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# The New Daily Prime

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# N150m fine awaits banks issuing new notes to hawkers – CBN

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has disclosed that any Deposit Money Banks found culpable of issuing illegal flow of mint naira notes to currency hawkers across the country will be fined N150 million.

A statement by the acting Director of Corporate Communications of the apex bank, Sidi Ali Hakama disclosed this information in Abuja.

This development comes amidst the misinformation about the validity of the old N1000, N500, and N200 banknotes still in circulation.

According to the apex bank, the denominations remained valid legal tender in line with a Supreme Court ruling issued on November 29, 2023, and warned against hoarding.

Following the clarification, CBN in a circular signed by the Acting Director of the Currency Operations Department, Mohammed Olayemi on Friday, said it was concerned about the increasing prevalence of mint naira notes being traded by hawkers.

The apex bank described the practice as impeding efficient and effective cash distribution to customers and the general public.

The circular, which referred to an earlier directive dated November 13, 2024, highlighted CBN's determination to address the commodification of the naira.

According to the directive, any branch of a financial institution



found guilty will face a penalty of N150m for the first violation.

The apex bank warned that any subsequent infractions would attract stricter sanctions under the provisions of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act, BOFIA, 2020.

To ensure compliance, the apex bank stated that it would increase periodic spot checks in banking halls and ATMs while deploying mystery shoppers to uncover illicit cash hawking spots across the country.

The circular read, "The CBN has noted with dismay the prevalence of illicit flow of mint banknotes to currency hawkers and other unscrupulous economic agents that commodify Naira banknotes, thus impeding efficient and effective cash distribution to banks' customers and the general public.

"CBN will continue to intensify the periodic spot checks to the banking halls/ATMs to review cash payouts to banks' customers, as well as mystery shopping to all identified cash hawking spots across the country.

"In this regard, any erring deposit money banks or financial institutions that are culpable of facilitating, aiding, or abetting, by direct actions or inactions, the illicit flow of mint banknotes to currency hawkers and unscrupulous economic agents that commodify Naira banknotes shall be penalised at first instance N150,000,000.00, One hundred and fifty million Naira, only, per erring branch, and at later instances, apply the full weight of relevant provisions of BOFIA 2020," the statement read.

# 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	100,434.5
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
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
2X1	8,630.00
1X1	4,315.00

### POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
HALF PAGE	213,250.00
QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

### POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,050,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

### CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	254,533.50
HALF PAGE	142,787.50
QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
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8X3	70,390.00
7X4	58,666.50
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5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
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4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
2X1	5,588.50
1X1	2,795.50

### PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	280,690.00
HALF PAGE	164,178.00
QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
10X6	228,000.00
10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
10X3	127,108.00
9X6	201,600.00
9X5	169,050.00
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9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

### PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
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5X2	22,841.00
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3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

### SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
2X6 BACK PAGE	300,000.00
2X6 INSIDE PAGE	155,000.00
3X6 FRONT PAGE	1,200,000.00
4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
EARPIECE FRONT PAGE(1.5X2)	246,500.00
EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PUBLIC NOTICE)	1,027,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PRODUCT)	929,000.00
CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
DOUBLE SPREAD COLOUR	721,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
CENTRE SPREAD B&W	835,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B & W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
HALF PAGE FRONT	5,500,000.00

### ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD		806,250.00
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
Full Page		430,000.00
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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# Terrorism: Finland freezes Simon Ekpa's assets

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**T**he Finnish government has frozen the assets of Simon Ekpa, the self-acclaimed Prime Minister of the Biafra Republic Government In-Exile facing allegations of terrorism-related activities.

According to Yle, a local newspaper, the Finnish authorities also froze the assets of companies associated with Ekpa and four of his accomplices, who are also in remand.

The report said Ekpa is being held in the Kylmäkoski vankila, (Kylmäkoski prison), which is reputed to be one of the world's toughest prisons.

On November 21, Ekpa was sent to prison for spreading terrorist propaganda on social media.

A district court of Päijät-Häme remanded him after the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) arrested him alongside four other men over alleged terrorist offences.

The self-declared Prime Minister of the Biafra Republic Government In-Exile was said to have committed the crime in 2021 in Lahti municipality.

He is accused of instigating violence and inciting terror in the south-east of Nigeria through his social media pages.

There have been calls for the arrest of the separatist following his alleged involvement in the Sit-At-Home that has relatively crippled economic activities in the South East.

The authorities in Finland had stated that Ekpa's offence is not bailable.

His trial is expected to commence in May 2025.

# BRICS: Nigeria ignores Trump' threat, says it'll decide alliances

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal Government has said it would continue to push for membership of international bodies to advance its economy, adding that the country reserved the right to align with any country it deems fit.

This comes on the backdrop of the recent threat by the President-elect of the United States of America, Donald Trump, to sanction countries that embraced BRICS.

BRICS, originally an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, and China, expanded in 2010 to include South Africa.

Nigeria emerged as a partner country of BRICS in October, a move towards becoming a full member in the next two years.

The group added Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates as full members, all of whom attended this year's summit in Kazan, Russia, as full participants.

The alliance has been moving towards the development of a new currency to challenge the dominance of the US dollar in global trade. This effort, often referred to as the 'BRICS currency project' is not expected to be implemented until 2025.

Trump had, in a tweet, threatened to impose 100 per cent tariffs on countries in the group if they created a new currency to rival the US dollar.

"The idea that the BRICS countries are trying to move away from the dollar while we stand by and watch is over.



We require a commitment from these countries that they will neither create a new BRICS currency, nor back any other currency to replace the mighty U.S. Dollar or, they will face 100 per cent tariffs, and should expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful U.S. economy," Trump posted on Truth Social.

Reacting, a source in the presidency who did not want his name in print because he was not authorised to speak on the issue, said Nigeria did not feel threatened by Trump's outburst.

The source said, "Nigeria is a sovereign nation that can decide its alliances."

Also speaking on the matter, Alkasim Abdulkadir, the Special Assistant on Media Communication and Strategy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar, said Nigeria would continue to push for membership of international bodies to advance its economy, adding that the country reserved the right to align with any country it deemed fit.

"Nigeria continues to explore and

advocate the democratization of global institutions including the United Nations Security Council and G20, ultimately by becoming a member state.

"Nigeria is a country in a multipolar world and we have a history of non-alignment. Our strategic autonomy is sacrosanct," Abdulkadir said.

Commenting on the issue, a retired career diplomat, Sola Abolurin, urged Nigeria to dismiss Trump's outburst, describing it as an empty threat.

Abolurin said, "Trump has threatened so many countries, not only BRICS. He threatened Canada and China, so Nigeria should not allow any country to dictate for it. It will pay Nigeria more to be a member of BRICS.

"Russia has been surviving without the support of America and many other Western countries. When the Russia-Ukraine war started, Russia decided to do away with all the major currencies and started trading its goods in ruble and nothing has happened."

