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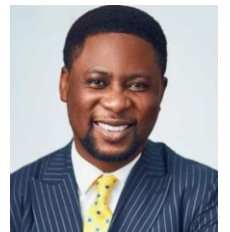
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Tinubu to present N47.9trn 2025 budget to National Assembly Dec 17

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Bola Tinubu is set to present the N47.9 trillion 2025 budget to the national assembly on December 17.

Senate President Godswill Akpabio announced the development at a plenary on Thursday.

“The president has made his intention known to the National Assembly to present the 2025 budget to the joint session of the National Assembly on the 17th of December, 2024,” Akpabio said.

On November 14, the federal government proposed N47.9 trillion as the total expenditure in the 2025 budget.

Tinubu later submitted the medium-term expenditure framework and fiscal strategy paper (MTEF/FSP) for 2025–2027 to both the senate and the house of



representatives on November 19.

The MTEF/FSP are parameters any budget of the country is premised on and also serve as a projection of a three-year spending plan of the federal government.

On December 3, the senate approved the MTEF/FSP ahead of the consideration of the 2025 budget proposal.

In the MTEF/FSP, the key parameters include a \$75 oil price benchmark per barrel, daily oil production of 2.06 million barrels per day (bpd), an exchange rate of N1,400 to \$1, and a targeted gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 6.4 percent.

The expenditure framework also has a new borrowing plan of N9.22 trillion, constituting domestic and foreign borrowings.

Senator Yayi slammed for awarding Yoruba territory projects to Igbo contractor

By Agency Reporter

Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola also known as ‘Yayi’ has come under intense criticism for awarding multi-million naira projects in Yoruba territory to an Igbo contractor.

The decision has sparked outrage and disappointment among many Yoruba people, who feel that the senator should have prioritized local contractors and supported the regional economy.

Many Yoruba groups has expressed their discontent and frustration, stating that there are many qualified Yoruba contractors who could have done a



better job.

Some argued that the senator’s decision was a betrayal of the trust placed in him by his constituents.

However, many Yoruba people feel that the senator should have prioritized local contractors and supported the regional economy.

On social media, users expressed disappointment and frustration, raising questions about many qualified Yoruba contractors who could have done more Justice to the project.

One user, Erinfolami, commented, “While I appreciate your work, please next time consider a Yoruba-owned construction company... Self-preservation should come first.”

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
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1X1	4,315.00

POLITICAL COLOUR

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CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
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QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
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QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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10X4	142,787.50
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PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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4X3	N/A
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2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
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4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
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EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
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DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
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ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
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ALLURE COVER		750,000.00
(IBC) Inside Back Cover		376,250.00
(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
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10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION

SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

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ECOWAS finalises \$75m renewable energy facility to boost clean energy in West Africa

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has finalised the framework for a \$75 million Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Facility, aimed at driving clean energy solutions across the region.

Dr. Omar Touray, President of ECOWAS, made the announcement on Thursday during the 93rd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in Abuja.

He explained that the facility will provide grants, loans, and guarantees through competitive calls for proposals, focusing on advancing renewable energy initiatives throughout West Africa.

“The Framework Document for the Establishment of an ECOWAS Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Facility has been finalised by the Ministers,” Touray stated.

“This is a new blended finance facility with an initial amount of USD 75 million, whose objective is to provide grants, loans, and guarantees through regular demand-driven competitive calls for proposals, offering clean energy solutions for the ECOWAS region.”

The initiative marks a significant step towards ECOWAS’s broader goals of promoting sustainable energy solutions and tackling climate change. The facility is expected to play a key role in enhancing the region’s energy security while reducing dependence on non-renewable sources.

In addition to the renewable energy facility, Touray highlighted progress in other important regional projects. One such initiative is the “Rice Offensive,” a project launched by



ECOWAS in 2014 aimed at achieving self-sufficiency in rice production by 2035. The project’s second cycle, which runs from 2025 to 2035, seeks to produce 33 million tonnes of milled rice to meet the region’s consumption needs. To achieve this, an estimated \$15–\$19 billion in investments is required to improve storage facilities, milling operations, and mechanisation of paddy production.

Touray also drew attention to the strategic importance of the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline, a major infrastructure project designed to enhance regional energy integration. The 6,800-kilometre pipeline, including 5,100 kilometres offshore, will transport 30 billion cubic feet of natural gas annually, connecting Nigeria to Morocco and extending the supply to ECOWAS member states, Mauritania, and Europe.

“This regional integrative project aims to build a gas pipeline linking Nigeria to Morocco, feeding ECOWAS member states and Mauritania, with future extensions to Europe,” Touray explained.

Furthermore, ECOWAS is making strides in regional integration projects, including the phased implementation of affordable roaming tariffs, now operational in

six member states, and plans to harmonise aviation charges to reduce passenger and security fees by 25%.

Touray also highlighted efforts to improve the management of shared water resources and develop infrastructure in the water sector, all aimed at reducing poverty and safeguarding the environment.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. Touray noted that by October 2024, only 40 percent of the Community Levy for the year had been received, which has hindered the implementation of ECOWAS programmes. He urged member states to fulfil their financial commitments to support regional development.

Security concerns, particularly terrorism, violent extremism, and organised crime, continue to be a significant focus for ECOWAS. Touray expressed hope that countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, which have recently withdrawn from the organisation, would reconsider their decisions and rejoin the collective efforts to address regional security challenges.

Nigeria unveils first certified mineral analysis laboratory in Sabon-Wuse

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, has hailed African Natural Resources and Mines Limited (ANRML) as a key partner in the Nigerian government's efforts to enhance local value addition within the mining sector.

Alake made the remarks during the commissioning of Nigeria's first ultra-modern mineral analysis laboratory in Sabon-Wuse, Niger State, on Thursday.

The state-of-the-art laboratory, a major milestone for Nigeria's mining industry, is expected to play a crucial role in the sector's growth.

