido received a warm and lively reception from Owerri residents. Throngs of fans gathered to catch a glimpse of the superstar, waving and cheering as he made his way through the city. For many, this was a rare chance to meet one of Nigeria's most celebrated artists in person. The highlight of the trip wasn't just the hotel opening. Cubana Chiefpriest took Davido to the palace of traditional rulers in Owerri, presenting him as an in-law to the community. This gesture cemented Davido's place in the hearts of the locals and underscored the cultural significance of his visit.

Businessman Cubana Chief Priest and "Spirits love Davido," Traditional



Chiefs declare

In a light-hearted yet powerful moment, one of the traditional chiefs praised Davido during the palace visit. He described the singer as someone even "spirits love." This comment, while humorous, carried a deeper meaning, highlighting Davido's widespread appeal and his ability to connect with people from all walks of life.

The visit wasn't just about admiration. It also showed the respect Davido commands beyond the entertainment industry. As a cultural ambassador, his presence symbolized unity and pride for Owerri people.

Chief priest shares words of inspiration

Chief priest, known for his flamboyance and inspirational messages, shared his thoughts on the occasion. Posting a video of the palace visit, he wrote: "Over Dem All!!! Money Na Water. I Will Never Stop Doing It For The Culture. IM Is Our Own, It Will Never Spoil. We Will Do Everything To Keep Our City Alive & Flourishing. Now You Know Why #CpNoSmall @davido Mount Me, Everything Is Possible On This Side."

His message resonated with many, reflecting his dedication to promoting his hometown and culture while celebrating success with friends like

Davido.

Fans celebrate Davido's visit

The videos and photos from the event sparked a wave of reactions on social media. Fans flooded the comment sections with love and admiration for the singer. Some praised his humility, while others marvelled at his connection with traditional rulers and ordinary fans alike.

@amariches_official: "Everybody loves him. Even the spirits love him."

@etek_notions: "Success always, my brother. You are constantly improving on the man you were yesterday."

@sammy_lyonn: "The king said even spirits love him."

@gochy_glam: "David is a free bird. Such a sweet soul. The guy no get time."

@cj_ceejay: "The Igwe said 'anyi na akpo gi Jehova' in front of Kola?"

These comments highlighted Davido's unique ability to bridge gaps, not just between different cultures but also between generations and societal classes.

Beyond music

David's visit reinforced his image as more than a musician. He has become a symbol of hope and pride for many Nigerians.

Nollywood legend, Mama Rainbow clocks 82, says 'Life's just getting started!'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Veteran actress, Idowu Phillips, popularly known as Mama Rainbow, has once again inspired fans with her vibrant energy and positive outlook on life.

Taking to Instagram, the Nollywood legend shared a post celebrating her 82nd birthday, exuding youthful vigour and determination to embrace life to the fullest.

“Age is just a number! At 82, I’ve decided life is just getting started. I refuse to get old—feeling 45 and fabulous every single day!” she wrote, accompanied by hashtags like #YoungAtHeart and #82IsTheNew45.

Mama Rainbow’s post radiated her trademark humour and warmth, signing off with a heartfelt “Happy Sunday my children, my family, and friends.”

The post garnered over 9,000 likes within hours, with fans and colleagues flooding the comment section to celebrate her ageless spirit.

Actress Kemi Korede, producer Allwell Ademola, and actor Yomi Fabiyi were among the many who shared their admiration.

“More grace and youthfulness. You are blessed, ma. LEGEND,” wrote Yomi Fabiyi, while Chief

Femi Branch exclaimed, “Ha! Mama, you’re unstoppable!”

Mama Rainbow, a revered icon in the Nigerian entertainment industry, continues to inspire generations with her undying passion for her craft and her zest for life.

Her declaration that “life is just getting started” is a testament to her belief in staying young at heart and embracing every moment with joy.

Regina Daniels earns degree in Psychology, lauds family over feat

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Actress Regina Daniels has achieved a significant milestone in her life and career.

The 23-year-old actress just earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from a prestigious university in Mexico. Sharing the joyful news on her social media platforms, she expressed immense pride for her achievement, gratitude for her loved ones, and faith in God's favour.

The young actress, known for her roles in Nollywood films, celebrated this academic accomplishment as more than just a milestone. It was a reflection of her determination, hard work, and resilience. Regina shared her feelings with millions of her followers, writing, "Another achievement unlocked: Bachelor in Psychology bagged!"

