

# The New Daily Prime



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# Tinubu targets \$1 trillion economy by 2030 as Q3 GDP increase

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has expressed confidence in Nigeria's economic trajectory following the release of the third-quarter Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth figures by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which show a growth of 3.46 per cent, an increase from the 3.19 per cent recorded in the previous quarter.

The president welcomed the positive figures as a sign that the country's economy is on a path to recovery, particularly after the initial challenges posed by recent reforms.

He emphasised that the 3.46 per cent growth reflects the administration's ongoing efforts to stimulate economic expansion and improve the living standards of Nigerians.

In a statement by Sunday Dare, his Special Adviser on Media and Public Communications, Mr Tinubu reiterated his commitment to achieving a \$1 trillion economy by 2030, highlighting that the country's economic recovery will be further solidified when the economy is rebased in early 2025.

This process, he explained, would better reflect Nigeria's dynamic economy and the significant developments across various sectors.

The third-quarter GDP growth was largely driven by strong performances in key sectors such as Agriculture, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Transport, Education, Health, Real Estate, Finance and Insurance, Trade, and Manufacturing.

These sectors together played a crucial role in propelling the economy forward, with Agriculture contributing the most at 28.65 per cent, followed by ICT at 16.35 per cent and Trade at 14.78 per cent.

President Tinubu also pointed to the administration's tax reforms as a key driver in spreading economic benefits more equitably, particularly through efforts to ease the tax burden on small



businesses and ensure a fairer distribution of resources across the country.

This, he said, would address regional disparities by shifting the focus away from the traditional "headquarters effect" where state housing company headquarters benefit disproportionately from national tax remittances.

"I am excited by the latest report from the National Bureau of Statistics that our economy grew in the third quarter more than last quarter and even beyond projected estimates," President Tinubu stated.

"While I welcome this development, the latest figure also shows the much work that needs to be done. We won't rest until Nigerians feel the positive impacts in their pockets and experience a better living standard. My administration remains committed to the welfare of our people."

The top contributing sectors to Nigeria's GDP in Q3 2024 were Agriculture (28.65%), ICT (16.35%), Trade (14.78%), Manufacturing (8.21%), Crude Oil (5.57%), Finance & Insurance (5.51%), and Real

## Ebonyi Governor suspends 2 commissioners over alleged misconduct

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

**E**bonyi State Governor, Francis Nwifuru, has suspended two commissioners from his cabinet following allegations of gross misconduct and dereliction of duties.

In a press statement issued on Tuesday, November 26, by the state's Commissioner for Information and Orientation, Jude Chikadibia-Okpor, the governor announced the indefinite suspension of Engineer Francis Ori, Commissioner for Housing and Urban Development, and a three-month suspension for Dr. Moses Ekuma, Commissioner for Health and Social Development.

The statement also revealed that several other officials in the Ministry of Health would be placed on a three-month suspension, including the permanent secretary of the ministry, as well as the executive secretaries of both the State Primary Healthcare Development Agency and the State Health Insurance Agency.

In response to the suspensions, the Governor has appointed the Special Assistant to the Governor on Primary Health to oversee the Ministry of Health in the absence of Dr. Ekuma.

The suspended officials have been directed to hand over all government properties, including vehicles, to the State Secretary of the Government by the close of work on Monday, November 25, 2024.

This follows the earlier indefinite suspension of Chinedum Nkah, the Commissioner for Water Resources, due to similar allegations of dereliction of duties.

Governor Nwifuru emphasised that his administration remains committed to fulfilling the needs of the people, stressing that such actions are part of



efforts to ensure accountability and good governance in the state.

## Port Harcourt Refinery begins crude oil processing

By Dave Oludare Oso

**T**he Port Harcourt Refinery in Rivers State has officially resumed crude oil processing, marking a significant milestone in Nigeria's energy sector.

According to Femi Soneye, the Chief Corporate Communications Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), the refinery is set to operate at 60 percent capacity, processing 60,000 barrels of crude oil per day (bpd).

This development is part of ongoing efforts to boost domestic refining capacity and reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported petroleum products.

Details later.





## ISIS suicide bombers attack Nigeria troops, claim 3 killed By Agency Reporter

The Islamic State (ISIS)-affiliated militants, ISWAP on Monday claimed it coordinated an attack against the Nigerian troops involving the use of suicide bombers and direct assault.

They claimed that two suicide bombers identified as Abu Aisha al-Barnawi and Abu Sadiq al-Muhajir believed to be a foreign national detonated vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) at military defensive positions, paving the way for a ground assault.

They claimed that Seven military vehicles, including armored personnel carriers, were reportedly destroyed in the assault.

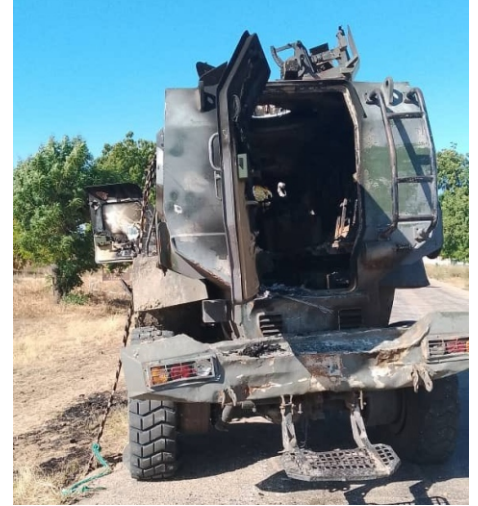
Images purportedly taken by the

attackers were shared online, showcasing the aftermath of the attack and captured military equipment.

**FACT**

Contrary to ISWAP's claims, only three Nigerian soldiers paid the supreme price in the attack, few other soldiers were wounded while the troops in supported by the Air Component of Operation Hadin Kai successfully repelled the assault. The militant deployed four VBIED at the army camp, two were detonated while two others were destroyed.

Attached is a photo of this armored vehicles that was destroyed by the Air Task Force but in their own narrative, they were showcasing the militant on the vehicle and advancing towards the



camp. This was its usual propaganda style, of exaggerating its role in the assault by fabricating details to mislead the public and bolster its image after suffering a decisive defeat.

## Shettima advocates for tech-driven solutions to combat Africa's security challenges

**By Friday Omosola**

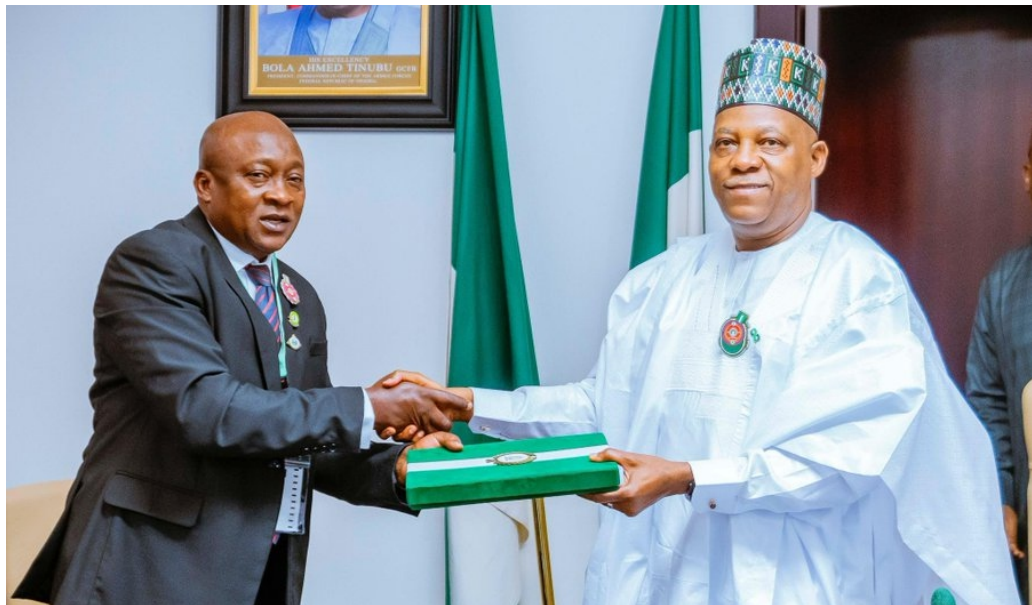
Vice President Kashim Shettima has called for the adoption of technology-driven strategies to address the pressing security challenges facing Nigeria and the broader African continent.

