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# The New Daily Prime

## Tinubu presents N49.7trn 2025 budget to NASS

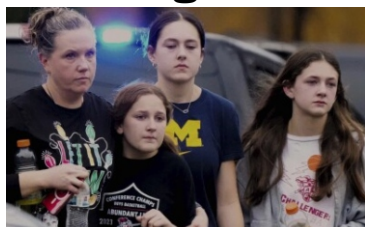
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# Tinubu winning war against terrorism, others – Information Minister

By Friday Omosola

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has declared that President Bola Tinubu's administration is making significant progress in combating terrorism, banditry, and ethnic conflicts that have plagued Nigeria in recent times.

Speaking at the management retreat of the Voice of Nigeria held at the BON Octagon Hotel in Jabi, Abuja, yesterday, Idris emphasised the need for Nigerians to showcase to the world that the country is on the path to recovery and progress.

He highlighted the administration's efforts to rejuvenate the nation's workforce and promote sustainable productivity.

The Minister also noted that the younger population now has greater access to quality tertiary education through the National Education Loans (NEL) Fund, which offers a clearer pathway to academic success and empowerment.

"Importantly, our nation is going through an energy transition phase that will guarantee more sustainable electricity and gas to power our homes and machinery", he said.

He stated that President Tinubu is pursuing an ambitious fiscal reform agenda designed to allocate more resources to Nigeria's State and Local Governments—and ultimately to



the Nigerian people—in line with the principles of true federalism.

According to him, 2025 will mark the consolidation of the President's Renewed Hope Agenda, which he said is already delivering tangible results across various aspects of Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape.

Idris further stated that, to support Nigeria's ongoing transformation, the country will increasingly depend on VON's information assets to combat the growing threats of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation.

He said, "For media organisations like VON to compete in a crowded global field, technology must be a priority. You must leverage new and emerging digital technologies to improve

the quality and reach of what you do here, and to ensure that you continue to stay relevant in these ever-changing times.

"I cannot close these remarks without specially recognizing and saluting all of the hardworking staff of the Voice of Nigeria, for the work that you do. From the journalists on the front-lines, to all of the other staff who contribute just as much from behind the scenes.

"We will ensure that we prioritize your welfare, and make resources available so that you can continue to fulfill your mandate. I look forward to the outcome of this retreat and to the emerging new template for VON's repositioning. Thank you and I wish you all a great management retreat."

# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

**EFFECTIVE FROM  
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR		SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	=		372,500.00
HALF PAGE	=		213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	=		106,500.00
14X2	=		118,000.00
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9X4	=		193,500.00
9X3	=		166,223.50
8X6	=		225,368.50
8X3	=		106,934.50
7X4	=		180,173.50
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6X3	=		82,750.00
6X2	=		52,499.50
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SPECIAL POSITIONS		SIZE	RATE
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2X6 INSIDE PAGE	=		155,000.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	=		144,294.00
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DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	=		425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	=		15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	=		8,500,000.00
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(IFC) Inside Front Cover	=			430,000.00
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Full Page	=			430,000.00
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Half Page	=			225,000.00
EVENT	=			250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION			
SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
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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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# Tinubu presents N49.7trn 2025 budget to NASS

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu today presented the 2025 budget to the National Assembly, totalling N49.7 trillion.

Tagged “Budget of Restoration: Securing Peace, Rebuilding Prosperity,” the proposal outlines the government’s strategy to rebuild the nation’s economy and address critical issues like insecurity and human capital development.

Speaking at the joint session of the National Assembly held in the House of Representatives chambers, Tinubu emphasised the importance of restoring macroeconomic growth, building a resilient economy, and addressing rising security concerns with the budget.

He commended Nigerians for their resilience in the face of economic challenges, noting that the 2025 budget targets a revenue of N34.82 trillion to fund government operations, including N15.81 trillion earmarked for debt servicing.

He said the total projected expenditure stands at N47.90 trillion, leaving a budget deficit of N13.08 trillion, or 3.89 per cent of the nation’s GDP.

He expressed optimism that inflation would decrease from the current 34.6 per cent to 15 per cent, while the exchange rate improves from 1,700 Naira per US dollar to 1,500 Naira. The budget also assumes a base crude oil production of 2.06 million barrels per day.

In the budget, Tinubu allocated substantial funds to defence and security, infrastructure, health, and education.

He proposed N4.91 trillion for defence and security, N4.06 trillion for infrastructure, N2.48 trillion for



health, and N3.52 trillion for education.

President Tinubu described the budget as a renewed commitment to strengthening the foundation of a robust economy.

Regarding security, the president highlighted increased funding for the military, paramilitary, and police forces.

He reiterated his administration’s commitment to providing modern security equipment to combat insurgency, banditry, and other threats. “Our people should never live in fear,” Tinubu stated, vowing to restore peace and productivity across the nation.

In the realm of infrastructure, Tinubu underscored the importance of the Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund, designed to accelerate investments in energy, transport, and public works.

He highlighted the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway and Sokoto-Badagry Highway as key projects that will foster economic growth and create jobs.

For human capital development, Tinubu announced that his administration had disbursed N34 billion through the Nigeria Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) to over 300,000 students.

He noted that in the budget, N826.90 billion has been set aside for educational infrastructure, including the Universal Basic Education (UBEC) and nine new higher education institutions.

The President allocated N402 billion for infrastructure investments and an additional N282.65 billion proposed for the Basic Health Care Fund.

Tinubu emphasised his government’s commitment to revitalizing public healthcare facilities, ensuring quality care for Nigerians, and reducing reliance on medical imports.

More so, the President prioritized agriculture, with provisions to support farmers and boost food security in the budget.

Tinubu stressed that the government would provide funding and agricultural inputs to enhance productivity and ensure that no Nigerian would go to bed hungry.

# Money tears private school owners apart, two factions exist despite court order

By Alade Adisa

The National Association of Proprietors of Private Schools, NAPPS, is now factionalised, as the issue of who controls resources at its disposal has led to members pitching tents with different leaders.

NAPPS, which has over 40,000 members across the country, is also divided over allegation of sit-tight syndrome levelled against some leaders.

New Daily Prime learned that a group, led by Mijinyawa Said and Samira Jibril is alleging that the tenure of Chief Yomi Otubela as the National President has ended and that a new set of leaders has been elected.

However, Otubela is claiming that he has been elected for another tenure and declaring the other group illegal.

The Said group operates from Abuja, while Otubela does so from Lagos. Only recently, an Upper Area Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja presided over by Gambo Garba restrained the group led by Said and Jibril from organising or participating in a NAPPS conference scheduled to hold at Baze University Abuja or any other venue.

The court order in motion number MT/72/2024 and dated 18 November, restrained the defendants, including their officers, agents, staff, and any other persons acting on their behalf from running or operating a parallel NEC of the association.

“These orders are hereby granted pending the hearing and



determination of the motion on notice,” it noted.

However, the Otubela group, which has Abdulmumuni Kundak as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, held its NAPPS International Conference and Exhibition (NICE 2024), in Calabar, Cross River State.

Meanwhile, the NAPPS leadership in Lagos, led by Alaka Yusuf, where Otubela is, aligns with the Said group.

To clip the wings of the Alaka leadership in Lagos, the Kundak-led BOT, warned, “All NAPPS states affiliates, as well as the majority of private school proprietors across Nigeria, are enjoined to note that we have only one NAPPS legitimate body recognised by law. We have only one BOT and one NEC.”

Meanwhile, the Otubela faction has elected new leaders for the Lagos State chapter.

They are Dr Bodunde Samuel as the new President, Chief Mrs. Yetunde Balogun, Vice President, Mr. Yusuf A.

Ibrahim, Secretary, Mr. Adebisi, Financial Secretary and Mr. Olawale Cardozo, Treasurer.

The election of the new leaders followed the suspension and dissolution of the former executive committee led by Alaka.

Responding to the development, Alaka said the alleged dissolution of his team would not stand.

“It is a joke taken too far. We have a constitution that stipulates how leaders are elected and for how long. We came into office a little over a year ago and some people sat somewhere and said they have dissolved the exco and elected new ones. Who does that? They are the illegal body not us. They are the ones sitting tight in office.

“You can see that they are perpetrating illegalities. They operate from the office of one man who acts like a lord. We have our members solidly behind us and nobody can truncate our tenure until it expires,” he stated.



# Oyo gov orders probe on death of children at Christmas party

By Friday Omosola

**G**overnor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has ordered a probe into the circumstances that led to the death of some children yesterday, at Islamic High School, Basorun, Ibadan.

The incident occurred during a children's Christmas party organised by Queen Naomi Silekunola Ogunwusi, the former wife of the Ooni of Ife.

In a statement on his X page, Makinde confirmed the loss of multiple lives and revealed that several others sustained injuries.

He said: "This is a very sad day for us here in Oyo State. We sympathise with the parents whose joy has suddenly been turned to mourning due to these deaths. We have taken steps to ensure no further deaths are recorded at that same venue by deploying security agents to restore order at the place.

"We also deployed medical personnel and ambulances to the venue. The event has been stopped, and attendees have been escorted out of the venue. We are taking all realistic measures to ensure that the venue is secured."

He stated that the primary organisers of the event responsible for the stampede



had been taken into custody.

The governor emphasised that anyone directly or indirectly connected to the disaster would be held accountable.

He appealed for calm as security agencies continue investigating the sad incident.

"Our thoughts are with the families and loved ones affected by this tragedy. May the souls of the departed rest in peace. Amen," he added.