Regina reflects on her journey

In her soul lifting post, Regina emphasized the significance of her journey to getting the degree. She described the process as a testament to her dedication and the many challenges she overcame. "This moment is more than a milestone," she wrote. "It's a testament to countless hours of hard work, determination, resilience, and God's love. I am super proud of myself!"

Her words resonated with many fans, who have followed her journey as an actress,



philanthropist, and now a graduate. Regina often refers to herself as "God's favourite," a sentiment she confidently repeated in her celebratory message.

Heartfelt thank you to her family

Regina's gratitude extended beyond her efforts. She warmly thanked her husband, businessman and politician, Ned Nwoko, for his unwavering support. She described his encouragement and love as being instrumental in helping her achieve her goal.

"Thank you, my darling hubby, for your unwavering support, love, and encouragement," she wrote. The couple, who share two young sons, have been open about their supportive relationship, often celebrating each other's

successes.

Regina also acknowledged the vital role her mother, Nollywood actress Rita Daniels, played in her success story. She referred to her mother as her "backbone" and her "rock." In her post, she expressed deep love and gratitude, writing, "To my treasure, Nnem, thank you for always being my backbone. I love you, mummy."

Fans and celebrities celebrate her achievement

Regina's announcement quickly went viral, with fans and colleagues in the entertainment industry flooding her social media with congratulatory messages. Many praised her dedication to education while balancing her career and family life.

next for the talented actress.

Lil Smart accuses Naira Marley, Zinoleesky of assault, threat to life

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

Social media has erupted in outrage after former Marlian Records signee, Lil Smart, alleged that he was assaulted and threatened by Afeez Fashola, popularly known as Naira Marley, and Oniyide Azeez Adigun, known as Zinoleesky.

Lil Smart's claims have sparked intense reactions, with many drawing parallels to the tragic case of the late singer Mohbad.

Yesterday, Lil Smart, whose real name is Idowu Smart Emmanuel, took to Instagram to share series of alarming posts. He accused Naira Marley and Zinoleesky of abducting and brutally attacking him. According to Lil Smart, the assault left him with visible bruises and robbed him of several possessions, including \$300 in cash, his wallet, and his house keys.

Lil Smart speaks out

In his posts, Lil Smart painted a grim picture of his ordeal. He alleged that he was kidnapped, taken to a secluded area, and subjected to a merciless beating. Sharing photos and videos of his injuries, he made it clear that his life was in danger.

"I escaped death today. Naira Marley, Zinoleesky, and others attacked, kidnapped, and dragged me into the bush," he wrote. "If anything happens to me if I go missing or get killed know it's because of Naira Marley and Zinoleesky."

The former Marlian artist also mentioned plans to report the incident to the police in Abuja. He appealed to the public to hold the duo accountable if anything happens to him.



Evidence and public reaction

To back his claims, Lil Smart shared proof of his injuries, including a video where Zinoleesky appeared to mock him. The posts sparked outrage among fans, with many expressing concern and recalling similar accusations by the late Mohbad against Naira Marley and his associates.

One commenter wrote, "This was how Mohbad was bullied until he died. Someone else is crying out again." Another added, "Not another Mohbad situation. This needs to stop."

Allegations against Zinoleesky

In addition to the alleged assault, Lil Smart accused Zinoleesky of orchestrating previous attacks. He claimed the Marlian artist had sent people to beat him up at his residence. In a bold move, Lil Smart challenged Zinoleesky to a one-on-one fight, accusing him of cowardice for hiding behind others. "Zino, face me like a man. Let's settle this. You know you stand no chance against me in a fair

fight," he declared.

Growing concerns about Marlian records

These allegations come on the heels of ongoing scrutiny surrounding Marlian Records, especially after Mohbad's death earlier this year. The label, led by Naira Marley, has faced numerous accusations of fostering a toxic and abusive environment for its signees.

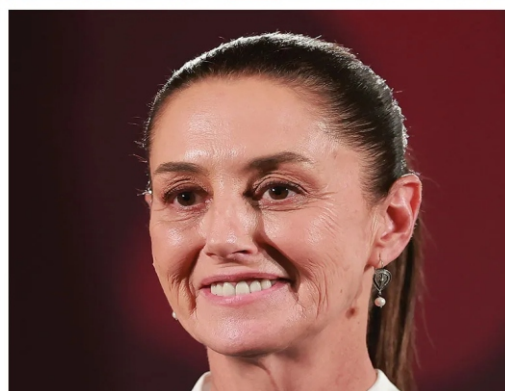
Many fans and critics are now calling for a thorough investigation into Lil Smart's claims. They argue that ignoring these allegations could lead to another tragic outcome, much like Mohbad's case.

