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FG flags off agricultural empowerment project, distributes relief materials in Plateau

By Friday Omosola

The Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Yusuf Sununu, has reaffirmed the federal government's (FG) commitment to alleviating the challenges faced by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and boosting food security.

Iliya Ishaku, Director of Information and Public Relations in a statement on Thursday said the minister during his official visit to Plateau State on Tuesday flagged off the 'Renewed Hope Agricultural Empowerment Project (REHAEPI)' in Kwall, Bassa Local Government Area.

The Minister distributed relief materials to IDPs in Bokkos, and paid a courtesy visit to the Gbong Gwom Jos, His Majesty Da Dr. Jacob Gyang Buba (CFR).

At the launch of the REHAEPI project, Sununu highlighted its alignment with President Bola Tinubu's 8-Point Agenda, particularly in food security, poverty reduction, and collaboration. He noted that the project, initiated by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), aims to empower IDPs with agricultural skills, making them self-reliant and productive.

"This initiative ensures IDPs are equipped to contribute to national food security once resettled in their ancestral homes," Sununu stated.

He revealed plans to formalize the project through a Memorandum of Understanding between NCFRMI and the National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA).

The Federal Commissioner of NCFRMI, Tijani Ahmed, described REHAEPI as a collaborative pilot scheme with take-offs in Nasarawa,



Plateau, and Borno States.

He expressed optimism for its expansion, calling on the Federal Ministry of Agriculture for continued support.

Sununu also distributed food items to IDPs in Bokkos who were displaced due to insurgency and natural disasters.

He reassured them of the FG ongoing efforts to improve their conditions and facilitate their safe return to their communities. He urged the IDPs to maintain good relations with host communities and cooperate with security agencies to enhance safety and stability.

In his visit to the Gbong Gwom Jos, Sununu commiserated with His Majesty over the recent loss of his son.

He briefed the traditional ruler on the activities undertaken during his visit and emphasized the need to promote dry-season farming and prevent early disposal of farm produce.

His Majesty, Jacob Gyang Buba, thanked the FG for its humanitarian interventions and stressed the importance of durable solutions to security and displacement issues.

He called for the rehabilitation of the state's dams to support dry-season farming and urged the inclusion of traditional rulers in federal programs to ensure their success.

The visit, accompanied by federal and state officials, was marked by assurances of continued collaboration to address the humanitarian challenges in Plateau State and beyond.

How I drank my urine to survive in prison — Senator Ojudu

By Dave Oludare Oso

Babafemi Ojudu, a former lawmaker representing Ekiti Central Senatorial District and a seasoned journalist, has shared how he resorted to drinking his own urine to survive while imprisoned during the military regime of the late General Sani Abacha.

A former Presidential Adviser on Political Affairs under Muhammadu Buhari's administration, Ojudu made the revelation in Ado-Ekiti, during a media interaction with journalists, on his new book titled 'Adventures of a Guerrilla Journalist.'

The book, which captured his struggles for the success and sustainability of democracy under the military regime, gave a detailed account of how he was arrested 15 times between 1993 and 1997, as an investigative reporter, and other life-threatening experiences he encountered.

Excerpts:

"There was a time I drank my urine when I was dying. I had diarrhea and no medication was given to me. I read a book about someone who says urine cures illnesses and maybe because I had faith in it, I could not feel the illness again the following day after drinking it," he said.

He said the book is also dedicated to the unwavering commitment and sacrifice of some well-meaning Nigerians "who valiantly fought and discharged their duties with conscientious diligence during the prolonged military rule in Nigeria."



The one-time senator said the highest obligation any journalist owed his country and people, was to seek the truth, write the truth, and report the truth at all times without any coloration or consideration for any mundane factors.

He said he did not believe some of the current moves, being canvassed by Nigerians, especially the issue of constitutional amendment, as the real solutions to the nation's crisis.

He said: "The real solutions to our myriads of problems are far from what are being suggested. For instance, constitutional review, being suggested is not one of such solutions to Nigeria's problem, it is simply all about us.

"In the course of performing your duties as a good journalist, tendencies are that you will be waylaid, harassed, intimidated, threatened and so on, and even

excommunicated to exile, like I experienced many times. But those were not enough to draw me back, I remained resolute. Without a vibrant press, it will be difficult for a nation to get things right.

"Do not be dissuaded because that was never me. I saw death face to face, but all that did not discourage me from fogging ahead in performing my avowed duties to the nation."

Ojudu said the book is to pay homage to those who died in the struggle for their commitment to a liberated society, independent press, democratic ethos and the pursuit of good governance.

While calling on Nigerians to grab their copies at nearby bookshops in Lagos, Ibadan and Ekiti, he said the book will also be officially unveiled on December 18, 2024.

500 terrorist commanders, leaders eliminated in 2024 – DHQ

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ), on Thursday, revealed that over 500 known and wanted leaders and commanders of terrorist groups, violent extremist organizations, and criminal gangs have been neutralized in battlefield operations from January to December 2024.

This was as the DHQ also disclosed that the military, in collaboration with other security agencies, has heightened its state of readiness to ensure that no terrorist group or criminal element disrupts peace and security during the festive season.

The Director of Defence Media Operations, Major General Edward Buba, pointed out that many of the neutralized commanders, particularly those listed in official media and government gazettes, were eliminated during coordinated air and ground offensives.

He added that the military will soon release a fresh publication of wanted terrorist commanders who have been chosen to replace the neutralized leaders.

Also, Major General Buba described the arrest of Simon Ekpa, a leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), in Finland as a significant development.

“Terrorism is a global phenomenon



impacting the international community, and no one country can combat it alone.

“We are happy that the international community has taken action. Simon Ekpa will surely face the law and the consequences of his actions,” he said.

Buba linked the continued influx of arms and ammunition into the country to terrorist activities in the Sahel region and transnational jihadist operations.

“This increased arms flow is due to terrorist activities in the Sahel and other jihadist movements. Our expansive borders further complicate the situation.

“However, we are not resting on our oars in addressing this challenge.

“The quantum of arms and ammunition recovered from terrorists and criminal groups across our theatres, running into several

hundreds of thousands, is proof of our efforts.

“Similarly, the number of gunrunners and logistics suppliers arrested shows we have dealt a significant blow to these groups’ firepower,” he said.

Responding to allegations that troops involved in combating economic sabotage are partaking in crude oil theft, Buba said: “For someone to go on national television and slander the military by accusing them of oil theft is unfortunate and unfounded.

“The claim is myopic. We all witnessed the directive by Mr. President to the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, to tackle crude oil theft in the Niger Delta.

“This effort has led to an increase in production from 1.2 million barrels per day to approximately 1.75 million barrels per day. The results speak for themselves.”

FG not investigating Air Peace — FCCPC

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has said its invitation to Air Peace is simply to understand its price methodology and respond to consumers' complaints.

FCCPC Director of Surveillance and Investigation, Boladale Adeyinka, said neither the airline nor its chairman, Dr. Allen Onyema, is under investigation.

Adeyinka said the Commission invited Air Peace based on complaints from customers for the airline to educate them on its price methodology.

He said, "Thank you so much for honouring our invite in person. We have gained more insight into your operations. Just again to reiterate that it is not an investigation, it is an enquiry to understand and again, find out based on consumer complaints."

Adeyinka, who stated this on Tuesday in Abuja when the chairman of Air Peace, Dr. Allen Onyema led some members of his team to honour the invite, extended to the airline, commended Air Peace for the insights made on its operations.

"Thank you also for bringing your expertise and insights to the industry, it is a good one for us, it is a good one for Nigerian consumers. This is our own, we are happy that you are doing well because if the consumers are saying that this is our aircraft, it means that ownership has moved from you to every Nigerian."

She noted that the Commission exists for the good of businesses, customers and the operators, stressing that business stability and sustainability are core to their mandate.



She said, "We will review the situation and intervene where we can, not just for Air Peace customers but generally for all air passengers and other consumers of aviation services," adding that this is part of the Commission's efforts at bringing competitiveness in the market.

The FCCPC director also commended Dr. Onyema for his love for the country and philanthropic spirit and advised him not to let anything deter him from his services to humanity.

Earlier, the Chairman of Air Peace, Dr. Onyema explained that fare pricing in the aviation sector is a global thing but lamented that the fare regime in Nigeria is not commensurate to the cost of putting an aircraft in the air, thus the reason why airlines frequently go under in Nigeria.

Dr Onyema argued that the choice before Nigerians going forward would be flying safe and sustainability of the airlines, which requires proper pricing based on global standards or watch the airlines go under due to poor pricing.

He said, "We need flight safety in Nigeria. For us at Air Peace, safety is a pre-condition rather than just a priority."

He pointed out that the cost of flying anywhere in the world is priced at between \$250 to \$300 for an hour and in some cases even as high as \$540, adding that this is what could pass for fair pricing, which Air Peace does not follow because of the low purchasing power of Nigerians.

Dr Onyema argued that the addictive nature of aviation business and patriotism have kept him in the business, stressing that if Air Peace is to factor the numerous charges involved in its operational cost, not many Nigerians would afford to fly.

He stated that the high cost of interest on loans from banks ranging from 33 to 35 percent, high insurance cost put at about \$12m annually, an amount which could insure about eight aircraft abroad, volatility in the cost of aviation fuel, other sundry charges and replacement of parts, which are all sourced in dollars, make prices of tickets very high.

FG moves against travellers' harassment at Nigerian airports

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo (SAN), has approved measures by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) to end the harassment of travellers by government agencies at Nigeria's international airports.

The Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development made this known on Thursday in a post he shared on his X handle.

The Minister also announced the launch of "Operation Air Clean", an initiative aimed at eliminating corrupt practices and enhancing service delivery, among others, following a surge in passenger complaints at airports.

Among the reforms for the Murtala Muhammed International Airport is the dissolution of joint inspection



tables, which will be replaced by intelligence-driven searches and the use of advanced scanners to speed up security checks.

Also, a streamlined passenger processing by consolidating checkpoints, with officers from the Department of State Services (DSS) and Immigration Service sharing counters to reduce congestion.

Additionally, Keyamo approved the activation of mobile courts to expedite the prosecution of offenders, particularly touts, and a zero-tolerance policy to be enforced against Bureau de Change operators and car-hire personnel engaging in unauthorised activities.

FAAN will also introduce new airport facilities, including improved lighting, enhanced signage, free Wi-Fi for passengers, and designated meet-and-greet areas.

On her part, the Managing Director of FAAN, Mrs. Olubunmi Kuku, called on stakeholders and the public to support "Operation Air Clean," stressing that collaboration is essential in creating a safer and more efficient airport environment.

Six party girls still missing, Lagos CP mum

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following the disappearance of six ladies after attending a house party in the Lekki area of Lagos State, efforts to know their whereabouts by journalists have met a brickwall, as the state Commissioner of Police, Olanrewaju Ishola, has declined to speak on the issue when he was approached.

In a viral video, a lady recounted the incident, explaining that the seven ladies had been invited to the party, but one of them narrowly escaped after briefly stepping away to retrieve her forgotten hair wig.

The lady in the video while speaking on their mysterious disappearance claimed that by the time the seventh lady came back, the car had zoomed off leaving her behind.

However, the Lagos State Police Command has been silent over the incident as efforts to reach its



spokesperson, Benjamin Hundeyin, through calls and text messages, had been unsuccessful.