According to Alake, the facility aligns with the core objectives of his seven-point agenda aimed at repositioning the mining sector. One of the key priorities of the agenda is to promote local value addition, and the new laboratory is seen as a vital step in reducing Nigeria's dependence on foreign testing facilities for mineral analysis.

"You are not only aligning with the President's Renewed Hope Agenda but also contributing to our ministry's seven-point agenda, with local value addition being a critical component," Alake said during the commissioning.

"This internationally certified lab will significantly benefit the sector, as it will handle mineral samples that were previously sent abroad for testing, positioning Nigeria as a key



player in global mineral analysis."

The laboratory, which has received international certification, will allow Nigeria to test mineral samples domestically, significantly improving the efficiency and accuracy of mineral analysis while saving costs associated with sending samples overseas. The move is expected to bolster the country's standing in the global mining sector.

Commending ANRML's initiative, the Minister encouraged the company, which also operates an iron ore mining and processing plant, to continue its investments in the Nigerian mining landscape. He pledged the support of the Federal Government for investments that would generate employment for the country's youth.

ANRML's Group Managing Director, Alok Gupta, expressed gratitude for the commissioning of the facility and reaffirmed the company's commitment to transforming Nigeria's mining

sector. "The world-class laboratory commissioned today will be used to analyse solid mineral samples. Recognising the need for such a facility in Nigeria, we decided to establish this laboratory using the latest technology," Gupta said.

He further noted that ANRML is the only company in Nigeria certified with the prestigious ISO 7025 accreditation from the Canadian Association of Laboratory Abbreviations and other internationally recognised testing laboratory bodies.

The laboratory is equipped with cutting-edge WDXRF machines and provides a comprehensive range of geochemical services tailored to meet the needs of the exploration and mining industries.

With this development, Nigeria takes a significant step towards advancing its mining sector and enhancing its competitiveness on the global stage.

NAFDAC probes suspected fake Amoxicillin capsules

By Friday Omosola

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) it has commenced an investigation into reports of suspected substandard Deekins Amoxicillin 500mg Capsules, Lot Number 4C639001.

Mojisola Adeyeye, NAFDAC Director-General/CEO in a statement on Thursday, said the product, manufactured by Ecomed Pharma Ltd and marketed by Devine Kings Pharmaceutical Ltd, has been linked to serious adverse drug reactions nationwide.

The agency added that preliminary findings have raised questions about the authenticity of the batch in question.

More so, NAFDAC said that Ecomed Pharma Ltd claims it produced only 20 packets of Lot 4C639001 for registration renewal purposes and 1,961 packets of a different batch, Lot 4C639002.

However, NAFDAC noted that 790 packs of Lot 4C639001—bearing a manufacturing date of March 2024 and expiry date of February 2027—have reportedly been recalled.

According to NAFDAC, the manufacturer denies producing the recalled packs, suggesting



possible falsification.

“Key suspects, including Pharm. Ekene Christopher of Ecomed Pharma Ltd and Kingsley Ekeanyanwu of Devine Kings Pharmaceutical Ltd, are currently under investigation.

Samples of the product have been collected for laboratory analysis, with further inquiries being conducted in collaboration with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria”, NAFDAC added.

In response to the potential health risk, NAFDAC advised the public to immediately cease the use, sale, or distribution of Deekins Amoxicillin 500mg Capsules from the affected lot.

The agency further called on healthcare providers, distributors, and patients to source medicines only from authorised suppliers and to

inspect products for authenticity and integrity.

“Reports of adverse reactions or suspicious activities related to the product can be submitted to NAFDAC via 0800-162-3322, sf.alert@nafdac.gov.ng, or the Med Safety mobile application.”

Reiterating its commitment to public safety, NAFDAC assured the public of its resolve to eliminate substandard and falsified medicines from the supply chain.

“We will continue to work with stakeholders to uphold regulatory standards and ensure the safety of medicines in Nigeria,” said NAFDAC.

The agency added that further updates on the investigation will be provided once they are available.

Yuletide: IGP orders security beef up, pledges safety of lives, properties

By Friday Omosola

As the yuletide season approaches, the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, has assured Nigerians of heightened security measures to safeguard lives and property during the festive period.

In a statement by Olumuyiwa Adejobi, the police spokesperson said the IGP has directed the immediate deployment of police personnel to strategic locations nationwide to curb traffic disruptions, highway robberies, and other criminal activities.

The deployment, he said includes enhanced police presence along highways, urban centres, and recreational hubs.

Adejobi added that the proactive measure aims to deter criminal activities, particularly highway robberies, which often escalate during periods of increased public mobility and gatherings.

He said in a show of commitment to public safety, the police have recorded significant successes in tackling armed robbery.

According to him, on December 10, police operatives in Lagos arrested four suspected



robbers—Akeem Alabi, Adewale Sogbesan, Emmanuel Izeagbe, and Francis Okoko—believed to be part of a robbery syndicate operating around the Costain area of the state.

He said the suspects reportedly confessed to their crimes during interrogation.

Similarly, on December 6, Adejobi stated that police operatives in Anambra State apprehended a suspected armed robber, Miracle Mwakaloi, in Awka.

He noted that the suspect later led officers to his residence, where three AK-47 rifles were recovered.

Adejobi emphasised police

dedication to creating a safe environment throughout and beyond the festive season.

“Ongoing measures include increased patrols, community engagement, and focused efforts on public safety. Citizens are urged to cooperate with law enforcement officials, who will maintain professionalism and respect for human rights”, he said.

According to him, the IGP also encouraged Nigerians to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the police or other security agencies.

Adejobi reiterated the police’s commitment to ensuring a crime-free yuletide celebration.

Lagos Court Hands Down 10-Year Sentence for Sexual Assault of Minor

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In a significant ruling, a Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Ikeja has convicted and sentenced Bamidele Folorunsho to 10 years imprisonment for the indecent treatment and sexual assault of a minor. The court's verdict marks a major milestone in the ongoing efforts to combat sexual and domestic violence in Nigeria.