It would be recalled that on Tuesday, Agidigbo FM, a radio station in Ibadan announced that Queen Naomi, the founder of Women In Need Of Guidance and Support, (WINGS) would hold the Children Fun Fair.

Speaking during a special programme on the radio, she

said she would host 5000 kids between the ages of 0-13 years across Ibadan for free under the aegis of WINGS Foundation.

She revealed that the event is strictly for children and they will win exciting prizes like scholarships and other bountiful gifts.

She also assured parents and guardians of adequate security for all participants of the event.

As of now, The New Daily Prime could not confirm whether the ex-queen was among those in custody or if she was being interrogated at the time of filing this report.

# Sowore faults accolades for Buhari at 82

By Friday Omosola

Criticising wrongheadedness, Omoyele Sowore, the 2023 presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC), has criticised the accolades showered on former President Muhammadu Buhari on his 82nd birthday, stating that he did not deserve them.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that Buhari received numerous tributes, including one from his successor, President Bola Tinubu, who pledged to uphold Buhari's legacy.

In a series of posts on X, Sowore accused Buhari of destroying Nigeria and labeled him "Baba Munafikin Banza, Baba Barawo Banza."

He further argued that it was unjust that Buhari was not handcuffed alongside the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, for allegedly overseeing massive looting and economic sabotage during his eight-year tenure.



Sowore also expressed disappointment that Buhari was not facing trial at the International Criminal Court for the atrocities and crimes against humanity he allegedly committed across Nigeria. He cited incidents such as the massacre of Shiites, violence in the Southeast, and the #EndSARS crackdown.

His posts read: "A man that destroyed his country do not deserve any honour, accolades or happiness. Baba Munafikin Banza, Baba Barawo Banza!

"It is unfair and unjust that Muhammadu Buhari is not

facing trial like former CBN governor Godwin Emefiele for the massive looting and economic sabotage he supervised during his disastrous eight year tenure or that he is not facing trial simultaneously at the International Criminal Court for the monumental atrocities and crimes against humanity he committed across Nigeria from the massacre of Shiites, South easterners, and #ENDSARS."



# Yuletide: Police raid black spots nationwide, arrest 128 hoodlums

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Nigeria Police Force has announced that operatives arrested a total of 128 suspected hoodlums across the country, leading to the recovery of dangerous weapons from the suspects.

The Force Public Relations Officer, ACP Muyiwa Adejobi, in a statement issued on Tuesday, confirmed that the raids align with the directive of the Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, to implement efficient security measures during the Yuletide.

The PPRO stated, “As the festive season approaches, the Nigeria Police Force remains vigilant and proactive, ramping up efforts to ensure the safety and security of all citizens. Through intensified operations, the Force has achieved significant successes in raids, arrests, and recoveries.

”On December 14, 2024, operatives of the Lagos State Police Command raided



multiple criminal hideouts in the Isolo area, arresting 43 suspects. Among the recovered items were large quantities of cannabis, daggers, swords, and fetish objects.

”On December 15, 2024, in Isheri Osun, Lagos State, police arrested a suspect, Charles Orji, who attempted to steal a Toyota Hilux. A search revealed seven different Toyota car keys in his possession, raising suspicions of a larger car theft operation.

”The Force is maintaining vigilance in other states, including Kaduna, Zamfara, Taraba, Edo, Delta, Benue, and Niger, to curb criminal activities. Police operatives

have deployed coordinated security measures to safeguard lives and property nationwide.

“As we enter the final stretch of the festivities, the Nigeria Police Force assures citizens of its commitment to deterring crime and protecting lives and property.”

ACP Adejobi urged the public to remain vigilant and promptly report suspicious activities to the authorities, emphasizing the Force’s dedication to providing a safe environment for all Nigerians during the holiday season.



# Why strike by LASU workers may not end soon – Investigation

By Alade Adisa

The ongoing industrial action by workers at the Lagos State University, LASU, Ojo, may not end soon, as the state government requires additional N560 million monthly to meet the demand by the workers for enhanced salaries.

Investigation by New Daily Prime showed that the state government is in dilemma of how to meet the additional expenditure without asking the management of the school to raise fees or levies.

Also, the state government, which is thinking of turning the College of Medicine of the university in Ikeja to a full blown medical university, is facing constraints regarding the huge cost that will be involved.

Apart from the monthly additional cost, our correspondent gathered that the workers are not happy that though Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu announced N85,000 as the new minimum wage, the salary template prepared indicated N40,000.

LASU workers, both teaching and non-teaching, under the auspices of the Joint Action Committee, JAC, began an indefinite strike on December 6, 2024 and the management of the university hurriedly announced a four-week Christmas break to end on January 6, 2025.

The striking workers are members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, SSANU, the National Association of Academic Technologists, NAAT, and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Allied Institutions, NASU.

LASU workers are complaining that their salaries are lower than those of



their colleagues in Lagos State University of Science and Technology, LASUSTECH and the Lagos State University of Education, LASUED. The three universities are owned by the Lagos State government.

The workers are angry that a Chief Lecturer 111 in LASUED (formerly a College of Education) would be earning more than a professor in LASU.

Commenting on the development, Prof. Ibrahim A. Bakare, ASUU Chairman, Comrade Oluwaseyi Lawal, SSANU Chairman, Comrade Dr. Olujimi Adejo, NAAT Chairman and Comrade Obafemi Sanni, NASU Chairman, expressed disgust at the poor treatment being meted out to the workers.

“For the records, below are the three major demands by the staff unions. These demands are as follows: Implementation of the 25%/35% salary Increase for all staff of tertiary institutions in Lagos State based on the agreement between the Federal Government and the Staff Unions in those institutions which is expected to be domesticated in the state

universities.

“Harmonisation of salary disparity between members of staff of Lagos State University and those of other state-owned tertiary institutions of Lagos State.

“Implementation of the New National Minimum Wage for our members in line with the relevant procedures and processes as approved by the National Minimum Wage Law (2024).”

“We pray that a timely and immediate intervention of Mr. Governor will save our University – the Lagos State University – from the current industrial action while counting much on his Executive Approval to quicken the implementation of our demands for improved welfare for the entire Staff Union members of Lagos State University.”

Also, the workers complained that the staff buses given them by the state government in 2008 had become rickety and unserviceable and called on the governor to look into their plight of having to commute to school daily paying exorbitant transport fares.

# Tinubu's reforms responsible for hardship – Opposition; FG kicks

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following Governor Sheriff Oborewori of Delta State's criticism of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies, the Federal Government has declared that the reforms have made more resources available to states.

While the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) agreed with Governor Oborewori that Nigerians are suffering heavily as a result of Tinubu's economic reforms, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, dissented, saying, "Nigerians will feel the benefits in 2025."

According to Punch on Tuesday, the minister said, "2025 is a year that President Tinubu's reforms will be consolidated for the benefit of all Nigerians."

"Mr President has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda that is already freeing more resources to the sub-nationals, not just the Federal Government."

Arguing that the Delta governor's comments are a smokescreen to avoid accounting for the increased allocation Delta, an oil-producing state has enjoyed under Tinubu, Idris said, "The Delta governor's comments about the economic policies of the Tinubu administration are an attempt to distract from the challenge thrown to him to account for the resources of Delta State which have increased vastly in the last 18 months."

"A governor who has received close to a trillion naira since coming to office should focus on accounting for it, not



casting aspersions on a Federal Government that is doing everything to empower the states."

Oborewori had accused the Federal Government of unleashing unprecedented hunger, poverty and mass unemployment on Nigerians, turning Nigeria into the world's poverty capital.

The governor said the probable gains of Tinubu's policies on petroleum subsidy removal and floating of the naira had been eclipsed by naira devaluation and soaring inflation.

In a statement by his Executive Assistant on New Media, Mr Felix Ofou, the Delta governor said it was time Tinubu embraced policies that would stem poverty and suffering.

His comments came on the backdrop of an assertion by the former Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, that the President's economic policies "increased federal allocation to state and local governments, rising economic growth rates, declining imports, higher

exports and higher incomes for farmers."

Tinubu's unification aimed to create a more transparent and equitable foreign exchange regime.

However, it also led to an immediate naira depreciation, severely eroding purchasing power and raising import duties.

This raised the prices of essentials like medicines, electronics and food products, further worsening inflation.

Also, about 104 million Nigerians sank into poverty by December 2023, the World Bank estimated.

Per Punch on Tuesday, the PDP Deputy National Youth Leader, Timothy Osadolor, and the NNPP National Publicity Secretary, Ladipo Johnson, said the policies should be reviewed.

Osadolor said the country was suffering due to the policies of the current administration.



# Hungry workers can't perform optimally, CONUA tells Tinubu

By Alade Adisa

The Congress of University Academics, CONUA, has said dispirited, hungry and financially challenged workers cannot perform to the highest level and has therefore appealed to President Bola Tinubu to order the payment of their three and a half months withheld salaries, as well as four months of third party deductions that have not been remitted to the appropriate quarters.

The congress, in a press release by Dr Folasade Hunsu, the Chairperson, CONUA Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU, and who is also the Southwest Zonal Coordinator, said members have been exposed to untold hardship because of an industrial action they did not partake in.

It frowned at the attitude of the federal government not obeying the ruling of the court that emphasised CONUA as an independent academic staff union in the university system.

It reiterated its position that it was never part of the strike called by another academic union and wondered why it was lumped together for punishment for an offence it did not commit.