He said, "Call my PPRO, I am the Commissioner of Police."

When told that the spokesperson had been unreachable for a while, he insisted, saying, "Try him more, try him the more if he is not picking. That is his job. You can go to his office. I

have 13,500 policemen under me in Lagos and they all have their specific duties."

The woman who raised the alarm in the viral video had expressed deep concern about the situation, revealing that the missing girls' phones had been unreachable, and their friends had been unable to get in touch with them, describing the incident as "deeply troubling."

She said, "Six girls in Lekki have gone missing. They were invited to a private house party, and no one had heard from them. Their lines are no longer going through, and their friends can't reach them."

"Only one person survived because she went back to get her hair. When she returned, they were gone. They were supposed to be seven for the house party, but they took six. The six girls are missing."

Amazon lists Dele Farotimi's book as No. 1 bestseller in global politics

By Dave Oludare Oso

Nigeria and Its Criminal Justice System, a book by Nigerian author and lawyer, Dele Farotimi, has moved to the top spot on Amazon's bestseller list in global politics.

The book's sudden popularity followed Mr. Farotimi's arrest earlier this week on the orders of prominent lawyer and businessman, Afe Babalola.

The book, published in July 2024, had garnered little attention until Tuesday when armed police apprehended Farotimi in Lagos and transported him to Ado Ekiti, a city where Babalola lives and own a university.

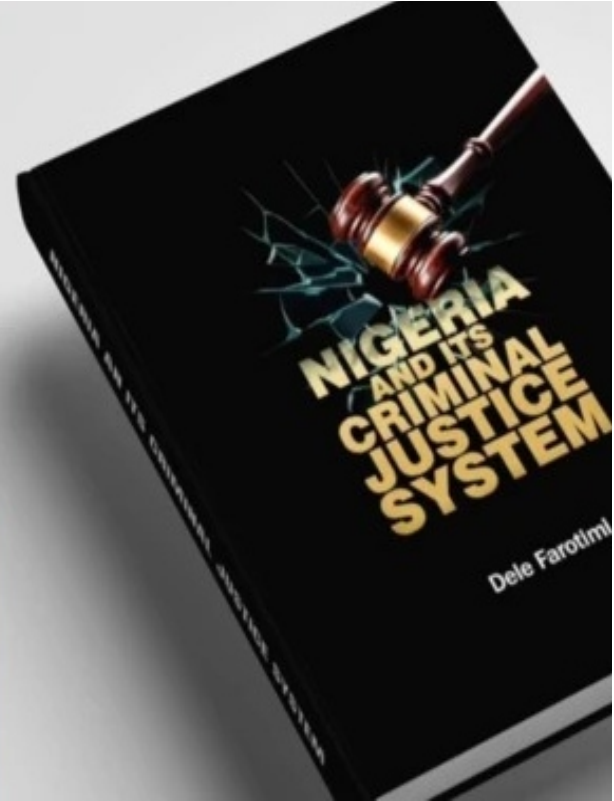
The arrest and subsequent court proceedings, where Farotimi was remanded in custody until a December 10 bail hearing, sparked outrage and reignited public interest in the book.

Farotimi's work delves deeply into systemic corruption within Nigeria's judiciary.

The author directly accuses Babalola, a 93-year-old senior lawyer, of undermining the country's justice system by influencing court decisions through bribes and backdoor dealings.

In one section, Farotimi alleged that Babalola "compromised the Supreme Court and the remaining semblance of integrity it might have had," citing a specific case where the lawyer allegedly secured a corrupt outcome.

The arrest has drawn widespread condemnation, with Nigerians



accusing Babalola of abusing his influence to suppress dissent.

Critics see the detention as an attack on freedom of expression and an attempt to silence Farotimi's damning exposé.

The controversy propelled the book to bestseller status on Amazon and spurred a surge in sales at bookstores across Nigeria.

Readers expressed curiosity to learn about the allegations that have ignited national debate and drawn international attention.

Remarkably, Farotimi's book outperformed globally renowned titles like *Why Nations Fail* on Amazon's charts, a rare feat for a Nigerian-themed publication.

The Nigerian police charged Farotimi with publishing material "likely to cause fear and alarm to the

public or disturb the public peace," according to a charge sheet obtained by newsmen.

However, civil society groups, lawyers, and activists have dismissed the charges as baseless, framing the arrest as an assault on Nigeria's democracy.

Mr. Babalola, often regarded as Ekiti State's most influential private citizen, has faced repeated allegations of corrupting Nigeria's judiciary over the years.

While he has consistently denied wrongdoing, the public backlash following Farotimi's arrest has renewed scrutiny of his legacy and practices.

Five Reps members dump Labour Party for APC

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following the resumption of plenary at the House of Representatives on Thursday, five lawmakers of the Labour Party (LP) have defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The members are Tochukwu Okere (Imo), Donatus Mathew (Kaduna), Bassey Akiba (Cross River), Iyawe Esona (Edo) and Dauliyop Fom (Plateau).

Similarly, a lawmaker, Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu (Delta), dumped the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for the APC.

Erhiatake Ibori-Suenu is a daughter of former Delta State governor, James Ibori.

The now-former Labour Party lawmakers cited division within their party as the main reason for



their defection.

After over 20 years of its formation, pro-workers political organization, Labour Party (LP) made inroads into mainstream politics during the 2023 elections as the party got six Senate and over 34 House of Representatives seats.

Compared to its phenomenal stride in the 2023 elections, the LP did not

get a single seat in the 2019 National Assembly elections.

With the party's presidential candidate Peter Obi coming third during the poll, many had thought that the Labour Party would form a formidable opposition alongside the PDP against the ruling APC but intra-party squabbles after the general elections have plagued the party.

Woman, 43, docked for N1.6m child adoption scam

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A woman, Tina Aguocha, who allegedly obtained N1.6 million under the pretext of facilitating an adoption process, on Thursday appeared before a Surulere Chief Magistrates' Court, Lagos.

Aguocha, 43, who resides at No. 3, Sarim Street, Itire, Surulere, Lagos, is facing trial on a charge of obtaining by false pretences.

The Prosecutor, Insp Sadiq Adewale, told the court that Aguocha committed the offence on May 17, 2023, at No.13, Alubarika Street, Ijeshatedo Surulere, Lagos.

He said that Aguocha falsely presented herself as a midwife who worked at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH).



could facilitate an adoption process from any orphanage in Lagos, adding that she had done it for other people.

The prosecutor added that when the process failed, the defendant could not refund any money.

The offence, Adewale said, contravened section 314 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.

According to him, Aguocha used her position to fraudulently obtain the sum of N1.6 million from one Ignatus Chidebere, under the guise of helping him to adopt a child from any orphanage in Lagos.

The prosecutor said the defendant assured the complainant that she

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge.

The Magistrate, Ganiyu Tiamiyu, granted Aguocha bail in the sum of N500,000 with two responsible sureties in like sum.

Tiamiyu adjourned the case until January 9 for substantive trial.

Bridging financial inclusion gaps critical to Nigeria's \$1trn economy vision, says Shettima

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has called on development partners and stakeholders to address systemic inequalities and foster a more inclusive financial system to drive Nigeria's economic growth.

He emphasised that achieving the nation's vision of a \$1 trillion economy by 2030 depends on creating equitable access to financial services for all Nigerians, regardless of gender or geography.

In a statement today, Shettima's spokesperson, Stanley Nkwocha said the Vice president made the call at the Development Partners Roundtable on Economic and Financial Inclusion at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Shettima who was represented by Special Adviser to the President on General Duties, Aliyu Umar, highlighted key challenges hindering financial inclusion.

He noted that only 23 per cent of women in Nigeria have access to digital financial services, compared to 43 per cent of men, with socio-economic barriers such as low incomes, limited education, and restricted access to financial tools exacerbating the disparity, particularly in the northwest and northeast regions.

"We have come this far by continually assessing the extent of economic and financial inclusion in Nigeria. However, these assessments reveal disturbing gaps that demand urgent attention.

"Our task is clear: to bridge these systemic inequalities and foster an inclusive, equitable financial system that benefits all Nigerians," Shettima said.



He expressed optimism that the roundtable would foster meaningful discussions and align efforts toward crafting sustainable solutions.

Shettima also announced the inauguration of a Presidential Committee for the Implementation of the Aso Accord, which he will chair.

The committee, consisting of signatories to the Accord and supported by a secretariat within the office of the Vice President, will report quarterly to the National Economic Council (NEC) to ensure the effective implementation of its framework and goals.

He further emphasised the need for collaboration, stating, "Whatever we do as a government cannot materialize fully unless we work together with development partners, the private sector, and all stakeholders committed to progress."

The Vice President urged stakeholders to support the committee with technical expertise and assistance in accelerating specific initiatives under the Aso Accord.

In the same vein, Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State, Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, commended President Bola Tinubu's leadership, noting that the nation was on the right track in its economic reforms.

He called for the inclusion of rural communities in financial initiatives to

ensure inclusive development.

Also, Minister of Livestock Development, Idi Maiha, and Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs, Yusuf Sununu, highlighted the importance of integrating farmers, petty traders, and vulnerable populations into financial inclusion programmes.

Sununu pledged accountability and transparency in implementing social intervention programs such as the Conditional Cash Transfer and School Feeding initiatives.

Furthermore, the Technical Adviser to the President on Economic and Financial Inclusion, Nurudeen Zauro, described the roundtable as a defining moment for the government's financial inclusion strategy.

"The Aso Accord serves as a blueprint for action, unlocking Nigeria's full potential and enhancing socio-economic growth," he said.

Additionally, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa, lauded Nigeria's financial reforms as feasible and encouraged increased support for women and MSMEs to further enhance inclusion.

Okuama president general dies in detention

By Olamilekan Botti

Pa James Oghoroko, the President-General of the Okuama Community in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State, has reportedly succumbed to torture and harsh conditions while detained by the military. The news of his death has sparked outrage and grief among community members, who viewed him as a crucial leader.

Oghoroko was among several leaders apprehended by Nigerian military forces starting from August 2024. He was arrested alongside notable figures including Prof. Arthur Ekpeko, Chief Belvis Adogbo, Dennis Okugbaye, Pa Anthony Ahwemuria, and Mrs. Rita Akata, between August 18 and 20. They have remained in custody since their arrests under circumstances the community insists are both unjust and unlawful.

The community's leadership announced Oghoroko's death during an emergency meeting convened in Okuama. They revealed that Pa Dennis Okugbaye, another community leader still in military detention, is reportedly fighting for his life in an undisclosed military facility, highlighting ongoing concerns over the treatment of detained individuals.

The situation escalated in August following a violent incident in which 17 soldiers lost their lives. In response to the unlawful arrests of their leaders, the community, through their legal representatives, filed a suit (FHC/WR/CS/84/2024) against the Nigerian Army and two other parties, seeking a substantial sum of 100 million naira in damages for their illegal detention.

In previous legal actions aimed at seeking justice and alleviation of the



community's suffering, the Okuama community sought redress at the Federal High Court in Warri, represented by prominent legal figures such as Olorogun Albert Akpomudje (SAN) and several others. The community filed multiple suits, including FHC/WR/CS/41/2024, FHC/WR/CS/42/2024, and FHC/WR/CS/43/2024, which are currently being consolidated as the legal proceedings unfold.