Folorunsho's journey to conviction began in February 2018, when he was initially charged with the defilement of a 12-year-old girl. However, it wasn't until October 2021 that he was arraigned and pleaded not guilty to the charge. In a surprising turn of events, Folorunsho opted for a plea bargain, leading to his re-arraignment on amended charges.

During the re-arraignment, Folorunsho pleaded guilty to two amended counts of indecent treatment and sexual assault. The charges specifically stated that he rubbed the victim's anus and fondled her breasts with his hands. The prosecution, led by O. Aluko, informed the court that both parties had entered a



plea and sentence agreement dated December 12, 2024.

Justice Rahman Oshodi, who presided over the case, carefully considered the plea bargain agreement and Folorunsho's show of remorse before delivering the verdict. In his ruling, Justice Oshodi stated, "I have found you guilty based on your plea in the amended information dated December 11, 2024. I have carefully considered the plea bargain agreement and your show of remorse."

The sentence, which will commence from March 22, 2018, also includes the registration of Folorunsho's name as a sex offender. This move is seen as a significant step towards ensuring public safety

and preventing future instances of sexual violence.

The offences committed by Folorunsho contravened Sections 135 and 263 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State 2015. The Lagos State Government has been vocal about its commitment to combating domestic and sexual violence, establishing the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency in September 2021.

This verdict serves as a testament to the government's efforts to bring perpetrators to justice and protect vulnerable members of society. As the fight against sexual and domestic violence continues, this ruling sends a strong message that such crimes will not be tolerated in Lagos State.

Two feared dead, 20 others injured in Borno varsity auto crash

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two students of the Borno State University, Maiduguri, were yesterday feared dead as the school's Staff bus and a truck collided on Njimtilo Road in the state capital.

Also, no fewer than 20 other students were seriously injured in the accident. According to the Borno State Police Command, a truck collided with the university's bus, causing significant damage and loss of lives.

The Borno State Police Command spokesperson, Nahum Kenneth, confirmed the accident, stating that a male and female students lost their lives, while three others were currently unconscious and receiving medical care at the Umaru Shehu Specialist Hospital.



He further disclosed that the bus was conveying 30 students at the time of the accident.

However, 20 of the injured student were still receiving treatment, while the other 10 were unhurt.

Meanwhile, the university's community is still in shock and mourning, with students, faculty and

staff expressing their condolences to the families of the deceased.

The school's management has also promised to provide necessary support and assistance to the affected families.

The cause of the accident is still under investigation, but eyewitness reports said, that the truck's driver lost control before colliding with the bus. The police are working hard to determine the circumstances surrounding the accident.

Moreover, the State Police Command has urged motorists to exercise caution and adhere to traffic rules to prevent accidents. The command also appealed to the public to provide any information that may aid in their investigation.

Ekiti airport gets NCAA's approval to begin operations this month

By Friday Omosola

The Ekiti Agro-Allied International Cargo Airport (EAICA) in Ado-Ekiti to received the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority's (NCAA) approval to begin non-scheduled flight operations on December 15, 2024.

In a letter dated December 11, 2024, addressed to the Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyeibanji, the NCAA granted the airport permission to operate under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) for six months, from December 15, 2024, to June 15, 2025.

The approval, signed by the Acting Director General of Civil Aviation, Capt. Chris Najomo was in response to the state government's application for a flight operational permit.

The NCAA noted that the six-month approval would allow the state government to address pending



corrective action items identified during its last inspection. It also provides a window for validating the implementation of its findings.

To ensure compliance, the airport's non-scheduled operations will be coordinated with relevant agencies for essential services, including Air Traffic Services, Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Services, Aviation Security, and Meteorological services.

Ekiti State had earlier signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and Service Level Agreements with these federal aviation bodies in preparation for the airport's operations.

Governor Oyeibanji described the approval as a significant milestone and a testament to the state's investment in the airport project.

He emphasised that the project aims to enhance Ekiti State's socio-economic development by improving accessibility and attracting investment.

"This approval is a welcome development and a clear justification of our commitment to boosting Ekiti's economy. The airport will enhance trade, tourism, and overall development in our state," the governor said.

Nigeria seeks deeper collaboration with France to boost space technology, says NIGCOMSAT MD

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**

Nigeria's Communications Satellite Limited (NIGCOMSAT), the country's satellite operator, is seeking enhanced collaboration with France to advance its space technology capabilities, Managing Director Jane Egerton-Idehen announced on Thursday, December 12.

In a statement posted on Facebook, Egerton-Idehen highlighted the recent visit of French Ambassador to Nigeria, Marc Fonbaustier, as a pivotal step in fostering deeper bilateral cooperation in satellite technology.

Though the visit was described as a formal courtesy, it was viewed as a significant symbol of the growing opportunities for collaboration between the two nations in the field of space exploration and technology.

"Although this visit was primarily a formal courtesy, it symbolised something much larger: the increasing opportunities for Nigeria and France to collaborate in the field of space technology," Egerton-Idehen remarked.

The discussions during the ambassador's visit focused on potential partnerships with major French space firms such as Eutelsat Group and Thales. These companies, renowned for their leadership in space innovation, were identified as key players in the



expansion of Nigeria's satellite ambitions.

"Sharing expertise allows us to learn from global leaders, which in turn accelerates innovation," Egerton-Idehen added, emphasising the importance of these collaborations in advancing Nigeria's space capabilities.

Egerton-Idehen further highlighted the immense economic potential of satellite technology, explaining that it could significantly impact industries such as agriculture, education, and healthcare.

"Advancements in space technology improve connectivity and sustainability for everyone," she noted.

At NIGCOMSAT, the vision is to establish an innovative space economy that benefits Nigerian citizens and raises the country's global standing.

"Collaborations like these bring us closer to realising that vision," Egerton-Idehen declared.

