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# We'll pay Rivers allocation, obey court orders – FG

By Dave Oludare Oso

In the face of recent legal controversies surrounding Rivers State's financial entitlements, the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF) has said it will adhere to court orders regarding the disbursement of federal allocations to the state.

Speaking to journalists on Friday, the Director of Press and Public Relations at the OAGF, Bawa Mokwa, said, "We are going to obey court order.

"Since there is a notice of appeal, the notice of appeal has overridden the earlier court judgment. So far, it is a court order that we will obey; if there is a notice of appeal, Rivers will be paid."

The assurance comes amid a Federal High Court ruling on October 30, 2024, which directed the Central Bank of Nigeria to withhold further monthly allocations to Rivers State.

The court ruled that Governor Siminalayi Fubara's presentation of the 2024 budget to a four-member House of Assembly was unconstitutional.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik, who delivered the judgment, stated that since January 2024, allocations received and spent by the state were based on an illegitimate budget, describing it as a "constitutional aberration."

The ruling raised questions over the legitimacy of the State House of Assembly's composition and its authority to approve budgets.

The judge contended that the governor's actions ignored constitutional requirements for budget approval by a fully constituted House of Assembly. Delivering judgment in suit FHC/ABJ/CS/984/2024, Justice Abdulmalik declared that decisions made by the four-member Fubara-backed



Assembly were void, referencing prior rulings by the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal that had annulled its authority.

The ruling also held that Fubara's actions violated Sections 91 and 96 of the 1999 Constitution, and warned that any continued bypassing of legislative processes constituted an affront to the rule of law.

The court's decision followed a suit filed by the State House of Assembly faction led by Martin Amaewhule, challenging the legitimacy of the four-member faction loyal to Fubara.

The Amaewhule-led Assembly had earlier declared in July that all state expenditures would be halted until the governor resubmitted his budget to the legitimate legislative body.

Justice Abdulmalik denied a request to stay the proceedings, dismissing the application as "frivolous and vexatious." She also refused to recuse herself from the case, rejecting the defence's allegations of bias.

However, the Rivers State Government swiftly filed a notice of appeal against the ruling.

This came as the governor celebrated one of the failed attempts to impeach him by the Amaewhule-led state Assembly faction loyal to the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike.

The state Commissioner for Information and Communications, Joseph Johnson, earlier told The PUNCH that the judgment had been appealed, expressing optimism that the Appeal Court would overturn the judgment.

He said the pointers to the anticipated judgment were glaring, adding that they were unperturbed as they had already instituted an appeal against the Federal High Court's judgment.

The OAGF has now confirmed that the appeal effectively overrides the earlier court decision, ensuring that allocations to the state will continue pending the final outcome of the legal process.

# Simon Ekpa: Finland-based Nigerians fear attack, hunt for sponsors get underway

Dave Oludare Oso

Following the arrest and detention of one of the leaders of the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Simon Ekpa, some Nigerians in Finland have gone into a panic mode.

Reliable sources said Nigerians in the European country are afraid of commenting on the arrest of the suspect over fear of being attacked and victimized.

A Nigerian community leader, who spoke to one of our correspondents on condition of anonymity for fear of victimization, noted that the Igbo community was “gravely affected” by the violent acts of the secessionist group.

He said, “Everyone is afraid to speak about Ekpa’s arrest. The key people in Finland and the Igbo community at large are not ready to lend their voices either.”

The source noted that some persons were being accused of reporting Ekpa to the police and were being threatened.

“A particular person they accused now, they’re after him. This happened before he (Ekpa) was even remanded—what will happen when they imprison him? Everyone is afraid. These people are very deadly,” the source said.

Another resident, who also asked not to be identified, said there was tension among Nigerians in the country.

“People don’t want to speak about Ekpa for fear of being hunted by his followers. We believe that they will hunt whoever comes out to talk about their leader. But the Finnish Government is trying to get rid of the situation.”

Ekpa was arrested alongside four others on Thursday by Finnish authorities on suspicion of terror-related activities, including incitement to violence and financing terrorism.



Checks by NEW DAILY PRIME revealed that his X handle (@simon\_ekpa) had been inactive for four days.

Ekpa, who describes himself as the Prime Minister of the Biafra Republic Government-in-Exile, is accused of using social media to promote violent activities in southeastern Nigeria, including attacks on civilians and the authorities.

He was first arrested in February 2023 for inciting comments and sit-at-home orders to the people of the South-East.

The suspect gained international notoriety for his calls to boycott Nigeria’s 2023 general elections, which were enforced through violent means, contributing to attacks on residents.

Before his arrest, Ekpa had attracted global attention, with thousands of Nigerians worldwide petitioning the Finnish and Nigerian governments, as well as the European Union, to take action against his disruptive activities.

In response, the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Finnish Ambassador to Nigeria, Leena Pylvanainen, urging Finland to

Laaksonen explained that “NBI Finland cannot confirm the name of the suspect(s). The proceedings in the district court and contents of the decisions are classified at this point of the investigation,” adding, “The Ministry of Justice is the competent authority regarding extraditions.”

Meanwhile, Nigerians on social media have begun to search for suspected sponsors of the suspect, particularly those financing his alleged terror activities from the United States.