A significant development took place during the last court session on November 20, 2024, when the bail application for the detained leaders was scheduled for further hearing on December 9, 2024. Unfortunately, before this session could take place, Oghoroko passed away on December 4 in military detention, a tragic development that raises questions about the accountability for the treatment of detainees. Since their apprehension, the community leaders had not been formally charged with any crimes, further fueling suspicions of injustice and human rights abuses.

Olorogun Albert Akpomudje, the lead counsel for the detained leaders,

expressed his deep dismay upon hearing the news of Oghoroko's death. "This is deeply troubling news, and our thoughts are with the family during this challenging time," Akpomudje remarked. He indicated that he would be meeting with Oghoroko's family and his legal team to discuss potential next steps in seeking justice.

The shocking news of the President-General's death has profoundly affected the Okuama community, with many residents expressing their sorrow and condemning the inhumane treatment their leaders endured. The community now finds itself in mourning, grappling with the loss of a leader who was seen as a pillar of strength and hope.

As the situation continues to unfold, it remains crucial for legal mechanisms to hold accountable those responsible for Oghoroko's untimely death and to ensure that justice is served for the other detained leaders. The community calls for urgent action to address the broader issues of unlawful detentions and human rights violations.

ECOWAS court rules Nigeria to compensate torture victim N5m

By Olamilekan Botti

The ECOWAS Court of Justice has directed the Federal Republic of Nigeria to pay ₦5 million to Oluwatimilehin Adebayo, compensating him for the violation of his right to freedom from torture. The court's decision comes in the wake of a harrowing account of abuse, underscoring the urgent need for accountability and justice within law enforcement.

The court's order follows a suit filed by Adebayo, marked as ECW/CCJ/APP/47/23, in which he detailed the gruesome torture inflicted upon him by police officers in Ogun State. Adebayo alleged that he was subjected to severe physical violence, including being assaulted with the handle of an axe and having his limbs bound with chains and attached to a pole. This brutal treatment resulted in significant physical injuries, including trauma to his scrotum, and left him plagued by profound psychological distress.

In its judgment, delivered by Justice Dupe Atoki, the ECOWAS Court reiterated its stance on human rights, asserting jurisdiction over cases of torture irrespective of the Nigerian Government's objections. The government had contended that the lawsuit fell outside the three-year statute of limitations prescribed by the Court's rules, claiming the court lacked the authority to hear the case since it may involve matters already adjudicated in domestic courts. However, the tribunal dismissed these assertions, clarifying that the limitation does not pertain to human rights violations, thus underscoring the Court's mandate to address such grave concerns.

The Court emphasized that Adebayo's torture constituted a blatant violation of Article 5 of the African Charter on



Human and Peoples' Rights, an agreement to which Nigeria is a signatory. "The Court noted that the torture was intentional and aimed at coercing Mr. Adebayo into signing a pre-written statement," it stated, highlighting the reprehensible nature of the actions taken against the applicant.

In addition to the compensation, the Court mandated the Nigerian government to initiate a prompt, impartial, and effective investigation into Adebayo's ordeal, ensuring that those responsible for the torture are held accountable. This ruling serves as a crucial moment for justice in Nigeria, one that reinforces the necessity for law enforcement agencies to operate within the bounds of the law and respect human rights.

Nevertheless, the court dismissed a claim concerning the violation of the applicant's right to a remedy, noting that Adebayo had not provided evidence that he had formally reported the abuse to relevant authorities. This aspect of the ruling highlights the complexities involved in seeking justice and the importance of formal reporting mechanisms for victims of torture and other abuses.

As Nigeria grapples with ongoing issues of human rights abuses within its police force, this ruling by the ECOWAS Court may serve as a critical catalyst for reform. The decision not only offers compensation to Adebayo but also sends a strong message about the international commitment to uphold human rights standards and the responsibility of nations to protect their citizens from brutality by state agents.

In a region where justice for victims of torture can often seem elusive, the ECOWAS Court's ruling stands as a beacon of hope, urging all member states to strengthen their legal frameworks to protect human rights and ensure accountability for violations.

The parliament also asked the president to reopen all the warehouses of NSIPA nationwide.

The motion was unanimously adopted when it was subjected to a voice by Tajudeen Abbas, speaker of the house.

Following that, the house agreed to transmit the resolution to the senate for concurrence.

Protest looms over Dele Farotimi's detention

By Dave Oludare Oso

A protest is set to commence on December 10 and will be led by the rights advocacy group, 'Take It Back Movement', alongside other activists, including Omoyele Sowore over the arrest of a human rights lawyer, Dele Farotimi.

According to the 'Take It Back Movement', the protesters will demand the release of Farotimi who was recently remanded in prison by the presiding Magistrate of the Ado-Ekiti Magistrate court, Abayomi Adeosun.

The magistrate ordered his remand and adjourned the case until December 10.

NEW DAILY PRIME reports that Farotimi was accused of defamation against legal luminary and founder of Afe Babalola University, Aare Afe Babalola, in his book 'Nigeria and Its Criminal Justice System.'

His arrest sparked outrage on social media as rights groups, among others, condemned it as an assault on free speech.

**NATIONWIDE/GLOBAL PROTEST
AGAINST THE NIGERIAN JUDICIARY**

**Nigerians refuse to
be SILENCED**

LOCATIONS

- Lagos** - Afe Babalola Chambers
- Abuja** - Federal Ministry of Justice
- Ekiti** - Police Headquarters, Ado-Ekiti

In a statement shared on its official X handle, Take It Back Movement confirmed the protest plans scheduled to take place across four major locations—the Afe Babalola Chambers in Lagos, the Federal Ministry of Justice in Abuja, the Police Headquarters in Ado-Ekiti, and King's College Campus in London.

Sowore, on his part, described the situation as a grave injustice.

In a series of posts via his X page, he urged Nigerians and the global

community to rise against what he termed "crimes against humanity hatched between the police and the judiciary."

"The Abuja movement on December 10 is taking serious shape. We must converge by 7 AM at the Federal Ministry of Justice and occupy the Federal High Court Complex. Mass transport plans to Ado-Ekiti, Lagos, and London are being finalized. Enough is enough. #FreeDeleFarotimi NOW!," he wrote.

UI's Queen Elizabeth Hall up in smoke

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A fire outbreak has razed a section of Queen Elizabeth Hall, a female students' hostel at the University of Ibadan, in the early hours of Thursday.

Queen Elizabeth Hall is the first female hostel of the school.

The fire affected administrative sections, including the office of the Hall Warden and the Secretary.

Firefighters from the university reportedly prevented the fire from spreading further.

Upon investigation, this reporter



observed that only the office of the Warden and the office of the Secretary of the Warden were affected.

She noted that efforts are ongoing to

assess the extent of the damage and investigate the cause of the fire.

However, no casualties have been reported at the time of press.

Ondo pledges sustained fight against NTDs to achieve SDGs

By Helen Okechukwu

In the effort to address Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), the Ondo State Government has vowed to fight against its rise to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the state.

On Wednesday, the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Banji Ajaka, made this affirmation in a one-day advocacy meeting held with stakeholders from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare along with other key partners.

Highlighting the importance of addressing this issue, Dr. Ajaka said controlling NTDs will lead to poverty reduction, improve health, gender quality, education, and other health benefits that align with SDGs objectives.

He said the programme aims to manage, reduce, and eradicate NTDs in Ondo State.

Dr. Ajaka reveals that the state NTDs unit will employ technology and innovation approaches such as mass administration, integrated control, disease mapping and surveillance, and disease control and elimination.

Dr. Ajaka stated that within the state about 584 primary healthcare centres, 24 secondary health facilities, and over 385 private hospitals have taken the bold step in fighting against NTDs.

He said, "The state currently addresses treatment of NTDs such as Lymphatic Filariasis, Onchocerciasis, Schistosomiasis, and Soil-Transmitted Helminths in Ondo State."

Recalling their achievements, Dr. Ajaka stated that health facilities have treated about 1,489,692 individuals across onchocerciasis-endemic Local Government with Ivermectin with 100% geographic coverage across the



communities.

Dr. Ajaka recounted, "Also this year, the United Nations Education Fund (UNICEF) supported the state in Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in four endemic wards of the Akoko North East Local Government Area of the state with 11 thousand households triggered, and over 100 communities have been confirmed to be open defecation free out of 186 communities triggered."

"Moreover, about 146 community WASHCOM committees were formed across the communities with 835 members."

The Ondo State Government has reaffirmed its dedication to combating Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) as part of its public health agenda and sustainable development goals.

Dr. Ajakaye emphasized that the state, with the support of partners, has been evaluated for NTD endemicity, with findings from the Federal Ministry of Health expected to guide future efforts.

He commended partners such as UNICEF and MITOSATH for their contributions, highlighting their collaboration's success.

On behalf of MITOSATH, Executive Director Ononogbo Ikesinachi urged the state to commit its counterpart funding to sustain the project's gains.

UNICEF's representative, Mr. Monday Johnson, lauded the state for prioritising both treatment and prevention, noting this as a critical index of development.

RUWASSA General Manager, Engr. Rotimi Oladimeji, outlined government initiatives to improve access to clean water and sanitation, pledging further collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

He announced plans for intensified efforts to end open defecation in the coming year.

Mrs. Imaobong Umah from the Federal Ministry of Health acknowledged progress but stressed the need for sustained efforts, urging media organisations to enhance public awareness through advocacy.

Other key contributors, including Dr. Stephen Fagbemi and representatives from the Ministries of Health and Budget, pledged continued support for the project.

Zenith Bank wins 'Bank of the Year, Nigeria' award

By Dave Oludare Oso

Zenith Bank Plc has emerged as 'Bank of the Year, Nigeria' in The Banker's Bank of the Year Awards 2024.

The award was announced by The Banker Magazine, Financial Times Group, United Kingdom during the awards ceremony.

The ceremony, held in London on December 4, 2024, was in recognition of the bank's strong management, sound business model and strategy, and approach to sustainability and ESG banking practices.

The Banker's "Bank of the Year" accolade is among the most coveted and widely regarded awards in the banking industry.

Often contested by the world's leading financial institutions, the winners span across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America and Western Europe.

Commenting on the award, the Group Managing Director/Chief Executive of Zenith Bank Plc, Dame Adaora Umeoji, said: "We are delighted and honored to have been recognized as the Bank of the Year, Nigeria in The Banker's Bank of the Year Awards 2024.

"This award is a testament to the unwavering trust and loyalty of our esteemed customers, the unparalleled leadership and guidance of the Board and Management as well as the hard work and dedication of our staff.

"It also reflects our bank's steadfast commitment to delivering excellent services to our customers and contributing to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy.

"We will continue to invest in



innovative technologies, expand our range of products and services, and maintain our commitment to exceptional customer service in order to sustain our position as Nigeria's Number One Bank."

Dr. Umeoji lauded the Founder and Chairman of Zenith Bank Plc, Jim Ovia, for his visionary role in laying the foundation for a reputable, dominant and globally recognised financial institution known for innovation, superior performance, and the creation of premium value for all stakeholders.

In November 2024, Zenith Bank commissioned its Paris Branch following the granting of the final approval by France's banking regulator, the Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR).

This is part of the bank's global expansion strategy, and its commitment to serving clients wherever their businesses are around the world.