“CONUA notes with consternation that the thirdparty deductions (Cooperatives, etc.) were not paid and have not been paid to date! Efforts on the part of the Union to trace the third-party deductions have proven unsuccessful. The Union calls on the Federal Government to direct the payment of these deductions to the appropriate quarters without further delay.

“Our Union, CONUA, has consistently maintained that it never declared and was not part of any strike action. What the government did was to lump together those who embarked on strike with those who did not! This is against the judgment of 25 July, 2023 at the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), which affirmed CONUA as an independent Union.

“Since CONUA neither called for nor joined any strike, withholding the three-and-a-half months' salaries of members of



the Union contravenes Section 43 (1b) of the Trade Disputes Act CAP. T8, which states that “where any employer locks out his workers, the workers shall be entitled to wages and any other applicable remuneration for the period of the lock-out and the period of the lock-out shall not prejudicially affect any rights of the workers being rights dependent on the continuity of the period of employment”.

This provision is consistent with global best practices. In conclusion, CONUA demands that the process of paying these outstanding months be kick-started immediately to ensure lasting peace in the ivory towers.

The union further explained the steps it has taken so far to get the appropriate authorities to look into its claims.

“CONUA wrote the Honourable Minister of Education at different times to officially complain about the three-and-a-half months of withheld salaries and the need to make the payment to CONUA members for the aforementioned reasons. The union received a letter dated 20th May 2024, wherein CONUA was advised to reroute its request to the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment. It stated further that “the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment is vested with the mandate to verify all work claimed to be done during

the period of industrial action.”

“The Union thereafter initiated an official communication with the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment in a letter titled “Three and a half months' withheld salary” dated 28th June 2024.

The Union got a response that reads “...and to inform you that the content therein is noted. It then appears to the union that the FG is not willing to yield to the rulings of the court that affirmed the independence of CONUA as a union and is also not willing to obey the Trade Dispute Act CAP. T8.

“CONUA is therefore calling on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR) to expedite intervention in this regard so as to avert industrial crises in the universities.

“Financially debilitated, psychologically challenged, and dispirited lecturers cannot be expected to sustainably engage in the mentally tasking and physically exhausting tasks of teaching, research, and community service which constitute the mandate of academics. This point is particularly critical in light of the unprecedented developmental challenges, which are being created and will be created by the innovative measures that are being put in place by the President Bola Tinubu administration.

“CONUA is also demanding to be invited to the re-negotiation of the 2009 agreement, having affirmed its right to be involved in the process. On the 15th of October 2024, CONUA was conspicuously excluded when the Federal Ministry of Education inaugurated a 53-member committee to re-negotiate the 2009 agreement. In this regard, several letters have been written and the last one, a response to the communication received from the Honourable Minister and dated 4th December 2024, was dated 6th December 2024, wherein some justifications were advanced for requesting the inclusion of CONUA in the re-negotiation committee.”

# Adeleke moves to pardon teen convicted for stealing fowl

By Friday Omosola

Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has ordered an immediate investigation and pardoning process for a young man reportedly sentenced to death by hanging in the state for stealing a fowl.

The New Daily Prime gathered that an Osun State High Court sentenced Segun Olowookere, who was 17 years old at the time, for robbing a poultry farm in Oyan, Odo-Otin Local Government Area.

Olowookere, who was convicted in 2014 and is currently held in Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison, was alleged of stealing a fowl and eggs.

In November, Olowookere's parents appealed to Governor Adeleke to grant their son amnesty, emphasising that he is their only child.

Speaking during the celebration of the governor's second year in office, the parents revealed that they had sold their properties in an attempt to secure their son's release.

They pleaded for mercy, describing him as a promising young man who



could contribute positively to society.

In response to their plea, Governor Adeleke, through a statement issued yesterday by his spokesperson, Olawale Rasheed, directed the Attorney General to intervene in the case and ensure Olowookere is included in the list for the prerogative of mercy before the end of the year.

"I have read about the case. I recognize separation of powers in our democracy. In this particular case, I

have directed the Commissioner for Justice to initiate processes to grant prerogative of mercy to the young man.

"Osun is a land of justice and equity. We must ensure fairness and protection of the sanctity of lives. I assure the public that the matter is receiving my direct attention. A sense of urgency is also attached to our response to the matter as a responsible state government", the governor said.

## NBS website hacked

By Friday Omosola

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has confirmed that its website has been hacked.

The bureau confirmed the security breach in a post on its X page Wednesday evening.

"This is to inform the public that the NBS Website has been hacked and we are working to

recover it. Please disregard any message or report posted until the website is fully restored," NBS stated.



NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS



# Most COVID 19 labs in Nigeria not functional Tomori, says virologist

By Helen Okechukwu

**A** Nigerian virologist and Chairman of the Expert Review Committee on COVID-19, Prof. Oyewale Tomori, has alerted that out of the 100 laboratories set up in Nigeria during the COVID 19 scourge, that over 60 of them are presently non functional.

He, therefore, doubted Nigeria's preparedness to tackle the disease despite the newly detected XEC COVID-19 variant in some other countries.

Tomori disclosed this at the 10th Annual International Bioethics Forum held recently at the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research in Yaba, Lagos State.

"...They have a page where they list over 60 laboratories that are not functioning anymore. So, we are back to square one," he added.

The renowned virologist further explained the implications of the negligence and the need to find ways to solve the problem.

He said, "For us to now have six years of labs not functioning, after all the money we spent on those labs, something is wrong somewhere. And we must continue to challenge it anywhere we go."

The New Daily Prime reported on December 8 that the Federal Government declared that there is no evidence of the new COVID variant, XEC, in Nigeria despite its presence in Australia and 29 other countries.

Speaking in the same vein, the Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations, Alabi Balogun, in the Ministry of Health, said precautionary measures have been taken by the Federal Government as isolation centres, intensive care units, and others are established at federal



tertiary hospitals.

Reacting to FG utterance towards tackling this virus if there is an outbreak, the health expert said the NCDC should speak out on their discovery to convince Nigeria.

Tomori said while explaining the slow progression of NCDC, "When the Ministry of Health said that we shouldn't have any fear or something, the question I ask is: if you want to convince me, is for NCDC to tell me I've tested 600 samples and none was positive."

"That's the assurance we want. It's not a statement from the State House to say we don't have it. It is NCDC who is in charge of this, and they should be the ones to tell us. If it was said by the minister, he should have said the NCDC said we tested X number and no cases," Tomori said.

Speaking further on the manner in which the health declaration form is being filled, Tomori said he feels ashamed of the entire process after what he witnessed at the borders over a few or three visits.

"I've been through our borders a few or three times, and the way they are handling even the filling of the forms, I am ashamed of this country. They tell you to snap the form, go and fill it out at home, and bring it back. We don't do things like that," he said.

Challenging the authenticity of the forms filled, the World Health Organisation's Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 vaccine composition member quipped, "All these forms we are filling, do you give feedback to the society? NCDC is the one to tell us we don't have COVID in this country."

He urged Nigerians, particularly the elderly and people with health issues, to be safety cautious; urging to them to wear a face mask, acknowledging that ethics are mandatory in all spheres of life while defining ethics as a foundation.

Director General of NIMR, Prof. John Obafunwa, emphasised the significant impact of the conference while reaffirming the initiator's commitment in addressing critical issues that permeate research and practice in Nigeria.

# Cyclone Chido: climate change fueled devastating Mozambique storm

By Olamilekan Botti

The wrath of Cyclone Chido has left a trail of devastation across northern Mozambique, with scientists attributing the storm's ferocity to the intensifying effects of climate change. The cyclone made landfall on December 15th, bringing destructive winds of up to 120 km/h and torrential rains that exceeded 250 mm within a single day.

The provinces of Cabo Delgado, Nampula, and Niassa bore the brunt of the storm's impact, while neighboring countries like Malawi and Zambia also experienced secondary effects.

The Mozambican government has reported widespread damage to infrastructure, including homes, schools, hospitals, and vital communication networks. Over 35,000 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged, leaving thousands displaced and struggling to find shelter.

The storm's impact on agriculture has been particularly devastating, with vast swathes of crops and livestock lost, threatening food security for vulnerable communities.

The National Institute for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction (INGD) has confirmed 34 fatalities and over 300 injuries. Rescue and relief efforts are underway, but the scale of the destruction poses



significant challenges.

The remote and often inaccessible areas affected by the cyclone are hampering the delivery of aid and hindering assessments of the full extent of the damage.

Scientists studying the cyclone's trajectory and intensity have pointed to the influence of climate change. Warmer sea surface temperatures provide more energy for tropical cyclones, leading to stronger winds and heavier rainfall.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that climate change is likely to increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, including cyclones.

The Mozambican government has appealed for international assistance to support relief efforts and help communities rebuild. The country is still recovering from the devastating impacts of previous cyclones, including Idai in 2019, which highlighted the urgent need for climate adaptation measures and disaster preparedness.

As the world grapples with the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, the devastation caused by Cyclone Chido serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need to address climate change and its far-reaching consequences.



# Top 10 takeaways from 2025 budget of N47.9trn

By Yomi Olugbenro

1. The proposed spending represents 37% increase over 2024 amended budget of N35.06 trillion. While this appears to be highly ambitious, the quantum leap is directly attributable to Naira devaluation. Using the budgeted exchange rates for both years, 2025 budget amounts to \$32b (N1, 500/\$) against 2024 budget of \$44b, a reduction by 37%. So, blame it on the currency's value!