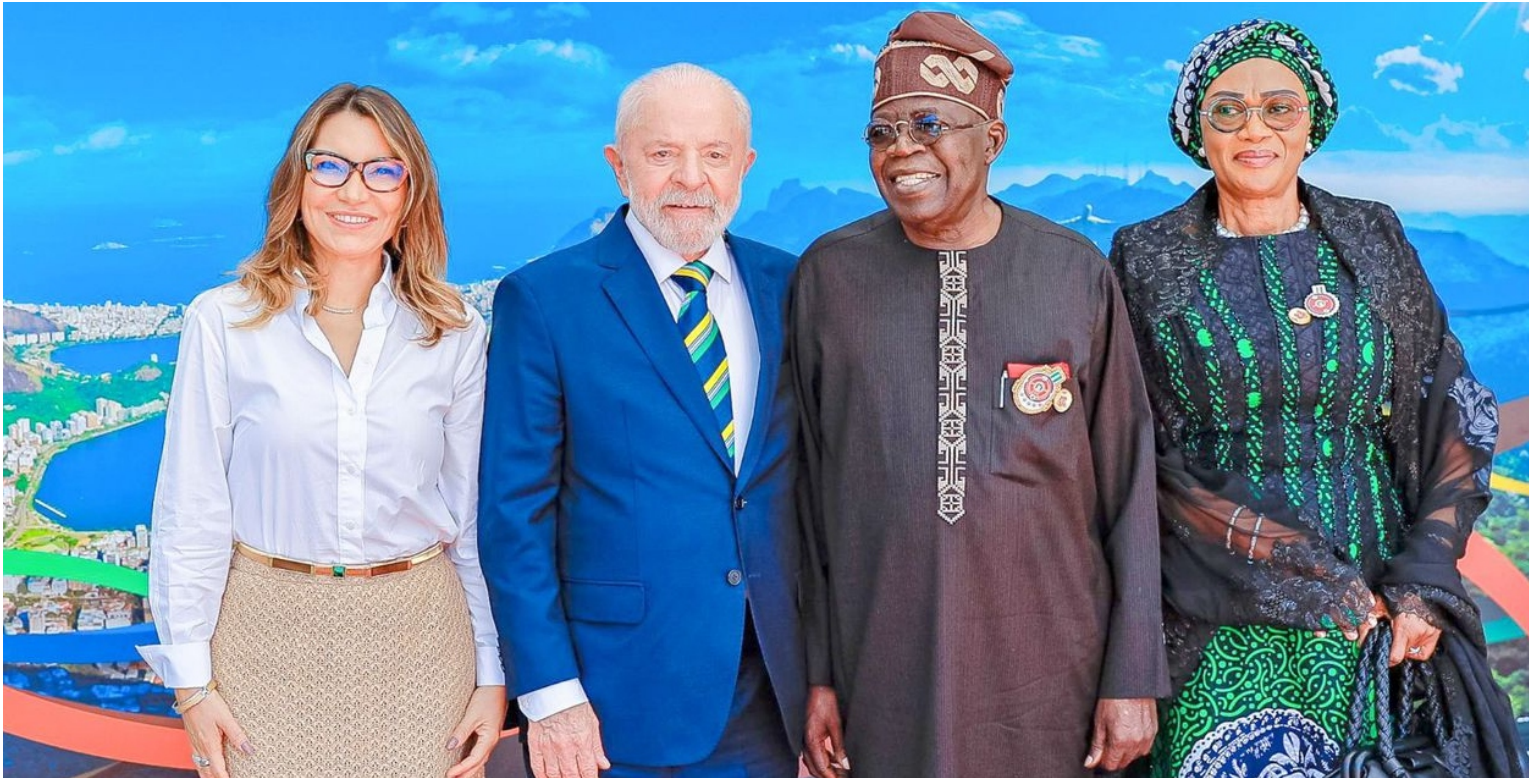
An X user, @Burmese\_Tyga\_, stated that those sponsoring him should be identified and brought to book.

He said, “If Simon Ekpa is indicted for terrorism in Finland and you know anybody in the US who has donated to him, pls forward name and address to me. I’ll make a comprehensive list I’m sending to the Department of State Service as sponsors of terrorism.

“Someone has to pay for the lives wasted and blood spilled in Igbo land. Destroying your lives here in the US is the least we can do.”

# Tinubu, wife head back home after G20 summit

By Dave Oludare Oso



The Nigerian President, Bola Tinubu have departed Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, after attending the 2024 G-20 leaders' summit.

President Tinubu, who attended the summit with his wife and his wife, Oluremi, engaged in bilateral discussions to advance Nigeria's socio-economic reforms at the summit, which held from Monday, November 18, to Tuesday, November 19, 2024.

Hosted by the Brazilian President, Lula da Silva, the G20 summit focused on the theme, "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet."

Discussions addressed sustainable development in

development in economic, social, and environmental dimensions, global governance reforms, climate change, and the digital economy.

The meeting brought together leaders from the world's top 20 economies, including the European Union, the African Union, and multilateral financial institutions, among others.

The G20 comprises 19 member countries, including Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, the UK, and the US, along with the European Union.

Tinubu's participation in the

Tinubu's participation in the meeting was at the instance of the Brazilian president and the president was accompanied by top government officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar; Ministers of Livestock Development, Idi Maiha; Minister of Art, Tourism, Culture and Creativity, Hannatu Musawa; Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Dr. Aliyu Abdullahi; and the Director General of the National Intelligence Agency, Mohammed Mohammed.

# Israeli airstrikes kill 20 in Beirut as diplomats urge ceasefire

By Dave Oludare Oso

Israeli airstrikes Saturday killed at least 20 people and injured dozens in central Beirut as diplomats scrambled to broker a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah.

Lebanon's Health Ministry said the death toll in the country's capital could rise as emergency responders dig through the rubble looking for survivors. DNA tests are being used to identify the victims, it said, adding that 66 people were wounded.

The pre-dawn strikes, which destroyed an eight-story building and left a crater in the ground, were the fourth in Beirut in less than a week. Hezbollah legislator Amin Shiri said no Hezbollah officials were inside. The attack stripped the facades from some nearby buildings and crumpled cars.