The Managing Director also referenced a report by Morgan Stanley, which predicts that the global space economy will grow to \$1.1 trillion by 2040, up from \$350 billion today.

"This growth is not happening because of isolated efforts," she said.

"Rather, it is happening because countries and organisations are working together."

The push for greater collaboration with France is a reflection of Nigeria's growing interest in space technology and its commitment to harnessing the power of satellites for national development.

Nigeria's November inflation rate projected to reach 34.03%

By **Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE**

CAPE Economic Research & Consulting has projected that Nigeria's headline inflation rate will reach 34.03 per cent in November 2024, ahead of the official release of November's inflation data by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

It said headline inflation will rise to 34.03 per cent, food inflation will reach 40.13 per cent, and core inflation will hit 28.12 per cent in the month.

In its latest publication, the firm said its forecast is predicated on the persistent increase in food prices, fluctuations in the exchange rate, housing, and utility costs, which contributed 4.70 per cent, 0.38 per cent, and 0.31 per cent, respectively, to the inflation rate in November.

CAPE stated, "Inflation is expected to heighten in November 2024. Our forecast showed that inflationary pressure would heighten as the headline, food and core inflation are expected to rise to 34.03, 40.13 and 28.12 per cent, respectively.

"The principal drivers shaping the forecast for headline inflation persist in food prices, the exchange rate, housing, and utility costs, contributing 4.70 per cent, 0.38 per cent, and 0.31 per cent, respectively.

"Our analysis underscores the significant influence of food prices,



exchange rate fluctuations, and housing and utility costs on headline inflation."

Fuel subsidy removal, forex volatility are biggest pressures
The firm further noted that fuel subsidy removal, which has led to fuel price increases, foreign exchange rate volatility as a result of naira floating, and expanded fiscal deficit, continues to exert pressure on inflation.

It added that core inflation remains largely driven by increases in transportation, education, clothing, housing, utilities, and healthcare costs.

CAPE stated, "Inflationary risks are further compounded by the expanding fiscal deficit, the removal of fuel subsidies, and sustained exchange rate pressures, all of which contribute to significant pass-through effects on

consumer prices."

Inflation rate reached 33.88 per cent in October

The NBS recently released the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which revealed that Nigeria's inflation rate reached 33.88 per cent in October 2024.

The rate is a 1.18 per cent increase from the 32.7 per cent recorded in September 2024, attributed to high energy prices, currency depreciation, and supply chain disruptions, exacerbated by floods, infrastructural deficits, and insecurity, among others.

Nigeria's inflation rate soared from 22.4 per cent in May 2023 to a new 28-year all-time high of 34.19 per cent in June. After 19 months of increase, it decelerated to 33.40 per cent in July and declined further for the second consecutive month in August to 32.15 per cent.

Nigeria begins anti-malaria vaccination to check infant mortality

By Helen Okechukwu

To check malaria scourge in Nigeria, the Federal Government in partnership with some states has commenced the first roll out of the anti-malaria vaccine.

Nigeria is rated as one of the countries globally with the highest numbers of malaria deaths.

The newly approved R21/Matrix-M vaccine by the World Health Organisation (WHO) aims to protect children between the ages of 5 to 15 months.

Data revealed that malaria claims the lives of a large population of Nigerians annually, which is a factor in its rise, placing the disease at the third global death record.

The two states in Nigeria, Bayelsa and Kebbi, heavily hit by the rise of malaria, have started their vaccination programmes.

Prof. Seiyefa Brisibe, Bayelsa's Health Commissioner, asserted that the health campaign will be promoted using local language.

The malaria vaccine, reported to have a 75% effectiveness rate, is being introduced alongside other preventive measures like mosquito nets and insecticides to enhance its impact.

Happiness Idia-Wilson, whose 11-month-old son was the first



recipient of the vaccine in a public event, expressed her motivation for participating: "I'm doing this for my child's safety." She encouraged other mothers to embrace the initiative.

Malaria remains a major public health issue in Nigeria, which accounted for 31% of global malaria-related deaths in 2022, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) data.

Developed by the Jenner Institute at Oxford University, the vaccine requires three initial doses followed by a booster shot after a year.

Nigerian health authorities are optimistic that this new measure, combined with ongoing prevention strategies, will significantly alleviate the

country's malaria burden.

Malaria's economic toll is also substantial, with Nigeria losing an estimated \$1.1 billion annually due to healthcare costs and reduced productivity.

This vaccine rollout, therefore, marks an essential addition to efforts aimed at minimising malaria's effects.

Other African countries, including Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo, have also started deploying the vaccine.

Nigeria aims to expand its distribution nationwide by 2025, further strengthening the continent's fight against malaria.

COVID-19: FG orders compulsory health declaration for inbound passengers

By Helen Okechukwu



To prevent the outbreak of the COVID-19 variant in Nigeria, the Federal Government (FG) has ordered for mandatory health declaration from inbound passengers over new COVID-19 XEC

The disease was recently reported in Australia and 22 other countries.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare gave a directive to the Committee of Chief Medical Directors and Medical Directors to activate alert systems in all hospitals over high index suspicion of COVID-like symptoms in patients.

In a report, the Nigeria Centre

for Disease Control and Prevention confirms that filling out health declaration forms is mandatory to tackle this COVID-19 variant.

Also, the Head of the Teaching Hospitals Division, the Department of Hospital Services of the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. O.N. Anuma, on December 5, 2024 issued a warning notice to CMD-MD over the new variant.

The notice calls for collaboration from important stakeholders to share adequate data for effective monitoring of the COVID-19 XEC variant.

“They are filling the form; this

is a strategy to know if they have any symptoms relating to SARs,” the Director, Special Duties, Office of the Director General of the NCDC, Dr. John Oladejo, stated in an interview.

NCDC noted the National COVID-19 Technical Working Group will be monitoring the situation to prevent an outbreak and acknowledged the level of their readiness.