Speaking on Monday during a courtesy visit by members of the Executive Intelligence Management Course 17 from the National Institute for Security Studies (NISS), Shettima emphasised that the current security and economic struggles demand innovative solutions, particularly through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

"Africa and Nigeria are currently navigating some of the most troubling times, especially in the areas of security and economy.

"The challenges we face require innovative solutions, and AI presents a vista of opportunities to address issues in agriculture, healthcare, financial inclusion, and security," Shettima said.

Drawing on the wisdom of Franklin D. Roosevelt, he encouraged resilience, quoting, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," while underscoring the



importance of tackling these challenges head-on.

He also cited the efforts of the Enugu State Governor, who he said has successfully curbed the excesses of those exploiting security vacuums, demonstrating the impact of strategic leadership.

The Vice President also highlighted the potential of Nigeria's youthful population, with an average age of just 16.9 years, noting that Africa's young,

tech-savvy citizens are a critical asset in bridging the skill gaps needed to tackle these challenges.

"Africa is the youngest continent, and our youth are essential in leveraging technology to drive progress. With advancements in AI, there are significant opportunities to transform key sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, finance, and security," he added.

# FCT CP takes action against vehicles lacking plates number

By Olamilekan Botti

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Commissioner of Police Tunji Disu announced on Tuesday the implementation of stringent measures targeting vehicles lacking proper identification, specifically those without number plates. This directive comes as a response to an alarming increase in “one chance” incidents covert robbery operations that prey on unsuspecting commuters in the capital.

Accompanying the impoundment of vehicles that are either unregistered, display only one plate, or feature defaced number plates, Commissioner Disu emphasized the necessity to bolster law enforcement presence throughout the territory. The police force will deploy additional officers and advanced equipment for increased patrols and stop and search operations in a bid to deter criminal activities that threaten the safety of residents and motorists alike.

The FCT Police Command, through its spokesperson Josephine Akeh, articulated the urgent need to enforce existing regulations surrounding covered number plates and tinted windows, which have often obscured the identities of vehicles involved in criminal acts. In her statement, Akeh called upon residents to remain patient and understanding, acknowledging that these measures might cause temporary inconveniences for commuters.

“The FCT Police Command is committed to addressing the rising tide of criminal activities, particularly the unfortunate trend of ‘one chance’ crimes and vehicle thefts. As part of this initiative, we will impound vehicles that do not meet the required registration standards, along with those that utilize singular or defaced plates. Our enforcement will also extend to regulations about covered number plates and tinted glass,” said Akeh.

Since the introduction of these proactive measures, the police have already reported noticeable successes.



“We are pleased to inform the public that we have recovered several stolen vehicles and apprehended suspects involved in ‘one chance’ robberies,” Akeh noted, expressing gratitude for the community’s patience and cooperation during this crucial period.

The Commissioner reiterated the importance of compliance with vehicle registration regulations. “We urge all vehicle owners to ensure that their vehicles possess the appropriate registration details and that they adhere to all traffic laws. Our operations are not merely regulatory; they are a fundamental part of our overarching commitment to the safety and security of every resident in the Federal Capital Territory,” she stated.

To further strengthen community-police relations, Akeh encouraged citizens to actively report any suspicious activities they may encounter. “We believe that public participation is key to maintaining a safe environment. We implore residents to cooperate with our officers during these operations. Remember, your safety is our utmost priority,” she asserted.

The concerted effort by the FCT Police Command demonstrates a vigilant approach to crime prevention and public safety. As the capital grapples with rising crime rates, these initiatives underline the importance of rigorous law enforcement and community engagement in the fight against criminal elements. With the enforcement of these new directives now in full swing, the police are hopeful that a significant decline in crime rates will help restore a sense of security and trust in the law enforcement system among the residents of Abuja.

In a city that is both the political nerve center and a diverse melting pot of cultures, the proactive steps taken by the FCT Police under Commissioner Disu serve to remind all residents that together, through vigilance and cooperation, a safer environment can be cultivated for everyone.



# NANS, NAKSS applaud Gov AbdulRazaq for education investment, student welfare

By Friday Omosola

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and the National Association of Kwara State Students (NAKSS) have commended Kwara State Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq for his substantial investments in students' welfare and the education sector.

In a statement, Rafiu Ajakaye, the governor's Chief Press Secretary, revealed that student leaders visited the Government House on Monday to express their gratitude to Governor AbdulRazaq.

The students praised the administration for its significant contributions, including the prompt payment of bursaries and other vital support for students, both before and after the removal of fuel subsidies.

AbdulRazaq

Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq and the students [PHOTOCREDIT: Facebook]

NANS President, Comrade Issa Abdulgafar Arikewuyo, lauded Governor AbdulRazaq as a democratic leader deeply committed to the progress and development of the education sector.

"To whom much is given, much is expected. We will be ungrateful if we cannot come en masse today to show to the world that the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum is a student-friendly personality," he said.

"We have an action governor in the person of AbdulRazaq who loves to appreciate and celebrate humanity, and who has turned students into people of value."

He praised the governor for establishing Kwara State University of Education, providing solar lighting systems at Kwara State University Malete, and supplying 250 ICT infrastructure units to students at the College of Aviation, Ilorin, among other notable interventions.

For his part, the President of NAKSS, Comrade Abdulwahab Habibullahi, highlighted several benefits the



students had received from the government, including scholarships for law students, a bus provided for the leadership of the students' union, and a free bus service for students, among other initiatives.

"Today is a remarkable day in the history of students in Kwara State. We are here today to appreciate His Excellency for all the unwavering support and commitment he has been showing to students' leadership in the state," he said.

Governor AbdulRazaq, in his response, commended the students for their visit and emphasised the importance of ongoing productive engagements with his administration.

He pledged to continue incorporating students into the empowerment programs of his government to help them achieve their goals.

"I must acknowledge that your leadership's engagement with the government has been beneficial to the state. This collaboration will continue to generate positive responses from the government, supporting your

activities and advancing the welfare of student bodies," he stated.

"On our part, we will ensure that students are included in our initiatives to ease their lives. We remain committed to engaging with your leadership, so feel free to submit proposals to us," he added.

The governor also praised the Special Assistant on Students Affairs, Wasiu Onidugbe, for his proactive efforts in serving the public good.

Onidugbe explained that the visit was part of activities planned for the Annual Unity and Harmony Week, an event introduced to promote unity and togetherness among students.

"This year, the students felt it important to pay a special visit to Your Excellency to celebrate and appreciate you for your ongoing efforts in prioritizing their welfare. This visit also aims to highlight the positive contributions you've made in the education sector," he noted.

The governor warmly received the students, joined by several cabinet members, including the Chief of Staff, Prince AbdulKadir Mahe.

# Bauchi police command arrests drug dealers, uncovers conspiracy

By **Olamilekan Botti**

The ongoing battle against drug trafficking and related criminal activities, the Bauchi State Police Command has announced the arrest of a notorious drug dealer, identified as Kabiru Adamu. The apprehension occurred during a meticulous operation executed by the Rapid Response Squad.

According to a statement released on Tuesday by the Command's Public Relations Officer, Ahmed Wakil, the incident took place on November 22, 2024. Under the leadership of CSP Suleiman M. Tambuwal, the operatives tactically raided a location in Tudun Wadan Dan Iya, also known as Bayani Gari, where they apprehended Adamu, who is alleged to have been dealing in two dangerous substances: methylene chloride, colloquially referred to as "Suck and Die," and a product called Diamond Rubber Solution.

The raid proved fruitful, resulting in the recovery of a substantial cache of illicit goods. Authorities seized 264 pieces of OSHN Diamond Rubber Solution, alongside 19 bottles of the suspected methylene chloride and 363 empty bottles that could potentially be used for further distribution of the illegal substances.

During subsequent interrogations, the suspect revealed critical insights into the operations of drug dealing within the region. He admitted that the dangerous substances were sourced from a superior and that he was compensated for each sale. According to Adamu, a bottle of "Suck and Die" was sold for N300, while each piece of Diamond Rubber Solution fetched N250, indicating a lucrative yet perilous trade that threatens the safety of the community.

In an interconnected narrative concerning criminal activities in Bauchi, the PPRO also reported the arrest of another suspect implicated in a series of grave offenses that include criminal conspiracy, trespassing, the



fabrication of keys, instrumental in store breaking, and numerous thefts. This individual, identified as Ukasha Adamu, a 23-year-old male from Ajiya Adamu Road in Bauchi metropolis.