"The area is residential, with closely packed buildings and narrow streets, making the situation challenging," said Walid Al-Hashash, a first responder with the Lebanese Civil Defence.

The escalation comes after U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein traveled to the region this week in an attempt to broker a cease-fire deal to end the more than 13 months of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

Hochstein said on Tuesday that he held "very constructive talks" with Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Hezbollah who is mediating on the group's behalf.

"Specifically today, we have continued to significantly narrow the gaps," the envoy told reporters after the two-hour meeting. "It's ultimately the decisions of the parties to reach a conclusion to this conflict. ... It is now within our grasp."

On Saturday, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin spoke with Israeli Minister of Defense Israel Katz to



discuss ongoing operations and reaffirm the United States' "ironclad commitment to Israel's security."

In a statement, the Pentagon said Austin also reiterated the U.S. commitment to a diplomatic resolution in Lebanon that "allows Israeli and Lebanese civilians to return safely to their homes on both sides of the border."

Two Western diplomatic officials on Saturday described disputed points between Israel and Lebanon in cease-fire negotiations. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the talks.

The current proposal calls for a two-month cease-fire during which Israeli forces would withdraw from Lebanon and Hezbollah would end its armed presence along the southern border south of the Litani River. Thousands more Lebanese army troops would patrol the border area with U.N. peacekeepers, and an international committee would monitor the deal's implementation.

The officials said Israel wanted more guarantees that Hezbollah's weapons

would be removed from the border area. Israeli officials have said they would not agree to a deal that did not explicitly grant them freedom to strike in Lebanon if they believe Hezbollah is violating it.

Lebanese officials have said the inclusion of such a term would violate their country's sovereignty. And Hezbollah leader Naim Kasseem said this week that the militant group would not agree to a deal that doesn't entail a "complete and comprehensive end to the aggression."

Israeli bombardment has killed more than 3,500 people in Lebanon and wounded more than 15,000, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. The fighting has displaced about 1.2 million, or a quarter of Lebanon's population. On the Israeli side, about 90 soldiers and nearly 50 civilians have been killed by rockets, drones and missiles in northern Israel and in fighting in Lebanon.

Israel's military did not issue a warning for residents prior to the strikes in central Beirut and did not comment on the casualties.

# We'll improve population health, financial protection – FG

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Government (FG) has reaffirmed its commitment to improving population health outcomes, ensuring financial protection for the poor and vulnerable, and maintaining industrial harmony in the health sector.

This was disclosed by the Coordinating Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Ali Pate, during the 65th National Council on Health (NCH) meeting held in Maiduguri, Borno State.

Speaking at the event, themed “Accelerating Pathways to Universal Health Coverage: Strategies for 2030 Success,” Mr Pate emphasised the administration’s dedication to addressing the nation’s health challenges.

The event attracted Commissioners of Health from all 36 states, ministry officials, development partners, and civil society organizations.

Highlighting recent milestones, Mr Pate said that over 8,000 primary healthcare centres have benefited from the N46 billion Basic Health Care Provision Fund (BHCPF).

Additionally, more than 43,000 frontline health workers have been trained under a target of 120,000, with efforts still ongoing.

The minister underscored the revitalization of primary healthcare services, with close to 4,000 centres already upgraded in collaboration with state governments.

These initiatives aim to expand medical relief programs to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable have access to essential healthcare services.



On maternal health, he revealed that over 1,000 women with obstetric fistula complications have received free treatment through the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA).

He noted that 30 healthcare facilities across the country now provide similar services to reduce maternal mortality.

By year-end, additional support will be extended to women facing obstetric emergencies, including cesarean sections, under the NHIA reimbursement scheme.

The minister appealed to health professionals to prioritise public welfare, assuring them that the administration is actively addressing their concerns.

“We must keep the people at the centre of our attention. This administration is committed to resolving issues affecting the health workforce,” he stated.

Declaring the meeting open, the Governor of Borno State, Babagana Zulum, reaffirmed his administration’s commitment to the Abuja Declaration, which mandates states to allocate at least 15% of their annual budget to health.

He announced a pay rise for medical doctors in the state civil service, aligning their salaries with federal counterparts, and directed the state Commissioner of Health to address payment gaps.

Governor Zulum described the NCH meeting as a vital platform for collaboration and progress towards achieving President Bola Tinubu’s vision of accessible healthcare for all Nigerians.

Meanwhile, the Permanent Secretary Daju Kachollom appreciated Governor Zulum for hosting the meeting and for his commitment to improving healthcare delivery in Borno State.

She also lauded the warm hospitality extended to delegates and participants.

The 65th NCH meeting served as a significant milestone in the FG’s mission to accelerate progress toward universal health coverage by 2030.

# 2027: Deji Adeyanju lied, no deal with Tinubu – Labour Party

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Labour Party (LP) has dismissed claim by Deji Adeyanju, a lawyer and activist that its leadership has entered into an alliance with President Bola Tinubu and the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC in the 2027 general elections.

Adeyanju made the assertion in a video that has been making the rounds in the social media.

However, while denying the claim, Labour Party, in a statement by Obiora Ifoh, its National Publicity Secretary, on Friday in Abuja challenged Adeyanju and any other person to come up with facts and proof that its leadership or Mr. Abure intends to work for President Bola Tinubu or his party, the APC in the 2027.

The party said it viewed Deji Adeyanju's now viral comments as criminal defamation and a ploy to ridicule its hard-earned reputation.

Ifoh said this was because the party has on several occasions debunked the allegations that it has an understanding with the APC to collaborate in the 2027 general election.

The statement read, "As a matter of fact, the Labour Party is the most visible opposition party as at today and our National Chairman, Barrister Abure is the leading voice in the opposition camp, and has been most critical of the present government.