2. The budget is christened as "budget of restoration: securing peace, rebuilding prosperity" with the objectives of restoring macroeconomic stability, improving business environment, and fostering inclusive growth, employment, and poverty reduction. With defense and security having the highest allocation of N4.91 trillion, there appear to be a matching of action and words. Business environment will also be greatly improved in an atmosphere of peace and security. Education and healthcare also enjoyed priority allocations with N3.52 trillion and N2.48 trillion respectively. Some of the macro-economic projections include an expectation that inflation will reduce to 15% in 2025. I say Amen to that! That's all I can say. On exchange rate, the goal should be Naira recovery rather than an expected stability at N1, 500/\$.

3. The addition of debt servicing and recurrent expenditure for 2025 amounts to about N30 trillion which is about the size of the planned revenue of N34.82 trillion. Put differently, if the revenue estimate is fully achieved (and it's a big IF), it will only be sufficient for debt servicing and recurrent expenditure. Capital expenditure of N13.61 is fully tied to borrowing, which explain why there's under performance in most budget years. Further, the portion of planned capital expenditure that is planned for core infrastructure is N4.06 trillion. (There's a need to revisit how spendings are classified. The real capital spending is what goes to infrastructure development.)

4. Projected revenue for 2025 is N34.82 trillion, representing 73% of total spending and deficit of N13.1 trillion (27% of total expenditure). Simply put, borrowing continues, with debt servicing to gulp N15.8 trillion, exactly 1/3rd of the total budgeted spending or 45% of planned revenue. For most years, planned revenue is not often met. As at Q3 of 2024, only 75% of planned revenue has been achieved – which, in comparison with other years, is great performance? Shortfall in revenues means either additional borrowing (increased debt servicing cost) or under funding of capital projects (as it's often the case). As far as debt servicing and recurrent expenditure estimates are concerned, it is more likely to exceed



budget than under-perform.

5. It was surprising to see budgeted exchange rate at N1, 500/\$ against N1, 400 stated in MTEF and the consistent position from monetary policy authorities that Naira is undervalued. This could potentially be explained as misalignment between monetary and fiscal policies. It is unclear if the intention is to set the expectation so low with a view to over-deliver or an acceptance of the reality of the direction of travels for Naira, albeit in near term. The macro-economic implications of a possible medium term exchange rate of N1, 500/\$ is unsettling!

6. Breakdown of revenue estimates shows that 56% (N19.6 trillion) is expected from oil sources while 44% (N15.22 trillion) is expected from non-oil sources. Oil revenue is tied to the three variables of quantity and price of oil as well as exchange rate, all of which have proven to be beyond our complete grasp. Crude oil production is planned for 2.06mbd with oil price benchmark of \$75 (based on MTEF) and exchange rate of N1,500/\$. Having most of the determinants as variables makes the outcome quite uncertain. Non-oil revenue is made of taxes and other independent sources. Performance from non-oil tax revenue against budget has been great with focus on domestic revenue mobilization and the impact of currency devaluation.

7. Non-oil tax revenue (N5.7 trillion) constitutes the largest share of non-oil revenue of N15.22 trillion and is likely to be achieved. I hold the view that tax yield can significantly be increased by blocking loopholes and leakages; a lot of improvements have been seen lately with significant headroom for more. Other sources

of non-oil revenue include dividends and surpluses from government owned enterprises, grants and donor funds, levies, fines, recoveries, sale of assets and other independent revenues. While many of the sources create significant opportunities, the discipline, prudence, and accountability required is what determines the reality. Much more can be made through government owned enterprises and unlocking values from government assets.

8. While the remarks from the National Assembly leaders touched on the importance of the pushing through the tax reforms, not so much is clearly laid out in both MTEF and the budget speech. This might have been a cautious approach at lowering the high temperature around the tax bills and allowing the ongoing consultations to continue without further ruffling of feathers. The expectation is that the contentious areas of the tax reform bills will be ironed out so that the benefit of improving the business environment, providing the needed succor to the vulnerable and potentially deepening tax penetration in the country can be achieved. It's a much-needed reform.

9. With less than two weeks to the New Year, it is hoped that the budget can still be passed to allow for a full-year implementation. While the law allows the executive to continue spending up to certain percentage of the prior year's budget, there's a sense of direction and purpose that is achieved when the year is started with an Appropriation Act. Businesses and investors take cues from government fiscal direction and the budget is by far the most important pillar of that.

10. Nigeria's budget might appear large on paper, but it represents a fraction of what is required for the desired development. The country's infrastructure deficit is huge while spending priorities remain misaligned! Until the revenue is raised significantly, there's work to do in reducing our cost of governance. The amount that is currently required to sustain the structure and bureaucracy of government is unsustainable. To keep the country afloat, it is necessary to drive higher revenues, unlock wealth from government assets, increase infrastructure spending, reduce recurrent and debt servicing cost, block leakages, curb corruption, and raise accountability and transparency in government. And all these levers need to be pulled simultaneously.

# MOVIE REVIEW: Femi Adebayo's Seven Doors stunning blend of culture, spirituality

By Friday Omosola

Movie Title: Seven Doors

Language: Yoruba

Producer: Femi Adebayo

Director: Femi Adebayo, Adebayo Tijani and Tope Adebayo

Cast: Chioma Chukwuka, Hafiz Oyetero, Adebayo 'Oga Bello' Salami, Gabriel Afolayan, Jide Kosoko, Dele Odule, Femi Adebayo, Muyiwa Ademola, Kunle Afod, Ganiyu Nafiu, Kolawole Ajeyemi.

Streaming platform: Netflix

Release Date: 13 December

Femi Adebayo's "Seven Doors," a Netflix original released on 13 December, is a perfect example of the adage that "a peaceful home or life is preferred to an honourable title."

The film delves into the consequences of attempting to rewrite God's destiny for one.

Adebayo crafts a cautionary tale through this cinematic masterpiece, weaving together tradition, morality, and the far-reaching consequences of human choices.

The film underscores the profound significance of doors in Yoruba belief, portraying them as portals that connect the living with their ancestors and the divine.

With Seven Doors, Adebayo continues to demonstrate his mastery of storytelling, much like he did with "Jagun Jagun", captivating audiences with epic narratives, powerful themes, and a remarkable cast.

Film's synopsis

The movie "Seven Doors" opens with seven women under a spell, falling to their deaths from a waterfall. The next scene transitions to a beautiful and happy family playing tennis.

Set in Ilara Mokin, Ondo State, the narrative quickly spirals into chaos as the kingdom of Ilara faces injustice, unrest, and disputes over land seizures, and



demolition of houses due to the absence of a king to rule the kingdom.

The house's demolition and land seizures were the handwork of corrupt chiefs who fed on the king's absence with their power being unchecked. The power of the chiefs continues with backing one of the princes, Adeoye, whom they favour to ascend the throne as the next Onilara of Ilara, bypassing the oracle's decision on the rightful family to produce the king.

The favoured Prince Adeoye lavishes the chiefs with money and gifts, but the oracle unexpectedly selects the Adekogbe family to produce the next king. Adekogbe's family picks Adedunjoye as the next king but he's reluctant at first; eventually, he agrees after being convinced by his wife, Amaka. However, the disgruntled chiefs delay the traditional rites.

After completing all the rites, Adedunjoye becomes king, bringing justice, collaborating with investors, and steering Ilara towards prosperity. Yet, the kingdom's progress is short-lived when he fails to follow the oracle's command to knock on seven doors (marry seven wives).

Trouble begins as the king loses his daughter, Fola, faces the deaths of his subjects and becomes the target of a conspiracy led by the chiefs. They pressure him to install "Amoju Opa", Opa Yemi, who later brings him the forbidden

staff meant to cause his demise but Agunbiade, his friend's father sacrifices himself instead.

Haunted and desperate to save his kingdom, the king complies and marries six new wives to appease the gods, only to find them troublesome. Frustrated, he sends them away, but the chaos intensifies as his only son, Tade, hovers on the brink of death. Left with no choice, he recalls the queens, and harmony seems restored.

Believing he has finally achieved victory, the king gathers with his wives at the dining table, only to witness an evil spirit from the gods entering his home once again. The Ifa priest, Olojongbodu, reveals that the battle isn't over until he confronts and defeats Esusu, the spirit who granted his grandfather, King Adejuwon longevity.

The climax reaches its peak as the king confronts Esusu, leaving viewers in suspense about whether he will triumph. In a gripping final battle, the king emerges victorious.

The cast

**Continuation  
on next page**



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The film features renowned actors such as Chioma Chukwuka, Hafiz Oyetoro, Adebayo 'Oga Bello' Salami, Gabriel Afolayan, Jide Kosoko, Dele Odule, Femi Adebayo, Muyiwa Ademola, Kunle Afod, Ganiyu Nafiu, Kolawole Ajeyemi, and others.

Kolawole Ajeyemi portrays King Adejuwon, as a monarch desperate and willing to sacrifice everything to remain on the throne after killing his brother.

His desperation drives him to Esusu, Aliu Gafar, who sacrifices his seven wives to ensure his longevity. Ajeyemi's skilful portrayal captivates the audience.

Muyiwa Ademola plays Prince Adeoye, a wealthy man determined to buy his way to the throne by appeasing influential people with money, gifts, and valuables.

Ademola represents a desperate example of Nigerian politicians who use wisdom, the power of money, and thuggery to achieve their goals, disregarding the consequences.

Femi Adebayo portrays Oba Adedunjoye, the Onilara of Ilara, a monarch committed to transforming and improving the lives of his citizens by creating opportunities for the youth.