The apprehension of Ukasha Adamu was the culmination of a thorough investigation conducted by the State Intelligence Department (SID). This inquiry unravelled a sophisticated network of crimes that revolved around systematic surveillance of various establishments within the bustling Bauchi metropolitan area. The investigation established that Adamu and his accomplices had been meticulously inspecting keyholes and replicating keys, thereby enabling them to surreptitiously infiltrate stores and make off with invaluable merchandise. The modus operandi adopted by this criminal group raises significant concerns regarding public safety and the broader implications for economic growth. It highlights the precariousness of both businesses and community members as they navigate an

environment rife with targeted theft and criminal exploitation.

In terms of the material gains from this criminal operation, Wakil disclosed that significantly valuable items were recovered from Adamu's possession. The haul included 150 bags of 25kg parboiled rice, valued at an impressive N6,000,000, 43 cartons of I.R.S. spaghetti, which are worth N774,000, 20 cartons of Emperor vegetable oil, amounting to N1,440,000, and 42 cartons of liquid fertilizer valued at N5,040,000.

The cumulative value of all recovered goods totaled an astonishing N13,254,000, highlighting the scale of illicit enterprise that the police are actively striving to dismantle. The Bauchi State Police Command remains resolute in its commitment to maintaining law and order, ramping up efforts to combat drug-related crimes and effectively responding to the ever-evolving landscape of criminal activity affecting the region.



# Lagos govt to relaunch school safety traffic advocacy programme By Friday Omosola

In a renewed effort to enhance student safety and promote responsible road use, the Lagos State Government has announced it will relaunch its school safety traffic advocacy programme.

Spearheaded by the Ministry of Transportation, the initiative aims to instil traffic safety awareness among students, teachers, and parents across the state.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Transportation, Sola Giwa, highlighted the programme's focus on addressing poor road attitudes and the lack of traffic knowledge as key contributors to road safety challenges and traffic congestion in Lagos.

Lagos

He described the initiative as a comprehensive traffic safety education program targeted at students in both public and private primary and secondary schools.

"The goal is to catch them young. This program will not only educate students on traffic rules but also equip schools with the knowledge needed to foster a culture of safety", Giwa said.

He emphasised that early exposure to traffic education is crucial for instilling safety consciousness and promoting responsible road use among young people.

The relaunch of the advocacy programme, according to Giwa, underscores the state government's renewed commitment to traffic safety education.

He noted that the initiative represents a significant step toward ensuring safer roads for Lagosians and creating a generation that is traffic-conscious and responsible.

Giwa also pointed out that many commercial and professional drivers in Lagos either graduated only from primary school or had limited secondary education, often without formal traffic safety training.

He stressed that children and young people, who frequently share the road as pedestrians or passengers, require traffic safety education as a priority.

The programme will provide students



with essential skills to become responsible drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists, ultimately fostering responsible citizenship.

Giwa called on all stakeholders, including schools, parents, and road users, to embrace and support the initiative to ensure its success.

# UNICEF, partners develop education revolution road map for 3 Northern states By Agency Reporter

United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with implementing partners have developed a road map for revolutionising education and shaping children future in Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara States.

The plan was unveiled at the end of a groundbreaking meeting on "Education Roadmap and 2025-2027 Priorities" for the three states on Tuesday in Birnin Kebbi.

Speaking at the event, the Kebbi Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Dr Halima Bande, expressed gratitude for Kebbi to have hosted the high level meeting on reviewing education challenges and offered solution.

Bande thanked UNICEF and partners for the unwavering support and encouragement to the three states.

She acknowledged the commitment of Gov. Nasir Idris in prioritising education in his agenda, especially his candid efforts in addressing the menace of out-of-school children in the state.

Dr Michel Juma, the Chief of UNICEF's Sokoto Field Office, commended the governors of Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara states for prioritising education in their governance.

While describing education as the foundation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UNICEF officer observed that the sector required urgent and collective action to address the challenge of out-of-school

children.

He stressed the need for improved access to quality education, adding that to achieve meaningful learning outcomes, teacher professionalism must be prioritised.

Juma advised governments to ensure adequate budgetary allocation to education to support teacher training as well as the integration of digital literacy into teaching practices.

The UNICEF official encouraged stakeholders to collaborate in identifying state-specific priorities to align them with broader education strategies.

He stressed the need to strengthen the deployment of Teacher Management Information System (TMIS), a digital tool for teacher recruitment, deployment, and performance monitoring.



## Plea bargain: Man jailed 4 years for impregnating teenager

By Agency Reporter

An Ikeja Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court on Tuesday sentenced a man, Onyeka Ubaka, to four years imprisonment, for indecent treatment of a teenager which resulted to pregnancy. The court sentenced Ubaka to four years imprisonment after he pleaded guilty to an amended two-count charge of indecent treatment of a child and sexual assault.

Ubaka, had during arraignment on Jan. 12, pleaded not guilty but changed his plea, in a plea bargain agreement. He pleaded guilty to indecent treatment of a child and sexual assault by caressing the buttocks of the survivor with his hands.

Before delivering the judgment, Justice Rahman Oshodi, asked Ubaka if he understood the content of the plea bargain agreement and the obligation of the court to give maximum sentence. Ubaka admitted that he made the plea bargain voluntarily and was satisfied with the advice of his counsel.

The judge, thereafter, convicted the defendant as charged.

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In his judgment, Oshodi said that the facts of the case was troubling due to how the convict engaged in a sexual relationship with a 16-year-old girl. He said, "You took her to a bar, purchased yogurt for her, she lost consciousness and later found herself in a hotel room where you had sex with her without her consent.

"The sexual intercourse resulted to pregnancy and child birth.

"I have considered the plea bargain agreement and document attached to it which stipulates that your father, Mr Emeka Ubaka, shall be responsible for 30 per cent of the survivor's educational expenses.

"I have also considered that you will be responsible for the child's upkeep to the age of eight years.

"I have also seen the document marked Exhibit C, where your father paid three hundred thousand naira as hospital expenses to the survivor's mother."

Justice Oshodi, therefore, sentenced the convict to four years imprisonment and ordered that his name be registered in the



Lagos State Sexual Offences Register.

Earlier, the State Counsel, Ms Bukola Okeowo, in her review of fact, told the court that the survivor had earlier given evidence as prosecution witness one (Pw1).

She said that the PW1 narrated that the convict was her boyfriend, adding that he had sex with her multiple times which resulted to pregnancy.

The defence, in its allocutus, prayed the court to reduce the convict's jail term to enable him take proper care of the survivor and the baby.

## Lagos gov suspends media aide over controversial tweet

By Gbenga Oluranti OLALEYE

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has suspended his Senior Special Assistant on Print Media, Mr Wale Ajetunmobi, following a controversial post on his personal X account.

The suspension was confirmed in a statement issued by the Governor's Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Gboyega Akosile, on Tuesday, November 26. The statement, titled 'Governor Sanwo-Olu suspends aide,' highlighted that the suspension followed Ajetunmobi's misrepresentation of facts related to a past incident on his social media account.

Ajetunmobi's suspension stems from a tweet in which he claimed that arsonists

responsible for burning down the Television Continental (TVC) station during the 2020 #EndSARS protests had been "hunted down and executed." In the tweet, Ajetunmobi, using the handle #Riddwane, also mentioned a young boy allegedly involved in the arson, who he claimed was found with an AK-47 rifle in the Ketu area of Lagos.

In response to inquiries about extra-judicial killings, Ajetunmobi initially defended his tweet, stating that some of the arsonists were killed during a confrontation with soldiers. He suggested that this was not an instance of extra-judicial killing, but rather a legitimate exchange of fire.

However, following public backlash and a request for clarification, Ajetunmobi issued a statement early



Tuesday morning, apologising for his choice of words.

He explained that the term "executed" had been "erroneously used" and clarified that his comments were purely his personal opinion, not reflective of the stance of the Lagos State Government or his office.

# Nigerian States allocate N3.87t for recurrent expenditure in 2025 budget

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

A total of approximately N3.87 trillion has been earmarked for recurrent expenditure across 13 Nigerian states in their proposed budgets for the 2025 fiscal year.

The recurrent expenditure accounts for a significant portion of the total budget proposed by the states, highlighting the emphasis on administrative costs, including salaries and overheads, while also directing substantial funds toward capital projects aimed at boosting infrastructure development.

The total proposed budget across these 13 states for 2025 is N9.07 trillion, with N3.87 trillion allocated for recurrent expenditure, representing the ongoing costs of running the government and providing essential services.

The remaining N5.845 trillion is earmarked for capital expenditure, reflecting the states' focus on long-term infrastructural projects.