Zenith Bank has continued to earn numerous awards, with this latest accolade coming on the heels of several recognitions.

These include being recognised as the Number One Bank in Nigeria by Tier-1 Capital for the fifteenth consecutive year in the 2024 Top 1000 World

Banks Ranking, published by The Banker Magazine.

The Bank was also awarded the Bank of the Year (Nigeria) in The Banker's Bank of the Year Awards for 2020 and 2022; and Most Sustainable Bank, Nigeria in the International Banker 2023 and 2024 Banking Awards.

Further recognitions include Best Bank in Nigeria for four years from 2020 to 2024 in the Global Finance World's Best Banks Awards and Best Commercial Bank, Nigeria for four consecutive years from 2021 to 2024 in the World Finance Banking Awards.

Additionally, Zenith Bank has been acknowledged as the Best Corporate Governance Bank, Nigeria, in the World Finance Corporate Governance Awards for 2022, 2023 and 2024 and 'Best in Corporate Governance' Financial Services' Africa for four consecutive years from 2020 to 2023 by the Ethical Boardroom.

The Bank's commitment to excellence saw it being named the Most Valuable Banking Brand in Nigeria in the Banker Magazine Top 500 Banking Brands for 2020 and 2021, and Retail Bank of the Year for three consecutive years from 2020 to 2022 as well as Bank of the Year, 2023 at the BusinessDay Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BAFI) Awards.

11-yr-old pupil blinded in classroom incident, teacher attempts suicide **By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

An 11-year-old Primary 6 pupil of Owiwi Nursery and Primary School, Obada Oko, Ogun State, Idera Alao, has lost one of her eyes in a classroom incident that involved her teacher, Adeola Adeyemo.

The Ogun State Police Command confirmed the incident in a statement on Wednesday, adding that the teacher had been arrested.

According to the spokesperson of the Command, SP Omolola Odutola, Adeyemo, a 400-level student of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode undergoing her teaching practice programme at the school, was holding a cane in the classroom when Alao ran into it.

Odutola said the cane pierced her right eye, adding: "The child was immediately taken to the Federal Medical Centre in Abeokuta for treatment.



"Following this complaint, the teacher, Adeola Adeyemo, a 400-level student from Tai Solarin University in Ijebu Ode who was in teaching practice, was swiftly arrested and is currently being interrogated.

"It was simply a situation where the teacher, preparing for an end-of-year party, was holding a cane, as teachers often do.

"However, when the student rushed

toward her, the cane accidentally caused injury to the student's eye.

"The 11-year and old primary six student underwent surgery at the Federal Medical Centre, where her right eye was removed.

"After realizing that the student's right eye had been removed, the teacher attempted suicide, but was quickly rushed to the hospital where she is currently stable."

Troops rescue 25 kidnapped victims, neutralise bandits in Kaduna

By Agency Reporter

Troops of Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) have successfully rescued 25 kidnapped victims and neutralized three bandits during an offensive operation in Kauru Local Government Area (LGA), Kaduna State.

The operation, code-named Golden Peace, was launched early Tuesday morning to dismantle criminal networks terrorizing the region.

Intelligence sources told Zagazola Makama that the operation began at approximately 6:00 a.m. with troops clearing key bandit strongholds in villages, including Ruwan Sanye, Randa, Rafin Gora, Libere Gari, and Libere Makaranta.

During the offensive, troops encountered resistance at Randa Village, where a gunfight ensued.



Three bandits were neutralized, while several others fled, likely with gunshot wounds. The criminals were forced to abandon their kidnapped victims, resulting in the rescue of 25 hostages.

Further pursuit of the fleeing bandits led troops to discover traces of their movements, including items such as roasted chicken, cigarettes, tramadol,

energy drinks, and clothing.

Troops also uncovered an illegal clinic used by the bandits to treat their injured members. The makeshift medical facility was subsequently destroyed to deny the criminals access to medical aid.

Fire guts Mercy Aigbe's house

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Aravaging fire has gutted the residence of award-winning Nollywood actress, Mercy Aigbe, destroying valuable possessions in Lagos.

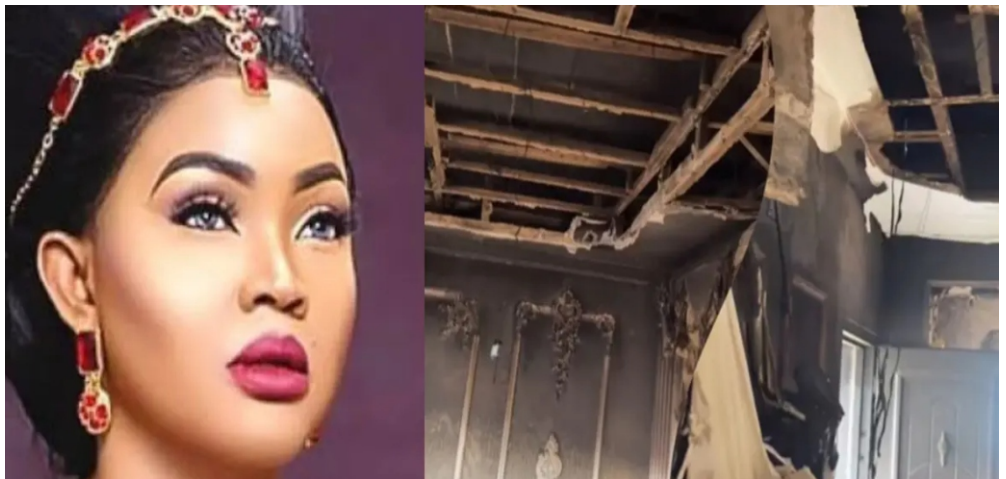
The inferno, which swept through the actress' multi-million naira property, reduced her belongings to ashes.

Taking to her official Instagram page on Wednesday night, Aigbe expressed her gratitude that no lives were lost in the fire.

The film star also shared a video post, writing: "Devastated, but I thank God no life was lost. It is well."

The cause of the fire outbreak however remains unknown.

Aigbe's post drew an outpouring of support from fans and colleagues, who offered condolences and well-



wishes.

The fire incident occurred barely a few days to the premiere of her movie 'Thinline' in cinemas.

In January 2022, Mercy unveiled movie marketer Kazeem Adeoti as her husband much to the surprise of many.

The 46-year-old also recently revealed why she married Adeoti, saying their shared passion for the entertainment industry brought them

together.

Aigbe also discussed the benefits of partnering with Adeoti, adding, "Together, we are building a production empire. I just felt I needed someone in the industry to collaborate with."

Last year, the actress converted from Christianity to Islam. She said she reconsidered her religious beliefs because of her love for Adeoti.

Senate reshuffles tax reform committee

By Friday Omosola

To ensure better efficiency, the Senate, today reshuffled its committee on tax reform bills.

The Senate President Godswill Akpabio announced the changes in the committee membership during today's plenary.

Akpabio disclosed that the Senate's Chief Whip Tahir Monguno has been replaced by Kaka Shehu, the senator representing Borno Central Senatorial District.

Both Monguno and Shehu hail from Borno State.

The initial nine-member committee was constituted during yesterday's plenary, chaired by Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin.

The panel, headed by Senate Minority



Leader Abba Morro of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), included principal officers, including Monguno was mandate lto liaise with a federal government delegation headed by Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi(SAN)

However, at today's session, Akpabio

raised concerns about the inclusion of principal officers in the committee, stating that it contradicted an earlier agreement reached during a closed-door session.

According to him, the senators had resolved that no principal officer would participate in the meeting with the federal government delegation to ensure transparency in the deliberations.

To address this, the Senate president canvassed Monguno's removal from the committee and recommended Shehu to represent the interests of the North-East region.

He further suggested that all principal officers be excluded from the discussions.

Akpabio's proposal was put to a voice vote and was supported by the majority of senators.

Military retirees shut Finance ministry in Abuja

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Retired soldiers under the group of Coalition of Concerned Veterans (CCV) protesting over non-payment of the 20 percent and 28 percent increment for 11 months in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja have said they will not leave the Federal Ministry of Finance gate except they see credit alerts.

The protesters, who stayed up all night, told NEW DAILY PRIME that they had bought chains and padlocks to lock up the gate.

The ex-servicemen who shut down activities at the Federal Ministry of Finance with music, displayed banners and carried different placards and inscriptions on Wednesday.

Among other demands by the retired military officers are the non-payment of their palliatives and its arrears from October 2023 to November 2024.

The protesters also highlighted others



as bulk SDA payments with new template regardless of retirement year, VFN bill to be reviewed and passed in line with global best practice and many others.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, who addressed the veterans on Wednesday night said the issue would be brought

to an end as soon as possible.

The Minister promised to pay them 50% of our 20/28 and 320000, minimum wage. While other entitlement will be discuss on Thursday morning.

“Our veterans that have served this nation so well, I salute you and I salute your steadfastness. I am not happy about the condition that has kept you here since morning and you are still here, it’s not a thing of joy and it doesn’t give us a feeling of contentment. I found it alarming, discomfoting. It’s something I will like to bring to an end as soon as possible,” he added.

However, one of the protesters said, “We won’t leave the Federal Ministry of Finance gate except we see credit alerts. We have already bought chains and padlocks and we would lock the gate by tomorrow morning.”

Nigerian-born UK pastor, Tobi Adegboyega responds to deportation reports

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

Tobi Adegboyega, a Nigerian-born UK pastor and former leader of Salvation Proclaimers Anointed Church, has addressed reports of his impending deportation to Nigeria.

The 44-year-old pastor, who is also a cousin of Star Wars actor John Boyega, has recently lost his legal battle against deportation, despite claiming that the move would violate his human rights.

The decision follows a ruling by an immigration tribunal, which ordered Adegboyega’s deportation after investigations revealed financial misconduct within his church. His church, Salvation Proclaimers Anointed Church, was shut down following allegations of a £1.87 million fraud.



In response to the situation, Adegboyega took to Instagram to reassure his supporters. He stated, “I’ve heard a lot today, and I’m doing this because our friends, our fans, people who are worried. I’m right here at home, no cause for alarm. And naturally, I dismiss things that have to do with retrogression. Every Nigerian should be proud of me.”

He further emphasised, “I have survived all sorts, the matter they are propagating is the smallest of matters. No panic. I love London city, it is my city, and nobody can do anything.”

The ruling has sparked significant attention, but Adegboyega’s response suggests a defiant stance against the legal challenges he faces.

Lakurawa terrorists responsible for Zamfara explosion — Police

By Dave Oludare Oso

The police have fingered newly-formed terror group, Lakurawa as the mastermind of an explosion that occurred along the Dansadau-Gusau Road in the Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara State on Wednesday.

The state's police commissioner Muhammed Dalijan said on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily breakfast programme on Thursday, "This Lakurawa (group) when they were dislodged by the Army in Sokoto and Kebbi, the rest of them that survived the military onslaught were trying to find new enclaves.

"As they were passing that village to Birnin-Gwari forest, they planted a bomb under a bridge. Then a motorist was passing and stepped on it. It exploded and killed the driver and three other people were seriously injured."

The police commissioner said members of the dreaded insurgent group were seen around the scene of the incident shortly before the explosion.

Dalijan said planting of explosive devices was a new development in the North-



West state. He said though Zamfara has had a long battle with deadly bandits, they don't have the capacity to plant explosive devices.