# Shettima commissions \$315m vessel in Dubai, to boost Nigeria's oil production

By Friday Omosola

In a major milestone for Nigeria's oil and gas sector, Vice President Kashim Shettima today in Dubai, commissioned a \$315 million Floating Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) vessel built by Oriental Energy Resources Limited.

In a statement posted on his X, Stanley Nkwocha, Shettima's spokesperson, said the Vice President who represented President Bola Tinubu presided over the commissioning held at Drydocks World Dubai Shipyard in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Vice President hailed the project, describing it as a testament to Nigeria's oil sector reforms.

The FPSO, named ENEM, boasts a storage capacity of one million barrels and will begin production at the Okwok Oil Field in the first quarter of next year.

The facility will take off with an initial production of 17,000 barrels per day (bpd) before scaling up to 30,000 bpd, thereby remarkably enhancing Nigeria's oil production capacity.

Shettima described the vessel as a symbol of Nigeria's ambition and readiness to meet global energy demands under President Tinubu-led administration.

"This FPSO is more than a technological achievement; it embodies Nigeria's transformation in the oil and gas sector, central to our economic revitalization efforts," he stated.

Highlighting the importance of the



facility, Shettima noted that it is a crucial link in Nigeria's quest to optimize productivity and establish itself as a hydrocarbon hub.

He lauded Alhaji Muhammadu Indimi, Executive Chairman of Oriental Energy Resources, for his vision and dedication, which he said have positioned the company as a global force in the oil and gas industry.

"Alhaji Indimi's achievements prove what is possible when ambition meets perseverance and expertise. His contributions reflect Nigeria's potential as a land of opportunity," the Vice President added.

In the same vein, the Borno State Governor, Babagana Zulum, commended the project, noting that the vessel's development was fully funded by an indigenous Nigerian company—a first in the nation's history.

Zulum highlighted the vessel's capacity to drive economic growth and job creation while ensuring steady national development.

Similarly, Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, commended Alhaji Indimi's investment, emphasizing his belief in Nigeria's potential.

"Alhaji Indimi stands out as a true patriot, investing in projects that will contribute to Nigeria's development and self-reliance," Sule noted.

Indimi also expressed gratitude to the Federal government and its agencies for fostering an enabling environment for the investment.

He revealed that ENEM is the first FPSO fully funded by a Nigerian company and emphasised its role in achieving the company's long-term goal of producing 100,000 barrels of oil per day.

# FG, states, LGs share N1.727trn for November

By Friday Omosola

The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) has distributed a whopping sum of N1.727 trillion to the Federal Government, states, and local government councils (LGCs) as Federation Allocation for November 2024.

This was disclosed during FAAC's December 2024 meeting, chaired by Wale Edun, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy.

The allocation, drawn from a gross total revenue of N3.143 trillion, included contributions from Gross Statutory Revenue, Value Added Tax (VAT), Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL), and Exchange Difference (ED).

The Federal Government received N581.856 billion, states were allocated N549.792 billion, and local government councils received N402.553 billion. Oil-producing states received an additional N193.291 billion as derivation revenue, representing 13 per cent of mineral revenue.

A breakdown of the revenue shows that N103.307 billion was allocated for collection costs, while N1.312 trillion was earmarked for transfers, interventions, and refunds.

The gross revenue from VAT for November 2024 totaled N628.972 billion, reflecting a decrease of N39.318 billion compared to October's figure of N668.291 billion.

Of the VAT revenue, N25.159 billion was allocated for collection



costs, and N18.114 billion for transfers, interventions, and refunds. The remaining N628.973 billion was distributed as follows, federal government got N87.855 billion, state, N292.850 billion, local government councils received N204.995 billion.

Statutory revenue for November 2024 stood at N1.827 trillion, an increase of N490.339 billion from the previous month's N1.336 trillion.

After deducting collection costs of N77.521 billion and allocating N1.294 trillion for transfers, interventions, and refunds, the remaining N455.354 billion was distributed as follows: N175.690 billion to the FG, N89.113 billion to the states, N68.702 billion to local government councils, and N121.849 billion to oil-producing states as 13 per cent derivation revenue.

A total of N15.046 billion from the EMTL was distributed among the three tiers of government, with the FG receiving N2.257 billion, states

allocated N7.523 billion, and local government councils receiving N5.266 billion.

Moreover, N671.392 billion from Exchange Difference was shared, with the Federal Government receiving N316.054 billion, states allocated N160.306 billion, local government councils receiving N123.590 billion, and oil-producing states (13% derivation) getting N71.442 billion.

While oil and gas royalties and CET levies recorded significant increases, other revenue streams such as VAT, Import Duty, Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), Companies Income Tax (CIT), and EMTL saw considerable declines.

The total distributable revenue for November 2024 comprised N455.354 billion from statutory revenue, N585.700 billion from VAT, N15.046 billion from EMTL, and N671.392 billion from Exchange Difference, culminating in the N1.727 trillion shared for the month.

# Don't give up on your dreams, Tinubu's wife tells girls

• Empowers 1000 women

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu's wife, Oluremi, has encouraged girls who dropped out of school due to early pregnancy, abuse, domestic violence, or financial difficulties not to give up on achieving their dreams.

Oluremi Tinubu made the appeal yesterday during the commissioning and handover of the Alternative High School for Girls in Osogbo, Osun State.

The school, established under the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), is part of the RHI Access to Education for All Programme.

It is designed to offer a second chance at formal education to girls and women whose education was interrupted by life's challenges.

"To the beneficiaries of this school, your past does not define you. This is another chance, another opportunity, and you must embrace it with determination and focus. Just believe in yourself and know there is light at the end of the tunnel," Oluremi added.

She underscored the transformative power of education, especially for girls, describing it as a fundamental human right.

"Through this facility, we are not only giving these girls and women a second chance at formal education but equipping them with life skills to rebuild their confidence,



independence, and potential to contribute meaningfully to society. Investing in women and girls' education is investing in the future of our nation."

In the same vein, the Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke, praised Oluremi's efforts, particularly her work through the RHI.

He said the state was already reaping significant benefits, adding, "This school is a testament to her commitment to providing a better life for families."

He thanked the President's wife for handing over the facility to the state government for smooth operation.

Furthermore, Suwaiba Ahmed, Minister of State for Education, highlighted the school's alignment with Sustainable Development

Goal 4, which focuses on inclusive and equitable education for all.

The facility features a creche, a skills acquisition centre, and modern classrooms.

Meanwhile, during the event, the RHI Economic Empowerment Programme also provided 1,000 women in the state with N50,000 business recapitalization grants and essential materials.

Mrs Tinubu urged the beneficiaries to make good use of the seed money to improve their livelihoods.

She further reiterated her dedication to the welfare of ordinary Nigerians, stating that it aligns with the principles of her husband.