What's next for Lil Smart?

Lil Smart has vowed to pursue justice. He revealed plans to meet with the law enforcement agencies in Abuja to ensure his case is documented and investigated. He also urged Nigerians to stand with him as he fights for his safety and rights.

2024 Time's Person of the Year: Trump, Kamala, Netanyahu make shortlist

By Dave Oludare Oso



On Thursday, TIME will announce the 2024 Person of the Year.

KAMALAHARRIS

KATE MIDDLETON

Since 1927, TIME has named a person, group, or concept that had the biggest impact—for good or for ill—on the world over the previous 12 months.

In 2023, TIME selected pop superstar Taylor Swift as Person of the Year. Other previous selections include Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the “spirit of Ukraine” in 2022, tech titan Elon Musk in 2021, the Ebola fighters in 2014, and former U.S. President Barack Obama in 2012 and 2008.

10 candidates, revealed this morning on NBC’s Today show, are under consideration for TIME’s annual designation. Here are the finalists, in alphabetical order by last name.

The night of July 21, President Joe Biden announced he was ending his presidential campaign and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for the Democratic nomination. What followed was a remarkable 107-day presidential campaign as Harris sought to become the first woman President. Harris centered her campaign on reproductive rights, slamming former President Donald Trump for his role in the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and suggested that Trump is a threat to democracy. But she lost to Trump, and conceded the race on Nov. 6.. Harris, along with Biden, was previously on the Person of the Year cover in 2020—the year that the duo defeated Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence.

The Princess of Wales made international headlines this year and stirred a conversation about privacy and health for public figures. In January, Kate Middleton was hospitalized for two weeks for a “planned abdominal surgery” and Kensington Palace said she would be out of the public eye until Easter. But after conspiracy theories circulated online in March about Middleton’s whereabouts, the royal put the rumors to rest by revealing that she had been diagnosed with cancer. In September, Middleton announced that she had completed her chemotherapy treatment. Middleton was previously on the TIME100 list of Most Influential People in 2013, and one of the runners-up for Person of the Year in 2011.

Cont'd from page 20

ELON MUSK

Elon Musk has long been an innovative disrupter. From online payments to electric vehicles to commercial space, the Tesla CEO has upended industry, and in 2022 he purchased and revamped the social media platform previously known as Twitter, rebranding it as X in 2023. But 2024 was the year that Musk—the richest person in the world, according to Forbes—stepped into the world of politics. He endorsed Trump, appeared at rallies, promoted pro-Trump content on X, and helped Trump form his presidential agenda. After Trump's victory, Musk's power only grew, and the President-elect announced that Musk would co-lead a new commission, the Department of Government Efficiency, that is expected to propose cuts to the federal workforce and to regulations. Musk was previously named TIME Person of the Year in 2021.

YULIANAVALNAYA

Russian economist Yulia Navalnaya has been in the spotlight this year after her husband and the country's leading dissident Alexei Navalny died in February. Navalnaya announced after her husband's death in prison that she would continue his work. She accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of killing her husband and has met with world leaders, including Biden, as Russia continues its war in Ukraine. Dubbed the "first lady" of the Russian opposition, Navalnaya also made the list of TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2024.

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been one of the most influential and controversial world leaders this year. Defying criticism of his war on Hamas, the terrorist organization that killed 1,200 people in an attack against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Netanyahu continued his

military assault on the Gaza Strip this year, even as the death toll there rose to 44,056, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. In September, Netanyahu expanded the war to Lebanon in the north, as Israel killed much of the leadership of Iran's proxy, Hezbollah, with air strikes and using explosives hidden in pagers. "We're in the midst of a war, a seven-front war,"

JEROME POWELL

Jerome Powell has been chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve since 2018, serving under both the Trump and Biden administrations. As chairman, he's been steering the ship on the economy, which voters identified as the top issue in the 2024 election. Although Powell was nominated for the role by Trump, the President-elect repeatedly criticized the Fed during his first term in office, accusing it of keeping interest rates too high. Powell has since stressed the importance of the Fed's independence from political parties and candidates. He's been on the TIME100 list twice—in 2019 and 2020—and was on the shortlist for Person of the Year in 2023.

JOE ROGAN

Podcaster Joe Rogan has had a major year. The Joe Rogan Experience—a podcast where he talks about current events, comedy, politics, and everything in between—was the top podcast on Spotify in 2024 for the fifth year in a row, and averages 11 million listeners per episode, mostly young men. In August, Netflix aired his live stand-up special, Joe Rogan: Burn Your Boats. In the days leading up to the election, Rogan released a three-hour interview with Trump, who Rogan later endorsed, with some voters saying that the interview influenced their decision.

CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM

In October, Claudia Sheinbaum made history when she was sworn in as

Mexico's first-ever female President. Sheinbaum, a lifelong leftist, is also the first Jewish leader in the country's more than 200 years of independence. Sheinbaum focused her campaign on fighting for the poor, and has taken office at a time when Mexico faces issues ranging from a struggling economy to rising organized violence.

DONALD TRUMP

In a stunning political comeback, Donald Trump won the 2024 election. He has reshaped the American electorate, activating young male voters who propelled him to a decisive victory that saw him win the popular vote for the first time and turn every swing state red. Trump's remarkable victory comes after he lost the 2020 election to Biden and repeatedly refused to accept the results. His 2024 win is history-making in multiple ways: he will be the oldest President in U.S. history, and he was convicted earlier this year by a New York jury of 34 counts of fraud, making him the first convicted felon to be elected President. Trump was previously named TIME's Person of the Year in 2016, the year he won the presidency for the first time.

MARK ZUCKERBERG

Mark Zuckerberg was under the microscope this year as the billionaire Meta CEO dealt with government scrutiny into Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms. Earlier this year, Zuckerberg and other tech CEOs faced questioning during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the impact of social media on young people. During the 2024 election cycle, election, state, and local officials expressed concern over the rampant spread of misinformation on Facebook. Forbes estimated that, as of December, Zuckerberg's net worth reached \$210 billion, making him the fourth richest person in the world.

Biden calls Bashar Assad's fall 'Fundamental Act of Justice'

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Joe Biden said Sunday that the sudden collapse of the Syrian government under Bashar Assad is a “fundamental act of justice” after decades of repression, but it was “a moment of risk and uncertainty” for the Middle East.

Biden spoke at the White House hours after rebel groups completed a takeover of the country following more than a dozen years of violent civil war and decades of leadership by Assad and his family.

Biden said the United States was monitoring reports of the whereabouts of Assad, with Russian state media saying he had fled to Moscow and received asylum from his longtime ally.

The outgoing Biden administration and President-elect Donald Trump were working to make sense of new threats and opportunities across the Middle East.

Biden credited action by the U.S. and its allies for weakening Syria's backers—Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. He said “for the first time” that they could no longer defend Assad's grip on power.

“Our approach has shifted the balance of power in the Middle East,” Biden said, after a meeting with his national security team.

Trump said Sunday that Assad had fled because close ally Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, “was not interested in protecting him any longer.”

Those comments on Trump's social media platform came a day after he used another post to decry the possibility of the U.S. intervening militarily in Syria to aid the rebels, declaring, “THIS IS NOT OUR



FIGHT.” The Biden administration said it had no intention of intervening.

The U.S. has about 900 troops in Syria, including forces working with Kurdish allies in the opposition-held northeast to prevent any resurgence of the Islamic State group.

Biden said he intended for those troops to remain, adding that U.S. forces on Sunday conducted “precision air strikes” on IS camps and operations in Syria.

U.S. Central Command said the operation hit more than 75 targets.

“We're clear-eyed about the fact that ISIS will try and take advantage of any vacuum to reestablish its credibility, and create a safe haven,” Biden said, using a different acronym for the group. “We will not let that happen.”

The Syrian opposition that brought down Assad is led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which the U.S. says is a terrorist organization with links to al-Qaida, although the group says it has since

broken ties with al-Qaida.

“We will remain vigilant,” Biden said. “Make no mistake, some of the rebel groups that took down Assad have their own grim record of terrorism and human rights abuses.” He added that the groups are “saying the right things now.”

“But as they take on greater responsibility, we will assess not just their words, but their actions,” Biden said.

A senior Biden administration official, when asked about contact with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham leaders after Assad's departure, said Washington was in contact with Syrian groups of all kinds.

The official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the situation and spoke on condition of anonymity, also said the U.S. has focused over the past several days on chemical weapons that had been controlled by the Assad government, aiming to ensure they were secured.

Trump to pardon 'Capitol rioters' on day one

By Dave Oludare Oso

Incoming US President, Donald Trump has declared that he would pardon individuals jailed for their involvement in the January 6 Capitol riot on his first day in office.

The former president, in his first network TV interview since securing electoral victory, discussed several key campaign promises, including those on immigration, healthcare, and his vision for the Justice Department, during an interview with NBC News.

Trump told NBC's Kristen Welker on Meet the Press, "First day. Yeah, I'm looking for these pardons."