The breakdown of the recurrent expenditure allocation across various states reveals the priority placed on maintaining day-to-day governance functions.

In Lagos State, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu proposed a budget of N3.005 trillion, with N1.24 trillion allocated for recurrent expenditure, constituting a significant part of the total budget. The state also dedicated N1.76 trillion for capital expenditure, underscoring its emphasis on infrastructure.

Bauchi State's budget for 2025, presented by Governor Bala Mohammed, totals N465.09 billion, with N182.74 billion allocated for recurrent expenditure, representing 39.3% of the budget.

The remaining N282.34 billion is allocated for capital expenditure, emphasising the state's commitment to development.

In Bayelsa, Governor Douye Diri proposed a budget of N689.4 billion, with N263.38 billion for recurrent



expenditure (38.2% of the total) and N404.76 billion set aside for capital projects. Meanwhile, Osun State's budget of N390.03 billion allocates N245.8 billion (62.9%) for recurrent expenditure, with the remaining N144.23 billion directed towards capital expenditure.

Other states such as Oyo, Anambra, Gombe, and Ekiti have also presented their budgets, with varying proportions allocated for recurrent and capital expenditure. Anambra State, for instance, proposed N606.9 billion for 2025, with N467.5 billion for capital expenditure and N139.5 billion for recurrent costs. The state also projected a deficit of N148.3 billion.

Meanwhile, Katsina State's budget includes N157.97 billion for recurrent expenditure (23.15% of the total budget), with a significant N524.27 billion dedicated to capital expenditure, which represents 76.85% of the budget.

Economists have raised concerns about the heavy reliance on recurrent expenditure, which they argue could limit the funds available for crucial capital projects. Charles Sanni, CEO of Cowry Treasurers Limited, pointed out that the large recurrent expenditure budgets indicate limited capacity for capital investment. He cautioned that low capital expenditure could hamper economic growth and lead to insufficient contributions to the GDP.

Sanni recommended strategies to improve the financial health of states, including cost optimisation through reduced political aide costs and stricter budget controls, as well as increasing internally generated revenue via public-private partnerships, multilateral organisations, and diaspora funding. Economist Vincent Nwani also criticised the relatively small size of some of the proposed budgets, noting that the budgets of some Nigerian universities exceed those of entire states.

Nwani raised concerns about the allocation of capital funds for non-productive purposes, such as vehicle purchases, instead of long-term infrastructure projects that could drive economic growth. He emphasised the need for greater transparency, fiscal discipline, and improved income generation to meet state obligations and address debt repayment.

As economic stakeholders continue to scrutinise the 2025 budgets, many are concerned that the assumptions underpinning the proposed budgets may lead to underperformance, with some predicting that the planned N47.9 trillion federal budget may not meet its targets.



# NNPCL seeks additional N1.19t subsidy refund

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has requested an additional N1.19 trillion subsidy refund for July 2024, citing exchange rate differentials on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) importation and joint venture taxes.

This request has sparked concerns from state governments, who have raised questions about the NNPCL's accounting practices and the transparency of its financial claims.

According to a report from The PUNCH, the findings are based on the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) Postmortem Sub-Committee report for September 2024.

The report reveals that exchange rate differentials for PMS imports stood at N4.56 trillion in June 2024, due to under-recovery on petrol imports from August 2023 to June 2024. By July 2024, this figure had increased to N5.31 trillion, further straining government finances.

The NNPCL attributed the increase in the subsidy figure to fluctuations in foreign exchange rates and unresolved subsidy payments from previous months, raising concerns over the fiscal burden on the Federation Account.

The rising cost of importing PMS continues to impact government revenues and has prompted renewed questions about the sustainability of the partial subsidy framework.

The FAAC Sub-Committee expressed concerns over discrepancies in the NNPCL's submission, particularly regarding the inclusion of the N1.19 trillion as a balance brought forward.

The report noted that this amount had not been accounted for in previous FAAC reports, leading to its exclusion from earlier deliberations.

The report from the sub-committee read, "As of June 2024, the Exchange Rate Differentials stood at N4,558,597,379,030.6, which increased to N5,309,418,715,637.13 by July 2024.

However, NNPCL's report included



the sum of N1,186,540,693,485.36 as an amount brought forward, contributing to the total. This figure was not included in prior reports, and therefore, it was not recognised in FAAC's discussions."

The NNPCL clarified that the N1.19 trillion under-recovery amount, which included adjustments for June and July 2024, was used as the opening balance in their report. The sub-committee has since recommended that the NNPCL re-submit the figure for further consideration at the next FAAC plenary.

In addition to discrepancies in reporting, further scrutiny of NNPCL's claims revealed gaps in critical documentation. A previous FAAC meeting had noted an outstanding claim of N4.34 trillion by the NNPCL, attributed to exchange rate differentials.

However, the report lacked essential details such as the volume of PMS imported, pricing, and sales values, making it difficult for the sub-committee to justify the figures submitted. The Federal Commissioner of the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation, and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) stated that the absence of

these details hindered the sub-committee's ability to assess the validity of the claims.

The sub-committee has now instructed the NNPCL to provide all relevant information to enable a more thorough assessment of its subsidy claims.

The ongoing subsidy payments, particularly the discrepancies in the reported amounts, have raised questions about the long-term sustainability of the subsidy framework.

The NNPCL's request comes at a time when the federal government has been grappling with the financial impact of fuel subsidies, which the administration of President Bola Tinubu had previously vowed to end.

During his inauguration in May 2023, President Tinubu declared that the "subsidy is gone," signalling an attempt to remove the fuel subsidy barriers that have long hindered the nation's economic growth.

However, the continuing subsidy claims by NNPCL suggest that the government is still supporting fuel imports by covering the difference between the projected rate and the actual costs incurred by the NNPCL for PMS imports.

# NLC, OPS reject Nigeria's unemployment figures, labeling them as misleading

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has strongly criticized the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for its recently released unemployment data, which showed a decline in the national unemployment rate to 4.3% in Q2 2024.

The NLC dismissed the report as “fiction,” accusing the NBS of presenting a misleading narrative that contradicted the harsh economic realities faced by Nigerians.

Chris Onyeka, the NLC's National Assistant General Secretary, described the figures as “a fabrication” intended to mislead the public. He argued that the country's unemployment situation is worsening, citing closures of factories, increasing inventory, and reduced consumer spending.

Onyeka further questioned the validity of the data, suggesting that it was a manipulation of figures aimed at presenting a false picture of the economy. He also challenged the NBS to provide evidence of the sectors creating jobs, as many employers continue to report economic difficulties and declining demand.

Similarly, the Organised Private Sector (OPS) echoed these concerns, with Gabriel Idahosa, President of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), describing the drop in the unemployment rate as a “technical improvement” in the methodology of calculating employment, rather than an actual improvement in the economic conditions. Idahosa stressed that the improvement in figures did not align with the visible challenges in the economy.

Dr. Muda Yusuf, Director of the Centre for Promotion of Private Enterprise, also rejected the NBS data, calling for a review of the methodology used in gathering employment figures.

He noted that the country's key economic sectors, such as agriculture,



manufacturing, and trade, are slowing down, making it difficult to see where the jobs are coming from. He emphasized the difficulties faced by small businesses and entrepreneurs, which are contributing to a shrinking formal sector.

The NBS Report

The NBS report, released on Monday, claimed a drop in the unemployment rate from 5.3% in Q1 2024 to 4.3% in Q2 2024, marking a gradual recovery from 5.0% in Q3 2023. It highlighted improved labour market conditions, with the Labour Force Participation Rate rising to 79.5% from 77.3% in the previous quarter. The Employment-to-Population Ratio also improved, reaching 76.1% in Q2 2024 from 73.2% in Q1.

The report revealed that self-employment continued to dominate, making up 85.6% of total employment, and informal employment rose slightly to 93.0%. Urban unemployment fell to 5.2% in Q2 2024, down from 6.0% in the previous quarter, while rural unemployment was even lower at 2.8%. Additionally, youth unemployment for ages 15–24 dropped significantly from 8.4% to 6.5%.

However, the report did not address the concerns raised by the NLC and OPS about the quality of the jobs created, the challenges facing small businesses, and the mismatch between official statistics and lived experiences.

Criticism of Methodology and Employment Quality

Several experts, including Dr. Femi Egbesola, National President of the Association of Small Business Owners of Nigeria, suggested that the decline in unemployment figures may result from changes in how employment is classified. For instance, shifts in the definition of employment, such as counting part-time or gig-based roles, could artificially lower the unemployment rate without improving income levels or job quality.