# Mutfwang hosts FG, World Bank, woos investors to Plateau

By Friday Omosola

**G**overnor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has said that the state is open for both local and foreign investors, emphasising its readiness to transform livestock production into a major revenue earner.

In a statement today, Gyang Bere, the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the governor, said he made this commitment during a strategic meeting held yesterday at the New Government House, Jos.

The session which featured delegations from the World Bank and the Federal Government, focussed on the Livestock Productivity and Resilience Support Project (L-PRES).

Mutfwang highlighted the state's comparative advantage in livestock farming and announced plans to revitalize Jos Abattoir as a central hub for beef export.

"We hope everyone embraces the Livestock Productivity initiative because it benefits the entire country. In Botswana, livestock contributes 50% to their GDP, and Plateau has the potential to achieve significant results," he stated.

The governor reiterated his administration's efforts to modernize agriculture to enhance food security and sovereignty.

The governor also unveiled plans to adopt irrigation farming to improve agricultural productivity



and shared his vision of leveraging technology to strengthen the state's key sectors, including agriculture, health, and tourism.

Similarly, the World Bank delegation, led by Mandeville Sene Emmanuel, reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Plateau State's developmental agenda.

He stressed the importance of collaboration to ensure the successful implementation of ongoing projects, including L-PRES, for sustainable development outcomes.

Also, at the session was Zarah Audu, Special Adviser, Technical to the Vice President on Foreign Direct Investment.

Her visit was geared towards assessing Plateau's economic environment as part of the broader efforts to attract foreign investments to Nigeria.

Audu commended the state for its proactive approach, emphasising the need for verifiable data and enabling infrastructure to attract investors. She described the visit as a continuation of recent engagements in Sweden and Morocco designed to draw international investments to Nigeria.

"We are here to assess the state's preparedness to host investors across diverse sectors for the overall development of Plateau," she stated.

The strategic engagements underline Governor Mutfwang's vision to position Plateau as a top destination for both domestic and international investors, with agriculture and livestock serving as the cornerstone of the state's economic growth.

# Nigerian accused of duping 139 Australians in EFCC net

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A suspected online fraudster, Osang Otukpa, has been arrested by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for allegedly duping 139 Australians to the tune of \$8,000,000.

The suspect was arrested at Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos upon arrival from the United States of America on Friday, December 6, 2024.

According to a statement signed by the EFCC's Head of Media and Publicity, Dele Oyewale on Friday, Otukpa used five names which are Ford Thompson, Oscar Tyler, Michael Haye, Jose Vitto, and Kristin Davidson, to scam the victims.

He added that the suspect lured his victims on social media to invest in his rogue cryptocurrency investment



platform, Liquid Asset Group.

Oyewale said, "Operatives of EFCC have arrested a suspected online fraudster, Osang Usie Otukpa, for allegedly duping 139 Australians to the tune of \$AUD8,000,000.

"He was picked up in a stake out at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos upon arrival

from the United States of America on Friday, December 6, 2024.

"Otukpa, who goes by five aliases, namely: Ford Thompson, Oscar Donald Tyler, Michael Haye, Jose Vitto and Kristin Davidson scammed the victims by luring them on the social media to invest in his rogue cryptocurrency investment platform, Liquid Asset Group.

"The proceeds of the alleged crimes were routed to his bank accounts through a global cryptocurrency exchange platform."

Oyewale said the suspect would be charged to court upon conclusion of investigations.

# Old, new Naira notes remain valid, CBN insists

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following rumours of a December 31 deadline for the phasing out of the old notes, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has reiterated that both the old and redesigned Naira notes of N1,000, N500, and N200 denominations will remain legal tender indefinitely.

The apex bank's Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Hakama Ali, in a statement issued on Friday by, cited a Supreme Court ruling delivered on 29 November 2023, which permits the concurrent circulation of all versions of the affected denominations without any deadline.

It said the clarification follows widespread misinformation regarding the validity of the old notes.

The statement read, "The Central Bank of



Nigeria (CBN) has observed the misinformation regarding the validity of the old N1000, N500, and N200 banknotes currently in circulation.

"In line with the Bank's previous clarifications and to offer further

assurance, the CBN wishes to reiterate that the subsisting Supreme Court ruling granted on 29 November 2023 permits the concurrent circulation of all versions of the N1000, N500, and N200 denominations of the Naira indefinitely.

"For the avoidance of doubt, all versions of the naira, including the old and new designs of N1000, N500, and N200 denominations, as well as the commemorative and previous designs of the N100 denomination, remain valid and continue to be legal tender without any deadlines."

The CBN urged the public to disregard claims suggesting the old series of these denominations would cease to be valid at the end of this year.

Instead, it advised Nigerians to continue

# Soldier knocks down elderly man, flees

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A yet-to-be-identified military personnel reportedly knocked down an elderly man with a motorcycle at the Moshalashi bus stop in the Mushin area of Lagos State on Thursday and fled the scene.

It was gathered that the elderly man was crossing the road when the incident occurred.

The victim sustained a broken leg as a result of the accident.

Confirming the incident on Saturday, the Permanent Secretary of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Dr. Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu, attributed the accident to the recklessness of the military personnel involved.

“Upon arrival at 0843hrs, LASEMA’s Eagle Response Team



discovered an incident involving an elderly man who was hit by a motorcycle. The rider immediately escaped from the scene of the incident.

“Information gathered revealed that the elderly man was crossing the road when he was reportedly knocked

down by a motorcycle ridden by a military personnel.

“Preliminary investigations conducted by the Agency’s Response Team revealed the immediate cause of the incident was as a result of recklessness on the part of the biker,” Oke-Osanyintolu said.

The victim is currently receiving medical attention at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Yaba.

“The Agency’s response team and LRU Pre-Hospital Care Unit gave the victim immediate treatment at the incident scene to stabilize his condition, before being transported to Federal Medical Centre, FMC, Yaba for further treatment,” Oke-Osanyintolu added.

# NNPC reduces fuel price in FCT

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has reduced the price of Premium Motor Spirit (petrol) across its retail outlets in the Federal Capital Territory.

A visit to NNPCL retail outlets showed that the petrol pump price was reduced from N1,060 to N1,040 per litre, representing a reduction of N20.

According to a filling station attendant at the NNPCL retail outlet along Kubwa expressway, “The price was reduced to N1,040 per litre from N1,060 on Saturday morning,

Also, a motorist, Ezekiel Njoku, confirmed the development, saying, “The reduction of N20 is significant. We need further fuel price reductions in the coming days.”



With the price cut, Nigerians will now buy petrol at N1,040 per litre at NNPCL filling stations, while prices remain within N1,115 per litre at other filling stations, depending on the location.

This comes barely three weeks after the state-owned Port Harcourt refinery began producing petroleum

products in November 2024.

Prof. Billy Okoye, former Managing Director of NNPCL Retail had earlier speculated that a fuel price reduction was imminent with the commencement of production at the Port Harcourt refinery.