"After the 2023 general election, it continued to interrogate the system's failure and has been very visible playing the role of the opposition, continuously critiquing the policies, proffering solutions and advising the government.

"Recently, the party under the able leadership of Mr Julius Abure came



"With it we hope to enthrone a credible, fair and transparent processes, leading to the selection of leadership in the country, Labour Party being a major victim in the 2023 general election."

Ifoh said the party had created a Political Education Committee for reorienting citizens on the need to have a positive behavioral changes towards politics in Nigeria.

He also said the party had become the first party in Nigeria to attempt to deepen participatory democracy by the introduction of e-membership registration with thousands of people already subscribing.

"All these efforts to reposition the party, for someone to be demarketing such a party in such an unguarded and callous manner, is most ridiculous and unfortunate.

"We are, therefore, challenging Deji Adeyanju and any other person to come up with facts and proofs that either the party leadership or Mr. Abure intends to work for President Bola Tinubu or his party, the APC in the 2027.

"Adeyanju's assertion which is presently trending globally has caused the Labour Party enormous harm and we are demanding that he refrains from causing the party further harms.

"As a political party, we view Deji Adeyanju's now viral comments as a criminal defamation, a clearly motivated ploy to ridicule our hard earned reputation.

# Shettima reaffirms FG's commitment to healthcare improvement

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has reiterated the federal government's (FG) dedication to enhancing healthcare delivery in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas.

During a visit by a delegation from the West African College of Physicians, Shettima emphasised the crucial role of healthcare professionals in the nation's health ecosystem and affirmed the government's commitment to supporting and retaining medical talent in Nigeria.

The Vice President acknowledged the challenges faced by medical professionals, praising their selflessness in serving the nation despite opportunities to leave the country.

"Yours is a very noble profession, you stayed not because you lacked options, but because of your moral obligation to serve," he stated.



He assured the delegation that under President Bola Tinubu's administration, efforts are underway to address pressing healthcare issues, including the recent appointment of Professor Ali Pate as the Coordinating Minister for Health and Social Welfare.

Shettima also reflected on his tenure as Governor of Borno State, where he sponsored female students to study

Shettima also reflected on his tenure as Governor of Borno State, where he sponsored female students to study Medicine and Surgery in Sudan, some of whom have since returned to practice in Nigeria.

He emphasised the government's moral obligation to assist the people and expressed optimism for the future of Nigeria's healthcare system.

# RMAFC advocates for domestic revenue mobilisation

By Friday Omosola

The Chairman of the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), M.B. Shehu has called for a strategic approach to domestic revenue mobilization as a catalyst for Nigeria's national development.

His comments came during his presentation at the 2024 edition of the National Council on Finance and Economic Development (NACOFED) conference held in Bauchi.

Themed "Fostering Economic Growth in Challenging Times: Strategies for Policies and Partnership for Fiscal Sustainability and National Development," the conference brought together key stakeholders, including the Minister

He noted that the nation's overreliance on oil revenue, compounded by global price fluctuations and mounting debt burdens, underscores the urgency of developing sustainable alternatives for revenue generation.

"Boosting domestic revenue provides a predictable foundation for national planning and reduces reliance on external borrowing," Dr Shehu stated, urging the government to explore multiple sources of revenue.

He identified taxation, non-tax revenues, state-owned enterprises, and the non-oil sector as key areas where Nigeria can harness financial resources.

The RMAFC Chairman also highlighted the importance of improving tax administration efficiency and expanding the tax base, especially by integrating the informal sector into the formal economy.

He further advocated for the development of untapped sectors such as solid minerals, agriculture, technology, and tourism. These sectors, he argued, hold the potential to generate employment, attract foreign investment, and significantly contribute to national revenue.

Dr Shehu recommended that Nigeria focus on diversifying its revenue streams, strengthening its tax systems, and promoting



# Decamp to APC if you think you're powerful, Fayose dares Wike

By Dave Oludare Oso

Isaac Fayose, a social media commentator and younger brother of former Ekiti State governor, Ayo Fayose, has publicly challenged the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Nyesom Wike, to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) if he believes he possesses significant political power.

Fayose's remarks, made in a video circulating widely on social media included a strong assertion that Wike's political clout would see an 80 percent reduction if he were to decamp to the ruling party.

Fayose's comments underscore an ongoing debate regarding Wike's shifting political affiliations and the extent of his influence.

Wike, a former governor of Rivers State and an influential figure within the



the People's Democratic Party (PDP) until his recent role with the APC-led government, has maintained a prominent stance in Nigerian politics.

However, Fayose insists that Wike's perceived strength stems from federal support, suggesting that his appointment as FCT Minister is part of a broader strategy to destabilize opposition parties.

Fayose drew comparisons to former Transportation Minister Rotimi Amaechi, Wike's one-time political rival, who left the PDP for the APC after facing challenges within his party. The implication is that Wike should consider a similar move if he feels discontented, with Fayose implying that such a defection would expose the true limits of Wike's influence.

# Kwara govt screens over 100,000 for hypertension, blood sugar

By Friday Omosola

The Kwara State Government has screened 102,452 individuals across the state as part of the nationwide Project 10 Million.

The initiative, which ran from October 28 to November 10, 2024, aimed to test for hypertension and blood sugar levels, with a target to screen 196,913 Kwarans.

In his address, Dr Shehu emphasised the critical need for Nigeria to diversify its revenue base to ensure fiscal independence and enhance economic resilience.

The state's Health Commissioner, Dr Amina Ahmed El-Imam, commended the efforts of Kwarans and stakeholders, including local leaders, health workers, and international partners, for their cooperation in achieving this milestone.

Dr. El-Imam described Kwara's performance as exemplary, ranking among the top states in the implementation of Project 10 Million.