Criticizing the jail conditions, Trump suggested that many who pleaded guilty had done so under duress.

He said, "Look. I know the system. The system's very corrupt. They say to a guy, 'You're going to go to jail for two years or for 30 years.' And these guys are looking, their whole lives have been destroyed.

"I'm going to look at everything. We're going to look at individual cases."

The Department of Justice reports that over 1,500 people have been arrested or charged in connection with the January 6th events, with nearly 900 having pleaded guilty.

Trump had long emphasized freeing those jailed for their role in the Capitol riot, a theme central to his campaign, often highlighting them at rallies.

In addition to his pledge to pardon rioters, Trump also shared varying views on the roles of his prospective picks for Attorney General and FBI Director, Pam Bondi and Kash Patel, should they be confirmed.



Trump was asked about retribution, a recurring theme in his 2024 campaign, and he stated that while he would not direct them to target political adversaries, they could choose to do so on their own.

"She's very experienced. I want her to do what she wants to do. I'm not going to instruct her" to go after Special Counsel Jack Smith, whom he called "a very corrupt" person," Trump said of Bondi.

On Patel, Trump remarked, "If they think that somebody was a dishonest or crooked or corrupt politician, I think he probably has an obligation to do it."

Patel has previously called for investigations into Democrats, media figures, and the Department of Justice, including President Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton. While Trump made it clear he wouldn't directly instruct Bondi or Patel to take action, he emphasized that they would have the freedom to act at their discretion.

Trump also sharply criticized the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 events, calling for its

members to be jailed. "Liz Cheney was behind it. So is Benny Thompson and everybody on that committee, honestly, they should go to jail."

When asked whether he would instruct Bondi to pursue charges against the committee members, Trump distanced himself from the decision: "I think that they'll have to look at that. But I'm not going to. I'm going to focus on 'Drill, baby, drill.'"

In response to Trump's remarks, former Representative Liz Cheney labeled them a "continuation of his assault on the rule of law and the foundations of our republic."

Cheney emphasized the legal inappropriateness of Trump's comments, stating, "There is no conceivably appropriate factual or constitutional basis for what Donald Trump is suggesting – a Justice Department investigation of the work of a congressional committee – and any lawyer who attempts to pursue that course would quickly find themselves engaged in sanctionable conduct."

South Korea imposes travel ban on President Yoon

By Dave Oludare Oso

South Korean President, Yoon Suk-yeol has been banned from leaving the country over a failed attempt at imposing martial law, amid growing calls for him to step down and a deepening leadership crisis.

Oh Dong-woon, the head of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, said on Monday he ordered a ban on foreign travel for Yoon when asked at a parliament hearing what actions have been taken against the embattled president.

A Ministry of Justice official, Bae Sang-up, told the committee the travel ban order has been executed.

Yoon's People Power Party (PPP) staged a walkout of the chamber before a vote to impeach the president on Saturday, prompting accusations of being "accomplices to insurrection" after the motion failed.

On Sunday, PPP leader Han Dong-hoon said Yoon would be excluded from foreign and other state affairs, and Prime Minister Han Duck-soo would manage government affairs until Yoon eventually stepped aside.

The decision to delegate presidential authority to the prime minister has plunged Asia's fourth-largest economy into a constitutional crisis.

Al Jazeera's Eunice Kim, reporting from Seoul, said the "big question" was how long the governing party would be able to maintain the scheme, which has caused uncertainty over who is in charge.

The defence ministry said Yoon was still legally commander-in-chief.

'Second coup'



South Korea's opposition accused the governing party on Monday of staging a "second coup" by clinging to power and refusing to impeach Yoon.

Claiming that the president can remain in office but has delegated his powers to the prime minister and the PPP leader – who is not an elected official – is "a blatant constitutional violation with no legal basis", Democratic Party floor leader Park Chan-dae said.

"This is an unlawful, unconstitutional act of a second insurrection and a second coup," Park said, urging PPP to "stop it immediately."

Al Jazeera's Kim said, "The opposition is now preparing for a second impeachment vote come Saturday."

Yoon has refused calls, including some from within his own party, to resign, and his future looked more uncertain on Thursday when a team at the National Police Agency launched an investigation into the president for alleged treason.

While a sitting South Korean president

has immunity from prosecution while in office, that does not extend to allegations of rebellion or treason.

The president gave the military sweeping emergency powers on December 3 to root out what he called "anti-state forces" and obstructionist political opponents. He rescinded the order six hours later, after parliament defied military and police cordons to vote unanimously against the decree.