"They were seen passing through a village and as we were getting reports, trying to get ourselves prepared to pursue them, this (explosion) happened. So, we are sure that they were the ones that planted the bomb.

"The bandits here (in Zamfara) don't use bombs because they don't know how to make it. They don't know how to improvise explosive devices. So, we are 100% sure that they (Lakurawa) are the ones because planting bombs in Zamfara State is a new

development and bandits don't have that capacity," he said.

Zamfara, located in North-West Nigeria, has become the "hub of banditry" in Nigeria, as described by Governor Dauda Lawal.

The governor said the marauding bandits whose kidnapping-for-ransom trade is booming in the state can be strangulated in two weeks with the right political will.

Meanwhile, military authorities have vowed to eliminate Lakurawa insurgents and other terror groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

EU seeks effective implementation of Nigeria's disability act

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The European Union (EU) has made a call to the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the National Disability Act.

In a statement released on Thursday, the EU stressed that while the Act outlines comprehensive policies and practices to accommodate and empower persons with disabilities, fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity and promotes social equity, its impact remains null without effective implementation.

The EU made the call during a national dialogue held in Abuja to mark this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The event, themed "Transformative Solutions to Disability-Inclusive Development in Nigeria," was organised by the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, with EU support through the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme implemented by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Representing the EU ambassador-designate to Nigeria, Quartier Mignot, and ECOWAS, Ruben Alba Aguilera, Head of the Governance, Security, and Migration Section at the EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, expressed concern over the exclusion of persons with disabilities in development planning.

He said, "People with disabilities are being left behind in development. Although inclusion is affirmed in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, many interventions still fail to include people with disabilities.



"Societal barriers continue to place them at increased risk of violence, poverty, poorer health outcomes, and limited access to education and employment opportunities.

"This is not inevitable, and we must be deliberate about ensuring disability inclusion."

Aguilera highlighted that over 35 million Nigerians live with disabilities, with 9 out of 10 living below the poverty line.

"These individuals face daily struggles, and it is our collective responsibility to address their challenges," he said.

While commending the government for passing the Disability Rights Law and establishing the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Aguilera stressed the need for swift implementation.

"A law is only as effective as its implementation. We cannot rest on our laurels; it is time to act and dedicate sufficient resources to make this law effective," he stated.

The dialogue also featured remarks from Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, represented by Sunday Hezekiah, Director of the Special Needs Department.

Yilwatda reiterated the need for an inclusive society and highlighted funding challenges for disability-related projects.

"While the Act mandates education, welfare, and other provisions for persons with disabilities, resources allocated by the National Assembly remain grossly inadequate," he noted.

Also, the Executive Secretary of NCPWD, Ayuba Gufwan, called for greater leadership and accountability in disability inclusion.

"Today is a day for stocktaking: where are we coming from, where are we now, and where are we heading?" he asked.

The Senior Special Assistant to the President on Special Needs and Equal Opportunities, Abba Isa, urged collaboration among policymakers, civil society organisations, and development partners to promote disability-inclusive development.

"Awareness is key," he said. "Ignorance of the law is no excuse; we must act now."

On his part, the Head of Programme for the RoLAC Programme, Danladi Plang, echoed the importance of inclusion.

"Sustainable development cannot be achieved without integrating the needs of persons with disabilities in planning and programming," he said.

The EU reiterated its commitment to prioritizing the welfare of persons with disabilities through its disability-inclusive international partnerships and interventions in Nigeria.

Ghana poll: Jonathan leads W/Africa elders forum to Ghana

By Agency Reporter

A delegation of the West African Elders Forum (WAEF) observation mission led by former President Goodluck Jonathan on Wednesday arrived in Accra, ahead of the Dec. 7 general elections in the country.

The WAEF's communications Officer, Wealth Dickson Ominabo, disclosed this in a statement made available to the News Agency of Nigeria on Wednesday in Abuja.

Ominabo, in a statement, quoted Jonathan on arrival in Ghana, urged Ghanaians to be patriotic and work for peaceful, free and transparent elections.

Other members of the delegation include former Burkinabe Prime Minister and President of the ECOWAS, Mr Kadre Ouedraogo; Executive Director of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, Ms Ann Iyonu, and Special Adviser to Jonathan, Ikechukwu Eze.

Jonathan commended the people of Ghana for their enduring commitment to democratic values, adding that Ghana's history of peaceful political transitions served as a beacon for democratic governance across Africa.

"The upcoming elections present another opportunity for Ghanaians to reinforce their dedication to democracy, stability, and development," he stated.

The mission leaders also charged the electoral commission of Ghana and the security agencies to keep to their mandate of independence and neutrality to ensure a credible polling process.

"WAEF urges the Electoral Commission of Ghana to uphold its



mandate of conducting free and fair elections, and ensuring the transparency and credibility of the 2024 elections as a way of building trust among the electorate and stakeholders.

"We encourage the security agencies to sustain their professional conduct, maintain their neutrality and a peaceful electoral environment by ensuring impartial deployment to safeguard voting materials, polling centres, and citizens across the country.

"As we approach the end of campaign activities, we urge all political parties and their candidates to reaffirm their commitment to peaceful campaigns devoid of hate speech, inflammatory rhetoric, and personal attacks."

The former President also called on political parties, candidates and all stakeholders to respect the integrity

of the electoral process and pledged to resolve disputes through lawful and constitutional channels.

Jonathan further urged the youth and party supporters to remain law-abiding during and after the elections, avoiding acts of intimidation or violence.

Describing Ghana as a model of democracy, Jonathan also urged Ghanaians to seek to safeguard Ghana's democratic legacy by rejecting violence, intimidation, or actions that could undermine the integrity of the electoral process.

"By working together, Ghanaians can once again assert the country's position as a model of democracy built on a tradition of peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections," he said.

12 Steps to Protect Your Brain and Prevent Dementia

By **Helen Okechukwu**

Memory lapses, like forgetting words or misplacing keys, may feel normal in midlife, but they could signal early changes in brain health.

A Trinity College Dublin study reveals that self-perceived memory issues are more strongly linked to dementia risk factors (like loneliness or hypertension) than objective tests.

The good news? More than 40% of dementia cases could be preventable.

Here's how to keep your brain sharp:

Stay Social

Loneliness doubles dementia risk, while social connections build cognitive resilience. Join clubs, meet friends regularly, and share laughs—it boosts feel-good hormones like serotonin and dopamine.

Cultivate Harmony

Toxic relationships trigger stress hormones, which impair neurogenesis and memory. Healthy, peaceful connections support brain longevity.

Adopt a Pet

Owning a pet slows cognitive decline. Talking to and caring for pets keeps verbal fluency sharp and alleviates loneliness, while dog walks add exercise and social interactions.

Engage Your Mind

Memory games, puzzles, and language learning strengthen neural connections and improve executive function. Even making shopping lists or focusing on tasks keeps your brain active.



Eat Smart

Start the day with protein-rich breakfasts like eggs to maintain stable blood sugar levels. Avoid high-sugar and high-carb diets linked to brain-damaging amyloid plaques. Keep your BMI under 23 to lower dementia risk.

Supplement Wisely

Take vitamin D (with K for absorption) to combat deficiencies linked to dementia. Studies show vitamin D reduces the risk of cognitive decline.

Manage Stress

Focus on controllable issues and limit stressors like social media. Chronic stress disrupts sleep and brain glucose levels, leading to cognitive impairment.

Read and Disconnect

Swap screen time for books or radio to stimulate brain regeneration. Passive activities, like excessive TV watching, are linked to higher dementia risks.

Find Your Passion

Pursue hobbies or interests that ignite excitement. Staying engaged with something meaningful helps regulate brain hormones and boosts mental resilience.

Prioritize Sleep

Good sleep removes brain toxins and supports cellular repair. Warm feet aid relaxation, while avoiding screens and heavy meals at night improves rest.

Declutter

Tidying up fosters focus and clarity, while too much clutter overstimulates and hampers memory. Organized spaces promote clear thinking.

Get Active

Gardening, dancing, or any enjoyable activity increases blood flow and stimulates BDNF, a protein essential for learning and memory. Build “cognitive reserves” through consistent movement.

Simple lifestyle changes can enhance brain health, reduce dementia risks, and help you maintain cognitive sharpness well into later life.

Six ways to detect your heart is growing weak and how to help yourself

By Helen Okechukwu

After reading about an X user, who shared a story of how her father died from heart disease at age 56 after going for replacement surgery at age 50 and the X user, bearing the same heart condition but still keeping hopes alive, I became curious to know why, how to detect a weak heart, and what to do about it.

“My father suffered heart disease from birth. Had a valve replacement surgery at 50 and died of cardiac arrest at 56. I have the same thing he had, except I went into heart failure at 30, and I keep telling guys... You cannot stress me. There’s a literal metal prosthesis in my heart,” the X user

Research from WHO explained that about 17.9 million people died from cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) in 2019.

The report acknowledged that 32% of deaths recorded are attributed to CVDs, revealing the health condition as the leading cause of death globally, while 85% were as a result of heart attack and stroke.

Remember that your heart beats 100,000 times to complete its pump of eight pints of blood for proper functioning of your entire body system, from delivering oxygen to easing muscle movement.

It is difficult to spot when your heart is growing weak day by day. Some symptoms were shared by the head of the school of medical sciences at the University of Manchester, Prof. Tony Heagerty, to be kept in check and stay alert.

Below are the signs that your heart may be in trouble and need urgent medical help:

When you struggle to hold things
When you find it difficult to hold things like door handles, tennis rackets, and



others. If you experience other worrying symptoms outside poor grip strength, like breathlessness and chest pain, you are advised to seek medical attention from your doctor because a flourishing and healthy heart provides extra blood and oxygen around your body.

But when you have the underlying heart condition, the circulation of the blood will be limited, and the organs will begin to deteriorate while you experience that your strength level is weak.

Prof. Heagerty said, “Therefore your muscles are weakened and your grip strength is reduced.”

Indigestion-Like Discomfort If you feel a burning or aching sensation in your chest, it could just be indigestion—or it might signal a heart issue. Since the nerves connected to your stomach and heart are similar, it can be hard to tell the difference.

A key distinction is that heart-related chest pain often arises during physical activity and eases with rest, while indigestion typically occurs after eating. If you notice indigestion-like pain after exercise, it’s a good idea to consult your doctor.

A Choking or Tight Feeling in Your Throat Chest pain caused by angina—a condition where narrowed arteries restrict blood flow to your heart—can also cause a choking or tightening sensation in your throat.

This happens because your heart struggles to pump enough blood, leading to a buildup of lactic acid.

If this sensation becomes more frequent or occurs with minimal physical activity, see your doctor promptly, as it may indicate a severe narrowing of your coronary arteries and increase your risk of a heart attack.

Observed Swollen Ankles

Persistent swelling in your ankles could be a sign of heart failure, where the heart fails to pump blood effectively. This inefficient circulation causes fluid to pool in your lower limbs.

Although other factors like medications, weight, or varicose veins can also cause swelling, it’s worth mentioning to your doctor. They can determine if your heart is involved and decide if further evaluation is necessary.

First tuberculosis diagnostic test met prequalification — WHO

By Helen Okechukwu

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that the tuberculosis diagnostic test marks a critical milestone to have met the prequalification standard of the health organization.