In the last 28 days of the outbreak in the affected countries, WHO disclosed that 180,907 cases of COVID-19 and 2,665 deaths have been recorded globally to 24 November, 2024.

Nigeria, US partner over HIV/AIDS, healthcare

By Helen Okechukwu

The Federal Ministry of Health is partnering the United States (US) to halt the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among citizens, particularly in mothers and children.

The planned partnership was sealed yesterday after a meeting in Abuja. The joint meeting highlighted the steps to eradicate HIV/AIDS targeting 2030 and achieve sustainable Nigeria healthcare service delivery.

The outcome of the meeting focuses on sustainability and the 95-95-95 of people living with HIV knowing their status, those diagnosed receiving treatment, and on treatment achieving viral suppression goals.

Also, highlighting the progress as the fight against HIV/AIDS continues in Nigeria, the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Muhammad Pate, said the progress stems from political will, enhanced funding, and the integration of the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp).

Other progress beams from initiatives such as the implementation of zero VAT on pharmaceuticals, primary healthcare strengthening, and job creation via local pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Acknowledging that 3 out of 4 Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF) primary health centres now provide HIV care along with a robust adolescent and youth HIV strategy is in place.

To this end, the CDC Director, Dr. Mandy Cohen, lauded the progress



witnessed in Nigeria as they aligned with the target globally.

Partners of the eradication process include the U.S. Embassy, Global Health Security and Diplomacy (GHSD)/PEPFAR, U.S. Department of Defence (DoD), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

Others include the National Assembly HIV, TB, and Malaria Committee; the Federal Ministry of Finance and Economy; the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning; the Federal Ministry of Defence; and the Special Adviser to the President on Health.

Pate, advocates the inclusion and signing of Nigeria's SWAp for effective outcomes with a deadline with the aim to reduce transmission rates between mother and child, establish adequate data systems, and prioritise sustainable funding.

Also, Dr. John Nkengasong, representing GHSD and PEPFAR, recommended sustainable funding, incorporating the SWAp approach, and improving the value chain in health sectors.

While representative of USAID, Dr. Atul Gawande hailed the efforts of Nigeria connecting HIV response to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) goals and primary health centres improvement.

Speaking further, the US government advised the Nigerian government to maintain momentum, protect vulnerable populations, and continue removing barriers in supply chains and data infrastructure.

Looking ahead, the meeting addresses the paediatric AIDS treatment gap, the development of a Technical Working Group (TWG) for a strategic action plan, accurate data for decision-making, and prioritises the recommendation of sustainable healthcare systems.

What to know about Nigeria's frequent electricity blackouts

By Agency Reporter

Nigeria suffered a widespread electricity blackout on Wednesday, the 12th time in 2024, after its national grid collapsed.

The country's national power grid is prone to frequent collapses, with the resulting power shortages proving an obstacle to economic growth and investment in Africa's most populous nation.

The World Bank estimates that the Nigerian economy loses \$29 billion a year due to its unstable power supply, which causes electricity blackouts across the country.

Here is why Nigeria's grid is failing.

WHAT CAUSES BLACKOUTS?

Nigeria's aging power infrastructure is at the heart of the crisis. Transmission lines and substations, some of which are more than 40 years old, are prone to frequent failures.

The government-owned Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) reports average transmission losses of 7.79 megawatts for every 100 megawatts injected into the grid.

Years of under-investment have left the grid susceptible to tripping when demand fluctuates unexpectedly, said Lagos-based energy lawyer Ayodele Oni.

Compounding this is vandalism and attacks on transmission infrastructure, especially in



Nigeria's north. In the last two years, TCN recorded 108 attacks on its towers and lines.

GENERATION GAP

Another major factor is that Nigeria, with a population of more than 200 million people, only generates and distributes a third of its installed generation capacity of 13,500 megawatts.

And despite having the world's seventh-largest gas reserves, Nigeria produces less than 10% of the electricity generated by South Africa, a country with a population a third the size.

More than 75% of Nigeria's electricity comes from gas-fired power plants, primarily located in its southern region. The remainder is generated by hydroelectric stations in the north.

Power generation firms feed electricity into the national grid, controlled by the federal government, which distributes it through 11 regional distribution

companies to consumers.

IS THERE A FIX?

More than a decade after Nigeria privatised its electricity sector, Nigeria's grid has barely improved.

But last year the government allowed its 36 states to generate and transmit their own power. States like Lagos, the nation's commercial hub, and five others have already begun developing independent power markets.

The government is also working with the World Bank to build 1,000 mini solar grids to expand power access in rural areas.

"A more resilient approach is needed in Nigeria to incorporate decentralised energy sources, such as solar power paired with storage, to complement the national grid," said Sherisse Alexander, chief business officer at independent power producer WATT Renewable Corporation.

Funke Akindele calls on fans to combat piracy ahead her film release

By Olamilekan Botti



Filmmaker and Award-winning actress Funke Akindele made a video about the rampant piracy plaguing Nigeria's film industry.

With her latest movie, *Everybody Loves Jenifa*, set to premiere on December 13, Funke Akindele made a passionate appeal to her fans to avoid engaging in piracy.

Posting to her social media handles on Wednesday, she stated that recording videos in cinemas is piracy and significantly harms the industry.

She highlighted the hard work and financial investment that went into the production and warned that anyone caught recording during screenings would be arrested.

"Say no to piracy! Recording short videos at the cinemas is piracy! Please stop it! Piracy is killing us!" Akindele pleaded.

"I worked so hard on this project. Please I'm pleading do not be caught promoting piracy!!! A lot of resources were and are still being invested in the movie #Everybodylovesjenifa.

In a video accompanying her message, Akindele elaborated, "If you proceed to see my new movie, 'Everybody Loves Jenifa,' and you bring out your phone or any device you have to film, then I won't be fine.

"I know you have much love for me as my fan, I know you respect me so much, I know you want to support me, I know you want to promote 'Everybody loves

Jenifa' but you filming it is not supporting me.

