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Nigeria, China renew \$2bn currency swap agreement to boost trade

By Dave Oludare Oso

The federal government and China have renewed their 15 billion Yuan (\$2 billion) currency swap agreement, aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and investment relations.

According to Bloomberg, the People's Bank of China (PBOC), in a statement on Thursday, confirmed that the agreement has been extended for another three years, with provisions for further renewal based on mutual consent.

"The agreement is valid for three years and can be renewed upon mutual consent," the PBOC stated.

The deal enables the direct exchange of the Chinese Yuan and Nigerian Naira, eliminating reliance on the US dollar to reduce transaction costs and promote trade efficiency between the two countries.

Originally signed in June 2018, the currency swap facility was designed to address liquidity challenges and facilitate trade in local currencies. At the time, the agreement allowed for the



exchange of 15 billion Yuan for 720 billion Naira, equivalent to \$2.5 billion at an exchange rate of NGN305 to \$1.

The arrangement permits the central banks of both nations to inject liquidity into their financial systems through bi-weekly auctions, supporting the seamless exchange of Yuan and Naira to facilitate trade and investment activities.

According to the agreement, the swap is designed to streamline trade transactions by eliminating the need for US dollars as an intermediary currency.

It provides liquidity in naira for Chinese businesses operating in Nigeria and in yuan for

Nigerian firms trading in China. This mechanism aims to facilitate seamless transactions, support bilateral investments, and enhance market efficiency.

The arrangement allows the central banks of both countries to inject liquidity into their respective financial systems via bi-weekly auctions.

By doing so, they promote the purchase, sale, and repurchase of yuan and naira to support trade and investment activities. The agreement shows the deepening economic ties between China and Nigeria, prioritising direct currency exchanges to reduce dependency on the dollar and encourage cross-border trade.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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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
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Compensate families of stampede victims, Falana tells FG

By Dave Oludare Oso



Human rights lawyer, Femi Falana (SAN) has told the Federal Government to compensate the families of those involved in the recent stampedes in parts of the country.

Falana stated this on Friday in Akure during a programme organised by the Ondo State Government, tagged Akeredolu Leadership Lecture Series, in honour of

the late governor.

The lawyer blamed the Nigeria Police for the recent stampedes in Ibadan, Anambra and Abuja, where over 65 people died in the process of collecting palliatives.

According to him, the police failed to adequately protect people during the gatherings.

“It was failure of security; it’s not poverty that caused

all the loss of lives.

“If there is any process or gathering, they, the police, shall provide security,” the lawyer said.

Falana said that Ondo State has become a reference point for states in the country by ensuring peace in its domain through the creation of the Ondo State Security Network, codenamed Amotekun, by Akeredolu.

Sokoto airstrike: We'll investigate causes, ensure justice – FG

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Federal Government has said that it would investigate the Wednesday's accidental bombing that killed 10 people in Gidan Bisa and Runtuwa villages of Silame Local Government Area of Sokoto State.

This comes on the heels of the clarifications by the Defence Headquarters (DHQ) that the death of 10 civilians in Sokoto State was as a result of a secondary explosion and not direct military airstrikes.

Dr. Bello Mutawalle, the Minister of State, Defence, assured of the investigation during a condolence visit to Governor Ahmed Aliyu in Sokoto.

He described what happened in the two villages as very unfortunate, and assured that thorough investigations would be conducted with a view to finding out what really happened, adding that justice would be done on the matter.

“Mr President is worried by the unfortunate incident and he asked me to come and condole you over what happened,” he said.

The minister also added that at times the military air strikes hit wrong locations due to the wrong information they may have been given while carrying out operations.

He, however, said that security reports had confirmed that the area where the incident occurred was being dominated by the Lakurawa



bandits.

He lamented the way and manner Nigeria has been placed on red alert on terrorism, and reiterated the commitment of the Federal Government to make the country safe.

The minister extolled the commitment of Governor Ahmed Aliyu on the fight against banditry and other criminal activities in the state.

According to him, Dr Aliyu was the only Governor who willingly requested for a military base in his state, hence he reassured the governor of military's support to make Sokoto State safe.

“We will continue to provide all the necessary equipment and gadgets to Sokoto State,” he assured.

The minister also made a personal donation of N10 million to the families of those killed and those

receiving treatment at the hospital as a result of the injuries they sustained from the bombings.

Responding, Governor Aliyu called on the military to improve on their information gathering and surveillance so as to avoid hitting the wrong targets.

He commended the military and other security agencies for their commitment in making the state safe.

He thanked President Bola Tinubu for the concern he has shown over the accidental bombing of the two villages in the state.

Governor Aliyu also thanked him for his support to the state in the fight against banditry.

The Governor also described the accidental bombing on the innocent souls as something destined to happen and prayed the Almighty Allah to prevent a reoccurrence.

Rogue officers fraudulently using IGP's name, office – Police

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Nigeria Police Force has decried what it described as the fraudulent use of the name and office of the Inspector-General of Police to perpetrate illegal activities by some of its officers.

ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, Force Public Relations Officer, said this in a statement on Saturday while lamenting the persistent unprofessional conduct of some officers which, according to him, is undermining the standards and reputation of the Force.

“Despite repeated warnings and disciplinary actions taken against those who have been exposed, some officers are still engaging in these shameful acts that erode public trust.”

He noted that such officers also invoked the name of the Inspector General of Police to stop the victims of their actions from reporting to higher authorities of the Force.

Even more alarming is the fraudulent use of the name and office of the Inspector-General of Police to perpetrate these illegal acts.

“The intention behind this tactic is to intimidate victims into believing that the IGP is aware, and approves of their illegal activities. As a result, victims are often deterred from reporting these incidents to higher authorities.”



Adejobi however urged the public not to be swayed by such tactics.

“We urge members of the public to report any misconduct by Police Officers to their superiors, the Heads of the Complaint Response Units (CRU) in their states or the Commissioner of Police in the state. Contact information for the CRU in all states has been published previously.

“Members of the public are therefore advised to exercise caution when approached by officers or individuals claiming connections with the IGP or any senior officer for the purpose of influence or favour.

“In such instances, we urge you to immediately report such cases

to the Nigeria Police Force via: DCP Akin Fakorede, Head, IGP Monitoring Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja – 08184077076; ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, Force Public Relations Officer, Force Headquarters, Abuja – 08037168147; CSP Taiwo Oyewale, Head, IGP Special Investigation Unit, Force Headquarters, Abuja – 08069318238; SP Sherriff Lawal, ADC (Aide-de-Camp) to the IGP – 08094712605.

“The Nigeria Police Force assures all Nigerians of its commitment to upholding the highest standards of integrity and professionalism. We encourage the public to collaborate with us by reporting any suspicious activities to ensure that justice and fairness prevail at all times.”

Police arrest officers demanding money to investigate missing Ogun girl

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**



The Nigeria Police Force have arrested some officers attached to the Ogun State Police Command for allegedly demanding money from the family of a missing girl before taking action on the case.

Muyiwa Adejobi, the Public Relations Officer (PPRO) for the Nigeria Police Force, disclosed this in a post on X.com on Saturday.

The police spokesman stated

that they were being held in detention.

His post partly read: “Otta missing girl: The policemen who demanded money before they could attend to the case have been arrested and are now in detention for disciplinary action.”

Adejobi further reaffirmed the command’s commitment to locating the missing girl, assuring the public that she would be found soon.

The PPRO added, “The Ogun State Police Command has been on the case. The girl will be found as soon as possible. We also urge the family of the victim to cooperate with the police.”

Adejobi had earlier warned officers against using the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun’s name to perpetuate fraud, advising the public to report such cases.

Fayemi endorses Oyebanji for second term

By Friday Omosola

The immediate past governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, has declared his support for the second-term bid of his successor, Biodun Oyebanji.

Speaking during a meeting and end-of-year gathering with All Progressives Congress (APC) leaders from the 16 local government areas of the state, Fayemi emphasised that the governor had performed exceptionally well and deserved full backing to secure a second term in office.

However, the former Minister of Solid Minerals clarified that his endorsement does not preclude other aspirants from contesting for the party's governorship ticket.

"I am a Democrat, so I cannot discourage anybody from contesting for the party's ticket. Anybody who feels he is capable can contest for the party's ticket. What I am saying is that as for me and my entire family, we are for Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji's second term in office. We have all agreed that our governor is an Omoluabi who has performed exceedingly well within the last two years.