Adebayo perfects his role, skillfully conveying the struggles of a ruler burdened by his responsibilities and personal flaws.

His commanding presence stands out during moments of decisive action, especially when confronting scheming chiefs, while his vulnerability in the face of Esusu's vengeance highlights his humanity.

Adebayo's performance in 'Seven Door' further solidifies his reputation, following his role as Ogundiji in 'Jagun Jagun (The Warrior)' a Netflix original Yoruba film he produced in 2023.

READ ALSO: Femi Kuti, 9ice to headline AMAA 2024 Event

Chioma Chukwuka plays Queen Amaka, a woman caught between making critical decisions for her family and the kingdom.

Amaka shines as a resilient and adaptive queen, adeptly navigating the complexities of palace life.

Her seamless blending of Yoruba and Igbo adds authenticity and depth to her performance, making it remarkable.

The supporting cast of 'Seven Door' delivers compelling performances, particularly in scenes exploring power dynamics and betrayal. Their interactions with the king and Esusu emphasise themes of loyalty and corruption.

What's good

This film showcases Adebayo's filmmaking skills, ensuring his audience remains glued to the screen.

The metaphor "knocking on seven doors" used in the movie reminds viewers of the importance of tradition and the beauty of the Yoruba language.

The film delves into the ripple effects of past actions taken by forefathers that affect the next generation. The conversation between Adejuwon and Esusu serves as a cautionary tale about the price of desperation and short-sighted decisions.

Moreover, the movie touches on greed, betrayal, and desperation, drawing parallels with the modern political system and governance in Nigeria. This is evident in the life of the chiefs who betray the king and plot against him for their gain, without considering the citizens.

Seven Doors also explores love and the sacrifices people make amidst difficult decisions, exemplified by Queen Amaka. These themes provide a counterbalance to the darker aspects of the narrative.

Adebayo does not neglect culture in the film through its costumes, language, and customs. Seven Doors celebrates Yoruba and Igbo culture while addressing universal human experiences.

The movie

Like "Jagun Jagun", "Seven Doors" boasts top-notch cinematography, earning well-deserved praise from viewers for its remarkable camera angles, movements, and lighting.

From capturing the beauty of Ilara Kingdom to the use of special effects—especially the transformation of statues into humans—it showcases the technical prowess of the production team.

This makes one want to give Adebayo the accolades it truly deserves.

The storyline is expertly crafted, with each scene seamlessly driving the narrative forward. The pacing captivates the audience, while unexpected plot twists keep the story fresh and full of surprises.

The opening of the movie sets the tone for a gripping tale, immediately engaging viewers and drawing them in to watch more, eager to uncover what happens next.

The costume and set design stand out, with the costume and set designers earning well-deserved praise. Every design detail immerses viewers in the world of Ilara. From the royal attire to Esusu's makeup, each element of the visual storytelling is meticulously crafted.

In addition to impressive cinematography and costumes, the film showcases renowned, veteran actors. Muyiwa Ademola, Oga Bello, Saka, and Jide Kosoko deliver standout performances, shining brightly on screen.

Adebayo, the protagonist, also delivers a powerful performance, instilling fear in the chiefs while agreeing to their request to install Amaju Opa (Opa Yemi), who attempts to kill him.

The movie uses flashbacks effectively, setting it apart from others. The intricate costumes in "Seven Doors" are a feast for the eyes, yet their eclectic nature makes it challenging to precisely place the film's period, especially for viewers unfamiliar with the film's context.

Seven Doors deserves praise for its subtle yet powerful exploration of the cultural divide between Igbo and Yoruba communities. In an era of heightened tribalism on Nigerian social media, this nuanced approach feels particularly relevant.

Whether captivated by its rich cultural tapestry or intrigued by its exploration of greed, "Seven Doors" stands as a cinematic masterpiece.

The film masterfully blends captivating storytelling, stunning visuals, and powerful performances into an unforgettable viewing experience.

Scorecard: 8/10.

# Funsho Adeolu marks 20th anniversary with wife

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

US-based Nigerian actor Funsho Adeolu marked a major milestone in his personal life as he and his wife celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary.

Taking to Instagram, Adeolu shared a moving tribute to his wife, highlighting their enduring love and the beautiful journey they've shared over two decades.

The actor, widely admired for his talent and charisma, posted a heartfelt message alongside a slideshow of precious memories.

The images, a mix of nostalgic moments and recent snapshots, told the story of their life together — a journey of love, laughter, and unshakable support.

In his post, Adeolu expressed deep gratitude to God for their lasting union. He described their marriage as a remarkable adventure filled with unforgettable experiences and important milestones.

His words painted a picture of a relationship that has grown stronger with time, weathering challenges and celebrating triumphs.

"20 years? Wow!" Adeolu began, capturing the awe and gratitude he felt about reaching this significant anniversary. He described his wife as his "rock, best friend, and soulmate," emphasizing the deep connection they share.

Adeolu's words reflected not just admiration but a profound appreciation for his wife's role in his life.

He thanked her for being a steadfast partner, acknowledging her unwavering support and love



throughout their years together.

With a touch of romance, he promised her a lifetime of love, coupled with a renewed commitment to their future.

His post resonated with his followers, many of whom praised the couple's love story and wished them more years of happiness.

Adeolu's anniversary message was not only a celebration of their bond but also a testament to the strength of their partnership.

He reflected on how their relationship has deepened with time, transforming into something even more meaningful. "Our bond grew stronger each year," he wrote, highlighting the growth and evolution of their love.

The actor's words carried a tone of renewed promise as he described their future as a "new beginning."

His heartfelt pledge to a "lifetime of love" demonstrated his dedication to ensuring their love story continues to flourish.

Adeolu ended his message with optimism and hope, saying, "Forever is the deal," while raising a

metaphorical toast to many more years of togetherness.

The post quickly gained attention on social media, with fans and colleagues flooding the comment section with congratulatory messages.

Many commended the actor for openly celebrating his wife and their marriage, noting that such public displays of affection inspire others to cherish their relationships.

Yoruba Actor Funsho Adeolu and His wife

Adeolu's tribute serves as a reminder of the beauty of long-lasting love and the effort it takes to nurture a marriage over the years.

His message stood out as a beacon of hope, showing that love when built on mutual respect and commitment, can indeed endure.

As Adeolu and his wife celebrate this remarkable milestone, their story is one of inspiration. It reminds us that marriage is a journey of two individuals growing together, supporting each other through life's ups and downs, and cherishing the bond they share.



# Funke Akindele's Jenifa legacy: A global phenomenon

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In 2006, Funke Akindele introduced the world to Jenifa, a fictional character who has become one of the most iconic figures in Nigerian cinema.

Nearly three decades into her acting career, Akindele couldn't have anticipated just how enduring Jenifa would become.

From a humble beginning in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Akindele has evolved into one of Nollywood's most recognizable faces, but Jenifa stands out as her most memorable and impactful creation.

## The birth of Jenifa

Funke Akindele created Jenifa as a means to explore a new dimension of storytelling. Jenifa, initially named Suliati, transformed herself into Jennifer, a village girl desperately seeking a better life.

Her story of transformation and resilience resonated deeply with audiences. Jenifa's debut in 2008 was an instant success, capturing the hearts of viewers across Nigeria and beyond.

The character's unique struggles, personality, and quest for self-identity made her relatable to many. Jenifa wasn't just a story, but an experience that resonated with people on a deeper level.

## Success of the franchise

Following the massive success of the first installment, Akindele wasted no time in expanding the Jenifa brand. In 2010, she released Return of Jenifa, which took the world by storm.

The sequel solidified Akindele's status as a significant figure not just in Nollywood but across the entertainment industry.



Return of Jenifa was not only a commercial success but also cemented Akindele's entry into the cinematic space.

What made Jenifa's success even more remarkable was Akindele's ability to let the character evolve while she continued to explore other roles.

This gave Jenifa the space to grow, becoming a brand in her own right. Akindele's shift towards exploring other characters didn't diminish Jenifa's relevance.

## Expansion into TV and new media

As Jenifa's popularity surged, Akindele leveraged her character across multiple platforms. The spin-offs, such as Jenifa's Diary, Aiyetoro, and Jenifa on Lockdown, catered to diverse audiences.

These series were not just TV shows but cultural phenomena, attracting viewers across different age groups and media platforms.

Jenifa's Diary, which aired on platforms like NTA, AIT, and Africa Magic, kept the character alive and

thriving in the hearts of audiences.

Meanwhile, Aiyetoro and Jenifa on Lockdown resonated more with younger audiences, capitalizing on the rise of new media content like YouTube and social media.

This approach allowed Akindele to reach a broader audience and solidify Jenifa's place in the hearts of Nigerian viewers and those around the globe.

## Philanthropic efforts through the Jenifa foundation

Beyond her achievements in film, Akindele's commitment to Jenifa extended into philanthropy. In 2014, she founded the Jenifa Foundation, an initiative aimed at empowering young women and promoting literacy.

The Jenifa Foundation focuses on supporting education, empowering women, and fostering personal development.

A key project under the foundation is the Jenifa Mobile Game, designed to improve spelling and English language skills. Through this game, Akindele has contributed to education, blending entertainment with social responsibility.

# Cardi B: Why men prefer less attractive women

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Cardi B claims men prefer less attractive women because they are more submissive, shared during a recent social media livestream.

“Men prefer less attractive women because they are more submissive than perfect 10s,” Cardi B asserted confidently.