He also pointed to the growth of informal sector employment, which may not guarantee meaningful livelihoods or contribute significantly to the economy.

Economist Gabriel Idahosa highlighted the need for a methodology that better reflects the actual employment situation, emphasizing that self-employment or informal work should not be confused with stable, well-paying jobs that guarantee livelihoods. He also underscored the challenges faced by small businesses in the context of inflation, high energy costs, and exchange rate volatility.

Calls for a New Approach

In response to the apparent disconnect between official statistics and economic realities, there have been calls for the Federal Government to reassess its employment data collection methodologies and take into account the broader economic context.



# Two US-based Nigerians jailed 30 years over \$3.5m romance scam

By Dave Oludare Oso



**T**wo Nigerians, Anthony Ibekie and Samuel Aniuoku, were on Monday sentenced to a combined 30 years in prison by a United States federal court for defrauding American citizens of \$3.5 million.

In a statement published on the US Department of Justice website, the duo was said to have orchestrated a romance scam, luring victims with false claims of inheriting substantial fortunes that required upfront payments to access.

The statement explained that law enforcement conducted an undercover investigation that exposed the fraud schemes.

It read, "An undercover law enforcement investigation has resulted in federal prison sentences for two Nigerian nationals residing in the Chicago suburbs who conducted online inheritance scams and other fraud schemes.

"Using aliases, Anthony Emeka

Ibekie and Samuel Aniuoku communicated with victims throughout the United States, convincing them they had received substantial inheritances and needed to send money to individuals associated with the defendants in order to claim it.

"In addition to the inheritance scam, the pair carried out an online romance scam that involved communicating with victims via social media and dating websites, building trust with the victims through a purported online romance, and convincing them to send money to a predetermined recipient.

Aniuoku and Ibekie also orchestrated a 'business email compromise' scam that targeted corporate email accounts.

"The fraud schemes were uncovered by a covert law enforcement investigation. The scams resulted in losses to victims of at least \$3.5 million.

"A federal jury earlier this year convicted Ibekie, 59, of Oswego, Ill., on all 14 counts of wire fraud, mail

fraud, money laundering, making false statements to a bank, and passport fraud. U.S. District Judge Steven C. Seeger on Thursday sentenced Ibekie to 20 years in federal prison.

"Aniuoku, 50, of Romeoville, Ill., pleaded guilty last year to wire fraud and money laundering charges. Judge Seeger on Nov. 8, 2024, sentenced Aniuoku to 10 years in prison."

In a related development, Jennifer Gosha, a U.S. citizen connected to the scam, is awaiting sentencing on December 18 after confessing to her involvement in the scheme.

"A third defendant, Jennifer Gosha, 52, a U.S. citizen from Oak Park, Ill., pleaded guilty earlier this year to charges of wire fraud and making false statements to a federal agent. Gosha is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Seeger on December 18, 2024.

# COP29: African governments reject \$300 billion annual climate finance deal

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaley

Governments of African countries have expressed dissatisfaction with the new collective quantified goal (NCQG) of \$300 billion a year by 2035 climate finance deal proposed by world leaders at the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP29).

On Sunday, November 24, at the closing plenary of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, world leaders reached a consensus on the “Baku Finance Goal,” which aims to provide \$300 billion annually to support climate adaptation and mitigation efforts by 2035.

The negotiations were extended by 33 hours, and COP29 President Mukhtar Babayev announced that the deal, despite challenges, represented the best possible outcome given the geopolitical fragmentation of the year.

Babayev commented, “The Baku Finance Goal represents the best possible deal we could reach. In a year of geopolitical fragmentation, people doubted that Azerbaijan could deliver. They doubted that everyone could agree. They were wrong on both counts.”

**Details of the \$300 Billion Agreement**

The deal was negotiated over a long period, with Least Developed Countries (LDCs) initially pushing for a much larger amount—\$1.3 trillion annually, mostly in grants rather than loans, to meet their climate finance needs. However, this proposal was rejected by wealthier developed countries, who argued that such a commitment was not feasible. Initially, developed nations proposed a smaller figure of \$200 billion to \$250 billion, which was also rejected by the LDCs, who argued that this amount would not meet their climate adaptation and



mitigation goals.

The final agreement, which set the goal at \$300 billion per year by 2035, will be achieved through a mix of public and private financing, as well as bilateral and multilateral deals. The deal also called for increased efforts to meet the LDCs’ goal of \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035. However, the \$300 billion deal was still far below the expectations of African nations and other developing countries.

**Rejection of the Deal by LDCs**

Despite the consensus on the \$300 billion target, many LDCs rejected the deal, stating that it fell short of the climate finance commitments made at previous COP summits. At COP27, nations agreed on a historic loss and damage fund, and COP28 saw a global commitment to transition from fossil fuels and boost climate resilience.

However, the COP29 negotiations were expected to yield a more substantial financial commitment, especially from the wealthier nations that have contributed the most to climate change.

African representatives and negotiators from the Global South stated that the deal was unacceptable.

One delegate remarked, “A no deal is better than a deal that commits African countries to what is undeliverable

without serious climate finance.”

Nkiruka Maduekwe, the Director-General of Nigeria’s National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), expressed her dissatisfaction, labeling the \$300 billion target as “unrealistic.”

She emphasised that this amount would not be sufficient to support climate adaptation and mitigation plans for developing countries, which are already facing severe climate-related challenges.

Maduekwe said, “That developed countries are saying they would take the lead with \$300 billion dollars by 2035 is a joke and not something we should take lightly. I do not think it’s something that we should clap our hands and force us to take it. I think we should rethink it. It is not just by putting it in statements but we have a right as countries to choose if we are going to take this or not. And I’m saying that we do not accept this.”

She further questioned the credibility of such agreements, stating that these deals would not support ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) if they lacked adequate financial backing.

**International Criticism and Reactions**



# Gov Adeleke reaffirms commitment to pensioners with N2bn payout

By Friday Omosola



Osun State Governor Ademola Adeleke has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the welfare of senior citizens, as he addressed pensioners at a labour event held on Monday at the Local Government Service Commission.

Governor Adeleke emphasised that his administration has consistently prioritized pension issues since assuming office in November 2022.

"We have left no one in doubt about our passion to address the challenges facing pensioners. From day one, we declared that senior citizens deserve the attention of the state leadership as a matter of duty", he said.

He said the event marked the distribution of bond cheques to contributory pensioners, with a total sum of N1.99 billion being paid out to both state and local government pensioners.

The governor also took the opportunity to highlight the progress made by previous administrations in

pension payment, noting that his government has already paid out a total of N22.67 billion in just over two years—almost 70% of the pension payments made under the previous administration, which spanned 12 years.

Governor Adeleke also introduced a new policy aimed at improving the well-being of pensioners.

He added that his administration has enrolled pensioners in a health insurance scheme, allowing them easier access to healthcare services.

"Our love, care, and support for pensioners is not a political gimmick. It is about doing the right thing," he said.

The governor acknowledged that while there are still outstanding issues in the pension sector, steps are being taken to address them.

He tasked the Head of Service with compiling a list of unresolved issues, ensuring the government remains responsive to pensioners' needs.

Despite the financial challenges faced by the state, including the declining value of the Naira and the impact of a less than 20% increase in federal allocations, Governor Adeleke expressed confidence in his administration's achievements.

He reassured the state workers of his unwavering commitment to their welfare, citing it as a key focus of his five-point agenda.

Governor Adeleke also commended the Head of Service, Ayanleye Aina, and his team for their outstanding performance in public service reform.

He encouraged pension union leaders to attend a town hall meeting scheduled for Wednesday, where they will receive a detailed accountability and scorecard from his administration.

"I thank you for your continued support and promise that we will keep delivering for the workers, pensioners, and the people of Osun State," the governor added.

# Shettima urges recommitment to gender equity

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has reiterated the federal government's commitment to advancing gender equity in Nigeria through transformative policies.

Speaking on Monday during the H.I.D. Awolowo Foundation Webinar, held to commemorate the 109th posthumous birthday of Chief Hannah Idowu Dideolu Awolowo, Shettima emphasised the crucial role of women in building a balanced and equitable society.

Shettima called for renewed national efforts to foster an inclusive society where women are empowered to lead and thrive.

"Every nation's treatment of women serves as the ultimate marker of its civilization," he declared. We cannot claim to have evolved as a nation unless we recommit ourselves to creating a society that offers women unconditional dignity and opportunity."