"And we all agreed that if we support him as our candidate, the people of Ekiti will joyfully follow us. So, the best thing to do is to rally support for him so he can continue the good governance till 2030. By April next year, INEC will announce dates for the Ekiti election. So, this is a good time to start the work. Let the work begin in our various wards and local government areas.



"I am a democrat and during my time, I contested against no fewer than 30 other aspirants in 2007 and in 2018 not less than 26 other aspirants showed interest. So, as a democrat, I cannot ask anybody not to show interest. Anybody who feels he is sufficiently capable can show interest, should go ahead," Fayemi added.

Responding to the endorsement, Governor Oyebanji appreciated the former governor and other party leaders.

He stated that he was deeply humbled by the public declaration made by Fayemi, whom he referred to as his "boss, mentor, and benefactor."

He assured Fayemi and other APC leaders of his unwavering commitment to meeting their expectations and vowed not to

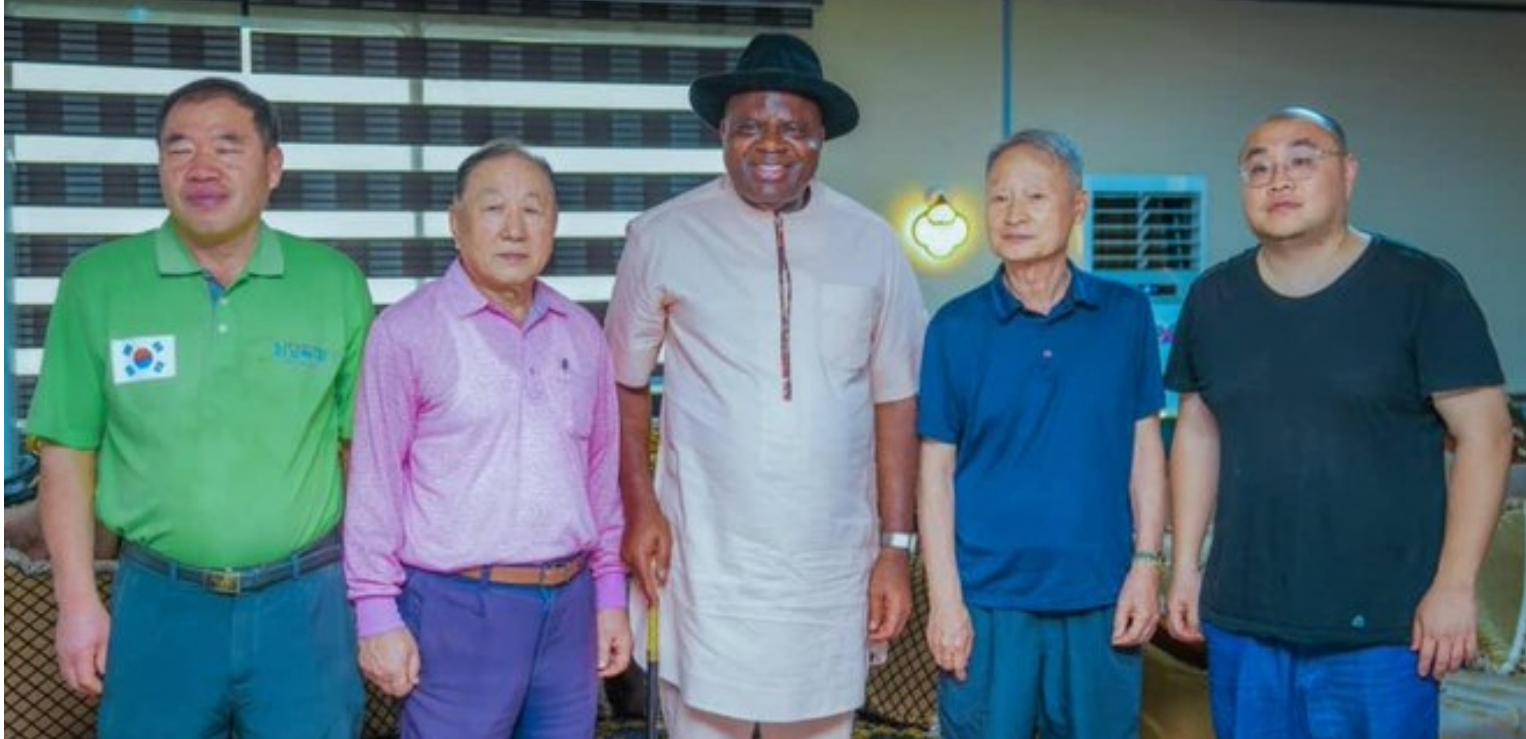
disappoint them.

"When you made me SSG in 2018, I said I would do everything to make you proud. When in 2021 you told me of the party's decision to have me as the flagbearer, I remember I also told you, I would make you proud. I believe I have been able to make you proud through the various programmes and policies that have brought joy to the people.

"What I can only say for now is that God helping me, I shall make you and the entire party proud again. We have been able to position the party as a darling of the people and I know that has always been your desire. And I am happy, no single person has left our party for another party. Instead, we have been receiving people from other political parties who are fascinated by what we are doing," Oyebanji said.

S' Korean firm installs modern rice mills in Bayelsa

By Friday Omosola



To boost agricultural development in Bayelsa State, a South Korean owned company has installed a modern rice processing mills in Yenagoa, the state capital.

The state-of-the-art mills, located at the state-owned School-to-Land Farm, can process 40 metric tonnes of rice paddies daily.

The project is part of a bilateral partnership aimed at improving rice production and strengthening the agricultural sector in Bayelsa.

Speaking after a demonstration exercise on the operation of the mills, Byung Chul Son, Managing Director of Deta Sung Machinery and Construction Company Limited and leader of

the Korean delegation, said the team collaborated with the Bayelsa State Ministry of Agriculture to train staff on soil preparation, land irrigation, rice cultivation, and milling.

He noted that while the mills would significantly enhance rice production, additional equipment—such as dryers, parboilers, and colour selectors—would be needed to optimize the full capacity of the machines.

The Bayelsa State Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Beke Sese, disclosed that the South Korean government donated four rice mills, each with a production capacity of 10 tonnes per day.

As part of their visit, the four-man Korean delegation met with Governor Douye Diri at his home at Sampo, Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area.

During the meeting, Governor Diri expressed appreciation to the South Korean government for the donation of rice mills, farming tractors, and technical support.

Governor Diri reiterated his administration's commitment to transforming Bayelsa into a hub for rice production.

He also urged the Korean engineers to explore opportunities for training local engineers in manufacturing farming equipment, including tractors.

Weird: Supervisors demand sex, gratifications before approving students' dissertations

Those involved demean themselves – CONUA boss

By Alade Adisa



When Grace, a final year student in a federal university in the South-West was about concluding her programme, she was surprised when she and her colleagues were asked to contribute money to take care of external assessors that would look at their final projects.

That was after they have contributed money to take care of their own internal assessors. But the situation is not different from what obtains in many university campuses across the country.

For postgraduate students, having to contribute money for

various reasons, especially to take care of supervisors and assessors, has become a norm.

Our experiences

“I decided I will never have anything else to do with Nigerian universities, the day I saw people defending their masters dissertation presenting coolers of rice, garden eggs and crates of drinks to their supervisors. I thought someone was getting married.”- Bibian U.

“We were told we will pay N60,000 each for both entertainment and logistics of external supervisor.”-Chiamaka O.

“We spent the night prior to my mother’s defense at the University of Ilorin, cooking coolers of rice with assorted meat for the lecturers.” – Omekagu.

” We fed the whole department. Paid a prior fee of N2,000. Still gave supervisor gift. This same supervisor then came on one of my Facebook posts to say how I’m too opinionated to get married. I blocked him for my peace of mind. I don’t have strength.”-Sylvia E.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Continuation from page 10

“My husband was so frustrated by his UNIUYO supervisor for this, that he abandoned his MBA and finally got it from a UK university without any sort of bribery.” – Uche N.

“In ESUT, students have to buy brand new suits for their supervisors.” – Udeh O.

“Envelopes filled with money. Hotel bills. Payment to the school. External supervisor’s fee. The mental stress. Ah! The only reason I’m still doing it is because I’ve come too far to stop. After Master’s, I’ll never do anything school in this country again. Never!” – Bello A.

“Some departments will even provide you with a menu and list of people you’ll feed on the day of your thesis defense. I nearly wept for my friend, when one non-teaching staff started dragging her because meat had finished.” – Esther A. “Ordinary B.Sc project I defended, my supervisor collected a bag of rice. On the defense day, we went to an eatery and bought food and drinks for all the supervisors in the hall.” – Harrison P.