On Saturday, Yoon issued an apology over the decree, saying he would not shirk legal or political responsibility for the move, which was born of "desperation."

Yoon has maintained martial law was necessary, accusing opposition members in the National Assembly of launching an unprecedented number of impeachment efforts against members of his administration, effectively paralysing key operations of government, and of handling the budget in a way that undermined the fundamental functions of the government, including public safety.

Germany, Austria freeze Syrian asylum applications

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees has put a hold on asylum applications from Syria on Monday, according to local media.

A spokesperson reportedly said the decision was made as Syria's political future is currently too uncertain.

Local authorities said 47,270 applications were impacted by the application freeze, but that existing applications, which were already decided on, have not been impacted.

Reacting to the news, CDU's Johann Wadephul said it must be assumed "that the rebels who have now won, have close ties to Afghanistan, to the Taliban."

The politician added that "these are not good omens," and that it is therefore too early to predict whether

this will result in an increased return of refugees to Syria, or that more refugees will come to Germany.

Lamya Kaddor from Germany's Green Party said she is shocked that people are already "directly calling" for deportations. "I think that's more than cynical and, to be honest, populist. And it misses the point of the lives of many German-Syrians and people who come from this region," she added.

Austria has also decided to put a pause on its asylum applications, the Interior Ministry confirmed to local media. 7,300 applications will be affected.

The start of the civil war in 2011, triggered by popular discontent and the pro-democracy Arab Spring protests, forced 14 million Syrians to leave the country. It is estimated that roughly one million fled to Germany.

After almost two weeks of intense clashes, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) opposition forces seized control over significant areas and eventually declared victory in the capital city of Damascus, bringing an end to Bashar al-Assad's dynastic rule of the country.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Sunday that the end of al-Assad's rule in Syria was good news "for now", and emphasised that the priority should be on restoring the country's law and order.

"We will judge the future rulers by whether they make it possible for all Syrians to live in dignity and self-determination, defend Syria's sovereignty against malicious interference by third parties and live in peace with their neighbours," Scholz added.

Zelensky seeks diplomatic end to Russia's warFloats role for foreign troops

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Volodymyr Zelensky made the case on Monday for a diplomatic settlement to Russia's war in Ukraine and raised the idea of foreign troops being deployed in his country until it could join the NATO military alliance.

The remarks at a joint press conference with German opposition leader Friedrich Merz were the latest to signal Kyiv's increasing openness to war negotiations, with Donald Trump preparing to return to the White House on Jan. 20.

The U.S. president-elect, who has said he wants to end the war quickly, called on Sunday for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations to end the "madness", after he met Zelensky and French President Emmanuel Macron for talks in Paris.

"Ukraine wants this war to end more than anyone else. No doubt, a diplomatic resolution would save more lives. We do seek it," Zelensky told reporters in Kyiv on Monday.

He said he discussed a "freezing" of the lines in the war when he met Macron and Trump. Russia controls nearly a fifth of Ukrainian territory after launching the 2022 invasion that unleashed the biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two.

Zelenskiy said he told the two leaders that he did not believe Putin actually wanted to end the war and that the Russian president would need to be forced.

"You can only exert force if Ukraine is strong. A strong Ukraine before any diplomacy means a strong (Ukraine) on the battlefield," he said, implying Kyiv needed help to become stronger.



He received a rhetorical boost from Merz, the frontrunner in the election race to become Germany's next chancellor, who used his visit to liken Berlin's current policy to making Ukraine fight with one arm tied behind its back.

FOREIGN TROOPS

Zelenskiy also returned to an idea raised in February by Macron, who floated the possibility of European nations sending troops to Ukraine. There was no consensus on the matter among the European leaders.

"We can think and work on Emmanuel's position. He suggested that some part of troops of a country be present on the territory of Ukraine, which would guarantee us security while Ukraine is not in NATO," Zelenskiy said.

"But we must have a clear understanding of when Ukraine will be in the EU and when Ukraine will be in NATO," he added.

Kyiv, which has made a concerted push to obtain an invitation to join NATO, has insisted throughout the war that it needs security guarantees to prevent Russia launching another invasion once the current hostilities are halted.

"If there is a pause while Ukraine is not in NATO, and even if we had the invitation, and we would not be in NATO, and there will be a pause, then who guarantees us any kind of security?" Zelenskiy asked at the press conference.

Russia has demanded that Ukraine abandon its NATO ambitions and sees Kyiv's membership of the alliance as an unacceptable security threat.