The Vice President paid tribute to Chief H.I.D. Awolowo describes her as a "matriarch like no other and a jewel of inestimable value."

He commended her unwavering support for her husband, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and her pivotal role in advocating for women's rights, particularly in shaping policies like free education in the Western Region.

"This is what an empowered woman can achieve," he said.

READ ALSO: Shettima calls for media, government collaboration  
Shettima also acknowledged the global struggle for women's rights, referencing icons like Susan B. Anthony, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, and Hajiya Gambo Sawaba.

He highlighted how these trailblazers confronted structural inequalities, expanding the conversation from suffrage to workplace equality, reproductive rights, and the fight against domestic violence.

The Vice President noted the transformative role of technology,



citing digital platforms as tools for amplifying women's voices and achieving legislative successes, such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015.

He emphasised that this landmark law is a testament to the power of women-led advocacy in creating a safer and fairer society.

Further praising President Bola Tinubu's inclusive governance, Shettima highlighted the influence of the President's mother, Alhaja Abibatu Mogaji, a prominent women's rights advocate.

"Her legal battle for personal liberty set a precedent in our constitutional history, reminding us that women's rights are human rights and must never be negotiable," he added.

Shettima called for urgent action to address societal inequalities, particularly in education and leadership. "The nation we must build is one where no girl is denied the chance to learn, no woman is denied the opportunity to lead, and no mother is denied the dignity of safety and respect," he stated.

However, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Amina Mohammed, marked November 25th as

the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

She praised HID Awolowo as a fighter for social justice and human rights, urging the need for women's leadership and representation in every facet of society.

"We need partnerships for change—everyone must work for systemic change that will be sustainable," she said.

READ ALSO: Shettima calls for media, government collaboration  
Senator Daisy Danjuma, Chairperson of the H.I.D. Awolowo Foundation Advisory Council emphasised the importance of recognizing and utilizing the role of women in building a viable Nigeria.

"Together, let us chart a society where the role of women is recognized, celebrated, and utilized," she urged.

Dr. Olatokunbo Awolowo Dosumu, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Obafemi Awolowo Foundation, welcomed guests and reflected on the enduring legacy of H.I.D. Awolowo and her late husband, Chief Obafemi Awolowo.



# I spent my 20s following one man – Toke Makinwa reveals

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a candid discussion on the popular “Cocktails and Takeaways” podcast, media personality and influencer Toke Makinwa opened up about her formidable journey through her twenties.

The renowned author and talk show host revealed that a significant portion of that undeniably pivotal decade was devoted to a singular romantic relationship, which she now views through a lens of both nostalgia and reflection.

During the interview, Makinwa candidly expressed her reservations regarding her experiences in her twenties, admitting, “I don’t think I liked my twenties. I don’t think I knew what I was doing because I was in love with one man in my 20s. I spent my entire 20s following one man.”

She painted a heartfelt portrait of a formative period filled with confusion, love, and an overwhelming sense of directionality that stemmed from her commitment to her partner.

Reflecting further, Makinwa acknowledged the profound lessons that such an all-consuming relationship taught her, stating, “If I could turn back the hand of time, I’m grateful that I’m where I am today because my experience has shaped me.”

Her words resonate with many who have navigated the challenging waters of young adulthood, balancing personal aspirations with romantic commitments.

What sets Makinwa’s insights apart is her willingness to share not just her narrative but also crucial advice for the younger generation.

She urged young people to focus on

self-discovery and personal growth before entering into long-term commitments, particularly marriage.

“But I tell young people that you have no business getting married in your early or mid-twenties,” she cautioned. “Figure yourself out. Know yourself first.”

This pioneering perspective is particularly timely in an era where societal pressures often push young individuals into early relationships and commitments.

Makinwa’s advice serves as a reminder that understanding oneself is a cornerstone of healthy relationships.

By shining a light on her own experiences and distilling them into valuable lessons, she emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, personal growth, and the pursuit of one’s passions before taking the plunge into lifelong commitments.

Her reflections offer not only a personal narrative but also an important commentary on the evolving attitudes towards love and relationships among younger generations.

As many navigate the intricate balance between pursuing their dreams and engaging in serious romantic partnerships, Makinwa’s insights come as both a warning and a beacon of hope.

Makinwa’s journey from a committed relationship in her twenties to self-actualization today illustrates the complexity of human experiences.

Her evolution showcases a transformation from uncertainty to empowerment, inspiring countless



others who might find themselves in a similar predicament.

As society continues to evolve, Makinwa’s declaration holds significant weight: the path to self-discovery should be prioritized.

Her message reiterates an understanding that relationships, while meaningful, should not consume one’s identity or personal aspirations.

Furthermore, Toke Makinwa’s reflections serve as a powerful reminder. It’s essential to nurture one’s individuality before entwining lives with another, fostering both personal and relational growth.

As listeners tune into “Cocktails and Takeaways,” Makinwa’s voice emerges not only as a guide but also as a companion for those in the throes of youth, reinforcing the idea that the journey of self-discovery is just as important as the love one finds along the way.

# GWR: The World's oldest Man John Tinniswood passes away at 112 years old

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Guinness World Records has announced with deep sadness the passing of John Tinniswood, the world's oldest man, who departed this life at the remarkable age of 112.

Tinniswood breathed his last at a care home in Southport, England, on Monday, November 25.

His family took a moment to reflect on his final day, stating, "His last day was surrounded by music and love."

The loving family of Tinniswood extended their heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to his care over the years.

"His last day was surrounded by music and love. John always liked to say thank you. So on his behalf, thanks to all those who cared for him over the years, including his carers at the Hollies Care Home, his GPs, district nurses, occupational therapist and other NHS staff," they remarked in a statement to Guinness World Records.

Born on August 26, 1912, in Liverpool, Tinniswood grew up in a vibrant city rich in culture and history. It was here that he met his future wife, Blodwen, at a dance in the early 1940s. Their love story culminated in marriage in 1942, a day Tinniswood cherished as one of his fondest memories.

Just a year later, the couple welcomed their daughter, Susan, into the world. Tinniswood's life unfolded against the tumultuous backdrop of World War II.

He served heroically in the Royal Army Pay Corps, where he was tasked with managing finances, organizing food supplies, and performing the pivotal duty of locating stranded soldiers.

After the war, Tinniswood embarked on a faithful career, dedicating himself to the world of finance. He worked for notable firms like Shell and BP and gracefully retired in 1972 at the age of 60.

Tragedy struck the family when Blodwen passed away in 1986, but Tinniswood's spirit remained



undaunted.

For ten years, from ages 100 to 110, he received a birthday card from Queen Elizabeth II herself, a remarkable acknowledgement given that the Queen was nearly 14 years his junior.

In an extraordinary turn of fate, Tinniswood became the world's oldest living man in April 2024, following the passing of 114-year-old Juan Vicente Pérez from Venezuela.

Remarkably humble about his longevity, Tinniswood often attributed his record-breaking age to "pure luck."

There isn't any secret to it," he remarked. "You either live long or you live short, and you can't do much about it."

Despite the odds, he maintained an active and engaged mind throughout his long life, keeping up with current events daily and managing all his finances.

While he enjoyed a Friday tradition of indulging in battered fish and chips, Tinniswood did not adhere to any specific diet, sheepishly admitting to simply eating, "what they give me."

His key insight into maintaining health revolved around moderation, as he sagely noted "If you drink too much or you eat too much or you walk too much; if you do too much of anything, you're going to suffer eventually."

A lifelong supporter of Liverpool F.C., Tinniswood was born just two decades after the football club's founding.

He took pride in witnessing his favourite team's eight FA Cup victories and 17 of their 19 league titles.

Reflecting on the changing world throughout his extensive life, Tinniswood candidly shared, "It's no better in my opinion, or hardly any better, than it was then. Probably in some places it is, but in other places it's worse."

He acknowledged the impact of modern travel, primarily through the advent of the aeroplane, stating, "The world has gone smaller."

Ultimately, he felt that, in many respects, life remained fundamentally the same.

In his cherished wisdom, Tinniswood advised younger generations to strive for excellence. "Always do the best you can, whether you're learning something or whether you're teaching someone," he urged. "Give it all you've got. Otherwise, it's not worth bothering with."

Holding the distinction of being the fourth-oldest British man in recorded history, Tinniswood is survived by his beloved daughter, four grandchildren Annouchka, Marisa, Toby, and Rupert and three great-grandchildren Tabitha, Callum, and Nieve.