“The money I spent on my supervisor was enough to buy a piece of land in GRA. A bottle of special nonalcoholic wine and MTN airtime worth N1,500 for “consultation” before he approved my topic. Two months DSTV premium subscription. N5,000 for every

chapter I took to him for vetting. Except Chapter 4 – he made me pay N20,000 for it because, “all my project students know I do it better. The day of defence, we, (a group of about 15 students) paid N2,000 each for food and transport fare.” -Odichi R. “We paid N40,000 each for ‘refreshment’ and ‘honorarium’ during internal defence. We are also going to replicate that amount, if not more, during external defence.” – Ihunanya A.

“For BSc project defense we contributed money to feed the supervisors.” -Oreva E.

“My project topic was originally on aquatic snails. My supervisor said I should bring some snails to his house, not even the aquatic snails that I was supposed to be working on. I bought half a bag of land snails for him.

A week later, he changed my topic to Catfish and demanded that I buy some catfish and bring them to his house for inspection. I had to do it. I wish he would ask for rice and drinks, like my colleagues were asked. I would have spent less money.” – Ruth D.

“The best thing I ever did for my life and mental health was to abandon my Masters programme halfway. My blood pressure was always high. They killed my zeal to study and do research. Nigerian universities? God forbid!” –

Ene P.

“I abandoned my Masters programme because my supervisor wanted to have sex with me. I told him I’m a married woman. He said and I quote, “That’s even better! I like them married. If anything happens, we’ll both keep our mouths shut.” No one listened to my report.” – Annie U.

“And postgraduate students do multiple defenses – proposal, internal and faculty defense, then the very almighty external defense. Multiple seminars too. And refreshment is served in all. I swear, MSc/PHD in Nigeria was the most challenging thing I’ve done in my life so far.” – Olu A.

It is demeaning, inappropriate – CONUA boss

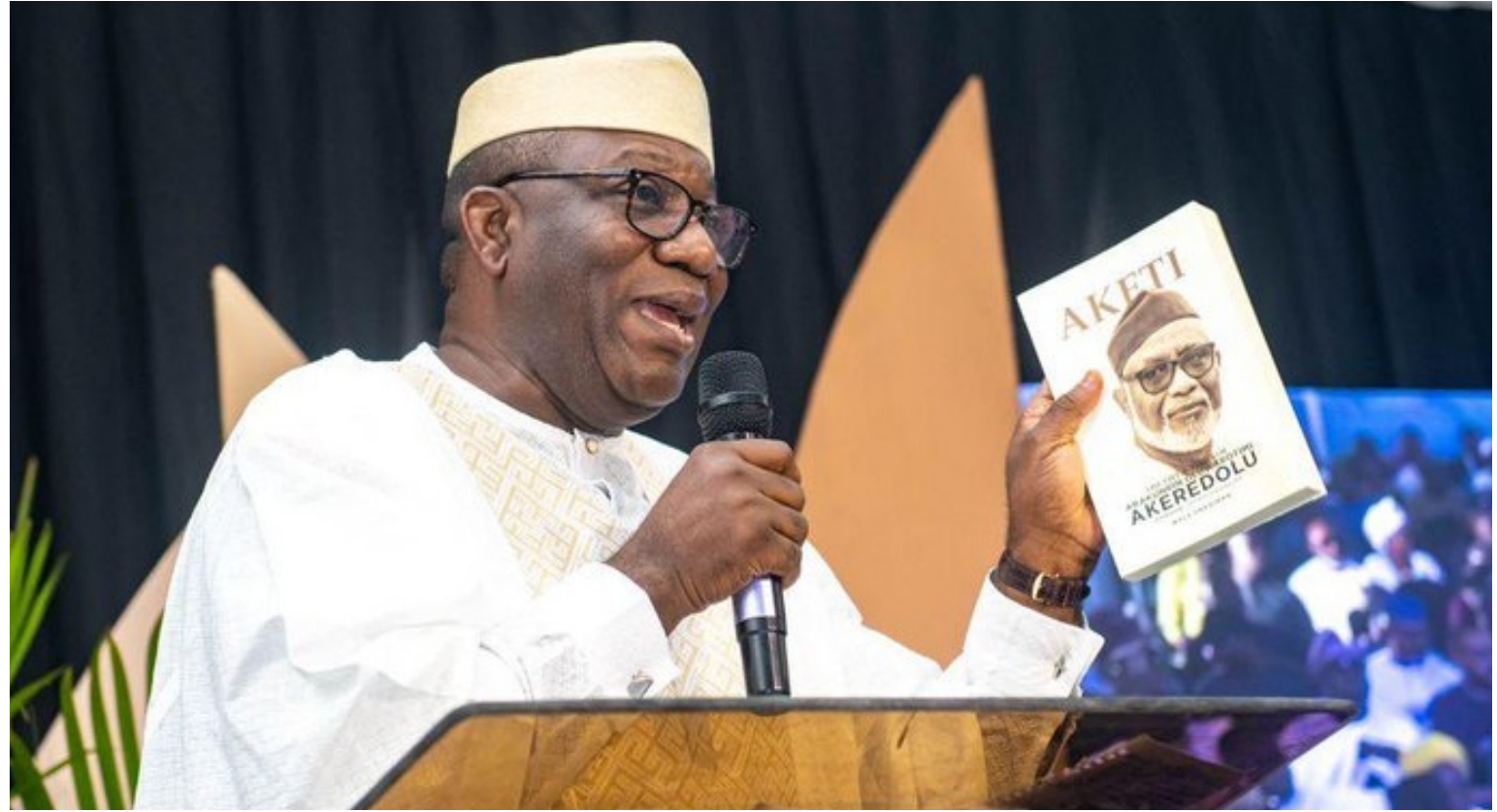
Speaking on the development, the National President of the Congress of University Academics, CONUA, Dr Niyi Sunmonu, described such practices as unethical.

“It is inappropriate and very demeaning to the calling of academics. It cannot be excused or justified under any disguise. It brings down the integrity of academics.

“I’ll suggest people engaging in it should stop forthwith. It amounts to corrupting the academic integrity.”

Fayemi , at Akeredolu's 1st memorial service, extols ex- gov's virtues

By Friday Omosola



It was a day of honour and glory for the late Ondo State, Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, as the immediate past Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi described him as a leader whose patriotism knew no bounds.

Speaking at the one-year remembrance service held in honour of the late governor yesterday in Akure, Fayemi echoed Akeredolu's unwavering dedication to the public good and his relentless pursuit of a united, prosperous, and secure Nigeria.

He noted that the late Akeredolu led with conviction, governed with compassion, and inspired everyone he encountered.

Fayemi expressed deep sorrow over the reality of Akeredolu's untimely passing, which he said left behind

unfinished work in the service of the nation.

"It is hard to believe that a year has passed since we lost Aketi, a sagely intellectual, a courageous lawyer, and a devoted nation-builder whose life and legacy remain deeply etched in our hearts," Fayemi added.

Fayemi, former Minister of Solid Minerals also described the late Akeredolu as an irrepressible advocate for justice, fairness, and equity, who never hesitated to speak the truth, no matter how uncomfortable it might be.

He further noted that the late governor exemplified visionary leadership during his tenure as Chairman of the South West Governors' Forum by spearheading the establishment of the Western

Nigeria Security Network, Amotekun—a landmark initiative that stands as a testament to his vision and determination.

"As we remember him, we draw strength from the memories of his courage, his wisdom, and his relentless fight for justice. Aketi's life reminds us of the duty we owe to our communities and our nation to continue the work of building a better Nigeria, as he would have wanted.

"Nigeria has lost a towering figure, Ondo State has lost a beloved son, and I have lost a dear friend. But his legacy endures in the hearts of all who knew and admired him. Rest well, Aketi. You remain irreplaceable."

Kwara gov's Chief of Staff, Mahe, is dead

By Emmanuel Nwagboniwe

Prince Abdul Kadir Mahe, the Chief of Staff to Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq is reportedly dead

The New Daily Prime reports that Mahe's death was announced by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Rafiu Ajakaiye.

He said in a statement that Mahe died in the early hours of today

The statement reads: "In total submission to the will of Allah, we regret to announce the passing of the Chief of Staff to His Excellency, Prince Abdul Kadir Mahe.



"He died this morning, December 28, 2024, as has been destined by Allaah.