WHO made this assertion on Thursday, describing Xpert® MTB/RIF Ultra as the prequalified molecular diagnostic test for tuberculosis (TB) of its first kind.

The notice said, “It is the first test for TB diagnosis and antibiotic susceptibility testing that meets WHO’s prequalification standards.”

WHO reported that a total of 1.25 million people died from tuberculosis (TB) in 2023, and it has been acknowledged as the world’s leading cause of death from a single infectious agent.

Research revealed that in 2023, about 10.8 million people fell ill with TB worldwide: 6.0 million people affected are men, 3.6 million are women, and 1.3 million children.

As one of the world’s leading infectious disease killers, it imposes immense socioeconomic burdens, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

However, WHO said accurate and early detection of TB, particularly drug-resistant strains, remains a critical and challenging global health priority.

WHO Assistant Director-General for Access to Medicines and Health Products, Dr. Yukiko Nakatani, stated that, “This first prequalification of a diagnostic test for tuberculosis marks a critical



milestone in WHO’s efforts to support countries in scaling up and accelerating access to high-quality TB assays that meet both WHO recommendations and its stringent quality, safety, and performance standards.”

Nakatani highlighted the significance of this development in addressing one of the world’s deadliest infectious diseases.

WHO’s prequalification of this diagnostic test ensures quality tools for early TB diagnosis and treatment, complementing its endorsement process focused on evidence, accuracy, patient outcomes, and accessibility.

The assessment draws on data from the manufacturer, Cepheid Inc., and a review by Singapore’s Health Sciences Authority (HSA), the regulatory body for this product.

Compatible with the GeneXpert® System, the Xpert® MTB/RIF Ultra test detects Mycobacterium tuberculosis in sputum samples and

identifies rifampicin resistance, providing results within hours.

It is intended for pulmonary TB patients who have not started treatment or received less than three days of therapy in the past six months.

Explaining its effectiveness and prevention, the WHO Director for Regulation and Prequalification, Dr. Rogerio Gaspar, said the prequalification grants access to advance technologies, empowering countries to address the dual burden of TB and drug-resistant TB.

The document noted, “In a joint effort by the WHO Global TB Programme and the Department of Regulation and Prequalification to improve access to quality-assured TB tests and expand diagnostic options for countries, WHO is currently assessing seven additional TB tests.”

Tired of eating rice for Christmas? Here are dishes you can try out

By Eytayo Jemimah Ajayi

Long gone are the days where rice is for Christmas alone. These days, it is a staple food. Some people even think the rate at which they eat rice, it might be growing on their heads.

I, for one find fried rice more economical to cook than white rice and stew. Most times, I cook fried rice on a random day. Are you also like me who is already tired of rice before Christmas? Here are few dishes you can make to make your Christmas delight-able

Chicken yam porridge

You know the chicken stock you use for your jollof or fried rice or even stew? It is time to revolutionise it for something else. For this dish, you'll be using your chicken stock as the base fluid for your yam pottage. Just imagine your yam boiling yummy in your chicken stock.

My mum, being economical, made this dish a day before Christmas sometime in 2021... For me, the aroma of the dish alone took me away.

To make this different from regular porridge, you're going to be adding chunks of chicken meat in it. Note that you'll be adding these chunks after mashing the yam. For other toppings for your chicken porridge, explore using green peas, carrots and green pepper.

2. Boiled plantain and garden eggs sauce with chicken

Where are Benin people at? This is one of their delicacies. This dish is a 10/10. Apart from its nutritional value, it explores local ingredients who make it whole. Made from boiled plantain and garden eggs



sauce, this dish should be on your list.

Garden eggs known as igba in Yoruba, anara in Igbo and dawadawa in Hausa, is typically a vegetable with no original sweetness. But to make garden eggs sauce, you need ripened garden eggs which you'll boil and pound. Also for the carbohydrate, you're making use of unripe plantain.

Mixing the sauce with chicken is the game changer.

3. Stir fry spaghetti

Yes, it is on this list. Stir fry spaghetti is on this list because of its exquisiteness. It's not the regular spaghetti because of the veggies you're going to be adding to the dish. Except you know you're going to feed people with large appetites and the cost of pasta will drain your pocket, there's no reason why you shouldn't go for this dish.

You might want to invest in getting a durable spaghetti brand to achieve

your desired stir-fry spaghetti dish. Also, spice it up with grilled chicken and vegetables such as peas, carrots and green pepper

4. Potato balls or yam balls for dessert

A perfect dessert idea is potato balls instead cakes or pies. You can get sweet potatoes, boil them, mash them, coat with flour or eggs then fry or bake as you wish. You can twist the taste of the potatoes by boiling in chicken stock instead of bland stock.

Also, Chef Amaka, popular Nigerian chef, in her benevolence at the start of this month dropped an economical and healthy tip to make your chicken. Instead of frying your chicken, grill them instead. This helps you to reduce the cost of oil to be used and also helps you eat healthy.

Do you want a recipe for this dish? Keep close tabs with us, one will be coming your way soon. Also, let us know what other dishes should be on the list. No rice o!

10 companies that have exited Nigeria in the last 2 years

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

The exit of these companies has raised concerns about the economic stability of the country. The affected sectors include: manufacturing, pharmaceutical, technology, among others, is because of the economic instability, security challenges and others.

It needs no business or economy expertise to be able to tell that the departure of these business will greatly affect or has significantly affected the Nigerian economy and the daily lives of Nigerians who were employed by these companies or used their products.

10 companies that have exited Nigeria

Here are 10 companies that have left the country in the last two years.

GSK

GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria Plc. is a pharmaceutical company that has been in Nigeria for X years. They announced in August 2023 that they would be closing operations in Nigeria and will start selling their pharmaceutical products through a third party.

Kimberly-Clark

The American company announced that it would be shutting down operations on May 31st, after 15 years of operation in Nigeria. The company laid off about 90 per cent of their staff. The company said it will no longer manufacture, sell or market its products like Huggies and Kotex in Nigeria.

Bolt Food

Bolt food announced that it will shut



down operations in Nigeria from December 7, 2023. The food delivery company claimed the reason for the exit, after two years of operation, was because it needed to streamline resources.

Jumia Food

The food delivery company left Nigeria and other African countries like Kenya, Morocco, Uganda etc, at the end of December 2023. They claimed they needed to focus on their physical goods and increase profitability.

Unilever

Unilever Nigeria Plc. stopped its production and sale of home and skin care products in Nigeria in December 2023. Products like Omo, Sunlight and Lux were discontinued allegedly due to a decline in sales of the products.

P&G

In December 2023, Procter and Gamble announced the plans to terminate their manufacturing plants in Nigeria and shift to importation.

Sanofi

The French pharmaceutical company announced its plans to exit the

country in November 2023 and shift to a third-party distribution model for its products.

Equinor

After over 30 years of operation in Nigeria, the Norwegian oil firm announced their plan to sell their assets in Nigeria to Chappal Energies, leading to their exit from the country.

PZ Cussons

Driven by the economic challenges of the country, PZ Cussons Plc. announced in April that they would be closing operations in Nigeria. According to the company, they suffered a 48 per cent decline in sales, hence the decision to leave Nigeria.

Guinness

The beverage brand announced it was closing operations in Nigeria due to the N61.9 billion loss between July 2023 and March 2024. The parent company, Diageo, announced that it would be selling its controlling shares to Tolaram Group.

Davido: Birth abroad trend in Nigeria

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Davido explains why Nigerians choose to give birth abroad

Davido explains why many Nigerians, especially from the upper and middle classes, choose to give birth abroad to secure a better future for their children.

In a recent episode of The Morning Hustle podcast, Davido spoke candidly about this growing trend. He stated that many Nigerians view giving birth abroad as more than just a means of ensuring better healthcare. Instead, he described it as a form of “insurance policy” for their children’s future.

“Having a child abroad opens doors to many opportunities,” Davido said. “It’s not just about medical care, but also about securing foreign citizenship, better education, and opportunities that might be harder to access in Nigeria.”

While the trend of Nigerians giving birth abroad is not new, it has gained momentum in recent years. Increasingly, wealthier families choose to fly abroad to give birth, often to destinations like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

One major factor driving this decision, according to Davido, is the ease that foreign citizenship provides.

A child born abroad automatically gains citizenship, which opens up a wealth of benefits. These benefits include access to quality education, healthcare, and job opportunities later in life.

In Nigeria, where the healthcare system often faces strain, many expectant parents are eager to ensure their children are born in places with more advanced medical facilities.

Foreign hospitals and experienced medical professionals offer a level of care that may be difficult to find in some Nigerian cities. This gives many



parents peace of mind during their child’s early life.

Another key point raised by Davido is the issue of visas. Nigeria’s visa application process can be challenging and time-consuming, often requiring extensive documentation and approval. By having a child abroad, parents can bypass some of these bureaucratic hurdles.

A child born overseas automatically gains citizenship, which makes future travel and living abroad easier.

According to Davido, many view this strategy as a way to “secure a better future” for their children, avoiding the delays and complexities that often accompany international travel and migration.

The opportunities provided by foreign citizenship can significantly improve these children’s lives, offering them advantages that might otherwise be out of reach.

Healthcare also plays a crucial role in this decision. While Nigeria’s healthcare system has made strides in recent years, many Nigerians feel that developed countries offer higher levels of care.

Access to modern medical facilities, advanced treatments, and better prenatal care is a primary reason why Nigerians are choosing to give birth abroad.

For parents who can afford it, the benefits of giving birth abroad are clear. Children born in countries with stronger economies and more developed infrastructures have a greater chance of accessing resources that ensure a successful start in life.

Nigerian singer Davido
Nigerian singer Davido
The quality of education available in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom is also a major attraction for Nigerians seeking the best education for their children.

Davido’s perspective aligns with a broader societal trend in Nigeria. Many Nigerians are increasingly motivated by the desire to provide their children with a better future, prompting them to seek opportunities abroad.

Though the reasons for this trend vary, it’s clear that foreign citizenship and its numerous advantages are key factors driving it.

Rema, Tems, Ayra Starr in Rolling Stone's top 100

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian musicians Ayra Starr, Tems, and Rema made Rolling Stone's 100 Best Albums of 2024 list, recognizing their globally acclaimed albums.

Representing the vibrant music scene of Nigeria, the three artists have made an undeniable impact in the international music industry. Rema's second studio album, *Heis*, landed at an impressive 11th place on the list.

Rolling Stone praised the album for its "unique, buzzy, and visceral" qualities, noting how it stood out in the crowded global music landscape. This recognition marks another milestone in Rema's career, solidifying his position as a major force in global music.

Tems, whose album *Born in the Wild* earned the 37th spot, was also lauded for creating a "physical and emotional listening experience."

Rolling Stone described her album as a journey that captures both deep personal expression and broad universal appeal. Known for her distinctive voice and introspective style, Tems continues to captivate listeners worldwide with her heartfelt, introspective tracks.

Ayra Starr, with her album *The Year I Turned 21*, took the 53rd position on the list. The album was recognized for showcasing her growth as an artist, combining musical maturity with a deep passion for her craft.

Rolling Stone celebrated how Ayra's album marked a significant leap in her career, positioning her as one of the brightest stars in contemporary Nigerian music.