His family lovingly recounted his many admirable qualities "John had many fine qualities. He was intelligent, decisive, brave, calm in any crisis, talented at maths, and a great conversationalist."



# America's best doctors are Nigerians- Davido

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Renowned Afrobeats artist Davido extolled the remarkable contributions of Africans to the medical and entertainment sectors, underscoring the global impact of individuals from the continent.

The singer, who has made a name for himself internationally, emphasized that many of the most esteemed medical professionals practising in the United States hail from Nigeria.

This highlights not only the academic rigour and dedication of these physicians but also points to a broader narrative of African excellence in highly regarded fields.

Davido's assertion is a testament to the capability and talent prevalent among Nigerians, illustrating the strength of the African diaspora in driving innovation and advancing healthcare.

Moreover, Davido delved into the burgeoning influence of African creatives in the international music scene, revealing a changing dynamic where Western filmmakers and artists are increasingly drawing inspiration from African culture.

This, he believes, represents a significant shift in how African artistry is perceived globally, asserting that the continent is becoming a wellspring of creativity that is both unique and powerful.

Drawing from his own experiences managing his record label within the framework of Sony Music, Davido pointed out that African artists are contributing some of the most innovative ideas in the industry.

"Even in my record label, Africans bring the best ideas. That shows that our imagination is off the grid," he declared confidently.

His statement underscores the need for recognition of African talent, acknowledging that the continent offers a fresh perspective that enhances the global narrative.

His passion for Africa's potential is palpable as he articulates his hopes for the future, stating that the continent is on the brink of a significant breakthrough.



Davido confidently asserted that Africa is "next" in terms of yielding global influence, an assertion that resonates with many young creators and entrepreneurs who are beginning to forge their paths in various industries.

The singer noted a tangible interest from major streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime, which are actively seeking African narratives for their cinematic projects.

He stated, "Netflix and Amazon Prime come to Africa to get movie ideas. Now, when you come on Netflix, you will see about two Nigerian movies in the top 10."

This statement reflects a notable trend where Nigerian cinema and storytelling are gaining traction, effectively positioning African narratives at the forefront of worldwide entertainment.

Davido's vision for Africa's future is one rooted in potential and abundance. "I feel like we have everything but just missing

a couple of things," he said, suggesting that while there is an abundance of talent and ideas, further support and resources are crucial to elevating African voices on the global stage.

However, Davido's comments serve as a powerful reminder of the underappreciated roles that Africans play across various sectors.

His optimism about Africa's trajectory in the global arena paints a hopeful picture of a continent rich with opportunities and creativity.

As Afrobeats continues to break boundaries and African filmmakers captivate audiences worldwide, the time is ripe for Africa to emerge as a formidable player in shaping the future of global entertainment and beyond.

# I still love Nigerian Men- says American despite romance scams

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a striking revelation that has captivated online audiences, an unidentified American woman has recounted her harrowing experiences with two Nigerian internet fraudsters, widely known as “Yahoo boys,” who deceived her out of a significant amount of money through elaborate romance scams.

In her candid narrative, the woman, who is over 50 years old, expressed her appreciation for Nigerian men, affectionately labelling them as the “sexiest and most handsome men on this planet,” despite the heartbreak she endured during her encounters.

The woman’s story gained traction through a viral video shared on Sunday, wherein she delved into how her unfortunate relationship with one of the scammers began in 2020 on TikTok.

With a striking blend of vulnerability and resilience, she displayed the photographs of the young Nigerian man and the false image he presented to unwitting victims.

The truth about his identity was accidentally revealed when he inadvertently dialled her number from his Nigerian phone, leading her to uncover his impending marriage to a girlfriend in Nigeria.

“Back in 2020, I met this man and was involved with him for ten months,” the woman recounted with palpable emotion. “Initially, everything seemed fine, but soon he began relentlessly asking for money. His demands were insatiable. Eventually, I reached a breaking point when he mistakenly called me from a Nigerian phone number. He tried to pass it off as a friend’s number, but that was the moment I realized the truth.”

When she finally decided to end the relationship, the scammer unexpectedly revealed his plans, stating, “Now, he is about to get married to his Nigerian girlfriend,” as she showcased a picture of the couple. With surprising grace, she added, “May God bless them, and hopefully, they have a long life together. I also

congratulated him and sincerely hope everything goes well for them.”

In recounting her second tumultuous experience, the woman described a different scenario involving another young man who initially approached her under a false identity.

However, he later confessed that he had resorted to deception to support his ailing mother, who required urgent medical care.

“This second encounter was a little different,” she reflected. “He was much more polite and considerate of my feelings. After spending a year together, he eventually decided to come clean, explaining that he was a young Nigerian man striving to put himself through school while his mother was gravely ill. He expressed immense gratitude, insisting that I had been instrumental in saving her life.”

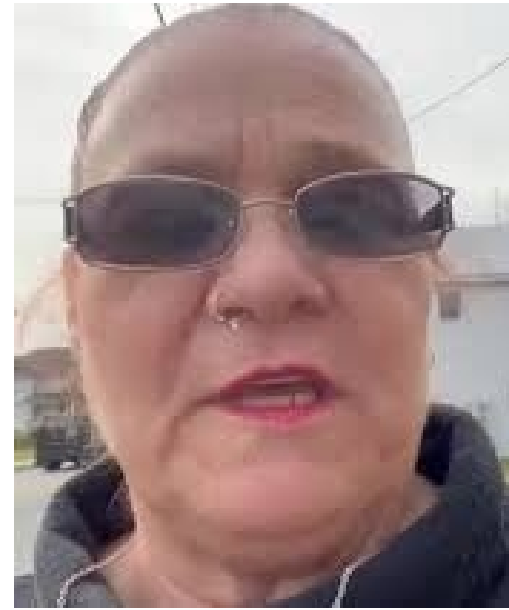
Reflecting on this experience, she commented, “That one doesn’t hurt me as much because I know the money I sent went to a good cause.” In contrast, she lamented how the first scammer frivolously spent money on lavish pursuits, sharing videos of himself splurging on extravagant items and dating local women.

“I’m over it,” she stated with resilience. “I will bounce back one day. My love for the Nigerian people remains intact; after all, the men are the sexiest and most handsome on this planet.”

However, her experience has left a bitter taste, as she cautioned others about the risks associated with romances formed online.

“I pray that nothing like this ever happens to me again, as I now know all the red flags,” she added, emphasizing the financial scars left by the scams. “Please be cautious in your dealings because both Nigerians and American women face their struggles; it can be tough for women here, especially for those without partners.”

In light of such fraudulent schemes, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria continues its relentless fight against internet fraudsters across the nation.



The commission has recorded notable successes, with its chairman, Mr Ola Olukoyede, announcing in May 2023 that the EFCC secured 3,175 convictions and recovered over ₦156 billion within a year.

This remarkable achievement coincided with President Bola Tinubu’s assumption of office. The recovery also included substantial sums in foreign currencies and cryptocurrencies, reflecting the far-reaching ramifications of cybercrime. Olukoyede, speaking during the launch of the Zero Tolerance Club at the University of Abuja, highlighted ongoing concerns regarding youth involvement in internet fraud.

“Despite the commendable performance of the EFCC, we are alarmed by the rising participation of young individuals, including students, in cybercrime, colloquially known as Yahoo Yahoo,” he noted.

“Hundreds of suspects are apprehended each month, and many face incarceration.” The woman’s tale serves as a poignant reminder of the perils of online relationships and the need for heightened vigilance in the digital age.

As the battle against internet fraudsters continues, so does the call for awareness about the risks associated with online interactions, ensuring that hopeful romantics are equipped with the knowledge to protect themselves from manipulative schemes.



# Blinken says Lebanon ceasefire talks 'in final stages'

By Agency Reporter

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday said efforts to secure a ceasefire in Lebanon were "in the final stages", and added that a deal could help end the Gaza conflict.

"We're not there yet, but I believe we are in the final stages," Blinken told reporters after a meeting near Rome with G7 counterparts, adding that "by de-escalating tensions in the region, it can also help us to end the conflict in Gaza". [7:12 pm, 26/11/2024] +234 803 862 6524: G7 to 'comply with respective obligations' over Netanyahu ICC warrant



G7 foreign ministers said Tuesday they "will comply with our respective obligations" regarding the arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The Group of Seven industrialised nations brings together Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, host Italy and the United States.

"We reiterate our commitment to International Humanitarian Law and will comply with our respective obligations," the ministers said in a joint statement issued following two days of talks near Rome.