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), and the Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association (PETROAN), had also hinted that the deregulation of the sector, coupled with the operations of Dangote and Port Harcourt refineries would lead to a drop in petrol prices.

# 2027: PDP woos Jonathan to run against Tinubu

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has asked former President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to enter the fray and contest the 2027 presidential election on its platform.

According to Saturday PUNCH, the party is desperate to secure the candidacy of the former university don, fearing he could be snapped up by another party to run for the presidency in 2027.

It (Punch) further said PDP's Deputy National Publicity Secretary, Ibrahim Abdullahi, emphasized that it would be a regrettable development if Jonathan chose another party for his presidential bid.

He revealed that the PDP had been eagerly awaiting the former president's return for a second term, stressing the party's continued connection to Jonathan's political rise.

Abdullahi highlighted the party's historical role in shaping Nigeria's leadership, citing several notable figures who had emerged from the party.

"We've said this about Jonathan and our governors. Even the FCT minister, is arguably the best performer in his role and he is a product of PDP. El-Rufai, Okonjo-Iweala, Dora Akunyili, Obi Ezekwesili, Akinwunmi Adesina, Amina Mohammed... these are the pride of this country, and they are all products of the PDP," he added.

The PDP chieftain urged Jonathan to heed the call to finish what he started within the party, and warned against the "hypocrisy of the All Progressives Congress."

"If Goodluck Jonathan is seriously considering running, we have been



calling him to come back and complete his term. It will not be out of place, but if he runs with another political party, it will expose the hypocrisy within the APC," he added.

Abdullahi also advised the former president to remain cautious of the recent praise from individuals and groups who previously criticised him.

"It's crucial for him to remember how he was derided, criticized and reduced to nothing by these same people. Now that they are suddenly calling him the messiah, he must not be swayed by their sudden affection. That would be unfortunate," Abdullahi stated.

The recent sighting of Jonathan's presidential posters for the 2027 elections across major streets in Kano sparked speculations about his possible return to the political arena and intensified conversations about other prominent figures like Peter Obi and Atiku Abubakar.

The posters, which were seen at strategic locations such as Gyadi-Gyadi/Zoo Road flyover, Kofar Nasarawa, and State Road, featured messages like, 'Team New Nigeria 2027; The Goodluck Nigeria Needs—Dr Goodluck Jonathan.'

The recent campaign posters, our correspondents gathered, were masterminded by a political movement known as 'Team New Nigeria', which has been promoting its activities across Nigeria.

The emergence of the posters is similar to a development before the 2023 elections when supporters purchased nomination forms for Jonathan under the APC, but the former president distanced himself from the move.

Another permutation that raised discussions about Jonathan's possible interest in the 2027 presidential election was the report that key political figures from northern Nigeria had begun efforts to draft Jonathan into the race.

It was reported that the move is based on the belief that Jonathan is eligible to serve another four-year term, having already served as president from 2011 to 2015.

Meanwhile, sources within the PDP have predicted that the future of the party would be determined at its upcoming National Executive Committee meeting, scheduled for February, 2025.

# 12 drug peddlers convicted in Kano

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Kano State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), has secured the conviction of 12 drug peddlers in the state.

The spokesman of the agency, Sadiq Maigatari, disclosed this in a statement issued to newsmen in Kano on Saturday.

Maigatari said the conviction was a significant milestone in the agency's relentless fight against drug-related offences under the leadership of the state Commander Abubakar Ahmad.

According to him, the agency secured multiple convictions in one day, demonstrating its unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law and maintaining a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption.

Maigatari said the convicts were found guilty of orchestrating drug trafficking



activities at the notorious Filin Idi drug den.

He said, "Each of the 12 individuals received a three-year prison sentence, with no option of fine, underscoring the severity of their crimes."

"One of the drug peddlers, Lawan Sani, was convicted following a 10-month manhunt that ensued after attacking an

NDLEA officer; he was given an additional two-year sentence, totalling five years of imprisonment."

Maigatari said the landmark conviction was a robust deterrent to drug traffickers who have been exploiting the Filin Idi area for their illicit operations.

He further explained that the NDLEA Kano State Command remained resolute in its mission to bring drug offenders to justice and combat the scourge of substance abuse in the region.

He urged the public to stay alert and report any suspicious activities related to illicit drug activity.

"Together, we can foster a safer and healthier environment for all residents of Kano State," he added.

# Alleged unlawful detention: Ex-Imo commissioner's wife petitions Tinubu, AGF

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Excel Ihekwe, wife of the former Commissioner for Foreign and International Affairs in Imo State, Dr Fabian Ihekwe, has petitioned President Bola Tinubu over the unlawful arrest and detention of her husband.

Excel, in two letters dated December 13 and written on her behalf by a rights group, Initiative Against Human Right Abuse and Torture, also sought the intervention of the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, SAN.

Ihekwe was a commissioner in the first term of Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo.

The petitions were signed by the Executive Director of the group, Comrade Gerald Katchy on behalf of the complainant.

They were titled: "Complaint of Abuse of Power and Office by Security and



Enforcement Agencies and Disregard to the Rule of Law: A Menace to the Renewed Hope Agenda of His Excellency."

Excel alleged that her husband was forcefully arrested on November 27 in his Abuja residence by the police without an arrest warrant and had since been in detention.

She said her husband's plight began when he (Fabian) urged the governor of Imo

State to prioritize the needs of the citizens of the state and to deliver on his campaign promises.

According to her, this demand of accountability by Dr Fabian Ihekwe, regrettably led to his persecution.

In two other letters she personally signed and addressed to the Executive Secretary, National Human Right Commission, and President, Nigerian Bar Association, Excel equally sought their intervention.

She said she wrote the letters over the alleged misconduct involving the Nigerian police.

"I am seeking your urgent intervention in this grave matter involving gross violation of fundamental right of a citizen of Nigeria (Dr Fabian Ihekwe), my husband, and an action of the police against the rule of law, the Nigerian constitution and the justice systems within the Nigeria Police Force.

# Okonjo-Iweala, Mo-Abudu shine in Forbes' 2024 powerful women list [FULL LIST]

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**gozi Okonjo-Iweala and Mo Abudu earn spots on Forbes' 100 Most Powerful Women list, solidifying their global influence and continuing to inspire change.

Okonjo-Iweala ranks 89th on this distinguished list, marking her eighth appearance. She has previously been featured in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2022, and 2023.

Mo Abudu secured the 97th spot, celebrating her fourth consecutive year on the list. The founder of EbonyLife Media expressed her pride, saying, "I am deeply humbled to once again be featured on the Forbes World's 100 Most Powerful Women list.

It is an incredible honor to represent the media and entertainment industry, to stand as a proud Black woman, and to fly the flag for Nigeria and Africa on this prestigious global stage."

Abudu extended her congratulations to her fellow honorees, particularly to Okonjo-Iweala. She stated, "A huge congratulations to all the phenomenal women on this list! A special shoutout to my dearest sister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, whose unwavering brilliance and leadership inspire us all year after year."