These three Nigerian artists have become central to a global wave of Afrobeats, contributing to the genre's



rising influence. Their albums reflect the dynamic, innovative nature of Nigerian music, which continues to resonate with audiences worldwide.

This achievement is a proud moment for the Nigerian music industry, following the success of Asake's debut album, *Mr. Money*, which also made it onto Rolling Stone's prestigious list in 2022.

Asake's success marked a turning point in the recognition of African artists on the global stage, and now Ayra Starr, Tems, and Rema are continuing this trend with their own distinctive musical styles.

Their inclusion in Rolling Stone's list of best albums is more than just a recognition of their music—it underscores the growing influence of African artists in the global music scene. These albums have found audiences across the world, breaking barriers and defying expectations.

The success of Nigerian artists like Rema, Tems, and Ayra Starr is a testament to the power of music as a universal language, one that transcends borders and connects people from all walks of life.

Rolling Stone's list is one of the most prestigious music accolades, and for these artists to be featured alongside some of the world's most celebrated musicians is a monumental achievement. Their inclusion speaks to the quality of their work and the global relevance of their artistry. It also highlights the increasing visibility of African music, which is now seen as a dominant force in global music culture.

For Rema, the success of *Heis* is not just a personal triumph but also a recognition of Afrobeats' growing prominence. Since its release, the album has captured the attention of listeners worldwide, with tracks that blend Afrobeat rhythms with global pop sensibilities. *Heis* has been praised for its innovative production, catchy hooks, and lyrical depth, making it a standout project in 2024.

Similarly, Tems has carved out a unique niche in the music world with her album *Born in the Wild*. Her voice, often described as ethereal and haunting, is perfectly suited for the introspective and emotionally charged themes explored in her songs.

Skit maker Taaooma, husband welcome baby

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular skit maker Taaooma and husband Abula welcome baby girl, Amani Greene

Nigerian comedian Taaooma and husband Abula welcome their first child, Amani Greene, announcing the joyful news on December 5, 2024.

Taaooma, whose real name is Mariam Apaokagi-Greene, took to Instagram to share the heartwarming moment with her fans. She posted an emotional video celebrating Amani's arrival, revealing that the little one was born on November 7, 2024. The post was filled with love and gratitude as Taaooma gave her followers a glimpse of her new journey into motherhood.

The skit maker's announcement quickly garnered widespread attention, drawing a flood of congratulatory messages and well wishes from fans, friends, and fellow celebrities. Within hours, her comment section was overflowing with kind words, prayers, and heartfelt messages celebrating the arrival of baby Amani.

Career built on laughter

Taaooma, a household name in the Nigerian entertainment industry, rose to fame for her relatable comedy skits. Her content humorously captures the quirks of Nigerian parenting, especially the no-nonsense approach of African mothers. These skits resonate deeply with audiences both in Nigeria and beyond, earning her millions of followers across various social media platforms.

Her ability to blend humor with everyday life experiences has made her one of the most beloved online comedians in Africa. Over the years, she has solidified her place as a cultural icon, using her platform to not only entertain but also shed light on societal issues.

Fans and celebrities celebrate



As soon as Taaooma shared the news of Amani's birth, social media platforms lit up with excitement. Fans expressed their happiness for the couple, showering them with prayers and warm messages. Many noted how inspiring it was to see Taaooma, a comedian known for portraying parenting in her skits, now embarking on her own journey as a mother.

Celebrities from the Nigerian entertainment scene were not left out. Several of her colleagues, including top actors, musicians, and influencers, took time to share their congratulations. Some shared her Instagram post, while others penned personal messages, celebrating the new addition to her family.

Personal milestone

For Taaooma and Abula, Amani's arrival marks a new chapter in their lives. While the couple has largely kept their private life out of the spotlight, their joy over their daughter's birth has been openly shared. In her Instagram post, Taaooma expressed gratitude for the overwhelming love and support from her fans and family.

Her husband, Abula, a filmmaker and content creator, has also played a significant role in Taaooma's journey. Together, they have become a creative powerhouse, often collaborating on projects that delight their audience. The couple's love story has been an inspiration to many, and their latest milestone has further endeared them to their fans.

Taaooma and Husband Abula with their new born baby

Taaooma's influence on Nigerian comedy

Taaooma's rise to stardom is a testament to the power of creativity and consistency. Since stepping into the comedy scene, she has transformed simple, relatable stories into viral content. Her unique style and ability to mimic different characters, from strict mothers to clueless children, have set her apart from others in the industry.

In addition to her comedic talent, Taaooma has used her platform to promote brands, advocate for social change, and mentor aspiring comedians. She has received numerous awards and accolades, cementing her place as a leading figure in Nigerian comedy.

New chapter of laughter and love

With baby Amani now in the picture, fans are eager to see how this new phase of Taaooma's life might influence her work. Many are already speculating whether her experiences as a mother will inspire fresh content, possibly exploring the humor and challenges of parenting from a first-hand perspective.

As she embraces motherhood, Taaooma's journey promises to remain an inspiring one. Her ability to connect with her audience, combined with her authenticity and humor, ensures that she will continue to shine both as a comedian and a new mom.

Conclusion

Yemi Solade rejects award, organizers withdraw

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Organizers withdraw award from Yemi Solade over non-payment

Nigerian actor Yemi Solade revealed that an award ceremony withdrew his recognition after he refused to pay for the plaque, a practice he criticized.

In a post on his Instagram page, Solade expressed his disappointment over the matter. He stated that he was not a part of the group of individuals who buy awards. He further accused the organizers of extorting him, citing the situation as unjust and unethical.

The actor shared a screenshot of his conversation with a representative of the event organizers, which clearly showed the back-and-forth surrounding the issue. In the post, Solade wrote, "I refused to pay for the AWARD PLAQUE. This is the outcome."

The leaked conversation between the actor and the organizers reveals the behind-the-scenes negotiations. The representative began the message by greeting Solade and wishing him well. They acknowledged his previous response regarding sponsorship, explaining that they had discussed it with the management team.

However, the organizers admitted that they were dissatisfied with his stance, especially after revealing the costs associated with the award plaques.

The message continued: "Good morning sir, trust you had a good night rest. I did revert your response regarding sponsorship to the management.

However, I think it doesn't sit well with them as they also disclosed how much the plaques cost. Hence, you can please attend, but the award plaque may not be presented in order to save cost. Thank you for your kind understanding, sir."



The exchange highlights a growing trend in the entertainment industry where award ceremonies sometimes require nominees to pay for their awards. While this practice remains controversial, it has become an issue in various sectors, from the arts to sports.

Solade's decision to speak out about the incident sheds light on what many perceive as a corrupt system within some award events. The actor's stance is likely to resonate with many of his fans and colleagues in the industry, who have long suspected that awards are sometimes sold rather than earned. This raises important questions about the integrity of award systems and the pressure they place on those involved.

The Nigerian entertainment industry, particularly the film sector, has been plagued by a series of controversies regarding award ceremonies in recent years.

While some prestigious events have maintained their reputations, others have been criticized for lack of transparency, favoritism, and even claims of bribery. Solade's refusal to pay for the plaque is a direct challenge to these practices, as it draws attention to a system that some feel exploits both artists and fans.

In his post, Yemi Solade emphasized

that his action was not an attack on the legitimacy of the award itself, but rather on the practice of asking for money in exchange for recognition. Yemi Solade pointed out that genuine acknowledgement should come from merit and hard work, not from financial transactions.

The controversy surrounding Solade's withdrawal from the award ceremony adds to a growing conversation about the commercialization of accolades within the entertainment world.

With the rise of online platforms and social media, many entertainers now have direct access to their fanbase, allowing them to speak out more freely about issues like this one.

As a result, instances of dissatisfaction with award events are now receiving more public attention, and the industry's inner workings are being exposed in ways they haven't been before.

Support for Solade has poured in from his followers and fellow actors. Many have praised Yemi Solade for standing his ground against what they see as an unethical practice. Several have also voiced concerns about the broader implications of the issue, noting that it undermines the value of hard-earned recognition.

Mother rapes her two under-4 children

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

....Tells Police she was suffering 'extreme stress' from divorce

A 31-year-old mother has handed herself over to the authorities for sexually abusing her children.

Keirsten White of Opelousas in central Louisiana, has been charged with first-degree rape, sexual battery, two counts of indecent behaviour with juveniles, and two counts of cruelty to juveniles.

Earlier in the week, White entered the St. Landry Parish Jail and confessed that she sexually and physically abused her children, both under the age of 4.

Detectives opened an investigation and with the cooperation of White, determined her claims to be true and she was promptly arrested, according to the announcement.

White claimed that she was dealing with extreme stress due to a divorce.

Sheriff Bobby J Guidroz, of St Landry Parish said White turned herself in and gave cops



all the harrowing details of her grisly crimes on Sunday.

'With this astonishing statement made and no outstanding warrants existing, the St Landry Parish Sheriff's Office began their investigation,' Guidroz said in a statement.

'Detectives with the Juvenile Division were able to determine, through the cooperation of Keirsten White, the extent of the criminal activity involving the children.

'White admitted to detectives

that she was dealing with extreme stress and frustration stemming from a divorce.

'While we, as Christians, should "hate the sin, not the sinner", law enforcement has the sacred obligation to uphold the law.

'We are thankful that White surrendered herself and was completely cooperative with detectives.'

If convicted, she could face life behind bars, the maximum penalty for first-degree rape under Louisiana law.

Bill Gates reflects on billionaire status amid modern distractions

By Olamilekan Botti

Bill Gates, the co-founder and former CEO of Microsoft, has expressed uncertainty about whether he would have achieved billionaire status had he grown up in today's smartphone and social media saturated environment.

Gates, integral in making computers and the internet an everyday fixture, shared his insights in a recent blog post, where he lamented the distractions that dominate the lives of contemporary youth.

In a candid admission, Gates articulated that much of his formative years were spent wandering outdoors with friends, delving into books, and engaging in deep contemplation activities that he views as crucial to his eventual success.

“When I felt restless or bored or even when I found myself in trouble for mischief I would retreat to my room,” he recounted.

“There, I would immerse myself in books or ideas for hours on end,” adding that this capacity for solitary reflection was fundamental to shaping his identity and achievements.

Gates recommended reading “The Anxious Generation” by New York University social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, a book that examines how smartphones and social media have “rewired” the brains of today's youth.

Haidt's research indicates a troubling rise in mental health issues among Generation Z, linking prolonged smartphone use to



increased feelings of loneliness and depression. Research shows that such constant digital engagement negatively impacts young people's memory, concentration, and attention spans.

Highlighting the stark contrast between “play-based childhoods” typical of previous generations and the “phone-based childhood” prevalent today, Gates underscored the importance of uninterrupted time for reflection and creativity.

He posited, “Our attention spans function like muscles; the incessant interruptions and the addictive quality of social media make it exceedingly challenging to cultivate them.”

Throughout his illustrious career, Gates has consistently attributed his achievements to his insatiable reading habit and capacity for self-imposed isolation. Reflecting on his strategies from the 1990s, he recounted annual “Think Weeks,” during which he secluded himself in a remote cabin armed solely with a

bag of books and technical papers.

These weeks were dedicated to “uninterrupted concentration,” a time when Gates refrained from checking emails to fully commit to reading, reflecting, and writing about the future.