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu last week, prompting outrage from Israel and its allies — including the US, which is not a member of the ICC and has rejected its jurisdiction.

All of the other G7 countries are members of the ICC — meaning they would have to arrest Netanyahu if he travelled there.

The ICC also issued warrants for Netanyahu's former defence minister and for Hamas's military

chief Mohammed Deif, whom Israel claimed was killed in an air strike in Gaza in July. Hamas has not confirmed his death.

The G7 statement said the foreign ministers "underline that there can be no equivalence between the terrorist group Hamas and the State of Israel". "In exercising its right to defend itself, Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international law in all circumstances, including International Humanitarian Law," the statement said.

The Hague-based ICC says the warrants for Netanyahu and his former minister were "for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed from at least 8 October 2023 until at least 20 May 2024".

'LEGAL DOUBTS'

Italy had asked for a discussion on the ICC warrants at the G7, after apparent splits within Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government over what it meant for Netanyahu.

A diplomatic source said the discussion in Fiuggi was "much broader and more strategic" than what ended up in the final statement,

without revealing details.

"We found a common position that was what we had asked for," Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani told a press conference after the talks.

He said there were "many legal doubts" regarding the warrant, saying "we need to understand the rules".

"Can a head of state be arrested? Who is going to arrest him?" he asked.

"Netanyahu will never go to a country where he could be arrested," he added.

War has raged in Gaza since Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which resulted in 1,207 deaths, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 44,249 people in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry that the United Nations considers reliable.

# Man Utd report £6.9m loss amid Champions League absence and restructuring Costs

**Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

**M**anchester United reported a £6.9 million operating loss for the first quarter of the 2024-25 financial year, largely attributed to their absence from the Champions League and costs tied to a significant redundancy programme.

The club's eighth-place finish in the Premier League last season—their worst-ever placement—meant they missed out on the lucrative European competition, competing instead in the Europa League. This absence contributed to a 20.4% drop in broadcasting revenue, decreasing from £39.3m in the same quarter last year to £31.3m.

Commercial revenue also declined by 5.6%, from £90.4m to £85.3m, while matchday revenue saw a 3.3% drop, from £27.4m to £26.5m.

Restructuring Costs and Future Savings United incurred £8.6m in exceptional costs, mainly due to a redundancy programme affecting 250 staff members

as part of a broader operational restructuring. Despite these expenses, the club expects the restructuring to result in annual savings of £40m-£45m, with benefits anticipated in the 2025 and 2026 financial years. The club's wage bill for the quarter also dropped by 11.2% (£10.1m), attributed to changes in the first-team squad's composition.

Challenges and Opportunities United posted a £1.9m profit in the same quarter last year, but net losses for the period have reached £113.2m. However, the club expressed confidence in adhering to the Premier League's profitability and sustainability rules, which cap non-allowable losses at £105m over three seasons.

Chief executive Omar Berrada



emphasized that cost reductions and renovations to the club's Carrington training ground are progressing on schedule. Additionally, a taskforce led by World Athletics president Lord Coe and former player Gary Neville is evaluating options for either redeveloping Old Trafford or constructing a new stadium.

“Once the taskforce delivers its recommendations, we will take time to digest and evaluate our options over the next year,” said Berrada.

# Salah's contract controversy: Carragher criticizes star for public comments

**Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

**L**iverpool legend Jamie Carragher has labeled Mohamed Salah “selfish” following the forward's public expression of frustration over Liverpool's failure to offer him a new contract. Salah, 32, has been a key player for the Reds, with 12 goals in all competitions this season, yet his current deal is set to expire at the end of the campaign.

Speaking after Liverpool's commanding 3-1 victory over Southampton, Salah revealed to reporters that he is “probably more out than in,” hinting at his dissatisfaction with the lack of movement on a new contract. The comments have sparked a flurry of opinions, with Carragher, a former Liverpool defender, expressing his disappointment on Sky Sports' Monday Night Football.

“I must say I am very disappointed with Mo Salah,” Carragher said. “Liverpool have Real Madrid midweek [in the Champions League] and Man City at the weekend. That's the story right now. If he keeps putting out comments and his

agent keeps dropping cryptic messages, that's selfish. He's thinking about himself and not the club.”

**Divisive Reaction**

Salah's remarks have divided fans and pundits alike. Chris Sutton, speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live's Monday Night Club, suggested Salah's decision to speak out indicates his desire to remain at Anfield.

“It wasn't one of those situations where he was cornered. Salah approached the press to get things off his chest. To me, that says he wants to stay,” said the former striker.

Rory Smith of The Athletic echoed this sentiment but pointed out Liverpool's potential hesitation to commit to a lucrative deal for a player in his 30s. “The club is likely looking at the long-term risks. At some point,



performances dip in your mid-30s. It's a gamble whether Salah can maintain this level for another year, two, or perhaps longer.”

**Key Decisions Loom**

The debate comes at a crucial moment for Liverpool, who sit eight points clear at the top of the Premier League and face a decisive Champions League clash against Real Madrid. With defender Trent Alexander-Arnold and captain Virgil van Dijk also out of contract this summer, the club is under immense pressure to secure the futures of its star players while focusing on winning silverware.



# Barbra Banda crowned BBC Women's Footballer of the year

**Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Zambia and Orlando Pride striker Barbra Banda has added another accolade to her growing list of achievements, having been voted BBC Women's Footballer of the Year. The 24-year-old was selected by football fans worldwide after receiving the majority of votes from the BBC Sport website.

Banda beat stiff competition from an illustrious shortlist that included some of the biggest names in women's football. The five nominees, based on performances between September 2023 and August 2024, were chosen by a panel of international experts, including players, coaches, and administrators from across the game.

**A Surprise Win**

Speaking to BBC Sport after receiving the award, Banda expressed her astonishment and gratitude.

"I am shocked and surprised to have this award right by my side," Banda said with a beaming smile. "I would like to thank

the people who voted and everyone who has played a part in my life and career – my family, my national team in Zambia, and especially the Pride team. This is for everyone."

Her heartfelt acceptance speech reflects the humility and determination that have made Banda a fan favorite, both on and off the pitch.

**A Stellar Year**

The recognition comes after a stellar year for Banda, who dazzled for both club and country. At the international level, she was instrumental in Zambia's impressive performances on the global stage, consistently proving her worth as one of Africa's brightest stars.

For Orlando Pride, Banda's contributions in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) were equally impactful. Her agility,



powerful strikes, and unrelenting work ethic made her a standout player, often turning the tide in critical matches.

In a year filled with remarkable individual achievements, Banda's name became synonymous with excellence, and her performances solidified her status as a trailblazer for African women's football.

# Thiago Messi takes the stage in Father's shadow

**Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Thiago Messi, son of legendary footballer Lionel Messi, is starting to carve his own path in football. The 12-year-old wore his father's iconic number 10 shirt as he represented Inter Miami's under-13 team at the Newell's Cup in Rosario, Argentina.

The tournament, now in its 10th edition, features youth teams from eight clubs across North and South America competing over five days. Monday's match saw Thiago and his teammates face Newell's Old Boys, Lionel Messi's boyhood club, where he spent five formative years before his move to Barcelona's famed La Masia academy at the same age as his son is now.

**Carrying a Legacy**

Thiago's debut at the Jorge B Griffa Sports Complex was steeped in symbolism. Although Lionel Messi was not present, a large banner depicting him kissing the World Cup served as a reminder of the immense legacy he carries. Lionel, now 37, has enjoyed a career most players can only dream of, winning:

13 league titles

Four Champions League titles

Three international trophies with Argentina, including the World Cup in 2022

Despite the pressure of living up to his father's monumental achievements, Thiago has shown a passion for the game, a trait likely influenced by growing up around one of football's greatest icons.

**Family Support on the Sidelines**

While Lionel was absent, Thiago had the support of his mother, Antonela Rocuzzo, and his grandparents, Jorge and Celia Messi, who were present in the stands. The match, however, ended in a narrow 1-0 defeat for Inter Miami to host club Newell's Old Boys.

Thiago wasn't the only famous



footballer's child on the pitch: Benjamin Suarez, son of Inter Miami striker Luis Suarez, also featured in the match, hinting at a new generation of potential stars growing under the watchful eyes of football royalty.

**Building the Next Chapter**

Inter Miami's youth team will continue their campaign in the tournament, next facing Uruguay's Penarol 91. While Thiago's football journey is still in its infancy, his presence on the pitch is a glimpse into the future for a family that has already left an indelible mark on the sport.