The Ukrainian leader told reporters he was hoping to call outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden in the coming days to discuss NATO membership.

"I intend to call President Biden in the coming time ... and raise the question of an invitation to join NATO," he said.

Premier League referee David Coote sacked following investigation

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

David Coote, a 42-year-old Premier League referee, has been dismissed by the Professional Game Match Officials Limited (PGMOL) after a comprehensive investigation into allegations surrounding his conduct.

Coote, who first officiated in the Premier League in 2018, was suspended on November 11 following the emergence of a video allegedly showing him making derogatory comments about Liverpool FC and their former manager Jürgen Klopp.

This video referred to a contentious match between Liverpool and Burnley in 2020, which ended in a 1-1 draw. Klopp criticized Coote post-match for what he perceived as leniency toward Burnley's physical challenges.

Two days after Coote's suspension, further allegations surfaced when The Sun published photos purportedly showing him sniffing a white powder through a rolled-up US banknote during the summer's European Championship. UEFA, which had employed Coote as a match official for the tournament, immediately suspended him and initiated its own investigation.

On November 27, another controversy emerged. Coote was accused of discussing a yellow card he planned to issue before a Championship game between Leeds United and West Brom in 2019. Coote denied the allegations, calling them "false and defamatory."

The PGMOL confirmed Coote's dismissal on December 9, citing "serious breaches" of his employment contract. A statement



from the refereeing body read:

"David Coote's actions were found to be in serious breach of the provisions of his employment contract. Supporting David Coote continues to be important to us, and we remain committed to his welfare."

Coote has the right to appeal the decision.

A Distinguished Career Tarnished by Allegations

Coote had officiated 112 Premier League matches, earning a reputation as one of the PGMOL's most dependable referees and video assistant referees (VAR). He also served as the VAR for 64 Premier League matches, 11 of which involved Liverpool.

However, his time as VAR was not without controversy. In October 2020, Coote was the VAR during Liverpool's 2-2 draw against Everton, a match marred by decisions Klopp and Liverpool deemed contentious. These included a challenge by Everton goalkeeper

Jordan Pickford on Virgil van Dijk that went unpunished and a late Jordan Henderson goal disallowed for offside.

Coote was only reinstated as a VAR for Liverpool matches in September 2023, officiating seven games last season.

Impact on the Refereeing Community

Coote's dismissal marks a rare and significant action against a Premier League official. The PGMOL is facing questions about the vetting and oversight of its referees, particularly given the severity of the allegations.

While Coote's dismissal underscores the PGMOL's commitment to upholding integrity, the refereeing body has emphasized its continued support for Coote's well-being.

Fans and pundits alike will watch closely to see how this episode influences the standards and scrutiny of Premier League referees moving forward.

Hamilton 'finished on a high' with Mercedes

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Lewis Hamilton said he was happy his time with Mercedes "finished on a high" after what he described as "a really turbulent year".

The seven-time champion brought to an end his 12 years with Mercedes with a fourth-place finish after starting 16th on the grid in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

"It has been probably the longest year of my life, knowing from the beginning I was leaving," Hamilton said.

"It's like a relationship that you've told whoever the counterpart is you're leaving but you're living together for a year. Lots of ups and downs but we finished on a high today."

Hamilton, 39, leaves Mercedes for Ferrari in 2025 after 12 years with Mercedes that was both the longest and most successful team-driver combination in F1 history.

He passed team-mate George Russell on the final lap to clinch fourth place and then celebrated by doing doughnuts on the pit straight, before climbing out of his car, crouching beside it and spending some moments with his thoughts.

"Each moment I have known it was one of the last and it has been really clear and really hard to let go," Hamilton said.

"When I stopped the car. I wanted to embrace the moment. Representing Mercedes has been the greatest moment of my life. Just giving thanks, my own spirit for not giving up, everyone the power to have built that car. I am proud of everyone."



Hamilton has won two races in 2024 – his first victories since the 2021 campaign in which he controversially lost out on a record eighth drivers' title at the final race of the season.

But he has also had difficult weekends, including in Qatar a week before Abu Dhabi, when he finished 12th.

He added: "We've definitely had ups and downs but what's come through is there has been real love.

"The board members who have stood by and supported me all these years, who were upset at the beginning, but today were saying you will always be part of the family. It just shows there is a lot of love between us."

For his final three years with Mercedes, Hamilton has been partnered by fellow Briton Russell, who finished 22 points ahead of him in the drivers' championship.

Russell, 26, said: "I felt like it was quite a fitting way to finish with

Lewis, to be one second apart after these years, I am happy he had a great weekend. He deserved it.