The media mogul emphasized the importance of global recognition for women of color and those from developing nations. "Representation matters. When we see women of color, women from developing



nations, and women breaking barriers in all industries recognized on a global stage, it reminds us of what's possible.

It's a call to action for us to continue breaking ceilings, forging paths, and lifting others along the way," she noted.

Abudu also expressed her gratitude to Forbes, saying, "Thank you, Forbes, for celebrating the power, resilience, and impact of women worldwide. Here's to more women rising and rewriting the narrative."

Mo Abudu first appeared on the list in 2021, ranked 99th. She moved up to 91st in 2022, and last year, she was ranked 98th before making this year's list at 97th.

Other Africans on the 2024 list include Judith Suminwa Tuluka from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mpumi Madisa from South Africa, and Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

The Forbes World's 100 Most Powerful Women list highlights trailblazing individuals making transformative impacts across business, politics, entertainment, and technology.

Below are the top 10 women who topped the list of the 2024 most powerful women in the world.

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission

Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank

Giorgia Meloni, prime minister of Italy

Claudia Sheinbaum, president of Mexico

Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors

Abigail Johnson, CEO of Fidelity Investments

Julie Sweet, chairwoman and CEO of Accenture

Melina French Gates, philanthropist

Mackenzie Scott, philanthropist

Jane Fraser, CEO of Citigroup

# WHO lists dangers of nations' low spending on health care

By Helen Okechukwu

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has raised fears that governments' less spending on health care has severe consequences for people's finances, which could lead to increased hardship.

A recent WHO's report which covered two years (2020- 2021), explained the influence of the average per capita government spending on health sector across countries' income groups during the years under review.

The published report titled, "Global Spending on Health: Emerging from the Pandemic," aligns with the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day campaign held yearly on December 12.

This year's campaign centred on improving financial protection for people everywhere to access the health services they need.

Explaining its importance on delivery UHC, WHO cautions that, "Its deprioritization can have dire consequences in a context where 4.5 billion people worldwide lack access to basic health services and 2 billion people face financial hardship due to health costs."

Also, the WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus stressed that, access to health has significantly increased globally, but acknowledged the effect of the services on people, leading to financial hardship or poverty.

"Universal Health Coverage Day is a reminder that health for all means everyone can access the health services they need, without financial



hardship," Ghebreyesus said.

To prevent financial burden on people, the WHO stated that recognising out-of-pocket spending will help achieve UHC.

The report further indicated, "that out-of-pocket spending remained the main source of health financing in 30 low- and lower middle-income countries."

While, "In 20 of these countries, more than half of total health spending in the country was paid for by patients out of their pocket, which contributes to the cycle of poverty and vulnerability," the report added.

Furthermore, a recent data shows that over a third of high-income countries, and more than 20% of total health spending were paid out-of-pocket.

The global health organisation, therefore urged world leaders to prioritise UHC and tackle health

expenses, targeting 2030.

Among the effective strategies outlined by WHO to strengthen financial protection include, minimizing or removing user charges for those most in need, particularly people with low incomes or chronic condition.

The organisation also urged the adopting of laws to protect people from impoverishing health costs and establishing health financing mechanisms through public funding to cover the larger population.

The report also noted that, "Public funding needs to budget for an affordable package of essential health services – from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care – using a primary health care approach."

# S' Korean President Yoon steps aside over planned removal

By Friday Omosola



**S**outh Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol today announced he would 'step aside' following a parliamentary vote to impeach him, urging an end to divisive and confrontational politics.

In its Saturday's report, it was stated that in a televised address, Yoon acknowledged the decision, signaling his temporary withdrawal from the political stage.

"Though I must now step aside for a while, the journey

toward the future must never come to a stop," he said.

The National Assembly's impeachment vote saw 204 out of 300 lawmakers supporting Yoon's removal, with 85 opposing, three abstaining, and eight votes nullified. The president faces allegations of insurrection.

Yoon's suspension is now in effect as South Korea's Constitutional Court deliberates on whether to uphold the impeachment, according to AFP.

The opposition Democratic Party celebrated the impeachment as a triumph of the people's will.

"Today's impeachment is a great victory for the people," said Park Chan-dae, the party's floor leader, shortly after the vote.



# Ice Prince: First African artist to receive BET onstage

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

**I**ce Prince clarifies he, not Davido, was the first African artist to receive a BET Award on stage, settling a long-standing debate among fans.

For years, the recognition of African artists at the BET Awards has been a source of pride and conversation. However, many fans mistakenly credited Davido with being the first to achieve this milestone.

Ice Prince, born Panshak Zamani, addressed the confusion during a recent appearance on the show *Listening*.

“I am the first African artiste to go on a BET stage and receive an award solo,” Ice Prince confidently stated. “When you guys talk about it, you give that credit to Davido, but it was me who broke the jinx.”

Ice Prince’s historic moment happened in 2013 when he won the Best International Act: Africa category. At the time, BET traditionally presented awards to African artists backstage, away from the main event’s spotlight. This practice often led to criticisms of unequal recognition.

However, Ice Prince’s victory marked a turning point. He became the first African musician to accept his award live on the main stage, a significant shift that highlighted the growing influence of African music on the global stage.

His win and on-stage presence symbolized more than just a personal achievement—it was a moment of progress for African artists striving for equal acknowledgment in international spaces.

While Ice Prince was the pioneer, Davido’s appearance at the 2018 BET Awards also holds significance. That



year, he won the Best International Act award and delivered an acceptance speech that captured global attention.

Davido’s remarks went beyond personal accolades. He used the platform to urge greater collaboration between African and American musicians. “Come to Africa,” he told the audience. “Eat the food, wear the clothes, listen to the music.”

His call to action resonated with fans and industry players alike, shining a light on Africa’s rich cultural offerings.

The confusion around who first received the award on stage likely stems from the attention Davido’s 2018 speech garnered. While his message was impactful, Ice Prince wants to ensure history is accurately remembered. His statement on *Listening* was a direct effort to claim the credit he feels is rightly his.

By correcting this narrative, Ice Prince not only emphasizes his own contribution but also reminds fans of the broader progress African artists have made in breaking barriers on

global platforms.

The BET Awards’ decision to include African artists in the main ceremony was not just a win for individuals like Ice Prince and Davido. It represented a shift in how African music is perceived and celebrated worldwide.

Over the years, genres like Afrobeats have gained massive popularity, with artists like Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Tems following in the footsteps of early trailblazers.

This evolution reflects the increasing demand for African music and its influence on global trends. Platforms like the BET Awards have played a role in amplifying this influence, helping artists reach new audiences while fostering cross-cultural collaborations.

For Ice Prince, this debate isn’t just about recognition; it’s about giving credit where it’s due. His journey as a musician is a testament to perseverance and breaking boundaries. Winning the Best International Act: Africa award in 2013 was a milestone not just for him but for African artists as a whole.

