

‘E sweet me well’: Tinubu, Macron exchange greetings in pidgin English — PAGE 5

Minimum wage: Defaulting states, NLC move to avert workers’ strike — PAGE 8

The New Daily Prime

FG secures €300m development partnership with France — PAGE 3

I fought for my life, actress Omotola Jalade says after life-saving surgery PAGE 24

Tinubu will transform nigeria like he did lagos -macron PAGE 4



Troops kill Boko Haram commander Abu Shekau, 4 others in Yobe” PAGE 3

Port Harcourt Refinery to sell petrol at N1,030/litre – PETROAN PAGE 4

WTO chief, Okonjo-Iweala reappointed as Trump threat looms PAGE 2

Global Internet users hit 5.5bn — ITU report PAGE 6

Prioritize global food security, Tinubu charges Macron PAGE 7

Chelsea not in Premier League title race – Maresca PAGE 33

WTO chief, Okonjo-Iweala reappointed as Trump threat looms

By Dave Oludare Oso

World Trade Organization chief, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was reappointed Friday for a second term, in the shadow of the coming return of Donald Trump and his disdain for international trade rules.

Okonjo-Iweala, the first woman and the first African to head the WTO, was the only candidate in the race, and had been all but assured a second term.

The organization's 166 members "today agreed to give incumbent Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala a second term as director-general," the WTO said in a statement.

The 70-year-old Nigerian's reappointment was approved by consensus during a special meeting of the organisation's General Council, held behind closed doors, the WTO said.

Her current term ends in August 2025, and the appointment process for the next mandate had initially been scheduled to take months.

But with Okonjo-Iweala the only candidate, African countries called for the process to be speeded up, officially to facilitate preparations for the WTO's next big ministerial conference, set to be held in Cameroon in 2026.

The unstated objective is to "accelerate the process, because they did not want Trump's team to come in and veto her as they did four years ago", said Keith Rockwell, a senior research fellow at the Hinrich Foundation.

The common practice of appointing directors-general by consensus made it possible in 2020 for Trump to block Okonjo-Iweala's appointment for months, forcing her to wait to take the reins until after President Joe Biden entered the White House in early 2021.

The overwhelming support for Okonjo-Iweala's second term came "not so much (because) everyone loves Ngozi," a source close to the discussions told AFP.

Rather, members were "worried that if

she doesn't get reinstated, then it's possible that the administration in Washington would slow things (or) block other contenders", leaving a void at the top, the source said. "The alternative of no-one leading the organisation is unacceptable to them."

Rockwell, a former WTO spokesman, told AFP that speeding up Okonjo-Iweala's reappointment "creates tensions in the relationship with the United States, for sure – tensions which would probably have been there under any circumstances, but now this raises the stakes."

During Trump's first term, the WTO faced relentless attacks from his administration, which crippled the organisation's dispute settlement appeal system, and also threatened to pull the United States out of the organisation altogether.

And Trump has already signalled he is preparing to launch all-out trade wars, threatening to unleash a flurry of tariffs on China, Canada and Mexico on his first day in office on January 20.

"The festival of tariffs announced to date shows that he has no intention of following any rules," said Elvire Fabry, a researcher at the Institut Jacques Delors think-tank.

"The United States would not even need to withdraw from the WTO," she told AFP. "They are freeing themselves from the WTO rules".

In this context, the WTO chief will have "a firefighter role", she said.

It will be a question of "saving what can be saved, and making the case that there is no real alternative to the WTO rules", said another source close to the discussions on speeding up Okonjo-Iweala's reappointment.

"It will be a very difficult mandate, with little certainty about what will happen."



Rockwell noted that the WTO's problems were not solely linked to Washington.

"It is a time right now in which application of the WTO rules has deteriorated," he said.

"You can't blame all of this on the United States. That's true of many other members as well."

Dmitry Grozoubski, author of the book "Why Politicians Lie about Trade", agreed.

"Governments are increasingly turning to trade measures to address issues like national security, environmental competition, and re-industrialization, and policymakers aren't as moved as they once were by arguments that their ideas violate the letter or spirit of WTO commitments," he told AFP.

"If president-elect Trump makes destroying the WTO a priority," he said, the organisation's "options will be limited as the institution is not built to withstand overt demolition from within its membership."