She attributed the success to the support of Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and the collaborative efforts of the state's health sector and community leaders.

The Commissioner urged Kwarans to continue monitoring their health, particularly blood pressure and sugar levels, in a bid to reduce mortality rates.

He also stressed the importance of investing in renewable energy, education, and infrastructure to ensure long-term growth and prosperity.

In his address, Dr Shehu emphasised the critical need for Nigeria to diversify its revenue base to ensure fiscal independence and enhance economic resilience.

# FG moves to shore up security in South-East

By Helen Okechukwu

The Federal Government Nigeria has vowed to boost security measures for a conducive environment and the expansion of businesses across the south-east region.

On Friday, the Minister of Defence, Mohammed Abubakar, made this assertion at Enugu State during the oprrationak visitation while addressing the officers and personnel of the 82 Division/Joint Task Force south-east Operation Udo Ka.

While speaking to the security personnel under General Officer Commanding (GOC), Major-General H.T. Dada, he urged them to increase their efforts in clamping down the evil doers as he lauded their performance.

He seeks collaborative strategies from significant stakeholders, security agency leaders, traditional rulers, students, and community leaders to halt the recurrent insecurities and challenges faced in the region.

Also, he visited the Nigerian Air Force base Emene in Enugu State.



He noted that, as directed by President Bola Tinubu, he was asked to seek sustainable solutions to the menace while highlighting the importance of security, which births a peaceful atmosphere and prosperity.

Badaru said, “Without security, there can be no peace or development.”

Reaffirming President Tinubu’s commitment to maintaining peace in the south-east, he recounted Tinubu’s administration effort in the fight against insecurity nationwide in the past few years.

According to the Director of Information and Public Relations, Henshaw Ogubike, who revealed that the GOC, Major General Dada, has announced the Army’s implementation of robust strategies to ensure enhanced safety during festive in the south-east region.

Also, during the discussion, retired Major General John Nwoga stressed the role of social media in fuelling insecurity, noting the implications of circulating misleading and fake content via social media.

# PDP hails Governor Adeleke’s governance ahead of 2-year mark

By Helen Okechukwu

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has commended Governor Ademola Adeleke for his “giant strides” in governance as he nears his second anniversary in office as Governor of Osun State.

In a statement released via its official X handle on Friday, the PDP leadership highlighted several significant achievements under Adeleke’s administration, with a particular focus on infrastructure development, healthcare reforms, and community empowerment.

“The @OfficialPDPNig Government



in Osun State under His Excellency Ademola Adeleke has made significant strides across various sectors since assuming office two years ago,” the party declared.

Earlier on Friday, November 22, it was reported that the Osun State Government had unveiled a series of 16 events to mark

the governor’s second year in office, further emphasising the administration’s progress.

The PDP noted that one of the key areas of success has been in infrastructure development, particularly in road construction and rehabilitation. The statement pointed out that over 90 kilometres of intercity roads had been completed across Osun State’s nine federal constituencies, significantly improving connectivity and boosting economic activity across the region.

## Five Nigerian pastors detained over Cameroonian politician's kidnap

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Cameroonian authorities have arrested and detained five Nigerian pastors and others residing in the Idabato II community of Cameroon, formerly known as the Bakassi Peninsula, following the kidnap of the community's Divisional Officer, Ewane Roland by armed men in early October.

Eniola Alabo, a former chairman of the Yoruba community in the defunct Bakassi Peninsula, disclosed this to newsmen during a recent interview.

In some reports, alongside another official of the council, Etongo Ismael, was whisked away on October 1, 2024, by gunmen who used a flying boat in the coastal area.

Alabo said the Cameroonian government blamed Nigerians in the area for Roland's abduction and deployed soldiers to arrest them.

Alabo said, "The Gendarmerie came to



the community and started shooting sporadically into the air on the day they arrested some of these Nigerians."

He said his compatriots in the troubled community are living in fear as the incident had plunged them into panic and anxiety in the border town.

During the raid, some Nigerians, including Iseoluwa Eniola, Feran Ajimosun, Idowu Ajimosun, Abiola

Abiola Ajimosun, Blessing Ajimosun, Sunny Bassey, Feran Samagbeyi, and Godwin were detained in Idabato II.

It was also learnt that Cameroon's South-West Governor, Bernard Okalia, visited Idabato on October 8, 2024 and was said to have declared a total lockdown of the area, which had mostly Nigerians who were fishermen.

Okalia was said to have issued a 72-hour ultimatum to both Nigerians and Cameroonians in the community to produce Roland alive.

A clip of the visit, obtained by our correspondent, showed him saying, "All shops are closed...the churches are closed till further notice. No exit, no entry in this whole Idabato."

Alabo said Nigerians in the community were rendered economically handicapped, leading to hunger and frustration.

## Kwara to launch de-worming campaign for over 700,000 children

By Friday Omosola

Kwara State is set to embark on a large-scale de-worming campaign aimed at reaching 776,896 children aged 5 to 14 across 15 Local Government Areas.

The initiative, focused on combating Schistosomiasis and Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis, will be implemented through the Mass Administration of Medicines (MAM).

During the launch of a training workshop for key personnel in Ilorin, Dr Amina Ahmed El-Imam stressed the importance of the campaign in improving children's health and preventing the spread of neglected tropical diseases.



She revealed that 3,000 teachers, 775 Community-Directed Distributors, and 300 health workers will be trained to facilitate the successful implementation of the programme.

The Commissioner also thanked Governor Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq for his continued support of the state's health initiatives.

The de-worming campaign reflects the state government's commitment to ensuring the well-being of its younger population and improving public health outcomes across Kwara.

# Celestial church, founder's son at war over N5m donation

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The donation of N5 million by the church authority has thrown the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), Acts of Apostle Parish, Ketu, Alapere, Lagos, into turmoil.