# Sir Shina Peters: “God ordered my ordination as bishop”

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**fro-Juju musician Sir Shina Peters says his 2021 Bishop ordination was a direct command from God at the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Lagos.

In an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Peters explained that the church leadership had received divine instructions regarding his ordination years before he accepted the calling. “The Almighty God declared that I should be the first bishop in this church,” Peters said. “He conveyed this message directly to the church leaders.”

Shina Peters attributed his ordination to his deep connection with hymns, which have been a recurring theme in his music and performances. “My



music draws heavily from hymns,” he explained. “Through my music, I have led many souls to Christ. However, I initially resisted the call to become a Bishop, but God eventually prevailed.”

Afro-Juju musician Sir Shina Peters

Reflecting on his illustrious career, Shina Peters expressed deep satisfaction and gratitude to God for his guidance. “I am content and

fulfilled,” he declared. “My sole prayer now is for increased enlightenment in God’s word and the grace to draw closer to Him.”

Peters also expressed profound gratitude for his achievements, especially considering the many contemporaries who have passed on. “I thank God for keeping me alive,” he said. “It’s a privilege to witness the impact of my music and my ministry.”

When asked about what his fans can expect from him in the future, Peters promised something “unusual” soon. “Expect something extraordinary and different from me,” he said, teasing a fresh direction in his music and ministry.

# Hafeez Oyetoro praises Joshua Ojo for Wole Soyinka biopic

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**t the premiere of Wole Soyinka – Eni Ogun, filmmaker Joshua Ojo’s biopic praised for thorough research and tribute to Nobel Laureate Soyinka.

Held at the Ikeja Cinema in Lagos, the event drew crowds of enthusiastic fans and actors who celebrated the film as a remarkable work of art.

Prominent actor Hafeez Oyetoro, also known as Saka, took the stage at the premiere and showered praise on Joshua Ojo for his invaluable contributions to Nollywood.

Saka lauded Ojo’s dedication and effort in bringing the iconic figure of Wole Soyinka to life.

He emphasized the challenges Ojo faced during production, revealing, “This movie took almost a year due to an accident Joshua had.

Nollywood Actor Hafeez Oyetoro and



Filmmaker Joshua Ojo  
Nollywood Actor Hafeez Oyetoro and  
Filmmaker Joshua Ojo

He put in a tremendous amount of research, writing, and shooting to ensure its success. This is a very interesting movie that deserves attention. Let people know about it and support this talented filmmaker.”

Saka’s admiration for Ojo extended beyond the production timeline. He highlighted Wole Soyinka’s multifaceted contributions to the arts, describing him as “an embodiment of art himself—a poet, playwright, actor, director, producer, essayist, and much more.”

Saka acknowledged the film’s limitations in capturing every aspect of Soyinka’s life but praised Ojo for focusing on key themes such as Soyinka’s deep love for his country, cultural heritage, and unwavering patriotism.

The actor urged the audience to show their appreciation for Ojo’s hard work: “Let’s give a round of applause for the executive producer, Joshua.

Despite his quiet demeanor, his achievements speak volumes. He has directed numerous films, including Sango and Efusetan Aniwura, and his work continues to inspire.”

# Wizkid transformed my career – Terry Apala

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian singer Terry Apala credited Wizkid for transforming his career by featuring on the Apala Disco remix, saving promotional costs and his exposure.

In a recent interview with Pulse, Apala revealed that Wizkid's support played a pivotal role in shaping his path to success.

Apala explained that Wizkid's collaboration on the remix of his hit song, Apala Disco, was a turning point for him. The appearance of Wizkid on the track, Apala said, saved him millions of naira that he would have otherwise spent on promotional efforts.

"It wasn't my doing. Wizkid just decided to help me, seeing that I've been struggling in the music industry for a long time," Apala stated. "He changed my entire career with just one verse."

Apala described Wizkid's contribution as a form of shortcut, helping him bypass the costly process of promoting his song.

"It's like you're planning to spend millions to promote your song, and then Wizkid jumps on it. That automatically reduces the need for extensive promotion. That's how God works," Apala added.

Terry Apala featured Wizkid and Seyi Vibes on the remix of his song Apala Disco, alongside DJ Tunez. This collaboration further emphasized the growing influence of these Nigerian artists in shaping the country's music scene.

Apala's acknowledgement of Wizkid highlights the importance of collaboration and mutual support



within Nigeria's vibrant music industry. By pooling their talents, artists like Apala and Wizkid are able to amplify their reach and create more impactful music for fans.

Wizkid's stature in the Nigerian music scene is unparalleled, and his involvement brought massive attention to Apala's track.

The remix of Apala Disco not only helped introduce Apala's unique sound to a wider audience but also solidified his position in the competitive Afrobeats genre.

Terry Apala credited Wizkid's decision to work with him as a turning point that elevated his career from relative obscurity to prominence.

Nigerian singer Terry Apala "It's not just about getting on a song. It's about the recognition and validation that comes with it," Terry Apala noted. "When someone like Wizkid endorses you, it opens doors

that would otherwise remain closed. It's the kind of break that a lot of artists dream of."

In the Nigerian music industry, collaborations often catalyze career advancement. Apala's success is a testament to how artists can leverage each other's fan bases and networks to achieve greater exposure.

The remix of Apala Disco was not just about creating a great song, but about creating a movement that transcended individual careers.

As Apala continues his journey, his praise for Wizkid serves as a reminder of the value of partnerships in the competitive world of music.

The Nigerian music scene thrives on collaborations, and Apala's story underscores how a single feature from a prominent artist can change the trajectory of one's career.

# Tonto Dikeh alerts public to new scam tactics

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**ctress Tonto Dikeh warns of a rising scam where victims are falsely accused in public, urging vigilance to avoid manipulation and pressure.

This alarming tactic relies on creating a scene to draw attention. According to Dikeh, the scam begins with an individual falsely accusing a stranger of making a fake bank transfer for a purchase. The accuser's goal is to corner the victim into either paying again or facing public humiliation.

To intensify the situation, the scammer often resorts to dramatic tactics. They may cry loudly, wail uncontrollably, or shout accusations, all designed to draw a crowd. This gathering creates an atmosphere of tension and judgment, making it harder for the accused individual to defend themselves or explain the situation calmly.

Tonto Dikeh's warning to the public In a social media post, Tonto Dikeh shared her concern over the rise of such schemes. She cautioned people to stay alert and think critically if they encounter a similar situation. Her Instagram post emphasized the emotional and physical risks victims face.

"New scam alert! Beware: Someone could approach you in public, crying and wailing, accusing you of making a fake transfer for something you allegedly bought. A crowd gathers, tensions rise, and you're forced to either pay up or risk facing jungle justice," she wrote.