Since taking the WTO reins, Okonjo-Iweala has tried to breathe new life into the fragile organization, pushing for fresh focus on areas like climate change and health.

But pressure is growing for WTO reform, in particular of the moribund appeals portion of its dispute settlement system, which collapsed during the first Trump presidency as Washington blocked the appointment of judges.

FG secures €300m development partnership with France

By Agency Reporter

Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, led the Federal Republic of Nigeria in signing two transformative agreements with the French Government and its development agency, AFD (Agence Française de Développement). These agreements, collectively valued at over €300 million, are set to strengthen key sectors of Nigeria's economy and drive sustainable development.

Strategic Focus Areas

The Letter of Intent, co-signed by Mr. Edun and France's Minister of Economy, Finance, and Industry, Mr. Antoine Armand, underscores a shared commitment to strategic investments in:

Healthcare

Transportation

Agricultural Value Chains

Renewable Energy

Human Capital Development

Speaking at the signing ceremony, HM Edun remarked:

"This partnership goes beyond financial support. It is about building robust, sustainable systems that foster development and empower Nigerians. It reflects the confidence of international partners in the progress of Nigeria's economic reforms."

Reinforcing Development Diplomacy
The Declaration of Intent signed with AFD marks a pivotal step in Nigeria's economic diplomacy. This agreement guarantees AFD's continued commitment to financing sustainable projects that align with President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda. It prioritises the following sectors:

Urban Infrastructure

Transportation Networks

Education, with a focus on STEM



Agriculture and Food Security
Healthcare Systems

Additionally, AFD pledged support for Nigeria's energy transition goals, agro-logistics hubs, and MSME financing, all aimed at fostering job creation and driving growth in high-impact sectors.

With these agreements, Nigeria and France reaffirm their commitment to forging strong bilateral ties and investing in a future of shared prosperity.

Troops kill Boko Haram commander Abu Shekau, 4 others in Yobe

By Agency Reporter

Troops of Sector 2, Operation Hadin Kai, in collaboration with local vigilantes, successfully repelled an attempted attack by Boko Haram terrorists on Sabon Fagi community in Buni Yadi, Gujba Local Government Area of Yobe State.

Intelligence sources told Zagazola Makama that the attack, which occurred at approximately 11:00 p.m., resulted in a fierce gun battle that left four insurgents dead, including a notorious Boko Haram commander identified as Abu Shekau.

The troops recovered weapons from the insurgents after engaging them with superior firepower,

forcing others to flee and securing a decisive victory for the security forces.

Abu Shekau, a staunch loyalist and admirer of the late Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau, was considered a significant figure within the terror group.

Abu Shekau (Father of Shekau) had named his son after Abubakar Shekau as a mark of reverence for the group's former ruffian.



Tinubu will transform nigeria like he did lagos -Macron

By Dave Oludare Oso

French President Emmanuel Macron has said that his Nigerian counterpart, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu is on a mission to transform Nigeria like he did when he was governor of Lagos State.

Tinubu, his wife, Oluremi and some top government officials and people from the business world have been in France on a state visit since Wednesday.

The French leader spoke at a dinner in Paris on Thursday.

Special adviser to the president on information and strategy, Bayo Onanuga, quoted Macron him as saying, "Tinubu conquered military rule and took your liberty. He will do for Nigeria what he did in Lagos State. "Nigeria is a formidable country with talented young people. Many Nigerians are exceptional in their chosen careers."

On his part, Tinubu said it is inspiring that France led by Macron wants to

work with Nigeria.

The Nigerian leader said, "Regarding Nigeria's economy, as you have said, we have embarked on a very strong reform, and there is no looking back.

"It is in the interest of the entire continent that we don't continue in the past. We must brace up for the future with commitment and optimism. And with the courage of our founding fathers.

"President Macron, all your efforts about Africa, I promise you shall not be in vain.

"You opened your doors for investment for our friends and brothers here. I could see Aliko Dangote, Aig Imoukhuede, and Tony



Elumelu here. You have memories of your friends in Nigeria. You asked for Mike Adenuga earlier today. Thank you."

The President also said Nigeria would have better relations with France.

Port Harcourt Refinery to sell petrol at N1,030/litre – PETROAN

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following updates from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), the Petroleum Products Retail Outlet Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) has confirmed that petrol from the Port Harcourt refinery will be sold at N1,030 per litre.