"The late CoS will be buried today at his residence on Moro Street, Adewole Estate, Ilorin, after the Asr prayer.

"His Excellency deeply mourns the

death of Prince Abdul Kadir Mahe, a perfect gentleman, community leader, urbane public servant, and statesman.

"The Governor commiserates with the Emir of Ilorin Dr. Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari; the immediate family of Prince Abdul Kadir; government establishments; and cabinet members.

"We ask for the understanding of everyone at this mournful period as the government and family mourn the quintessential public servant.

"We pray that Allaah accepts his return, eases his accounts, admits him to al-Jannah Firdaus, and upholds his family upon goodness."

Badenoch under fire over membership row with Nigel Farage

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Kemi Badenoch is facing mounting criticism for engaging in a public spat with Nigel Farage over claims regarding Reform UK's membership numbers. The dispute has drawn warnings from within her own Conservative Party, with members and political observers questioning the wisdom of such confrontations during a politically precarious time.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported Farage claimed that Reform UK's membership had surpassed the Conservative Party's, a claim Badenoch dismissed as based on "fake" numbers. Kemi accused Reform Party of using manipulated counters, prompting Farage to demand an immediate apology and threaten legal action.

Conservatives are now divided over Badenoch's handling of the situation. Some Tory MPs and party members criticized her actions, believing that her public attack on Farage has inadvertently given Reform UK more visibility, potentially boosting their profile. One Tory MP described the row as "total



bollocks," emphasizing that such public disputes only serve to detract from the Conservative Party's broader priorities.

A Conservative member from Manchester, speaking to The New Daily Prime, stated, "Kemi's actions are nothing but free promotion for Farage and the Reform Party. She needs to wake up and realize the threat Reform poses, especially with local elections just around the corner." The member added that engaging in online battles with Farage is counterproductive and could distract from the party's need to focus on issues voters care about.

Another senior party member criticized Badenoch for what they described as a futile attempt to discredit Farage. "Picking a fight like this is pointless—never wrestle with a pig, as they say. It just gets you dirty while the pig enjoys it," the member remarked. They urged the Conservative Party to focus on its own challenges, such as holding Labour accountable on critical issues like job creation, reducing carbon emissions, cutting taxes, and addressing the housing crisis.

Farage, meanwhile, has seized on the controversy to bolster his party's credibility. On Friday, he announced that Reform UK would open its membership figures for independent verification by media organizations, a move intended to counter allegations of fraud. He also reiterated his demand for an apology from Badenoch, describing her comments as "outrageous" and hinting at the possibility of legal action. "I'm not going to take this lying down," Farage said during a media call. "Kemi Badenoch has made a terrible mistake, and she's going to regret this."

Ibadan stampede: Woli Agba prays for Naomi Silekunola

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Comedian Woli Agba prays for Naomi Silekunola, ex-wife of the Ooni of Ife, sharing heartfelt support and faith-filled words on Instagram.

His emotional post offered words of encouragement, faith, and hope while addressing the challenges Naomi has faced since her separation from the royal figure.

In his message, Woli Agba assured Naomi that her struggles were not unnoticed by God. He expressed his belief that divine justice would prevail, asking for God's vindication in her life. With a tone of empathy and solidarity, he prayed for brighter days ahead, emphasizing that God's glory would shine more radiantly upon her.

Faith and mercy in focus

Acknowledging Naomi's merciful nature, Woli Agba appealed to God to extend His own mercy to her. He highlighted her resilience and character, describing her as someone whose strength lies in her faith. His words reflected a deep sense of hope that God's intervention would bring comfort and healing to her life.

In his prayer, the comedian condemned any negative forces that might seek to harm Naomi. He declared an end to satanic or demonic influences and boldly stated that the desires of her adversaries would ultimately fail. This powerful proclamation showcased Woli Agba's unwavering belief in divine protection.

Prayers for all affected

The comedian's post extended beyond Naomi, as he also prayed for everyone impacted by the situation. His words carried a message of unity and collective healing. He called on God to console all those affected, recognizing the emotional toll of the circumstances on everyone involved.



In a show of solidarity, Woli Agba mentioned the support of IPM Global, an organization he is associated with. He emphasized their prayers for Naomi and others tied to the incident, expressing regret over the turn of events.

Instagram post goes viral

Woli Agba's Instagram post quickly gained traction, drawing attention from fans and followers who commended his compassionate gesture. Many joined him in prayer, leaving comments of encouragement and support for Naomi.

The post resonated with people who admired the comedian's boldness in addressing sensitive issues while offering spiritual guidance.

Heartfelt message

The comedian's post included these heartfelt words:

"I strongly believe this is not happening outside the knowledge of God. May you be vindicated, and the Glory of God shall shine brighter on you.

"You are only being merciful, and God will show you HIS MERCIES. The desire of the enemies shall perish with them. Every Satanic or Demonic

intervention is canceled, and you are covered in the glory of God.

"May God console everyone affected in this trying time. It is very unfortunate and sad that everything turned out this way. PLEASE HAVE MERCY OH LORD!!!

"IPM Global is praying for you and everyone involved and affected by this unpleasant and regrettable occurrence. HAVE MERCY OH DEAR LORD!!!"

Reactions

Social media users praised Woli Agba for his courage and sensitivity. Many noted that his words provided hope and strength to those enduring difficult times. Some commenters shared similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of faith and perseverance in overcoming trials.

The prayerful tone of his message struck a chord with many, reminding them of the power of compassion and community. Others appreciated the use of his platform to advocate for healing and spiritual support, showing that even in the face of adversity, kindness and faith can prevail.

Conclusion

Woli Agba's heartfelt prayers for Naomi Silekunola underscore the importance of solidarity during challenging times.

His words reflect a message of hope, faith, and resilience, reminding everyone of the power of divine intervention and collective healing. As the story continues to unfold, his prayers stand as a testament to the role of faith in overcoming life's trials.

Kidnappers demand N75m for Ondo Anglican bishop, wife, children

By Dave Oludare Oso

Gunmen that kidnapped the Anglican bishop, Rev. Canon Olowolagba, his wife, and children, along Iboropa road in Akoko North-East council area of Ondo State, have demanded a ransom of N75 million for their release.

According to sources, the abductors have opened a line of communication with the victims family members and leaders of the Anglican Church.

GWG also learnt that different associations have asked their members to raise some money to be added to the ransom demanded by the kidnappers.

Announcing the traumatic incident on Friday, the Bishop of Akoko Anglican Diocese, Rt. Rev. Babajide Bada, said the family members were travelling from Ipesi through Isua Akoko when they were abducted.

Rt. Rev. Babajide Bada said, “They drove from Ipesi through Isua Akoko. And when they got to between Isua and Ise-Akoko, they were kidnapped.

And we didn’t know, until the following morning, when their members discovered that they didn’t get to Ikaram, where they were going. And they were not also at home.

Bada said that the daughter of the clergyman is a student of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA), who was on holiday, and a nine-year-old girl were abducted alongside the couple.

He confirmed that the kidnappers have demanded a ransom of N75 million before the victims could be released.



“But we told them that the money demanded for it was unreasonable; they later agreed to reduce it to N10 million.

“When we gathered some money to go and secure their release, they changed it to N15 million. That’s why we’ve not secured the release of the bishop and his family members.

“The abductors have now insisted on a N75 million ransom before they could set free the victims.

The cleric said that the matter had been reported to the state security outfit codenamed Amotekun.

“Amotekun is working because we have reported the matter at the Amotekun office in Akure, and they have started work to secure the release of the victims.

“We have also notified the hunters and reported the matter to the police, both in Ikare and Isua.

“Presently, Amotekun and the hunters are combing the bush, to ensure the victims are rescued from their captors.

Speaking on the unfortunate incident, the chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Akoko North-West Local Government, Sheikh Basiru Aminu, has called on religious leaders and the people of the community to pray for the victims to be released unhurt.

Contacted, the spokesperson for the state police command, Funmi Odunlami, said that the matter was not reported to any police station.

But the state Amotekun commander, Chief Adetunji Adeleye, confirmed the abduction of the victims.

Adeleye said that “Amotekun Corps is working with other security agencies to secure the release of the victims.

Funke Akindele lights up Cinemas with #ELJtheMovie Festive frenzy

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

It's a season of love, and Funke Akindele, popularly known as "Jenifa," is at the forefront of spreading festive cheer with her fans.

The beloved actress and filmmaker took to Instagram to invite her followers to watch her latest film, 'Everybody Loves Jenifa' (#ELJtheMovie), in cinemas across Nigeria.