The actress highlighted how these scenarios can quickly escalate. She pointed out the embarrassment, wasted time, potential loss of property, or even physical harm that victims might



suffer. She urged everyone to prioritize their safety and be cautious when dealing with strangers in public spaces.

## Growing threat in public spaces

This type of scam isn't entirely new, but its resurgence, coupled with the growing reliance on digital transactions, makes it especially concerning. Scammers exploit the public's limited understanding of online transfers and digital receipts, using the confusion to their advantage.

The tactic thrives on creating chaos. Many onlookers, unfamiliar with the details, may assume the loudest voice is in the right. In the heat of the moment, victims are often overwhelmed and find it difficult to prove their innocence, particularly without immediate access to their financial transaction history.

Additionally, the involvement of a crowd puts immense pressure on the accused. Strangers in the gathering may jump to conclusions, and in some cases, mob justice could ensue before law enforcement intervenes.

## Staying safe: Tips for avoiding the scam

Tonto Dikeh's warning comes with a clear call to action. She urged people to stay vigilant and prepare themselves to handle such situations calmly and effectively. Here are a few practical tips to help avoid falling for this scam:

**Stay calm and collected:** If you're falsely accused, avoid reacting emotionally. Keeping calm can prevent the situation from escalating further.

**Demand proof:** Politely but firmly ask the accuser to provide evidence, such as transaction records or receipts, to substantiate their claims.

**Involve authorities:** If the situation begins to escalate, seek the help of nearby security personnel or contact law enforcement.

**Document everything:** Record the incident on your phone to create evidence. This can help prove your innocence and discourage the scammer.

# Allu Arjun detained over stampede death at film screening

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Allu Arjun arrested after deadly stampede at Pushpa 2 screening in Hyderabad, India. One woman died, child injured. The incident occurred on December 4th.

Arjun was taken into custody on charges of three offences, including “voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means,” according to a police officer who spoke on the condition of anonymity. Seven others, including members of his security team and theater staff, were already arrested in connection with the incident.

Video footage shared by broadcaster TV9 showed Arjun holding a coffee mug and speaking to police officers as they arrived at his residence to make the arrest. Later that day, Arjun was granted interim bail for four weeks, as reported by local media.

The victim of the stampede was a woman in her 30s, who had attended the screening with her son. The child sustained serious injuries in the chaos.

The woman’s family has filed a formal complaint against Arjun, his security team, and the theater management, alleging negligence in crowd control and event organization.

Two days after the incident, Arjun expressed his deep sorrow on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), stating, “I am deeply heartbroken. While respecting their need for space to grieve, I stand committed to extending every possible assistance to help them navigate through this challenging journey.”

Allu Arjun is a prominent figure in Indian cinema, particularly in southern



India, where he enjoys a massive fan base. The Pushpa film series has been a massive success, generating millions at the box office. Arjun won the Best Actor award at India’s National Film Awards for his performance in the first installment of the series.

The ongoing investigation has raised serious questions about crowd management, security protocols, and the responsibilities of actors and event organizers in ensuring public safety during such high-profile events.

Fan gatherings have always carried the potential for chaos, but this incident highlights critical flaws in ensuring the safety of attendees.

The incident at Hyderabad’s theater marks a stark reminder of the dangers posed by unregulated public gatherings, particularly when fans’ enthusiasm is unchecked. The crowd at the screening reportedly swelled beyond the theater’s capacity, leading to panic and chaos.

This resulted in the tragic stampede, raising concerns about the lack of adequate crowd control measures,

safety protocols, and coordination between event organizers and law enforcement.

There have been previous instances where massive crowds have overwhelmed security, leading to injuries and sometimes even fatalities.

However, this incident involving a major celebrity like Allu Arjun has drawn even more attention due to his status in the Indian film industry and the popularity of the Pushpa franchise.

Arjun’s sudden arrest also draws attention to the growing debate surrounding the accountability of actors when tragedies like these occur.

While Arjun was not directly involved in crowd control or the management of the theater, the public and media have questioned his role in the events that transpired, given his prominence as the lead actor of the film.

The incident has reignited discussions about the responsibilities of celebrities and their security teams in ensuring public safety during large-scale events.

# Macron appoints François Bayrou as new PM

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

French President, Emmanuel Macron has appointed François Bayrou as Prime Minister.

This comes after an unprecedented parliamentary vote to depose the previous government last week.

Bayrou, 73, is a well-known personality in French politics and an important member of Macron's centrist alliance.

His political background is regarded as important in efforts to restore stability in a split National Assembly.

Bayrou, who was recently cleared of allegations of misappropriation of European Parliament funds, now has the difficulty of guiding the country through a divided parliament.

He is anticipated to reveal his selection of ministers in the coming days.

The appointment of Bayrou comes in the backdrop of political chaos and instability in France.

The country recently voted on a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Michel



Barnier that ended his three-month term and further deepened the political crisis.

The motion was backed by both the left and the far-right. It followed Barnier's controversial use of Article 49.3 of the French Constitution to pass the 2025 social security budget bill without a parliamentary vote. The move triggered no-confidence motions from both Opposition blocs.

Although Barnier, who headed Macron's minority government was hopeful that his administration would survive the vote.

Barnier emerged as the shortest-serving prime minister in modern French history. The motion against

him marked the first successful no-confidence motion since 1962.

Barnier's appointment as prime minister in September 2024 came after Macron's centrist alliance suffered a major defeat in the legislative assembly elections.

In the wake of a landslide victory by Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally in the June European Union elections, Macron dissolved the National Assembly and called for snap elections.

Following Barnier's removal, his 2025 budget proposal, which includes \$60 billion in tax increases and spending cuts, is expected to undergo significant revisions.

# South Korean President, Yeol impeached over martial law

By Dave Oludare Oso

South Korea's parliament has voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over his short-lived attempt to impose martial law earlier this month.

On Saturday, the country's National Assembly voted by 204 to 85 to impeach Yoon and suspend his powers and duties, the Associated Press reported.

The motion required the support of two-thirds of lawmakers to pass. Yoon had survived a first impeachment vote last Saturday after most of his ruling People Power Party (PPP) boycotted it.

Yoon issued a martial law decree on December 3, which caused political turmoil across the country. It lasted only six hours as the country's parliament voted to block the decree. South Korea's Constitutional Court has 180 days to decide whether to dismiss Yoon as president or restore his powers. If he is forced out, an election to choose his successor must be held within 60 days.

Yoon's refusal to resign and his insistence that he was right to declare martial law convinced some lawmakers from his own party to cross the aisle and meet the two-thirds majority, or 200 votes, required to oust him, The Washington Post reported.

Yoon justified the martial law declaration as a move to thwart "anti-state" activities by the opposition parties controlling the



National Assembly.

He sent hundreds of troops and police officers to the parliament in a bid to block its vote on the decree.

He said on Thursday that his decision was an act of governance, and accused the main liberal opposition Democratic Party of being a "monster" that had tried to impeach officials and undermine the government's budget bill.