PETROAN's spokesperson, Joseph Obele, announced the pricing in a statement on Thursday night.

Obele emphasized that the refinery is operational and that the NNPCL had officially communicated the price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) to the association.

"The NNPC Retail Ltd has

officially announced the PMS price at the Port Harcourt refinery as N1,030 per litre," Obele stated.

This announcement comes amid ongoing discussions about fuel pricing and the refinery's recent refurbishment.

The development is expected to impact market dynamics and consumer purchasing power across the country.



'E sweet me well': Tinubu, Macron exchange greetings in pidgin English By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Bola Tinubu and French President Emmanuel Macron exchanged lighthearted greetings on social media on Thursday, with both leaders communicating in pidgin English.

Tinubu arrived in France on Wednesday evening for a state visit.

After a meeting on Thursday, Macron reminisced about his days at the French embassy in Nigeria as an intern.

Writing on X in Nigerian Pidgin, an English-based creole language spoken as a lingua franca, the French president gushed over Tinubu's visit.

Macron wrote, "Na big honor for France, dear President Bola Tinubu @officialABAT, to welcome you for dis State visit as one big partner and friend of today and tomorrow.

"E still dey sweet me well well as I remember say I be young intern for French Embassy for Nigeria that time."

Reciprocating the friendly exchange,

Tinubu began by thanking Macron in French and added that the opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations is exciting.

Tinubu wrote, "Merci beaucoup, President M a c r o n @EmmanuelMacron.

"Na big privilege to dey strengthen dis bond wey join Nigeria and France together. E

sweet me well well to hear say di memories of your time as young intern for Nigeria still dey inspire you."

The Nigerian president urged his French counterpart to jointly prioritize mutual respect and equality with him while building partnerships.

"E show say di connection between our two countries strong and go



continue dey strong," Tinubu added. "We must to continue dey build dis our partnership wey stand for mutual respect and equality, wey go help di dreams of our people today and create better future for tomorrow. Thanks for di warm welcome and fruitful meetings, my paid!"

Tinubu's post also had an accompanying French translation.

Police arrest 5 trans-border gunrunners, recovers arms By Helen Okechukwu

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has announced the apprehension of five trans-border gunrunners and recovery of arms.

The police spokesperson, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, made this known on Friday via his X page, acknowledging the NPF's unwavering commitment to ensuring a conducive environment for all citizens of Nigeria.

Adejobi elaborated that the security team is working tirelessly to prevent and combat all forms of crime and criminality.

Announcing the apprehension by the operatives of the FID-IRT, the alleged five suspects include Adamu Noma, Matthew Audu, Andrew Poyi, Aminu Sani, and Aminu Talha, all males.

He said, during the search operation, 10 locally fabricated Ak-47 rifles, 5 Israeli Ak-47 rifles, 1 revolver pistol, 1 pump action rifle, 20 rounds of Ak-47 ammunition, and 1 welding machine used for the fabrication of arms were recovered.



Adejobi stated that these achievements showcase the result of good leadership skills to decimate and subdue criminal activities and insecurity in general in the country.

Kayode Egbetokun, the Inspector-General of Police, IGP, has issued a fresh order to his team, especially the tactical units, to flush out illegal arms and ammunition with the aim to neutralise local manufacturers of arms.

Adejobi stated, "The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Kayode Egbetokun, has re-echoed his directive to operatives of the Force, particularly, tactical units, to mop up every illegal arms and ammunition, and see to the total dismantling of local manufacturers of illicit arms and ammunition and dangerous weapons by all means."

Global Internet users hit 5.5bn — ITU report

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

A report released by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has disclosed that an estimated 5.5 billion people worldwide are using the Internet in 2024, according to the 'Facts and Figures 2024.'

This represents a significant increase of 227 million individuals compared to revised figures for 2023.

The ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs.)

The report found out that while global connectivity continues to rise, now reaching 68 per cent of the world's population, about one-third of the population, or 2.6 billion people, remain offline.

The report highlights persistent digital divides, particularly in low-income and least-developed countries, that continue to challenge the goal of universal connectivity.

ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin, said: "Facts and Figures 2024 is a tale of two digital realities between high-income and low-income countries.