The post, which garnered over 9,000 likes in just two hours, was a rallying call for fans to celebrate togetherness and the spirit of the season.

"My amazing family, it's a season of love, and we your faves are coming out to spread love and watch #ELJtheMovie with you today," she captioned, tagging it with her signature hashtags #funkeakindele and #funkejenifaakindele.

Fans were quick to shower her with admiration and excitement. One user, @niya.sstv, proclaimed, "Funke is like the movie industry's Wizkid! You no fit drag am! No dey compare her with anyone o!" Another fan, @kirabeautystore1, simply stated, "She is a FORCE," while @officialhaykay proudly



declared, "We are Jenifa family!"

The meet-and-greet sessions following screenings have become a highlight for fans. Comments revealed excitement about post-event gatherings at locations like the FAAN Fiesta and FAAN Praise.

Others shared personal stories of inspiration drawn from Akindele's energy and achievements.

One fan, @dobitasia_90, suggested that despite her immense talent and creativity, attending film school could further enhance her already exceptional skills. "She's a

genius indeed for achieving all this without studying the art!"

Another fan, @tranquilityedibles, captured the sentiment of many: "I love you. My data is being consumed by your page every day. Your energy, focus, and optimism are top-notch!"

Akindele's infectious energy isn't just lighting up the silver screen; it's inspiring her followers to aim higher and believe in their dreams.

As fans throng cinemas to watch #ELJtheMovie, Akindele continues to prove why she's a beloved powerhouse in Nollywood.

“Seven Doors” inspired by king I knew – Femi Adebayo

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Femi Adebayo shares his latest film, *Seven Doors*, was inspired by the life of a king he was closely connected to, focusing on culture, love, and tradition.

In an engaging interview with, Adebayo explained how this project aims to celebrate and preserve Nigeria’s rich cultural heritage.

The cultural significance of “Seven Doors”

Adebayo emphasized that preserving Nigeria’s culture is vital. “It’s extremely important to preserve our culture. Creating films that highlight our cultural heritage is one of the ways to ensure it’s passed down, so future generations can enjoy and learn from it,” he said.

For Adebayo, storytelling is more than entertainment; it’s a means of educating and keeping traditions alive.

“I was fortunate to be close to a particular king, and his experiences sparked the idea and concept of *Seven Doors*,” Adebayo revealed. “Many people view our kings as mini-gods, which they are, but they often forget that they are human beings with real struggles. They face numerous challenges, both before and after ascending to the throne. That is precisely what we explored in the movie.”

Through *Seven Doors*, Adebayo seeks to depict the human side of royalty—highlighting their personal struggles, conflicts, and the weight of leadership. “Our kings are not just revered figures—they are human, and they have to navigate the same challenges as everyone else,” Adebayo explained.

Story of love and tradition

Beyond its cultural exploration, *Seven Doors* is centered around a powerful narrative of love. Adebayo described the film as a “love story.” “I also want to convey that love conquers all. In situations where love conflicts with tradition, love will always prevail,” he



emphasized.

Adebayo believes this message is particularly relevant in a world where tradition sometimes clashes with modern values and individual desires. “We live in a time when there’s often a battle between tradition and personal freedom,” he said. “In “*Seven Doors*”, love triumphs over those conflicts.”

This central theme of love is not just about romantic relationships, but a broader message of connection, unity, and the strength that love can offer in the face of adversity. “The film showcases how love can heal and bring people together, even in the most challenging circumstances,” Adebayo added.

The controversial scenes

One of the most talked-about scenes in *Seven Doors* is the kissing scene between Adebayo and co-star Chioma Chukwuka. Addressing the reaction to this scene, Adebayo stated, “I was simply portraying the role, focusing on character analysis and interpretation.”

Adebayo emphasized that as an actor, his goal is to bring authenticity to the characters he portrays. “I wasn’t necessarily thinking about the public reaction,” he said. “My job is to interpret the role as truthfully as possible.”

However, he also admitted that his

favorite scene wasn’t the kissing one, but a more intense, symbolic moment involving chiefs being beaten. “For me, the most impactful scene was when they had to lay the chiefs on the floor and beat them. I wasn’t even part of that scene,” Adebayo explained.

Preserving heritage through storytelling Adebayo firmly believes that storytelling is a crucial way to preserve Nigeria’s cultural heritage. “Films like “*Seven Doors*” play a significant role in preserving our culture,” he said. “It’s about ensuring that our traditions, struggles, and triumphs are documented for generations to come.”

For Adebayo, the film isn’t just entertainment—it’s a form of documentation, a way of ensuring that the stories of past generations are not forgotten. “I see “*Seven Doors*” as a contribution to the greater narrative of our culture,” he said. “It’s not just about creating art; it’s about making sure that future generations can learn from and connect with our history.”

Vision for the future

Adebayo’s vision for the future is one where African cinema continues to thrive, focusing on themes that resonate with both local and global audiences. “I want to contribute to a cinema that reflects our realities, values, and traditions,” he said.

With *Seven Doors*, Adebayo aims to inspire others to tell stories that not only entertain but also educate. “Cinema has the power to shape how people view the world,” he explained. “Through “*Seven Doors*”, I hope to spark conversations and encourage others to explore their cultural roots through storytelling.”

As Femi Adebayo continues to make strides in the film industry, his focus on cultural preservation and the power of love remains at the heart of his creative journey. *Seven Doors* is not just a film—it’s a statement of his commitment to telling authentic African stories.

Police deny knowledge of VDM's missing N180m **By Friday Omosola**

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command has stated that it is unaware of claims that social media influencer Martins 'VeryDarkMan (VDM)' Otse lost N180 million from his non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Earlier, The New Daily Prime reported that VeryDarkMan, in an Instagram video, alleged that the account of his NGO—launched in October to focus on community development and equipping public schools—was hacked.

According to him, N180 million was



transferred to an unknown account, leaving only N20 million behind.

VeryDarkMan, who had previously

sought public support during the NGO's launch and promised transparency and accountability, has faced scepticism from the public regarding the credibility of his explanation.

Reacting to the claims, FCT Police Command spokesperson Josephine Akeh stated that the matter had not been reported to the police, and no investigation was underway.

She clarified that the command was not involved in the issue.

Tiwa Savage: "This might be my last studio album" **By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

Afrobeats icon Tiwa Savage has stunned fans with news of a potential retirement from music. In an emotional revelation shared on her Instagram story.

The acclaimed artist hinted that her next studio album might be her last.

The singer, known for her powerful voice and global hits, expressed feelings of exhaustion. "This might be my last studio album. I'm tired. I don't try," she wrote. Her candid words immediately sparked conversations among fans and industry insiders about her legacy and future.

As a mother and music pioneer, Tiwa Savage has spent over a decade at the forefront of Afrobeats. She has worked tirelessly to push the genre onto the global stage. Songs like "All Over" and "Koroba" have earned her international recognition, while collaborations with global stars solidified her reputation.

However, the pressures of fame and



the demands of a music career appear to have taken a toll. Tiwa hinted that she feels she has given her all to the industry. Her honesty struck a chord with fans, who have flooded social media with messages of support and gratitude for her contributions.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding her next steps, Tiwa's influence on Afrobeats remains undeniable. She is

one of the first African female artists to gain massive global attention, breaking barriers and inspiring countless young artists.

If her upcoming album does mark her swan song, it will likely reflect her journey, struggles, and achievements. Fans are eager to hear what could be her most personal and heartfelt project yet.

For now, Tiwa Savage's decision remains open-ended. The music world will watch closely as she navigates this pivotal moment. Whether she continues to grace the stage or pursues new ventures, her legacy as a trailblazer in African music is secure.

As fans await her next move, one thing is clear—Tiwa Savage's impact on music will echo far beyond her final album. Her story reminds us that even icons need time to pause, reflect, and prioritize their well-being.

2024, pivotal year in Nigeria's entertainment industry

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

2024 will be remembered as a pivotal year in Nigeria's history, marked by losses, separations, new beginnings, and remarkable achievements.

As is often the case, celebrities in Nigeria's vibrant entertainment industry—and even beyond—dominated the headlines for various reasons, whether personal, emotional, controversial, or inspiring.

The drama surrounding some of the biggest names in Nigerian showbiz showed no signs of slowing down. Like previous years, 2024 was a blend of highs and lows, featuring notable moments such as births and deaths, endorsements, controversies, and outstanding accomplishments that brought both challenges and celebrations to different individuals.