Korean democracy has survived a close call, and other democracies with a presidential form of government should take heed of the lessons from this episode," said Tom Pepinsky, government and public policy professor at Cornell University.

"President Yoon's attempt to declare martial law reveals the fragility of the rule of law in

divided societies, especially those with presidential governments in which the chief executive cannot be easily dismissed by the legislature," he told Newsweek.

Pepinsky said it was fortunate that the martial law declaration was decisively opposed by the country's National Assembly, as well as the media, civil society, and the rank-and-file members of the military who opted not to use violence against protesters and lawmakers.

Most importantly, no members of President Yoon's own party were willing to defend his actions in public, nor did any vote in defense of his martial law declaration," he added.

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo will serve as interim president as South Korea enters a period of uncertainty.

# Ex-Manchester City player becomes new Georgian President

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A former football star has become the President of Georgia as the ruling party consolidates its grip on power.

Ex-Premier League and Manchester City striker, Mikheil Kavelashvili, 53, easily won the vote given the Georgian Dream party's control of a 300-seat electoral college that replaced direct presidential elections in 2017.

Georgian Dream retained control of parliament in the South Caucasus nation in an election on October 26 that the opposition alleges was rigged with Moscow's help.

Georgia's outgoing president and main pro-Western parties have since boycotted parliamentary sessions and



demanding a rerun of the ballot.

Georgian Dream has vowed to continue pushing toward EU accession but also wants to "reset" ties with Russia.

The opposition calls the situation a blow to the country's European aspirations and a victory for former imperial ruler Russia.

## FINALLY BUSTED: Suspect arrested in 18-yr-old cold murder case

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A man previously sought in connection to the death of a professional welterweight boxer in the Bronx on New Year's Eve in 2006 was arrested and charged with murder on Friday, the NYPD said.

Ahmet Gashi, 42, of Kosovo, Serbia, allegedly ran over prizefighter, Kemal Kolenovic, then 28, with a Mitsubishi SUV outside a bar on Belmont Avenue in the Fordham section of the Bronx, according to police.

Kolenovic, who hailed from Montenegro, was killed after a bar fight between Gashi and two other men spilled outside into the street, police have said.

Kemal Kolenovic was struck and killed by a car outside a Bronx bar on

Dec. 31, 2006.

Cops said the suspect jumped into the driver's seat of his car and drove up on the curb to hit the men with whom he had been arguing.

Instead, Kolenovic, who was not even involved in the dispute, was struck and launched into a tree, hitting his head. He was later pronounced dead at a nearby hospital.

Kolenovic was a professional welterweight boxer.

The driver of the car fled and eluded retribution for the heinous act.

Police officers initially wanted to question Gashi in connection to the death, but the suspect fled into the



Balkans and disappeared for the last 18 years.

Gashi was picked up by Serbian police earlier this year and was then transferred to the ward of the US Marshals, according to ABC7.

He arrived at Central Booking in the Bronx on Friday night.



# Arsenal deserved to win, says Arteta after goalless draw against Everton

By Oluwatosin Ologun



**A**rsenal football club manager Mikel Arteta has said his side deserved to win the match against Everton in their English Premier League clash at the Emirate stadium.

In a post-match conference on Saturday, Arteta explained how Arsenal created chances against the Toffees.

“I feel very disappointed not to win the game, because obviously there is only one team which deserves to win, which is Arsenal,” added Arteta.

“We gave nothing away, no shots conceded, dominated the direct play, didn’t allow them to run, no set-pieces, our high-press was excellent.

“We generated the chances, but in the last 20 metres the goals were missing the goals, which is what you have to do with all the dominance. But I cannot ask much more of the boys, apart from putting the ball in the net.”

Mikel Arteta defended his decision to substitute Martin Odegaard as Arsenal were held to a goalless draw

by Everton and missed the chance to close the gap to leaders Liverpool.

Arsenal captain Odegaard was withdrawn along with Declan Rice after 62 minutes at the Emirates Stadium, with Ethan Nwaneri and Jorginho introduced in their places.

But while Rice’s substitution was put down to a niggling injury, Arteta confirmed afterwards that the decision to take off Odegaard was down to “tactical reasons” and not fitness-related.

The Gunners struggled to create chances without the Norway international during the closing stages as they failed to capitalise on Liverpool’s 2-2 draw with Fulham at Anfield.

“With Declan, I had to take him out because he was feeling something,” said Arteta. “And with Martin it was a tactical decision to try to change their rhythm, especially on that side.

“If Ethan comes in and scores a goal, is he a great sub? If he doesn’t, you have taken your captain out. That’s

football.

“[His reaction] was the same reaction as [Gabriel] Martinelli, as anybody. I’m sure that they want to continue to play the 90 minutes. But that’s why we have the subs. To try to help the team.”

Odegaard had not been at his best during the game, spurning a couple of presentable opportunities in the first half and not creating any chances as Arsenal failed to make their dominance count for the second consecutive league game following their 1-1 draw with Fulham.

But it was still surprising to see him taken off, given his importance, and the changes did not have the desired impact for Arteta, with Arsenal unable to create any clear scoring opportunities in the closing stages as the Jordan Pickford-inspired visitors held out for a hard-earned point.

# Slot delighted by Liverpool's character after Fulham draw

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Liverpool manager, Arne Slot was delighted by his side's character as they preserved their six-point lead on Arsenal and said Robertson was punished for playing on with an injury.

In a post-match interview on Saturday, Slot said he cannot ask for more although it is not the result he is expecting from the match.

At Anfield, Liverpool fought back to claim a 2-2 draw, thanks to Diogo Jota's late equaliser, after Andrew Robertson was sent off for a last-man foul in the 17th minute.

"The character the team showed, that is what Robbo showed," said Slot.

"If you get a kick like this, two studs on a knee, that can hurt for a few minutes. If you keep running and it gets better and better, that is what we

were hoping for." I only had one defender on the bench, who is not a left full-back, so you are hoping he was managing to come through it and did quite well.

"But the moment I noticed he wasn't completely himself was the one time they put the ball in behind and he started running and was just able to head back to Ali (Alisson Becker).

"I felt 'Hmm, OK, let's see how this continues' and I think it was quite soon afterwards he conceded the red card.

"Nothing to blame him, the character showed in wanting to continue because he got quite a hard knock with two studs. Unfortunately, it led to a deserved red card."

Slot praised his players, who

stretched their lead at the top of the Premier League to five points, with second-placed Chelsea playing Brentford on Sunday.

"I think it is exactly the opposite from Girona (the midweek Champions League win) where I was pleased but not the performance," he added.

"Here I am very happy about the performance, I couldn't have asked for more, but of course not with the result because if you drop points in a home game against Fulham that is definitely not what you expect and what you want.

"But yeah, being a goal down twice, it's all going against you, except for one thing, which is our players and our fans, I thought we were outstanding."