In his blog, Gates emphasized the need to foster environments that enhance sustained focus, free from the distractions of technology and daily life. He warned that without this ability to immerse oneself deeply into an idea, society risks missing out on transformative breakthroughs.

“The world might lose out on revolutionary innovations that often arise from the discipline of intense focus, even when a quick digital distraction is but a click away,” he asserted.

As we navigate this digital age, Gates' insights serve as a reminder of the value of deep thinking and the perils of distraction.

Elon Musk's SpaceX valued at \$350bn in potential share sale

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Elon Musk's SpaceX is considering a tender offer that would allow employees and early investors to sell their shares, valuing the rocket company at approximately \$350 billion, according to recent reports.

This substantial increase represents a significant leap from its previous valuation of \$210 billion after a similar tender offer concluded in June.

Terms and Participants

The terms of the tender offer are still subject to change and will depend on the level of interest from potential participants. SpaceX has declined to comment on the matter, but if the proposed valuation of \$350 billion is maintained, it would establish SpaceX as the most valuable private company globally.

SpaceX's Growth and Expansion

SpaceX, the world's leading satellite

operator, operates Starlink, a high-speed internet service that caters to underserved rural and remote areas lacking traditional infrastructure. Additionally, the company has developed the Starship shuttle as part of Musk's ambitious plans to return astronauts to the moon and eventually to Mars.

Political Connections and Business Outlook

Musk has played a significant role as an advisor and donor to President-elect Trump's 2024 White House campaign. Notably, Trump attended a Starship test launch in Texas in the recent past. This burgeoning relationship is seen as a positive indicator for Musk's businesses, including SpaceX, Tesla, and the artificial intelligence startup xAI.

Government Efficiency Initiative

Furthermore, Trump has appointed Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to lead

the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). This body is tasked with reducing the federal budget and eliminating unnecessary regulations. The appointment of Musk, a renowned entrepreneur and innovator, to this position is viewed as a testament to his potential impact on government efficiency and streamlining.

Conclusion

Elon Musk's SpaceX is poised for a significant valuation increase, solidifying its position as a leading private company. With its diverse portfolio of satellite technology, space exploration aspirations, and close ties to the incoming administration, SpaceX's future prospects appear promising.

The potential \$350 billion valuation is a testament to Musk's vision and the transformative power of innovation in the private sector.



Unknown flu-like disease kills at least 79 people in DR Congo

By Agency Reporter

At least 79 people have died from an unknown disease that is causing flu-like symptoms in south-western Democratic Republic of Congo, the health ministry says.

The health ministry says the majority of people who have died are between the ages of 15 and 18.

More than 300 people have been infected with patients exhibiting symptoms like fever, headaches, runny noses and coughs, breathing difficulties and anaemia.

Response teams have been sent to Kwango Province, specifically the Panzi health zone, where the disease is most common, to manage cases and investigate the nature of the disease.

Cephorien Manzanza, a civil society leader, told Reuters news agency the situation was worrying as the number of infected people continues to rise.

“Panzi is a rural health zone, so there is a problem with the supply of medicines,” he said.

A World Health Organisation (WHO) Africa region official told the BBC they have “dispatched a team to the remote area to collect samples for lab investigations”.

Authorities have urged the population to remain calm and vigilant.

They urged people to wash their hands with soap, avoid mass gatherings, and avoid touching the bodies of the deceased without qualified health personnel.

A local MP told Top Congo Radio that about 67 people had fallen sick and died between 10 and 26 November.

“It should be noted that Panzi hospital is short of medicines to cope with this epidemic. We really need assistance,” said the MP.

The central African country has also been dealing with a severe outbreak of mpox. Between January and July this year, they recorded about 14,500 infections.

DR Congo has also dealt with bouts of Ebola over the years.



UK announce e-visa system transition grace period until 2025

By Olamilekan Botti

The UK has introduced a grace period until March 2025, during which time expired physical documentation will be accepted for international travel as visa holders make the transition to an entirely online eVisa system.

As part of an ongoing Home Office drive, all visa holders including many Indians using a physical biometric residence permit (BRP), a passport containing a visa vignette sticker or ink stamp confirming their indefinite leave to enter/remain in the country, or biometric residence card (BRC) as evidence of their immigration rights, were given until the end of December to make the switch to an eVisa.

While the Home Office claims over 3.1 million people have already switched over to an eVisa, there are believed to be several others who have been unable to meet the year-end deadline having encountered technical issues, among other reasons. For those who are yet to switch to an eVisa, a wide range of guidance and support is available, said Seema Malhotra, UK Minister for Migration and Citizenship.

I have been listening to feedback from visa holders, stakeholders and MPs, and we are continually streamlining and adapting to ensure this is a smooth transition. As part of that, I am pleased to confirm greater flexibility on carriers accepting expired documents to smooth the transition for those travelling internationally without compromising on border security, she said.

A majority of the BRPs are set to expire towards the end of this year and are being automatically transitioned online in phases, to be



accessed by creating and logging into a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) online account. Now, as a fallback to help ensure a smooth transition to eVisas, airlines and other carriers will be able to accept BRPs and BRCs expiring on December 31, 2024, or later as evidence of permission to travel to the UK, provisionally until March 31 next year.

The Home Office said this date will be kept under review and passengers will remain subject to the usual immigration checks and requirements. It flagged a series of support measures in place for anyone encountering any issues during the transition period, including a 24/7 chatbot and helplines.

Using a phased approach to implementing digital services, the Home Office intends that by 2025 most people will have a secure and seamless digital journey when interacting with the UK's immigration system.

With an eVisa, it is also hoped that fewer people will need to leave their passports with the Home Office while awaiting a decision on their

immigration status. eVisas also mean that migrants do not need to make trips to collect documents like BRPs or wait for these documents to be sent to them, saving them on renewal fees. The process launched in April this year under the previous Conservative government, with BRP holders emailed directly with instructions on how to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa.

It has since been implemented by the Labour government, which has been warned by some digital rights experts of potential discrimination against those unable to prove their British residency rights as a result of glitches in the rollout of the eVisa system.

The government has dismissed the concerns and stressed that the three-month transition window until March 2025 would help address any small number of visa holders impacted. British passport holders and Irish citizens, including those who previously held an immigration status but have since acquired British citizenship, are not impacted.

Arsenal fan shot dead for celebrating win over Manchester United

By Dave Oludare Oso

A fan of the English Premier League club, Arsenal, John Ssenyonga, was fatally shot on Wednesday night while celebrating his team's 2-0 victory over Manchester United.

The incident occurred when a security guard opened fire on a large crowd of supporters jubilating at a restaurant in Lukaya town in central Uganda, about 62 miles from the capital Kampala.

According to the BBC, the noise from the crowd infuriated the manager of the

building who asked the guard to intervene while he switched off power at the restaurant.

The move reportedly annoyed the fans who decided to make more noise at the restaurant, causing the security guard to open fire.

The report said 30-year-old Ssenyonga was hit while another Arsenal fan, Lawrence Mugejera, was injured.

Both the guard and the manager of the building are reportedly on the run, while Mugejera was taken to the hospital for medical care.

Reacting to the incident, the regional police spokesman, Twaha Kasirye, said "A case has been opened against the security guard, and we are actively pursuing him.

"The security guard is on the run," he added.

Kasirye appealed to football fans to maintain decorum during celebrations.

"We encourage our people to celebrate peacefully. Violence in the name of football support is unacceptable," he said.



Amorim already bringing back Sir Alex Ferguson's standards to Man Utd

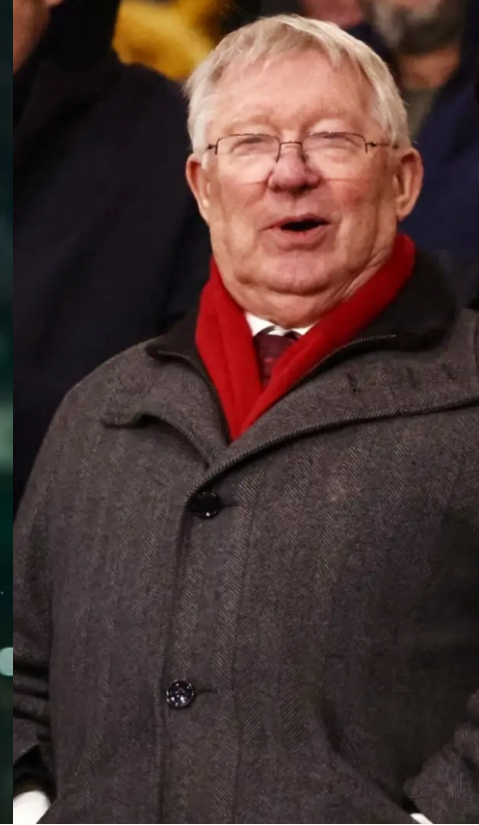
By Dave Oludare Oso

After a glittering 20-year playing career at clubs like Chelsea, Real Madrid, and AC Milan, Michael Essien has transitioned to coaching, a move that has given him new insights into the world of management. Despite being one of the best midfielders of his generation, it wasn't a desire to follow in the footsteps of renowned managers like Jose Mourinho or Carlo Ancelotti that prompted Essien to enter coaching. Instead, it was a simple realization: "I woke up one day and thought, 'Let me start doing something.'"

Essien's coaching career began in 2020 when he joined Danish side FC Nordsjaelland as an assistant coach. A club known for its strong ties to the Right to Dream academy in Ghana, Nordsjaelland's focus on developing young talent attracted the former Ghana international. "I love how they develop their boys here," Essien says, speaking of the academy's holistic approach to nurturing both footballing talent and academic success. "The environment is very nice and very healthy, and everyone is ready to help whenever you need."

Nordsjaelland's unique structure, where an academy drives the club's operations, appealed to Essien, especially given his longstanding relationship with academy founder Tom Vernon. The academy, founded in 1999, has produced top talents like Mohammed Kudus and Kamaldeen Sulemana, and Essien is excited to be part of this system that provides a pathway for young players to professional football.

Though Essien is far from considering a head coaching position, his current role has allowed him to learn from seasoned coaches like Mourinho and Ancelotti. "I understand a bit more why Jose would get angry," Essien



reflects, acknowledging the challenges of coaching that he never truly grasped as a player. His experiences under some of the game's best managers have influenced his own approach, and he now applies those lessons as he works with young players.

Despite Essien's success as a player, coaching has its challenges, particularly with the current generation of players. "Sometimes they think they know the world, but actually they don't know anything," Essien says, noting the importance of offering advice and guidance to young players. His mentorship helps them navigate their careers and the pressures that come with the modern game.

Essien has also been developing his managerial skills, recently completing a football management course that has broadened his understanding of club operations. While he's not actively

seeking a head coach role, Essien is clearly laying the groundwork for a future in management. "Football goes beyond the pitch," he says. "I'm collecting knowledge about the game because I want to do my best for these young boys coming up."

For now, Essien is focused on helping Nordsjaelland and its academy system continue to grow, but his journey in coaching has only just begun. As he gains more experience and refines his understanding of the game's inner workings, a future in management seems likely for the former midfield powerhouse.

As he continues to learn and grow in his new role, Essien remains passionate about football and determined to shape the next generation of players, just as his own career was shaped by the guidance of his coaches.