Following this statement, she elaborated further in a post on X, explaining that the livestream focused on how some men feel intimidated by women who are financially independent and assertive.

According to Cardi B, these men view such women as harder to control, making less attractive women a more desirable option. She also revealed that a man confessed to her why he would rather date someone rated a 6 over someone rated a 10.

Cardi B’s claims have sparked a wide range of reactions across social media, with many questioning the validity of her assertions.

However, the rapper has stood by her beliefs, insisting that these observations are rooted in personal experiences and conversations with individuals who share similar views.

In her view, societal norms and expectations still play a significant role in shaping men’s preferences, particularly when it comes to relationships.

The remarks come amid Cardi B’s very public divorce from her husband, rapper Offset, following allegations of infidelity.

While the exact reasons for their separation remain complex and multifaceted, Cardi B’s personal experiences seem to have shaped her perspective on the dynamics between men and women in relationships.

Her reflections indicate that issues like control, submission, and trust have been central to her views on attraction.

Cardi B’s comments also touch on broader societal conversations about



beauty standards and gender roles.

In today’s world, where emphasis is often placed on physical appearance, her claims suggest that some men may prioritize other attributes such as submissiveness or control when choosing a partner.

This has sparked debate on whether societal pressures and expectations continue to influence the choices men make in relationships.

Furthermore, Cardi B’s remarks highlight a tension between empowerment and traditional ideals of femininity.

As a successful, independent woman, she has been outspoken about her views on self-confidence and financial independence.

However, she seems to believe that some men still cling to outdated beliefs, valuing submissiveness and traditional gender roles over qualities like assertiveness and independence in women.

While Cardi B’s comments are likely to be met with a variety of opinions, they contribute to an ongoing conversation about relationships and gender dynamics in society.

American Rapper Cardi B. Photo Credit: Google  
Whether one agrees with her assertions or

not, Cardi B’s willingness to speak openly about her personal experiences and opinions adds depth to these discussions.

The idea that some men might prioritize control over other attributes such as appearance highlights the complexity of human relationships and the factors that influence attraction.

In addition, her perspective sheds light on how modern relationships are influenced by both individual experiences and broader cultural narratives.

The expectation that women should be submissive in relationships often contradicts the growing emphasis on female empowerment and independence.

This disconnect contributes to ongoing debates about what qualities men truly value in their partners.

Ultimately, Cardi B’s remarks open the door for further exploration of gender dynamics, highlighting the role that societal expectations and personal experiences play in shaping perceptions of attraction.

While her claims may not represent everyone’s beliefs, they highlight a significant conversation around how relationships are constructed and the factors that influence people’s choices in partners.



# Wale Adenuga talks Netflix's strategy in Nigeria

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nigerian showbiz icon Wale Adenuga, MFR, has openly criticized Netflix for its approach to the Nigerian film industry.

In a candid statement, Adenuga called for greater transparency and fairness in the platform's dealings with Nigerian filmmakers. His remarks shed light on the challenges and missed opportunities in showcasing the best of Nollywood to a global audience.

Adenuga began by addressing Netflix's entry into the Nigerian market, describing it as a test run. He alleged that the streaming giant quickly abandoned its efforts, leaving behind a trail of unfulfilled potential.

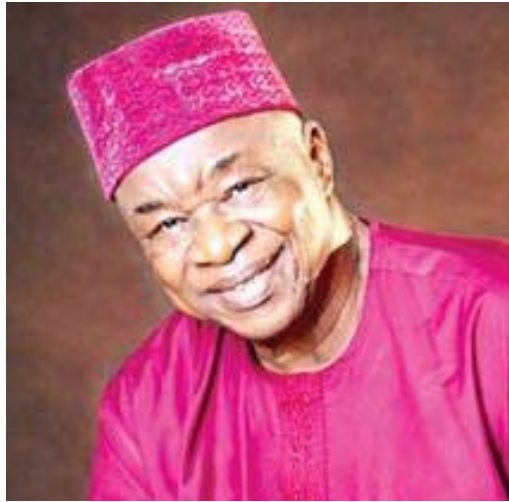
"Let's talk about Netflix," he said. "We, the older generation, can't stand it when lies are celebrated, and the truth is silenced. Yes, Netflix—along with other international, profit-driven platforms—came to Nigeria to test the market. But alas, after a short time, they packed up and took the next available flight back home!"

## Flawed selection process

The filmmaker argued that Netflix's failure in Nigeria was not due to economic conditions or the greed of local producers. Instead, he pointed to a flawed foundation, particularly in the selection process for Nigerian films.

"The problem lies in the corrupted and poor selection process of movies," Adenuga said. He accused Netflix of prioritizing the fame and connections of producers over the creativity and quality of their films.

This, he explained, created a system that marginalized talented filmmakers while rewarding mediocrity. Adenuga compared the current crop of Netflix-supported movies to those produced by legends like Tunde Kelani and Zeb Ejiro.



According to him, the latter offered far more captivating stories than the current selection.

"Many of the films featured on Netflix were far from the best Nigeria could offer," he said. "The truly gifted filmmakers languished in towns and villages simply because they lacked the right connections."

## Backdoor dealings and missed opportunities

Adenuga didn't hold back in describing the backdoor dealings he believes have plagued the industry. He alleged that wealthy producers monopolized access to international representatives, using lavish parties and personal connections to secure contracts.

"In return, just two producers land contracts meant for twenty," he said. These individuals, he claimed, often lacked real directing or producing skills. Instead, they relied on the talents of others, taking credit for work they did not create.

## Call for change

Adenuga urged Netflix and similar platforms to adopt a more inclusive and transparent approach. He proposed a democratic process where all Nigerian producers, regardless of status or wealth, could submit their work for consideration. "Let them submit

synopses of their work, coupled with perhaps one-hour productions, and sift through them to find the best," he suggested.

This method, he argued, would ensure that the selected films truly represent Nigeria's talent and culture. He emphasized that a compelling story resonates more with Nigerian audiences than technical perfection. "A good movie that scores 90% on storyline and 50% on technicalities will be far more embraced by the Nigerian audience than a movie with a 90% technical score but only 50% on storyline," Adenuga noted.

## Hope for progress

The veteran filmmaker expressed hope that Netflix has learned from its past mistakes and is taking steps to correct them.

He called on the platform to embrace fairness and give every Nigerian filmmaker a chance to shine. "If Netflix—or any international platform—wants to acquire the best of Nigerian films, they must adopt a democratic and transparent selection process," he concluded.

Adenuga's remarks highlight the potential for platforms like Netflix to play a transformative role in Nollywood.

However, achieving this requires a shift in priorities—one that values creativity, fairness, and the authentic Nigerian experience over connections and influence.

By addressing these issues, Netflix could unlock the true potential of Nigerian cinema, showcasing the rich stories and talents that have long defined Nollywood.

# Beyoncé tops female RIAA certifications

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**B**eyoncé has officially become the most certified female artist of all time, according to the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

With a total of 103 RIAA-certified titles, Beyoncé surpasses all other female artists in the association's history, a remarkable achievement that underscores her immense influence and talent.

“Crowning achievement! Congratulations to @Beyoncé, who now holds the record for the most certified titles for a female artist in RIAA history, including her first two Diamond singles! @Parkwood @ColumbiaRecords,” the RIAA posted on X (formerly Twitter) on Tuesday.

Beyoncé's journey to this historic milestone has been long and filled with countless hit songs and groundbreaking albums.

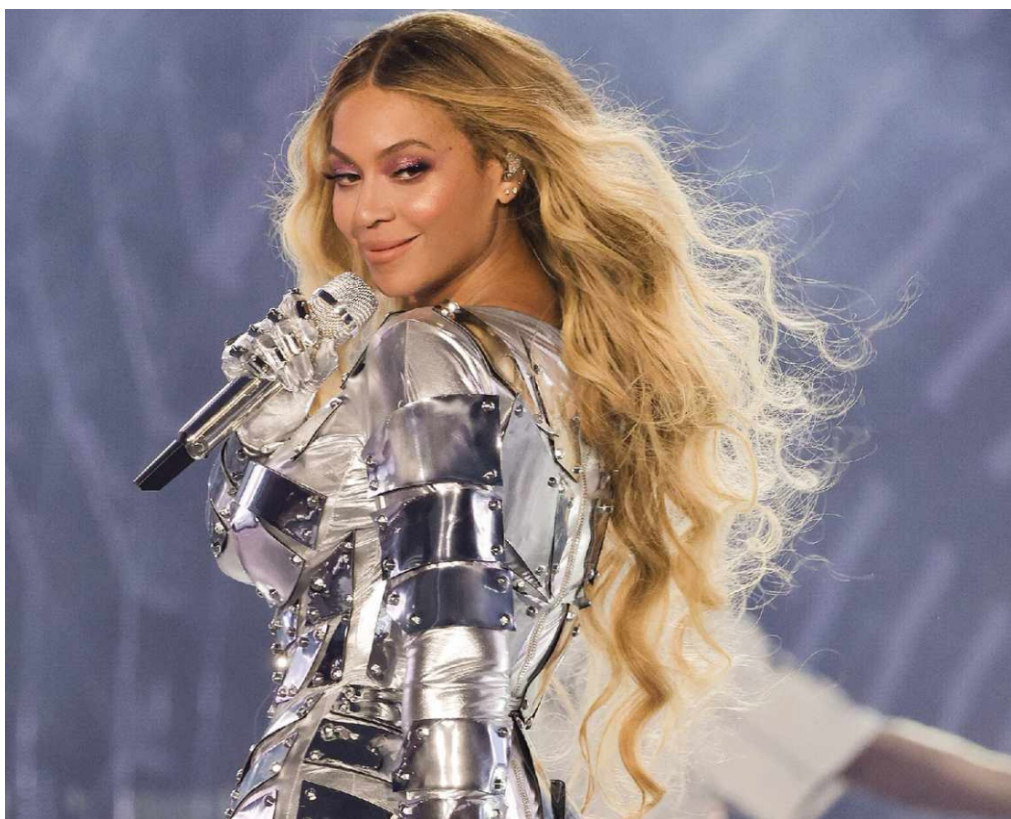
Among her most celebrated certifications are her two Diamond singles: “Halo” and “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It).”