According to Punch, the crisis erupted during a Sunday service last week when an acclaimed son of the church founder, Muyiwa Oluponna, stormed the church and disrupted service in an attempt to install himself as the shepherd of the church.

Oluponna allegedly seized the microphone from the acting shepherd of the church, Adetayo Adetola, during the sermon and claimed to have the right to deliver sermons every second Sunday of the month.

A viral video that circulated on social media captured the disruption and showed Oluponna and some members of the church engaging in a heated argument.

Our correspondent gathered that the development forced the church authority, through a task force, led by Akinbode Adjovi, to shut down the church for 40 days.

Narrating the incident to Saturday PUNCH, Adetola alleged that Oluponna demanded that the N5m donated by the church authority to the parish for renovation and construction of a clergy house be given to the family.

“That Sunday, our shepherd was not around and I was put in charge of the church. I was also assigned to give the sermon. We started the service and everything was going well until he (Oluponna) snatched the microphone from me, demanding to speak.

“I respected him and gave him the microphone because I knew him as a family member of the church founder. Immediately he collected the microphone, he said the N5m given to



the church by the headquarters for renovation does not belong to the church but to the family of Oluponna who founded the church.

“He also demanded that money be given to the family, insisting that the church belongs to the family and not the community or the CCC authorities.

“He also demanded that he be made the church shepherd and be allowed to give sermons every second Sunday of the month. We all kept quiet until he finished.

“After that, I took over to deliver the sermon, but to everybody’s surprise, he came back and snatched another microphone from one of the choristers and came to the pulpit to give the sermon. That was when we all resisted him”, Adetola said.

Also speaking, the Shepherd of the church, Emmanuel Iperepolu, alleged

that Oluponna had been causing trouble in the church, threatening him and other church members whom he perceived were against him.

Iperepolu said the incident had been reported to the church authorities and the police.

“I think the donation prompted him to do what he did, but before the issue of the money came, he had been coming to the church to threaten and abuse me and others. However, immediately after he heard about the donation, he came and demanded that the money be handed over to the family.

# ‘Everybody Loves Jenifa’ will hit N5 Billion – Funke Akindele

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood superstar, Funke Akindele, widely regarded as the reigning queen of the Nigerian box office, is poised to shatter existing records with her highly anticipated film, ‘Everybody Loves Jenifa’.

This eagerly awaited movie is set to grace cinemas nationwide on December 13, 2024, and Akindele has her sights firmly fixed on achieving a remarkable N5 billion in ticket sales.

Known for her exceptional flair in marketing, Akindele is leaving no stone unturned in her quest to ensure the film’s resounding success.

With months of pre-launch promotions tailored to generate buzz and excitement among audiences, she aims to tap into the potent power of her fan base and loyal viewers.

At a recent Exhibitor Soirée, Akindele



opportunity to address a gathering of cinema operators, stakeholders, and entertainment enthusiasts, sharing her unwavering belief in the film’s potential.

“We can beat N5 billion; I have faith,” she declared confidently, igniting excitement and anticipation in the room.

This audacious target underlines not

not only her ambition but also her commitment to elevating Nollywood to new heights in the film industry.

However, amid the excitement lies a pressing concern that Akindele addressed passionately during her address of piracy.

Citing the detrimental impact this illegal practice had on her previous film, ‘A Tribe Called Judah’, she emphasized the urgent need to combat this issue collectively.

“I plead with you guys, I know things are hard now, but I want to beg you to be security conscious. People use their phones to film. Remember what happened to us last year with ‘A Tribe Called Judah’? Please let’s be very careful, let’s be vigilant. It’s our movie. We want to make money from it,” she stated earnestly, calling for unity and vigilance among audiences and stakeholders alike.

# I have more than one girlfriend - Chris Brown opens up

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

American R&B sensation Chris Brown has opened up about his unconventional love life, confirming that he is currently engaged in a polygamous relationship.

This announcement has sparked considerable chatter among fans and followers alike, highlighting the complexities of modern romantic connections.

The discussion took place during a livestream hosted by popular content creator Kai Cenat.

As the two interacted, Cenat posed a direct question to the celebrated singer regarding his relationship status.

Brown, known for his chart-topping hits and vibrant personality, didn’t hesitate in his response.

“I’m in multiple,” he stated, indicating a



lifestyle that many might find unusual, yet appears to be increasingly discussed in today’s social media landscape.

Cenat couldn’t help but seek clarification on Brown’s assertion, asking, “Like more than one girlfriend?”

The 35-year-old artist smiled and

responded, “Something like that,” which added an air of intrigue to the conversation.

This exchange provided a glimpse into Brown’s personal life, breaking the mould of traditional relationship narratives often portrayed in the media.

# Wizkid shatters records 10 hours after 'Morayo' release

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Afrobeat singer, Wizkid has broken records as all the songs from his new album, 'Morayo' are in the top 17 positions on Apple Music.

This achievement came in less than 10 hours after the release of the album.

The album, which was released on Tuesday, is a tribute to his late mother, Juliana Morayo Balogun,

who died in August 2023.

NEW DAILY PRIME reports that 'Piece of My Heart' a lead single from the album climbed No. 4 on the U.S. Afrobeat Songs chart and No. 7 on the World Digital Song Sales chart. Morayo also shattered Nigeria's streaming records, with one of its singles amassing 1.57 million streams on Spotify on its opening day.



# What my dad told me at my first audition – Bimbo Ademoye

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Nollywood actress Bimbo Ademoye has risen to become one of the most sought-after talents in the Nigerian film industry.

Since her acting debut in 2014, Ademoye has consistently demonstrated her versatility, expanding her creative scope as both a YouTube filmmaker and actress.