"Do not upload on your Social media account, don't bring out your phones. If you want to support me, get to the cinemas, take pictures by the standees, post my trailers and teasers, and I will be fine."

She emphasized that strict security measures would be in place to apprehend anyone caught filming during screenings, urging her fans to support the film ethically. Because the act of filming it on the screen is piracy. We must not encourage piracy.

We are taking serious security measures to arrest anyone who does that. I love my fans so much, please don't be caught doing it.

I'm key to Plantashun Boiz's debut, says Blackface

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a surprising disclosure, Blackface has claimed ownership of Plantashun Boiz, the once-popular music group that included himself, 2Face, and Faze.

During a 2024 interview with media personality Daddy Freeze on an Instagram live session, Blackface opened up about his role in the formation of the group and his plans to revive it.

His comments have sparked a wave of discussion among fans and industry insiders alike, as the group's legacy continues to hold a significant place in Nigerian music history.

Blackface began by detailing how Plantashun Boiz came into existence, emphasizing his key contributions to the group's formation. He explained that he founded the group alongside 2Baba (then 2Face) and later invited Faze to join.

"I'm the head of Plantashun Boiz, not 2Baba. I brought 2Baba to Plantashun Boiz," Blackface asserted. His comments underscore his belief that he played a central role in shaping the group and its direction from the very beginning.

During the interview, Blackface also revealed how the name Plantashun Boiz was his brainchild. "The name was a combination of the words 'plantation' and 'youth,'" he explained.

According to Blackface, the name reflected a vision of growth, unity, and the desire to create something that represented the collective journey of the group. "It was meant to symbolize coming together and building something from the ground up, like a plantation," he added.

Blackface's claims to the ownership of Plantashun Boiz have raised eyebrows, particularly given 2Baba's high-profile status in the music



industry.

However, Blackface made it clear that the group's legacy is something he feels strongly connected to, attributing much of their early success to his creative input. He expressed his desire to revive the group and continue its impact in 2024.

"I believe in the power of our music. We had something special, and it's time we bring that back for our fans," Blackface said, emphasizing his commitment to ensuring that Plantashun Boiz continues to resonate with their audience.

His words have ignited renewed discussions about the group's potential comeback and the dynamics between its members.

The interview sparked widespread reactions on social media, with fans and music enthusiasts weighing in on Blackface's claim. Some supported his views, acknowledging the foundational role he played in the band, while others expressed scepticism, questioning whether his contributions justified sole ownership.

Regardless of the debate, the conversation has reignited interest in

Plantashun Boiz, whose music remains a key part of Nigeria's cultural landscape.

Blackface, however, remains resolute in his stance.

In his interview, he reflected on the challenges the group faced during their rise to fame, acknowledging the pressures and internal struggles they endured. Despite these difficulties, he emphasized his belief in the group's ability to overcome adversity and continue making impactful music.

"We had our disagreements, but those moments only made us stronger," Blackface said. "Now, I see the potential to reunite and create something even bigger than before. It's about paying homage to our roots and what made us special."

As anticipation grows, Blackface's assertions about the ownership of Plantashun Boiz add an interesting layer to the discussions surrounding their future. Whether fans will see a reunion of the trio or new configurations of the group remains uncertain, but Blackface's claim ensures that Plantashun Boiz continues to capture attention.

Infidelity not reason for my relationships' break up, reveals Tiwa Savage

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Afrobeats star Tiwa Savage recently revealed her relationship experiences and personal views. Speaking candidly during an interview, the 44-year-old singer revealed the challenges that pushed her to end past relationships.

According to the “Somebody’s Son” hitmaker, infidelity was never a reason for her to leave her partner. Instead, she cited more severe issues such as drug abuse, emotional abuse, and being ghosted as the key deal breakers.

Savage’s openness about her personal life sparked a flurry of reactions online. She explained that she has faced difficult circumstances in love but clarified her stance on certain topics.

When asked about her intimate life, she made another surprising confession—she has never reached the peak of pleasure during her romantic encounters. Furthermore, she revealed that she does not use toys for self-pleasure. These revelations added to the ongoing discussions about her views on love and intimacy.

During the interview, Savage also shared her uncertainty about monogamy. The mother of one admitted she isn’t sure if she believes in being with just one partner. This statement struck a chord with many listeners, generating mixed reactions on social media. Some applauded her honesty, while others criticized her stance.

Fans and critics alike took to social



media to share their thoughts on Savage’s candid interview. One user, @ivieemiko, commented, “Tiwa has never seen herself as the superstar. That was why she settled for Tee Billz and keeps going for small boys way under her league. It’s a pity.”

Another user, @iamtowo, questioned her reasoning: “Why will she leave a man because he cheated on her when she said she doesn’t believe in monogamy? It’s simply because she doesn’t also believe in the concept of having one partner... so it’s not surprising.”

These remarks reflect the polarizing effect Savage’s statements have had on the public. While some admire her frankness in discussing sensitive topics, others remain critical of her choices.

In another surprising twist, Tiwa Savage revealed that she receives more romantic advances from women than men. Speaking on Beat FM radio, the “Kele Kele Love” singer noted how often women

express their admiration for her. This disclosure left listeners shocked and sparked fresh conversations online. Some found the revelation intriguing, while others expressed disbelief.

Despite the personal controversies, Tiwa Savage remains a leading figure in the Afrobeats genre. Her music continues to inspire millions around the globe. Fans often praise her ability to balance her demanding career with motherhood. However, her recent revelations have painted a more complex picture of the artist behind the music.

Savage’s openness has reignited conversations about relationships, gender roles, and personal freedom. While opinions about her may differ, one thing is clear: Tiwa Savage isn’t afraid to speak her truth, no matter how uncomfortable it may be for others.

Apostle Femi Lazarus tops Spotify's 2024 Nigeria podcasts

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Spotify has announced its list of the top five most-streamed podcasts for 2024 in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa.