These Diamond certifications are not only a testament to Beyoncé's enduring popularity but also her ability to create timeless music that resonates across generations.

In addition to these iconic tracks, she has earned numerous other top-tier certifications throughout her career.

Her album *Renaissance* achieved 2x Platinum status, further emphasizing the widespread acclaim and commercial success of her recent work.

The 2016 *Lemonade* album, celebrated for its powerful storytelling and cultural impact, has reached 4x Platinum status, further solidifying



Beyoncé's place as a major force in contemporary music.

However, her earlier albums also boast impressive certifications. The *Sasha Fierce* album has been certified 7x Platinum, a nod to her ability to blend infectious pop hooks with introspective ballads.

Beyoncé

Similarly, her debut album *Dangerously In Love* achieved the same 7x Platinum certification, showcasing her early success and the foundation for her remarkable career.

What sets Beyoncé apart from many artists is her ability to evolve and remain relevant while maintaining a connection with her audience.

Her music seamlessly merges various genres, including R&B, pop, and hip-hop, making her a versatile artist who appeals to a wide range of listeners.

Whether it's her catchy anthems, emotional ballads, or socially conscious messages, her music has

consistently broken boundaries and reshaped the music landscape.

The musician's influence extends beyond her music. She is also a cultural icon, known for her powerful performances, philanthropic efforts, and advocacy for women's rights.

Her impact on the music industry and beyond is undeniable, and her latest RIAA certification is a testament to her continued relevance and exceptional talent.

With each new album, Beyoncé continues to push boundaries and redefine what it means to be a female artist in the 21st century.

Her success is not just about record-breaking certifications—it's about the lasting legacy she continues to build.

Beyoncé's journey is far from over, and her ability to connect with audiences worldwide ensures that she will remain a key figure in the global music scene for years to come.



# Tems: “Career start, I was so naive”

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-winning winner Temilade Openiyi, better known as Tems, recently opened up about the challenges she faced during the early stages of her music journey.

Speaking candidly in an interview with Glamour Magazine Germany, the singer revealed how her naivety initially shaped her experience in the music industry.

Tems, who gained international acclaim for her collaboration on the global hit “Essence,” admitted that her early days were filled with lessons and growth. “I don’t want to lie,” she confessed. “I was very naive at the beginning of my career. I just wanted to make good art.”

The singer’s honesty about her struggles offers a glimpse into the complexities of navigating the highly competitive music world.

For many, her words resonate as a reminder that even the most talented individuals must learn the ropes to succeed.

Tems explained that adapting to the music industry required more than just creativity—it demanded a conscious effort to maintain balance and stay grounded.

Learning to navigate the industry

Tems highlighted that entering the music scene wasn’t as straightforward as she had envisioned. The transition from being a passionate artist to understanding the business side of music took time.

“I had to learn how to navigate the music business in a healthy way,” she said. This learning curve, though challenging, helped shape the artist she is today.

Her journey reflects the reality for many young artists who step into the industry with dreams but lack a clear understanding of the challenges ahead.

For Tems, the desire to create good music was at the core of her ambitions, but she quickly realized that success required more than talent.

It involved building resilience,



establishing strong support systems, and staying true to her values.

Family and management as pillars of support

Tems credited her success and stability to the unwavering support of her family and management team.

According to the artist, these two groups have played a significant role in keeping her grounded amid the pressures of fame. “I would say that it is both my management and my family that keep me grounded,” she noted. “Especially my family, my mother and my brother.”

Her acknowledgment of their role sheds light on the importance of having a reliable support system in an industry known for its demanding nature.

Her relationship with her family, particularly her mother and brother, has been instrumental in helping her maintain focus and balance.

Rising above challenges

As one of the most influential African artists in the global music scene, Tems’ story of growth and resilience inspires many.

Her ability to rise above initial challenges and carve out her own path showcases her determination and strength.

Despite the hurdles, she remains committed to her craft and continues to produce music that resonates with audiences worldwide.

Tems’ journey also serves as a testament to the importance of self-awareness and

adaptability. By acknowledging her early struggles, she not only demonstrates humility but also provides a roadmap for aspiring artists who may face similar obstacles.

Her willingness to share her experiences emphasizes the value of perseverance and the rewards of learning from one’s mistakes.

Nigerian Music Sensation Tems  
Shining example for young artists

Her candid reflections underscore the reality that success in the music industry doesn’t happen overnight. It requires a blend of talent, hard work, and the ability to navigate the complexities of the business.

Her story is a powerful reminder that growth often comes from overcoming challenges and embracing the lessons they bring.

For fans and aspiring musicians alike, Tems stands as a role model—a testament to the power of persistence and the importance of surrounding oneself with a strong support system.

Her journey from a naive artist to a Grammy-winning sensation highlights the transformative power of determination and self-belief.

Looking ahead

As Tems continues to make her mark on the global music stage, her story remains one of hope and inspiration. Her openness about her struggles serves as a beacon for others navigating their own paths.

In an industry that often glamorizes success while glossing over the struggles, Tems’ honesty is a breath of fresh air.

With her grounded approach and unwavering focus, Tems is not only a symbol of African excellence but also a reminder that the journey to greatness is as important as the destination. Her music, resilience, and authenticity ensure that her impact will be felt for generations to come.

# 15 year old girl kills Teacher, Student in US School shooting

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Police are investigating the motive behind a tragic school shooting at Abundant Life Christian School in Madison, Wisconsin.

A 15-year-old student, identified as Natalie Rupnow, also known by the name Samantha, opened fire on Monday, killing a teacher and a fellow student before taking her own life. Two other victims remain in critical condition with life-threatening injuries.

Natalie Rupnow was found dead at the scene from what appears to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to Madison Police Chief Shon Barnes. The weapon used in the attack was believed to be a 9mm pistol.

Authorities are currently examining her online presence, including potential posts and a manifesto, to determine the motive behind the attack. Friends and family are also being interviewed as part of the ongoing investigation.

School shootings involving female perpetrators are rare. Of the 83 documented school shootings in the United States this year, only two involved female suspects, according to CNN.

The Irish Times reported that 2024 has witnessed 322 school



shootings in the U.S., making it the second-highest total since 1966, surpassed only by last year's figure of 349.

The shooting has left the Madison community in shock. Nine schools in the area were temporarily locked down as a precaution, while students from Abundant Life Christian School were evacuated to City Church before being reunited with their families.

"As difficult as today is, that's still someone's child that's gone," said Chief Barnes, emphasizing the tragedy's profound impact. "I don't know why, and I feel like if we did know why, we could stop these things from happening."

The lack of a known motive has intensified calls for better

understanding of the factors leading to such incidents. The police chief noted that the school did not have metal detectors, stating, "It's a safe space, and schools should remain safe spaces."

This latest act of gun violence adds to the grim tally of school shootings in the United States, reigniting debates around gun control and school safety. Emergency responders, who happened to be training just three miles away, arrived promptly at the scene, but the damage was already done.

The investigation continues as the Madison community grapples with the devastating loss of life.



# Suicide bomber wanted to kill me in Iraq – Pope Francis

By Dave Oludare Oso

Pope Francis has revealed he was the target of an attempted suicide bombing during his visit to Iraq three years ago, the first by a Catholic pontiff to the country and probably the riskiest foreign trip of his 11-year papacy.

In an excerpt published on Tuesday from a forthcoming autobiography, Francis said he was informed by police after landing in Baghdad in March 2021 that at least two known suicide bombers were targeting one of his planned events.

“A woman packed with explosives, a young kamikaze, was heading to Mosul to blow herself up during the papal visit,” wrote the pontiff, according to an excerpt from the book in the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*. “And a van had also set off at full speed with the same intent.”

Francis’s visit to Mosul was a key moment during his Iraq trip. Iraq’s second-largest city had been under the control of Islamic State from 2014 to 2017. The pope visited the ruins of four destroyed churches there and launched an appeal for peace.

During the trip, the Vatican provided few details about the security preparations for the pope. Many of the events during his visit, which took place as the COVID-19 pandemic was first easing, were open only to a limited number of people.

Iraq is known to have deployed thousands of additional security personnel to protect Francis.



Pope Francis, surrounded by shells of destroyed churches, attends a prayer for the victims of war at Hosh al-Bieaa Church Square, in Mosul, Iraq, March 7, 2021. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

The Vatican did not immediately respond to a request for further details about the pope’s new comments.

Francis’s new autobiography, entitled “Hope,” is due to be published on January 14, 2025.

In the excerpt published on Tuesday, Francis said the Vatican had been informed about the assassination attempt by British intelligence.

The pope said he asked a security official the next day what had happened to the would-be bombers.

“The commander replied laconically: ‘They are no more’,” wrote Francis.

“The Iraqi police had intercepted them and blown them up.”