Funke Akindele makes history

Actress and filmmaker Funke Akindele made history in January with her movie, *A Tribe Called Judah*, becoming the first Nollywood film to gross ₦1 billion at the box office.

Impressively, this milestone was achieved in just one month. The film, produced and co-directed by Funke Akindele, features a stellar cast including Uzor Arukwe, Tobi Makinde, Timini Egbuson, Nse Ikpe-Etim, Jide Kene Achufusi, Uzee Usman, and others.

Onyeka Onwenu Sisi Quadri, Mr. Ibu, Junior Pope, others passed on

The Nigerian entertainment industry faced profound losses in 2024, with the passing of several icons leaving fans and colleagues in deep mourning.

Beloved songbird Onyeka Onwenu passed away on July 30 while doing what she loved most—singing. Her death was one of the year's most shocking blows. Earlier in the year, on March 1, the film industry grieved the loss of Tolani Quadri Oyebamiji, popularly known as Sisi Quadri, who died at Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital, Ogbomosho.



The very next day, March 2, John Ikechukwu Okafor, fondly called Mr. Ibu, succumbed to prolonged health challenges at 62. Known for his comedic brilliance, he brought joy to countless fans across Nigeria and beyond.

On April 10, Nollywood suffered another tragic loss when actor Junior Pope Odonwodo died in a boat accident on the Anam River in Anambra State while travelling to a film shoot in Asaba. The accident also claimed the lives of three crew members.

Other notable figures who passed away in 2024 include Aduke Gold, Dele Gold, Amaechi Muonagor, Adejumo Aderounmu, Deji Aderemi (Baba Olofa Ina), Ethel Ekpe, Charles Olumo (Agbako), and Andy Best, marking a year of significant heartbreak for the industry.

Davido finally weds Chioma in Lagos

One of the most heartwarming highlights of 2024 was the wedding of Afrobeats superstar Davido to his longtime partner, Chioma Rowland. After navigating the highs and lows of their relationship, the couple exchanged vows in an intimate yet extravagant ceremony that dominated social media for weeks. Fans celebrated their union as a testament to love's resilience and triumph over challenges, with the event serving as a beautiful reaffirmation of Davido's unwavering commitment to Chioma, his "Assurance."

P-Square final separation

The legendary music duo P-Square faced a second split in 2024, shattering fans' hopes of seeing the beloved twin brothers perform together again. The year proved tumultuous for Paul and Peter Okoye, who publicly traded insults and accusations.

Paul confirmed the separation, alleging that Peter had involved the EFCC in his arrest and had stolen a song he had written. The rift sent shockwaves through the entertainment industry, leaving fans yearning for reconciliation and the magic of their united performances.

Bobrisky serves jail term

Controversial social media influencer Okuneye Idris Olanrewaju, popularly known as Bobrisky, remained a constant presence in the headlines throughout 2024—for all the wrong reasons.

First, Bobrisky was arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for allegedly defacing naira banknotes. Charged in court, he pled guilty to four counts of currency abuse, an offense punishable by up to six months in prison. Bobrisky served his sentence and was released on August 5, 2024.

However, just months later, on October 20, 2024, he was apprehended by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) at the Seme border while attempting to flee the country amid an ongoing investigation linked to corruption allegations made public by influencer VeryDarkMan.

In a related incident, the EFCC also filed a three-count charge against nightlife entrepreneur Pascal Okechukwu, famously known as Cubana Chief Priest, for similar allegations of naira abuse.

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VeryDarkMan's many moments

In 2024, internet critic VeryDarkMan (VDM) found himself embroiled in feuds with several celebrities. Among the most notable was his clash with rapper Folarin 'Falz' Falana and his father, prominent lawyer Femi Falana.

The controversy began when VDM released an audio recording of Bobrisky claiming he never served jail time after his conviction. Bobrisky alleged that Falz had facilitated a connection with his father, who secured a presidential pardon for him in exchange for millions.

VDM's subsequent disparaging remarks about the Falana family prompted the rapper and his father to take legal action against him. Throughout the year, VDM engaged in heated exchanges with multiple celebrities, keeping his name firmly in the spotlight.

Kollington Ayinla overcomes health condition

In 2024, veteran Fuji singer Kollington Ayinla faced a serious medical condition that sent shockwaves through the music industry, particularly within Fujidom. Rumours of his death circulated widely on social media as he was hospitalised at LASUTH for weeks.

The 75-year-old musician received overwhelming support from fans within and outside Nigeria, which played a crucial role in his recovery. Following the ordeal, Kollington Ayinla released a new single, proving his resilience and continuing musical journey.

Kate Henshaw and Saidi Balogun lose loved ones

In 2024, several Nollywood stars experienced the loss of loved ones, ranging from children to spouses and parents.

For Kate Henshaw, the passing of her beloved mother was a deeply emotional and heart-wrenching moment. The loss shook her profoundly, but the support of friends, family, and colleagues helped ease the burden of her grief.

Global music sensation Wizkid also struggled with tears and grief as he mourned the loss of his mother, openly expressing his pain.

Saidi Balogun was devastated by the loss of his daughter, Zeenat. The heartbreaking news was shared by Ronke Oshodi Oke on social media, leaving Balogun deeply shaken. Zeenat was Balogun's daughter from a previous relationship before his marriage to Fathia Williams.

Other notable losses included prolific filmmaker Kunle Afolayan, who lost his 81-year-old mother, as well as musicians Dare Melody and Mike Dada, who both lost their wives.

Kunle Remi gets married

Famous Nigerian actor Kunle Remi tied the knot with his wife, Boluwatiwi, in a traditional ceremony held in Lagos State. The event drew notable figures, including actors, actresses, and Nigerian billionaire Femi Otedola, who is a brother of the bride's mother, along with other esteemed dignitaries.

AY's marriage faces challenges

In 2024, famous comedian AY Makun and his wife, Mabel, ended their marriage, parting ways after 14 years of union, which began in 2008.

The couple, who share two children, announced their separation, shocking the public. Mabel hinted at irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split, while AY accepted responsibility, stating that his decision to stay silent in the public eye should not be perceived as a weakness.

Rema makes history

Afropop singer Divine Ikubor, better known as Rema, made history as the first African artist to win a Chinese music award. He achieved this milestone when his hit single "Calm Down" remix featuring American superstar Selena Gomez earned the Best Collaboration of the Year award at the 2024 Hito Music Awards in the Republic of China.

That same year, Rema also performed alongside Rihanna at the grand wedding

ceremony of an Indian billionaire's son, further solidifying his global influence.

Davido donates again

In February, Afrobeats star Davido announced a N300 million donation to orphanages through his foundation, The David Adeleke Foundation. The singer described the gesture as his annual contribution to the nation.

Davido revealed that this philanthropic effort would become a yearly initiative, aimed at supporting Nigeria and the wider public.

The donation comes one year after he donated funds he got on his 30th birthday to several orphanages across the country.

Sabinus, others welcome new babies

Popular skit maker Emmanuel Chukwemeka Ejekwu, aka Sabinus, and his wife, Ciana Chapman, welcomed their first child together. The couple, who tied the knot in a private ceremony in early 2023, celebrated the arrival of their bundle of joy.

Similarly, 41-year-old Nollywood actress Dayo Amusa became a mother, announcing the birth of her baby boy with the joyful message, "Alhamdulillah, my treasure has arrived. It's a boy."

Actor Chinedu Ikedieze, popularly known as Aki, and his wife, Nneoma Nwaijah, also welcomed their own new addition, sharing their excitement over the arrival of their little one.

Mavin Records goes global

In 2024, Don Jazzy's Mavin Records went global as Universal Music Group (UMG) acquired a major stake in the record label. According to sources, the deal marks a significant investment from UMG into Mavin Records.

As part of the agreement, Don Jazzy and COO Tega Oghenejobo will continue to lead the company. UMG chairman Sir Lucian Grainge confirmed the partnership, further strengthening Mavin's global presence.

Ibadan Stampede: Actress Opeyemi Aiyeola cancels charity

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood actress Opeyemi Aiyeola has announced the cancellation of her planned charity events, citing concerns over potential risks and legal consequences.

Her decision follows a devastating incident involving Queen Naomi and Hamzat Oriyomi, who were detained after a tragic stampede occurred at their charity funfair, claiming 35 lives.

Tragic incident at Oriyomi and Naomi's charity funfair

The stampede at the charity funfair organized by Queen Naomi and Hamzat Oriyomi sent shockwaves across Nigeria.