In a heartfelt reflection, Bimbo recounted a memorable moment with her father during her early career.

She shared how he personally escorted her to her very first movie audition, offering her words of encouragement that have stayed with her throughout her journey in Nollywood.

Ademoye also revealed a deeply personal aspiration: to portray the role of a character battling a terminal illness.

This desire stems from her wish to honour her late mother, who succumbed to cancer. By taking on such a role, she hopes to bring greater awareness to the challenges faced by individuals and families dealing with the disease.

Through her talent and determination, Bimbo Ademoye continues to captivate audiences while striving to use her



platform to tell impactful stories. Excerpt:

## Being a Youtube filmmaker

I want to thank God for giving me the patience to produce for Youtube without thinking of the billions of naira I would make from it. I was willing to lose money as well as keep on making movies till I got the buzz. I started off with "Iya Baraka" which had over a hundred thousand views on Youtube.

I remember when I was shooting the movie, I was really scared and I said 'God, I really want this movie to go far'. And after releasing the movie it got one millions views. "Shining

Star' which was the second movie, didn't really go that far. In fact, I recorded a huge loss, because I had a scene where a child actually passed on in the movie and Youtube had to restrict it, but we were not deterred. Later, I did "Last Straw" and then "Fame of Furry" and we have been garnering millions of views.

## My Nollywood journey

Since 2014 when I made my acting debut, it has been a very beautiful journey. Meeting Udokah-Isong was one of the blessings God could ever gave to me, This is because I didn't experience any kind of sexual harassment or people asking for money to feature me in movies. Instead she took me under her wings and allowed me to show my potential. So, from 2014 to 2024 I will say God has been faithful and I give God the glory.

## What prepared me for what I'm doing for a living

I won't say that anything prepared me for what I am doing today. But while growing up, I always wanted to be an actor. I remember telling my dad when I was in Senior secondary school (SS3) after he brought the Covenant University admission form for me to fill.

# I don't smoke, it's all about aesthetics' - Shallipopi reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Crown Uzama, better known by his stage name Shallipopi, has recently made headlines after addressing a rather prevalent misconception about his image.

Despite being frequently photographed with cigarettes in hand, the singer has categorically stated that he does not smoke, emphasizing that these images are purely for aesthetic appeal.

In an exclusive interview with Soundcity, Shallipopi opened up about this misunderstanding, revealing a side of his persona that many fans may not be aware of.

“One thing that my fans don't know about me is that I don't smoke. It's just aesthetics,” he asserted firmly.

This revelation sheds light on the broader narrative of how artists often curate their images to fit the artistic personas they wish to portray.

Shallipopi's decision to project a particular image with cigarettes serves to enhance his artistic expression rather than reflect his habits.

The singer's rise to fame has not only been marked by his catchy tunes but also by his ability to connect with fans.

Shallipopi's latest single, “Oba



Pluto,” has garnered significant attention, showcasing his talent and lyrical prowess.

Yet, despite the glitz and glamour that comes with his newfound success, Shallipopi remains grounded. He attributed his passion for music to the hardships he had witnessed throughout his life in Nigeria.

In the same interview, he candidly shared what propels him to create music that resonates with many. “What influences me to do music is hardship. You don't want to go through hardship in this country,” Shallipopi stated.

This sentiment is not only a reflection of his personal experiences but also a powerful commentary on the challenges faced by many Nigerians.

The societal issues of poverty, unemployment, and lack of opportunities forge a rich tapestry of inspiration for many artists like Shallipopi, providing a source of both

motivation and a relatable narrative for their audiences.

As listeners dive into his music, it becomes clear that Shallipopi's work is a heartfelt portrayal of his environment.

His lyrics often encapsulate the struggles of everyday life, which allows fans to connect with his story on a deeper level.

By drawing from his experiences, he sheds light on the realities faced by countless individuals in Nigeria, making his music not just entertainment but a source of empowerment.

However, Shallipopi's honesty about his smoking habits while also being transparent about his life's challenges further endears him to his fanbase.

# Trump, Musk watch as SpaceX launches Starship in Texas

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

SpaceX successfully launched its massive Starship rocket from Boca Chica, Texas, midweek, a milestone in advancing space exploration.

However, the mission faced a hiccup as the Super Heavy booster failed to land as planned.

The event drew significant attention, with US President-elect Donald Trump present, reflecting his growing ties with SpaceX CEO Elon Musk. Musk, who supported Trump's presidential campaign, recently joined a government initiative focused on efficiency.

Standing 122 meters tall, the Starship rocket system is designed for ambitious missions, including lunar landings and eventual trips to Mars. The launch occurred at 4 PM CT (3:30 AM IST on Wednesday), with the 71-meter first-stage booster separating from the Starship spacecraft at 62 km altitude, sending the second stage into orbit.

While Starship continued its journey, the super heavy booster attempted a catch-landing using tower-mounted arms but missed, splashing down in the Gulf of Mexico. A live stream showed the booster exploding into a fireball upon impact.



Despite this setback, the mission achieved other objectives. Starship successfully reignited one of its engines in space for the first time, showcasing improved maneuverability. It completed an orbit around Earth before landing in the Indian Ocean.

Elon Musk remains optimistic about accelerating Starship's development under the incoming administration. With NASA's Artemis program aiming

With NASA's Artemis program aiming to return astronauts to the Moon, Musk hopes for a stronger emphasis on Mars missions.

Notably, Trump recently appointed Musk as co-leader of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a move aimed at reducing wasteful spending and easing regulations.

## ICC warrant: Netanyahu faces arrest in UK

By Dave Oludare Oso

After an international arrest warrant was issued for him, Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu faces arrest if he travels to the UK, the prime minister's official spokesman has indicated.