The pope drew headlines earlier this month when, in an excerpt from a different book — titled “Hope Never Disappoints,” based on a series of interviews with the pontiff — Francis said Israel’s campaign against the Hamas terror group in Gaza should be investigated as a possible genocide.

He has also faced criticism for other comments about the ongoing war. Last week, the Vatican removed a Palestinian-sponsored nativity scene, whose dedication the pope had attended, showing the baby Jesus lying on a keffiyeh after backlash.

He is set to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday.

# Corruption trial: Netanyahu takes the stand for 4th day

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The judges of the Jerusalem District Court express skepticism over dozens of incidents cited in the indictment against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as examples in which he received favorable coverage from the Walla news website as a result of requests made to its CEO.

The indictment itself cites 315 such incidents, but in dozens of them it does not mention that Netanyahu was involved but rather alleges that he was aware of the requests in general.

Netanyahu's attorney Amit Hadad asserts that a large proportion of the requests for favorable coverage cited by the indictment were made without Netanyahu's knowledge.

Prosecutor Yehudit Tirosh of the State Attorney's Office notes that one of the general clauses of the indictment alleges that Netanyahu's involvement in making such requests was done "either directly or through intermediaries," and says that the incidents where the prime minister's direct involvement is not asserted were done with his "basic, psychological awareness through an intermediary."



Tirosh asserts that the requests were made by Netanyahu's son Yair or his wife Sara and that Netanyahu would therefore be aware of this.

Judge Moshe Baram asks Tirosh if she is claiming that there could have been involvement of Netanyahu without awareness, to which she says no, but Judge Oded Shaham quizzes her further, asking how then he was involved.

As a result of the questions, Tirosh requests a pause in proceedings to reread the indictment, but the judges insist on continuing.

The indictment alleges that Netanyahu or intermediaries of his demanded favorable

coverage of the prime minister from Walla in return for regulatory decisions which the prime minister advanced to benefit Walla owner Shaul Elovitch's business interests, specifically the Bezeq telecommunications company in which he was a controlling shareholder.

Hadad and Netanyahu have sought to demonstrate in the first four days of the prime minister's testimony that Netanyahu was not involved or aware of the overwhelming majority of such requests and that Walla's coverage remained intensely hostile to Netanyahu regardless, such that he received no bribe.



# Corruption trial: Netanyahu takes the stand for 4th day

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**V**eteran Australian broadcaster, Alan Jones has entered a plea of not guilty to charges of sexually abusing 10 young men over nearly two decades.

He is facing 34 charges related to alleged incidents occurring between 2001 and 2019, including 11 counts of aggravated indecent assault.

Jones, a prominent figure in Australian media and a former coach of the national rugby union team, had previously denied the allegations reported by The Sydney Morning Herald in 2023.

Speaking publicly for the first time since his arrest last month, Mr Jones stated, "I have never indecently assaulted these people.

"I want you to understand this: these allegations are all either baseless or they distort the truth, and you should know that prior to my arrest I was given no opportunity by police to answer any of these allegations."



Jones was apprehended at his Sydney apartment on 18 November by detectives from the New South Wales (NSW) Police Child Abuse Squad, who conducted a search of his harbour-front property and seized electronic devices.

Initially charged in relation to eight individuals, including a 17-year-old boy, the police have since added further charges and continue their investigations. All charges, except for two counts of common assault, are sexual offences.

According to NSW Police's Michael Fitzgerald, some of the alleged victims had personal connections with Jones, and at least one was employed by him. Others were allegedly assaulted upon first meeting him.

Jones, a longstanding fixture on Sydney's 2GB radio station, balanced his radio duties with television commentary roles until his retirement from full-time work in 2020 due to health issues.

Known for his polarising presence, Jones commanded one of Australia's largest audiences but frequently courted controversy.

In 2012, he suggested that then-Prime Minister Julia Gillard's father had "died of shame," and in 2019 faced an advertiser boycott after remarking that someone should "shove a sock" down the throat of New Zealand's then-leader, Jacinda Ardern.

## Five family members found dead in Utah, survivor hospitalised

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**F**ive members of a family, including three children, were discovered dead in a Utah residence on Tuesday, according to police reports.

Roxanne Vainuku, spokesperson for the West Valley City Police Department said a 17-year-old was survivor with a gunshot wound transported to a hospital.

The police said the deceased comprised two adults, an 11-year-old boy, and two girls aged 9 and 2, as reported by

The exact cause of their deaths remains undetermined.

The bodies were found in a house located in West Valley City, approximately 9 miles (14 kilometres) southwest of Salt Lake City. The injured teenager was found in the garage.

Vainuku stated during a nighttime press conference, "Absolutely horrific. This is something that certainly will weigh



heavily on investigators in this case."

Authorities do not suspect an at-large perpetrator, believing the shooting to be an isolated incident confined to the home,

# EFL: Gabriel Jesus' hat-trick secures semi-finals spot for Arsenal

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**A**rsenal striker, Gabriel Jesus scored an inspiring second-half hat-trick to give the Gunners the lead and secured a semi-finals spot for the Gunners.

In the Quarter-Finals match of the Carabao Cup played on Wednesday, at the Emirates stadium, Gabriel Jesus put his recent goalscoring troubles aside when Arsenal conceded two goals from Crystal Palace.

The Brazilian forward came into the game with one goal in his previous 33 Arsenal outings in all competitions but his treble rescued Mikel Arteta's side - who fell behind to a fourth-minute Jean-Philippe Mateta strike.

The Gunners to conceded poor goals, especially for Jakub Kiwior who was outmuscled too easily by the Palace forward from Dean Henderson's route-one punt, leaving the Frenchman to finish past David Raya. During the match, Arsenal's attacking quality, particularly its depth, was in question.

Their best first-half chances came from set-pieces as Jefferson Lerma cleared Leandro Trossard's corner from off the line, before Henderson palmed Raheem Sterling's free-kick away from the top corner.

Arsenal Manager, Mikel Arteta brought on captain Martin Odegaard at half-time which fixed these issues. Sterling should have put the Gunners ahead when



he was found by a good cross from Kieran Tierney, making his first Arsenal start after 548 days, but he fired straight at Henderson, then hit the bar from the rebound.

But Jesus eventually broke the Palace resistance eight minutes after the break when the influential Odegaard found the striker in the box and his turn bamboozled Marc Guehi.

His deft chip over Henderson was even better.

Jesus thought he had a second when he turned well again in the area - but Henderson palmed his effort into the side-netting. Arsenal brought on Bukayo Saka in a further momentum shift as he, like Odegaard before him, set up Jesus off the bench.

The England winger played the Brazilian into the box and it was

another quick turn from the forward before his finish into the far corner - although there was a hint of a tight offside from the forward with no VAR in play.

"It was offside," said Palace boss Oliver Glasner at full-time. Eight minutes later, Jesus had his third as he broke away with the freedom of north London - again finding that far corner to claim the matchball - his first hat-trick since April 2022, when he was playing for Manchester City.

Arsenal thought they were home and dry until Eddie Nketiah - let go by the Gunners over the summer - put in a superb header to create a nervy finish. But the Gunners did enough to reach the Carabao Cup semi-finals for the second time in three seasons.



# Liverpool beat Southampton to seal semi-finals spot in EFL Cup

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Arne Slot's Liverpool continued their good form as they defeated Southampton by two goals to one and sealed a semi-finals spot in Carabao Cup.

In the EFL quarter-finals clash on Wednesday, Liverpool remain in contention for all four major trophies.

The battle between the Premier League's top and bottom club didn't end with as big a gap as many expected, but Liverpool still won 2-1 thanks to goals from Darwin Nunez and Harvey Elliott.

Darwin Nunez and Harvey Elliott were on the scoresheet as Liverpool edged into the EFL Cup semi-finals with a 2-1 victory at manager-less Southampton.

Arne Slot, who served a one-match touchline ban, named a makeshift starting XI for this clash at St Mary's, but it made little difference in the end as the Merseysiders continued their push on all fronts.

Nunez opened the scoring on 24 minutes when he raced on to Trent



Alexander-Arnold's long pass and fired in just his fourth goal of the season.

Elliott then doubled the lead heading into the interval when he marked his first start of an injury-hit season with his maiden goal to polish off fine work by Cody Gakpo.

Southampton, who were being led by caretaker Simon Rusk following the dismissal of Russell Martin at the weekend, looked lost but suddenly

ignited in belief when Cameron Archer cut in from the left and curled a fine shot into the far corner to reduce the arrears on 59 minutes.

There were chances at both ends in a keenly-fought finale, but The Saints could not find the equaliser to deny the holders progress to the last four.

Next up, struggling Southampton visit Fulham on Sunday, while Premier League leaders Liverpool travel to Tottenham Hotspur.

## CAF POTY Award: Nigeria wins it more than any other nation

By Alade Adisa

With emergence of Ademola Lookman as the 2024 Confederation of African Football, CAF, Player of the Year, POTY, Nigeria has emerged the country with the highest number of winners of the coveted award.

The annual award was started in 1992 and Nigerian players have won it seven times.

CAF

Ademola Lookman

Also, Nigeria is the only country to win the CAF POTY Award in two consecutive years on three occasions, with different players.

The list of Nigerian winners are: Rashidi Yekini 1993, Emmanuel Amunike 1994, Kanu Nwaku 1996 & 1999, Victor Ikpeba 1997, Victor Osimhen 2023 and Ademola Lookman 2024.



The award was first started in 1970 by France Football but was taken over and organised by Africans through CAF in 1992.