The event, meant to raise funds and provide support for the less fortunate, ended in tragedy when the surge of attendees led to the loss of 35 lives.

The devastating outcome drew widespread condemnation and highlighted the dangers of poorly managed public gatherings.

Following the incident, Queen Naomi and Oriyomi were detained, bringing increased scrutiny to charity events, especially those involving large crowds.

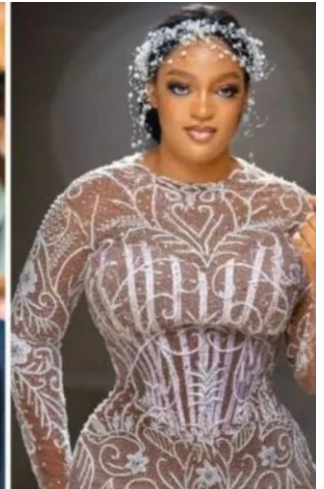
This tragic event sent ripples through the community, raising questions about safety protocols and the risks of organizing public gatherings.

Opeyemi Aiyeola's concerns about legal and safety risks

In a candid live chat with fans, Opeyemi Aiyeola expressed deep concerns about organizing public giveaways and charity events.

She admitted that the incident involving Oriyomi and Naomi had caused her to rethink her approach to charitable activities.

Aiyeola acknowledged that the risks associated with such events, including potential legal trouble, had made her feel



uneasy about continuing to organize similar initiatives.

"I am no longer doing giveaways. I am done," Aiyeola stated. "I have family members that need help. I will do my giveaway with them. If helping people will land someone in prison, I am out. People should learn from the case of Alhaji Hamzat Oriyomi and Queen Naomi," she added.

Aiyeola's remarks reflect a broader concern about the safety and legal implications of organizing charity events.

In a country where public gatherings are often associated with risks, particularly when they involve large crowds, Aiyeola believes that caution is necessary to prevent further tragedies.

Need for caution and safety in charitable initiatives

Aiyeola's decision to step away from public charity events underscores the importance of safety and responsible planning in such activities.

The incident involving Oriyomi and Naomi has served as a wake-up call for many Nigerians, urging organizers to prioritize safety and risk management when undertaking public gatherings.

Charitable initiatives, while noble, must adhere to proper guidelines, including crowd control measures, adequate security, and compliance with legal requirements.

Nigerian Actress Opeyemi Aiyeola

Without these, the likelihood of accidents and tragedies increases, leading to devastating consequences. Aiyeola's cautionary stance emphasizes the need for a balanced approach—ensuring the goals of charity are met while safeguarding the well-being of participants.

Call for reflection and responsibility

Aiyeola's call for caution resonates with many Nigerians, particularly those involved in charity work.

The incident involving Oriyomi and Naomi has sparked a broader discussion about the responsibilities of organizers and the need for accountability.

In her plea for reflection, Aiyeola advised others to learn from the tragic events. She emphasized the significance of carefully evaluating risks and making informed decisions, particularly when it comes to public gatherings. "We need to ensure that we're not putting ourselves in situations where we'll face legal consequences or tragic outcomes," she said.

Aiyeola's words reflect a growing sentiment among many Nigerians, urging a shift in how charity events are organized. The need for greater vigilance and adherence to safety protocols has become evident, as tragedies like the one involving Oriyomi and Naomi could have been prevented with better planning and precautionary measures.

Musk flags Badenoch's tweet on 'Fake' Reform membership numbers

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

The ongoing feud between Reform UK leader Nigel Farage and Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch escalated dramatically as Elon Musk's platform, X (formerly Twitter), added a fact-check to Badenoch's claims about "fake" Reform membership numbers. The fact-check, part of X's community notes feature, provided evidence contradicting Badenoch's accusations, reigniting the public spat between the two political figures.

The New Daily Prime had earlier reported that Farage was considering legal action against Badenoch if she did not apologize for what he called her "intemperate outburst." The controversy began when Badenoch accused Reform UK of using a manipulated membership tracker to inflate its figures. Farage has since demanded a retraction and apology, claiming Reform's tracker is legitimate and shows the party now has more members than the Conservatives.

On Saturday morning, Farage tagged Badenoch in a post on X, saying, "When will you apologize to me and 146,077 other members of Reform UK?" The Reform leader's demand followed his party's decision to release the internal workings of its membership tracker, claiming it proved the figures were accurate.

Earlier, Badenoch had used a series of posts on X to accuse Farage and Reform UK of spreading "endless lies, smoke, and mirrors." She claimed their membership counter was "coded to tick up automatically." Badenoch wrote: "Farage doesn't understand the digital age. This kind of fakery gets found out pretty quickly, although not before many are fooled."

However, Badenoch's claims faced backlash when her tweets were flagged by X's Community Notes. A user-



generated note beneath her post now states:

"This claim is false. It's not a 'fake ticker' – the website code clearly shows data being pulled via an API."

Musk's Growing Involvement in Reform UK

In a related twist, Elon Musk—who met with Nigel Farage earlier this month at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida—expressed support for Reform UK's rising membership. Musk declared earlier in the week, "Change is coming," fueling speculation that he might donate up to \$100 million (£78 million) to the party. While neither Musk nor Reform UK has confirmed the donation, the possibility has sent shockwaves through British political circles.

Farage welcomed Musk's endorsement and noted its significance for engaging younger voters. Speaking to the media on Saturday, he said, "Elon is a huge help to us with the young generation, and that will continue to be the case. Frankly, this is only just starting." Farage stressed the importance of mobilizing younger voters, adding:

"Reform only wins the next election if it gets the youth vote. The youth vote is the key. Of course, you need voters of all ages, but if you get a wave of youth enthusiasm, you can change everything."

The Fallout and Broader Implications

This high-profile clash between Badenoch and Farage has drawn mixed reactions from political observers. Some have criticized Badenoch for amplifying Reform UK's visibility by engaging in a public spat with Farage, a move seen as strategically counterproductive for the Conservatives as they face growing competition from Reform UK ahead of local and general elections.

The situation also highlights broader concerns about misinformation and political accountability in the digital age. X's fact-checking system, Community Notes, is increasingly influencing public discourse by providing user-generated clarifications to controversial posts. This development adds a new layer of scrutiny to political statements, further complicating the already fraught relationship between the two parties.

As the controversy unfolds, the political world awaits Badenoch's next move. Will she apologize to Farage and Reform UK, or will she double down on her accusations? The stakes are high for both leaders as they navigate a political landscape shaped by rivalry, shifting allegiances, and the looming specter of electoral battles.

69 migrants die as boat capsizes in Morocco

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Not less than 69 migrants, including 25 Malians, have died after a makeshift boat attempting to reach Spain from West Africa capsized off the coast of Morocco, Mali's authorities have confirmed.

The boat was carrying approximately 80 people, but only 11 survivors were rescued, according to a statement from Mali's Ministry of Malians Abroad. Of the survivors, at least nine are from Mali.

The tragedy occurred last week, but the ministry formally confirmed the incident on Thursday. A crisis unit has been dispatched to monitor the situation and assist those affected.

Mali has faced years of political and security instability, including jihadist violence and separatist uprisings, which have led to two military coups in 2020 and 2021.

While the ruling junta initially promised elections by March 2024, the country remains in turmoil, with much of its northern and eastern regions ungovernable.

Economic hardship, unemployment, and the impact of climate change on agriculture have driven many Malians to seek better opportunities abroad, often embarking on perilous journeys across the sea.

The Atlantic route, stretching

from the coasts of Mauritania and Morocco to Spain, is one of the deadliest migration paths in the world.

Spanish human rights group Caminando Fronteras reports that over 10,000 people have died attempting to reach Spain by boat this year alone, averaging 30 deaths daily.

Many migrants attempting this dangerous crossing come from sub-Saharan Africa, fleeing conflict and poverty.

At its closest point, Morocco is just eight nautical miles (14 kilometers) from Spain, making it a popular yet treacherous route for those seeking a new life in Europe.

Olivia Hussey, 'Romeo and Juliet' Star, dies at 73

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Olivia Hussey, known for her breathtaking portrayal of Juliet in Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, has died at 73.

Her family shared the news on Instagram, celebrating her extraordinary life and legacy.

"It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Olivia Hussey Eisley," her family wrote. "She went peacefully at home, surrounded by her loved ones, on December 27th. Olivia was a remarkable person whose warmth, wisdom, and pure kindness touched the lives of all who knew her."

Life of passion and art

Born on April 17, 1951, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Olivia Hussey lived a life filled with creativity, passion, and compassion.