According to BBC, a No 10 Downing Street spokesman refused to comment on the specific case but said the government would fulfil its "legal obligations."



former defence minister, Yoav Gallant over alleged war crimes in Gaza on Thursday.

ICC's member countries, including the UK, have signed a treaty that obliges them to act on arrest warrants.

Asked whether Netanyahu would be detained if he entered the UK, the prime minister's official spokesman refused to comment on "hypotheticals."

The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu, along with Israel's



# Trump planning to sanction lawyers behind Netanyahu arrest warrant

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**U**S President-elect, Donald Trump is considering sanctions against a British lawyer over the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Hague-based court is facing a major international backlash for its decision to issue a warrant for the Israeli prime minister and Yoav Gallant, the former Israeli defence minister.

Mike Waltz, who will serve as Trump's national security adviser, said the court had "no credibility" and promised "a strong response to the anti-Semitic bias of the ICC" when the Trump administration takes office on Jan 20.

Karim Khan KC, the ICC's chief prosecutor, could be among the officials targeted for sanctions by Trump.

Germany has signalled it would not detain the Israeli leader because of its Nazi past and special relationship with the Jewish state, despite being a member of the ICC.

Viktor Orban, the prime minister of fellow member state Hungary, has vowed to defy the order to arrest Mr Netanyahu, and instead invited him for a state visit.

However, Britain has said it respects the court and ministers have refused to say if Mr Netanyahu would be arrested if he came to the UK.

On Friday, Israel's ambassador to the UK called on all countries to reject the ICC's "farcical" order to arrest Mr Netanyahu.

Writing for The Telegraph, Tzipi Hotovely accused the court of finding common ground with Hamas, the Islamic terror group behind the October 7 massacre.

She said: "We thank the US and other allied countries that have rejected the farcical decision of the court and call upon other nations to follow suit in rejecting this injustice. The ICC has

shown that every democratic leader, seeking to defend its people, may become a target of the court.

"We've reached an astonishing new low when an international court, which claims to uphold international law and human rights, has found common cause with a terrorist organization that just over a year ago perpetrated the deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust on its gratuitous rampage of murder, torture, kidnapping and rape. Make no mistake, this moment has sounded the death knell of the ICC," she added.

Like Israel, the US does not recognize the authority of the Hague-based court. Senior Republicans have called for sanctions against the ICC's top officials in response to the arrest warrants.



# Unfamiliar territory for Guardiola as City lose 5 successive games

By Dave Oludare Oso

James Maddison scored twice as Tottenham romped to victory over a Manchester City side that has now lost five games in a row for the first time since 2006.

Pedro Porro drove home a third before Brennan Johnson added a last minute fourth on an incredible night that saw the end of City's 52-match unbeaten record at Etihad Stadium, stretching back to just before the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

It is City's worst home defeat since a 5-1 loss to Tottenham's north London rivals Arsenal in 2003.

It was also the first time they have lost three successive Premier League games under Pep Guardiola, who signed a two-year contract extension 48 hours earlier.

Guardiola had never previously lost a home game by four goals in his managerial career.

The Tottenham fans lapped it up, cheekily singing "you'll be sacked in the morning" at Guardiola as they celebrated Porro's goal.

It was an amazing transformation for



for Tottenham, who travelled north without both first-choice central defenders, had five teenagers on the bench and had lost their last game 2-1 at home to Ipswich a fortnight ago.

But Ange Postecoglou's side made light of their problems in a way City could not. It was their heaviest home defeat since a 5-2 reverse to Leicester in September 2020, when Maddison was among the scorers for the Foxes.

The manner of the defeat merely highlighted the absence of injured midfielder Rodri, who was the subject of an elaborate pre-match celebration on his first visit back to the stadium since winning the Ballon d'Or.

City remain in second but Liverpool will stretch their lead at the top to eight points if they win at Southampton on Sunday.

Tottenham move up to sixth, four points behind City.

Man City have to 'stand up and face' problems – Guardiola

He has never lost so many games in a row. He has lost by margins of three and four goals in two of his past three games, following the Champions League hammering by Sporting earlier this month,

While the Tottenham fans' baiting was also something he has probably not heard before, the 53-year-old is clearly going nowhere.

However, the answers he is seeking to his side's poor form are not easy to come by.

The absence of Rodri is clearly a significant factor. City are a shadow of the team they have been when the midfielder has been available.

With Mateo Kovacic also ruled out, there was no effective screen for a back four that looked vulnerable, even without self-inflicted wounds.

## Neymar hits back at Rodri over jibe at Vinicius Jr

By Dave Oludare Oso



**N**eymar has hit back at “talker” Rodri after the Manchester City star told Vinicius Junior to “pay attention” to become a better footballer.

Rodri was named the 2024 Ballon d’Or winner last month, pipping Madrid’s Vinicius Jr to the coveted accolade.

After the 28-year-old sent a warning of sorts to the winger, the Brazilian’s compatriot Neymar has come to his aid with a dig at the Spaniard.

Rodri said this week: “I think he’s (Vinicius Jr) an intelligent

guy and he’ll realize over time that the more he pays attention to the pitch, the better he’ll be.

Like everyone, he has areas for improvement both on and off the pitch. He’s young, I’m sure that people will give him good advice and even more so when he’s at Madrid. It’s a club with values.”

Then, in an Instagram post, Al-Hilal’s Neymar commented: “He (Rodri) became a talker now.”

There has seemingly been some bad blood over this Ballon d’Or award, which started with Madrid

boycotting the Paris ceremony when they found out Vinicius wasn’t going to win. And it seems these latest comments may just add fuel to the fire.

While City’s Rodri continues his recovery from a season-ending knee injury, Vinicius will be focusing on Madrid’s La Liga trip to Leganes on Sunday.