"I have learned so much from Lewis as a driver and a person. I am proud to have had these years."

Russell, who will be partnered by 18-year-old Italian rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli in 2025, said Hamilton had taught him a lot about how to behave as a role model.

"I recognise from Lewis that we all have this platform and we have to use it correctly. It has become even more apparent to me with my young nieces and nephews watching TikTok and Netflix.

"How you deal with the victories and losses you inspire the young kids.

"The biggest life lesson I have learned from him is that, even if you really want to express something, there are hundreds of millions of people watching, and the way you do it is super-important."

Maresca plays down Chelsea title hopes despite Spurs comeback

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca hailed his team's resilience after a thrilling 4-3 comeback victory over Tottenham on Sunday but admitted the Blues remain unprepared to challenge for the Premier League title.

The dramatic win at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium saw Chelsea overturn a two-goal deficit, with Marc Cucurella's early slip-ups gifting Spurs an initial lead. Maresca, appointed in the summer, acknowledged the team's progress but tempered expectations.

"We are ahead of my expectation in terms of how we play on and off the ball, and the results," said Maresca. "But we are far from being ready. Arsenal, [Manchester] City, and Liverpool probably don't slide—like Cucurella did," he quipped, referencing the Spaniard's boot change after Tottenham's second goal.

The win keeps Chelsea in second place, four points behind Liverpool, who have a game in hand after their weekend fixture against Everton was postponed due to Storm Darragh.



Palmer Shines in Derby Heroics While Jadon Sancho's stunning strike sparked Chelsea's comeback, it was Cole Palmer who stole the show. The 22-year-old contributed decisively, scoring two penalties—one a cheeky 'Panenka'—and creating Enzo Fernández's goal with a dazzling run.

Palmer's form has drawn comparisons to Chelsea greats, with Jamie Carragher declaring, "He's done more than [Gianfranco] Zola already in his 18 months at the club."

With 50 goal involvements in just 48 Premier League games, Palmer is among the league's fastest to reach this milestone, trailing only Erling Haaland,

Andy Cole, and Mohamed Salah.

Eyeing the Future

Despite their current position, Maresca remains focused on gradual improvement. "The plan is to not let the players slow down. They know another player is waiting to come in," he said.

As Chelsea continue their resurgence, their blend of youthful flair and tactical discipline under Maresca suggests a promising future, even if a title push might still be a season away.

Five Lionesses named in FIFPRO women's world XI

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Five England stars have been included in the FIFPRO Women's World XI, highlighting the growing global recognition of the Lionesses' talent.

Chelsea defender Lucy Bronze makes history by earning her seventh selection, equaling the record held by France's Wendie Renard. Bronze's move from Barcelona to Chelsea last summer has solidified her reputation as one of the best defenders in women's football.



Joining Bronze in the prestigious XI are Alex Greenwood (Manchester City), Mary Earps (Manchester United/Paris Saint-Germain), Keira Walsh (Barcelona), and Lauren James (Chelsea).

Global Diversity in the Team

The World XI features players from five nations, demonstrating the international breadth of women's football.

Brazilian icon Marta, a six-time FIFA World Player of the Year, returns to the team for the first time since 2021.

Barbra Banda (Zambia/Orlando Pride) becomes the first African player to make the lineup, continuing her stellar year after being named BBC Women's Footballer of the Year 2024.

Spanish stars Aitana Bonmati, Alexia Putellas, and Olga Carmona are included,

cementing Spain's dominance following their 2023 World Cup triumph.

Colombian forward Linda Caicedo rounds out the forward line, reflecting her growing stature in world football.

A Milestone Year for Women's Football

The FIFPRO Women's World XI, determined solely by votes from professional players, saw a record-breaking 7,000 women cast their ballots this year.

2024 Women's World XI Team

Goalkeeper:

Mary Earps (Manchester United/Paris Saint-Germain, England)

Defenders:

Lucy Bronze (Barcelona/Chelsea, England)

Olga Carmona (Real Madrid, Spain)

Alex Greenwood (Manchester City, England)

Midfielders:

Aitana Bonmati (Barcelona, Spain)

Alexia Putellas (Barcelona, Spain)

Keira Walsh (Barcelona, England)

Forwards:

Barbra Banda (Shanghai Shengli/Orlando Pride, Zambia)

Linda Caicedo (Real Madrid, Colombia)

Lauren James (Chelsea, England)

Marta (Orlando Pride, Brazil)

This year's lineup underscores the continued evolution of women's football and its increasing recognition on the global stage.