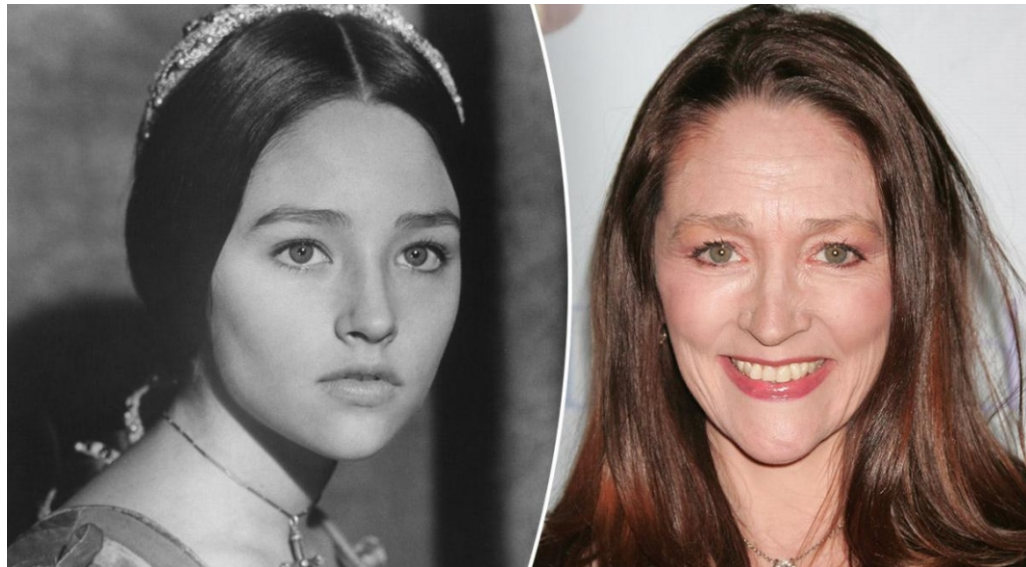
Her devotion to the arts, spirituality, and kindness toward animals defined her as much as her acting talent. From an early age, Hussey's passion for performing arts was evident, and by her teenage years, she was already making her mark in the entertainment world.

At just 15, Hussey landed the role of Juliet in Zeffirelli's adaptation of Shakespeare's timeless love story.

Her performance opposite Leonard Whiting earned her a Golden Globe for "New Star of the Year." Her portrayal of Juliet became an iconic piece of cinematic history, etching her name among the most memorable performers of her time.

Career highlights and accomplishments

Hussey's career was as diverse as it was impressive. She captivated audiences in a wide array of roles across film and television.



Her performances in the 1974 horror classic *Black Christmas* and the 1978 adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Death on the Nile* showcased her remarkable range as an actress.

Olivia Hussey

While she was widely celebrated for her talent, Hussey was also admired for her commitment to her craft and her ability to connect deeply with the characters she portrayed. Her work reflected her dedication to storytelling and her unique ability to bring authenticity to every role she took on.

Legacy of love

Olivia Hussey is survived by her husband of 35 years, musician David Glen Eisley, their three children—Alex, Max, and India—and her grandson, Greyson.

Her family's heartfelt tribute reflected the deep love and admiration they held for her.

"Olivia leaves behind a loving family and a legacy of love that will forever be cherished in our hearts," the statement read. "As we grieve this immense loss, we also celebrate Olivia's enduring impact on our lives and the industry."

Her family expressed gratitude for the support and prayers they have received during this difficult time. They also requested privacy as they mourn the loss of a truly special person who brought light and love to everyone around her.

Remembering a star

Fans and colleagues have taken to social media to express their condolences and share memories of the beloved actress.

Many remember her as an artist who brought depth and beauty to every role she played. Others recall her warmth, kindness, and dedication to causes close to her heart, including animal welfare.

Hussey's work in *Romeo and Juliet* continues to inspire new generations, and her impact on cinema remains profound.

She brought Shakespeare's Juliet to life with a sense of vulnerability and strength that made the character timeless. Her performance has stood as a benchmark for Shakespearean adaptations, influencing countless artists and audiences.

Arsenal, Manchester United join bid for Osimhen in January transfer

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Arsenal have joined other leading clubs and are planning a deal for Nigeria striker Victor Osimhen in January.

The Gunners are joining Manchester United in the race to secure the Galatasaray forward's signature following Bukayo Saka's injury setback.

Arsenal are reportedly considering triggering Osimhen's £66m release clause at Napoli, though they would need to negotiate with both the Italian club and Galatasaray, where the striker is currently on loan.

United had appeared favourites to land the 25-year-old, with Spanish outlet Fichajes reporting they have already opened talks with his representatives and are willing to pay £63.3m despite competition from Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus.

However, Arsenal's interest has intensified following confirmation that Saka will be sidelined for more

than two months after hamstring surgery. Manager Mikel Arteta admitted the England winger's absence creates a significant void in his attack.

"He has had a procedure and everything went well, but unfortunately he will be out for many, many weeks," Arteta said.

"It will be more than two months. I don't know exactly how much longer."

Osimhen has been in scintillating form since joining Galatasaray in September, scoring 12 goals and providing five assists in 15 appearances across all competitions. However, the Super Eagles striker recently expressed his commitment to the Turkish giants.

"I will not leave in January, I am at Galatasaray until the end of the season. I do not know what Galatasaray and Napoli are talking about afterwards, but if they come to me, we will talk. Galatasaray is a

nice club that I like very much," Osimhen said after his brace in a 3-2 win over Tottenham.

Despite this stance, former Galatasaray coach Hamza Hamzaoğlu believes the Turkish club cannot afford a permanent deal for the striker.

With Arsenal facing crucial Premier League fixtures against Brentford, Brighton, Tottenham, Aston Villa and Wolves in January, Arteta is keen to bolster his attacking options.

The club are also monitoring Barcelona's Dani Olmo and Wolves striker Matheus Cunha as potential alternatives.

United's interest remains strong as they look to address their goalscoring problems, having netted just 21 Premier League goals this season – with only four teams managing fewer. Their poor form has left them 14th in the table and closer to the relegation zone than the top four.

Chelsea unlikely to let Joao Felix leave in January

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Chelsea football club are unlikely to let Joao Felix leave the club in January.

Even though the Portuguese international has struggled for regular game time in the English Premier League, Fabrizio Romano believes that the Blues are likely to hold on to him until the end of the season at the very least.

The Blues signed him on a long-term contract four months ago and they have no plans to cash in on him.

Felix has started just two league games this season.

Romano said to GMS : “Joao has just arrived on a permanent deal four



months ago, I don't see Chelsea changing their stance on Joao in January. At the moment, the situation is

completely calm.”

The player has been linked with multiple clubs recently but it seems that he will be allowed to rediscover himself at Stamford Bridge. Chelsea are lacking in depth in the attacking unit and they need Felix to step up and deliver during the second half of the campaign.

With Mykhailo Mudryk potentially facing a lengthy suspension, this could be a golden opportunity for the Portuguese international to stake his claim as a regular starter. Felix has shown his quality in the past and it remains to be seen whether he can impress manager Enzo Maresca in the coming weeks.

Liverpool have made their decision on Luis Diaz with European giants circling

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Although the contracts of Virgil van Dijk, Mo Salah and Trent Alexander-Arnold seem to be a priority for Liverpool, so it would seem is the future of Luis Diaz.

The Colombian has been in great form for Liverpool of late, so it's little wonder that the Premier League leaders want to extend his contract.

Liverpool don't want to sell Luis Diaz

CaughtOffside sources understand that during contract negotiations in December, the Liverpool management, including Arne Slot, met with Luis Diaz and his representatives and told him that they were happy with his performance.

Furthermore, it's understood that they told the player directly that that they had no plans to sell him in the upcoming January transfer window.



His current deal doesn't end until June 2027 (transfermarkt), so even though it's believed that both Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona are making noises in Diaz's direction, the Reds hold all the aces at this point.

Sources have further advanced that both PSG and Barca have recently spoken with the player's inner circle to enquire about his situation.

Luis Diaz wants to join Barcelona

Interestingly, the 27-year-old expressed a clear willingness to join the Catalans, but that's unlikely to happen given their current issues with Financial Fair Play and the inability to register Dani Olmo for the second half of the season.

PSG are understood to be willing to offer €60m plus one of their players in exchange for Luis Diaz, though Liverpool are not interested in negotiating such a deal at this stage.