The results showcase the continent's growing appetite for podcast content, with billions of minutes listened to across Sub-Saharan Africa.

In a statement today, Ncebakazi Manzi, Spotify's Sub-Saharan Africa Podcast Manager, highlighted that podcasting continues to thrive in the region. She pointed out that "Apostle Femi Lazarus" retained its position as the most-streamed podcast in Nigeria.

This spiritual podcast leads a list that includes "Motivation Daily by Motiversity," "The Success Addicted Podcast," "Apostle Joshua Selman," and "The HonestBunch Podcast."

South Africa's podcasting landscape offered a different flavour. The country's top five included globally renowned shows such as "The Joe Rogan Experience" and "The Diary of a CEO with Steven Bartlett." Local favourites like "What Now? With Trevor Noah" and "Podcast and Chill with MacG" also made the list, alongside the motivational "Motivation Daily by Motiversity."

In Kenya, the podcast charts highlighted local storytelling. Leading the way were "The97sPodcast," "So This Is Love," "The Mkurugenzi Podcast," "Mic Cheque Podcast," and "The Sandwich Podcast." These shows reflect the diversity and creativity of Kenyan podcast creators.



Manzi emphasized that podcasting has become one of Africa's favourite ways to share stories. She revealed that listeners in Sub-Saharan Africa played nearly four billion minutes of podcast audio in 2024 alone. South Africa led the region with over two billion minutes, while Nigeria and Kenya also contributed significantly.

"These numbers don't lie," said Manzi. "Podcasting is here to stay. It allows creators to take control of their narratives and share their stories in their voices while engaging with their communities."

The popularity of motivational content was a recurring theme across all three countries. Shows like "The Diary of a CEO," "Motivation Daily," and "The Success Addicted Podcast" attracted listeners looking for advice on managing finances, improving relationships, setting goals, and maintaining health. Inspirational stories resonated strongly with audiences, reflecting their desire for personal growth.

Spirituality also stood out as a dominant category, especially in

Nigeria and South Africa. Manzi noted that "Christian Motivation" was among the most-shared episodes in South Africa, while Nigerian audiences continued to embrace "Apostle Joshua Selman." Nigeria, as the continent's second-largest podcast market, streamed 700 million minutes in 2024 and produced half of all new shows in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite the dominance of spirituality and motivation, conversation-style podcasts remain popular. Shows like "I Said What I Said" and "The HonestBunch Podcast" demonstrate a demand for relatable discussions on various topics. This trend extends beyond Nigeria, with audiences in Kenya and South Africa showing similar preferences.

Podcasting in Africa is evolving rapidly. With its unique ability to connect creators and listeners, it is redefining how stories are shared across the continent. As 2024 draws to close, the data underscores that podcasts are more than a trend—they are a powerful medium for communication and inspiration.

Selena Gomez engaged to Benny Blanco

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Pop sensation Selena Gomez has taken a significant step in her personal life.

The acclaimed singer and actress announced her engagement to renowned music producer Benny Blanco on her Instagram page.

In a post that quickly garnered millions of likes and comments, Gomez shared a close-up image of her hand adorned with a dazzling diamond ring.

The caption, a simple yet powerful “Forever begins now,” confirmed the joyous news to her millions of followers.

Benny Blanco, equally thrilled, commented on the post, playfully asserting his claim,

“Hey wait...That’s my wife.”

The couple’s friends and fans alike have been flooding the comments section with congratulatory messages and well wishes.

Among the notable reactions was a heartwarming comment from Gomez’s longtime friend and fellow music icon, Taylor Swift.

Swift, known for her close-knit circle of friends, expressed her excitement by offering to be the flower girl at the upcoming wedding.

The engagement news comes just over a year after Gomez and Blanco publicly confirmed their romantic relationship in December 2023.

The couple has been relatively private about their relationship, often sharing glimpses of their love and support for each other through social media and public appearances.

Gomez’s engagement with Blanco marks a new chapter in her life, one filled with love, happiness, and exciting prospects.

As fans eagerly await further details about the upcoming wedding and the couple’s plans, the news of their engagement continues to make headlines and trends worldwide.

Damilola breaks up with Portable after he 'publicly insulted' her

By Agency Reporter

Damilola Adeyemi, the girlfriend of singer Portable, has announced the end of their relationship after he "publicly insulted" her during a TikTok live session.

The incident occurred on Wednesday when Portable criticised Damilola for being online late at night. He also accused her of engaging in "polygamy and prostitution".

"What are you doing online at this time? Do you want to be practicing polygamy. Do I not tell you not to be coming online at this time?" he asked.

"Are you a prostitute? What is a housewife doing online at the time? Are you a prostitute?"

Reacting via an Instagram post, Damilola expressed her frustration and



humiliation, stating that she was "done" with the relationship.

"I'm done. This is too much for me. I can't take this embarrassment again. Oloriburuku somebody," she wrote.

"I'm gone for good. Go and eat your house."

Confirming their split in a video post on Instagram, the singer revealed that Damilola has left his house.

"Thank God, she has left. I was taking care of the child she had for Alaafin because of the respect I have for him," he said.

Damilola was one of the wives of Lamidi Adeyemi, the late Alaafin of Oyo.

In August 2023, Portable and Damilola sparked dating rumours on social media. Addressing their rumour, the singer said Damilola has been "my fan from day one."

The 'Zazoo Zeh' hitmaker added that he would not have been close to the entrepreneur if the monarch was alive.

Williams Uchemba, wife welcome second baby

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Actor Williams Uchemba has announced the arrival of his second child with his wife, Brunella Oscar.

The actor shared this exciting news on his Instagram, revealing that their baby was born on December 9, 2024.

In a heartfelt post, Williams expressed his joy, describing the child as "my good gift" and sharing a touching video that highlights their love story.

The announcement has been met with widespread celebration. Fans and colleagues have filled the comment section with congratulatory messages, pouring in their well-wishes for the couple.

Williams' Instagram post read, "My good gift is here. My baby is here. Date



of Birth: 9-12-2024."

The news of the arrival comes just months after the couple celebrated their growing family.

Known for his charm and relatable personality, Williams' fans have closely followed his journey, eagerly anticipating updates on his life.

The birth of their second child marks another joyful milestone for the Uchemba family.

As the couple embraces parenthood once again, their fans continue to celebrate with joy and admiration.

Donald Trump named TIME Person of the Year again

By Dave Oludare Oso

TIME Magazine has named incoming US President, Donald Trump as its person of the year for the second time.

“For marshaling a comeback of historic proportions, for driving a once-in-a-generation political realignment, for reshaping the American presidency and altering America’s role in the world, Donald Trump is TIME’S 2024 Person of the Year,” Time Editor-in-Chief Sam Jacobs said in a letter to readers.

The Republican president-elect is set to ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday to commemorate the honour alongside several of his family members.

Trump was first named person of the year in 2016 after winning the US presidential election.

The magazine’s tradition – which started in 1927 as “Man of the Year” – recognises a person or movement that “for better or for worse... has done the most to influence the events of the year.”

Other previous winners include climate change activist Greta Thunberg, former President Barack Obama, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Pope Francis and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Time Magazine editors ultimately decide who wins the award.

The outlet was considering 10 people for the person of the year award, including Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Princess of Wales and Tesla CEO Elon Musk, now a close



confidante of Trump set to lead an advisory board called the Department of Government Efficiency.

In a description of Trump for the list of finalists, Time said he had won the 2024 election “in a stunning political comeback.”

“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,” the outlet said.

“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 sat for interviews with the magazine in April this year during the

campaign season. During the wide-ranging discussions, Trump talked about his plans for a second term, including his goals of reforming the US immigration system and deporting millions of people.

Trump complained in 2015 when he was not chosen for the magazine cover during his first run for office, when the award went to former German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

But after he was named person of the year following his election win, he called it a “great honor.”

“It means a lot, especially me growing up reading Time magazine. And, you know, it’s a very important magazine,” he said at the time.

He has, however, continued to criticize the magazine’s choices since winning, including the selection of Taylor Swift as Time’s person of the year in 2024.

Trump invites China's Xi Jinping to inauguration

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President-elect Donald Trump has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping to attend his inauguration next month, multiple sources told CBS News, and inauguration officials are making plans for additional foreign dignitaries to attend the swearing-in ceremony.

Trump invited Xi in early November, shortly after the election, sources said, but it was not clear whether he has accepted the invitation. A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington did not immediately comment.

Transition spokesperson, Karoline Leavitt told CBS News on Thursday that Trump invited Xi to the inauguration. She told Fox News on Thursday that it is an example of Trump “creating an open dialogue with leaders of countries that are not just our allies but our adversaries and our competitors too.”

In addition to Xi, the president-elect's team has raised the possibility of hosting other leaders at the Capitol on Jan. 20. Hungary's far-right leader, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has a warm relationship with Trump and visited him at Mar-a-Lago this week, is “still considering” whether to attend, according to a source familiar with Orbán's plans.

“World leaders are lining up to meet with President Trump because they know he will soon return to power and restore peace through American strength around the globe,” Trump transition spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said.



Ambassadors and other diplomats are typically invited to inaugurations, but State Department records dating back to 1874 show that a foreign leader has never attended a transfer-of-power ceremony.

Members of Trump's inner circle remain sharp critics of Xi's government, including Sen. Marco Rubio, his pick to be secretary of state, and incoming national security adviser Mike Waltz.

Trump himself has threatened to increase tariffs on goods from China. The U.S. has imposed a deadline of Jan. 19, the eve of the inauguration, for TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance to sell the social media app or face a ban in the U.S. TikTok is fighting the ban in court — it lost a bid last week to block the ban but is appealing the case to the Supreme Court.

But Trump has also long believed that close leader-to-leader relationships are key to international deal-making. Since Election Day, world leaders have trekked to Mar-a-Lago to meet with Trump, including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Argentina's president, Javier Milei, has also been granted private audiences with the president-elect.

Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, was the first world leader to host Trump overseas since he won the 2024 election. Also in attendance at the Paris reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral were Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Prince William.

Trump was mostly unknown on the world stage at his first inauguration in 2017. This time, world leaders are treating Trump essentially as an incumbent.

Ashworth's departure, "doesn't change anything" - Amorim

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Though Manchester United Manager, Ruben Amorim admits Dan Ashworth's exit is "not the best situation" but he believes the exit of Manchester United's sporting director "doesn't change" anything.

Sunday morning brought the stunning announcement that the 53-year-old sporting director was leaving Old Trafford just 159 days after arriving from Newcastle.

Manchester United spent several months negotiating Ashworth's appointment, with Ashworth – who also worked for the FA and Brighton – spending a period of time on gardening leave from St James' Park.

Amorim faced the media for the first time since the sporting director's abrupt exit ahead of Thursday's Europa League group game at Viktoria Plzen, where the

first questions focused on that development.

"The first thing I want to say is that since the first day I felt great support from the ownership," Amorim said.

"From Omar [Berrada, chief executive], from Dan, from Jason (Wilcox, technical director). Dan was part of that and I really felt support from Dan.

"But this is football and sometimes these things happen. It happens with players, with coaches.

"I know that it's not the best situation but the important thing is we continue in our way. The path is really clear for everybody and I think this can happen in football."

The vision at Man Utd is clear –

Amorim

Asked if he is concerned that United were more unstable than when he first arrived a month ago, Amorim said: "I don't think so.

"Like I said, I've felt since day one the support from everybody, so one person leaving doesn't change nothing.

"Of course it's a bad situation because we are talking about a human being, a professional, that supports us as a team.

"But I think the most important thing is that your vision is really clear and that vision doesn't change if only one person leaves."