"Stark gaps in critical connectivity indicators are cutting off the most vulnerable people from online access to information, education, and employment opportunities.

"This report is a reminder that true progress in our interconnected world isn't just about how fast we move forward, but about making sure everyone moves forward together."

However, it was discovered that Internet usage remains closely tied to the level of development.

The report revealed the following statistics:

High-income countries: 93% of

the population is online.

Low-income countries: Only 27% of the population has Internet access.

Least developed countries (LDCs): 35% of people are online.

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs): 39% of the population is connected.

Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU's

Telecommunication Development Bureau, emphasized the urgency of accelerating progress, saying: "The world is inching towards universal access at a time that it should be sprinting. Our advances mask significant gaps in the world's most vulnerable communities, where digital exclusion makes life even more challenging.

"We must intensify our efforts to remove barriers and renew our commitment to achieving universal and meaningful connectivity."

Gender gap narrowing slowly: In 2024, 70% of men and 65% of women are online globally. While 189 million more men than women use the Internet, progress toward gender parity has been steady—except in LDCs.

Urban-rural divide persists: 83% of urban dwellers use the Internet compared to 48% of rural populations. Of the 2.6 billion offline people in 2024, 1.8 billion live in rural areas.

Youth lead Internet adoption: Globally, 79% of people aged 15-24 use the Internet, 13 percentage points higher than older



populations. The generational gap, however, has been shrinking over the past four years.

Affordability remains a challenge: In low-income countries, the cost of fixed broadband equals nearly a third of the average monthly income.

Mobile access is widespread but unequal: While over 80% of people globally own a mobile phone, ownership ranges from 95% in high-income countries to just 56% in low-income nations.

5G adoption varies widely: 5G coverage reaches 51 per cent of the global population in 2024, but disparities persist—84 per cent coverage in high-income countries versus 4 per cent in low-income countries.

Internet traffic is growing strongly: Average monthly mobile broadband usage per subscription is 16.2 GB in high-income economies, eight times higher than 2 GB in low-income countries.

The ITU report underscores the need for intensified efforts to bridge digital divides, ensure affordability, and bring meaningful connectivity to underserved populations.

Prioritize global food security, Tinubu charges Macron

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Bola Tinubu, during a meeting at the Palais des L'Élysée in Paris, called on French President Emmanuel Macron to prioritize global food security, emphasizing that “a starved nation will not care about weather or environment.”

The President also said that no child in the 21st century should go to bed hungry.

At a joint press conference, the two leaders discussed strengthening cooperation in critical areas, including food security, energy, solid minerals, education, and defence.

During the parley, Tinubu underscored Nigeria's untapped agricultural potential and encouraged French investors to explore the country's favorable business environment.

The Nigerian President noted the ongoing contributions of the French-Nigeria Business Forum but stressed the need for expanded collaboration, particularly in agriculture.

The President stated, “Nigeria's financial sector is evolving and flourishing. We are also creating grounds for investment in Nigeria's economy for French nationals, especially in the area of food security. “It is our responsibility to put together a food security programme for the private sector to come and invest in the country.

“We are working on stability and we are getting closer and closer, but we can do better and better.”

President Tinubu said Nigeria's economy was being repositioned for more Foreign Direct Investment that will directly impact the livelihood of the citizens.

He said, “I can assure you that Nigeria is open for business and close to this, we have a vibrant youth population that is educated, and ready to be trained in various areas of entrepreneurship and development.”

The President implored the French government to extend to Nigeria trainings that will develop the



youthful population.

“Furthermore, we should de-risk the opportunities in the solid minerals. We have the potentials and we have agreed on a deeper and deeper relationship,” the President added.

President Tinubu noted that Nigeria, like most African nations, had been preoccupied with tackling issues of food security.

“A starved nation will not care about weather or environment, and in the 21st Century no child should go to bed hungry,” he told the French President, and his delegation.

“If an African child is given a glass of milk in a class, there will be no problem in getting him to return and stay in school to learn. The more educated the children are, the better it is for us,” he said.

On security, the President said: “Nigeria is a partner in progress. We are ready to partner France so that we can have security operations that will stop the challenge of migration.”

President Tinubu said the blue economy in Nigeria also provides a huge opportunity for investment, with unexplored potentials in fishery.

“In Lagos, we have tamed the Atlantic ocean. For us, fishery is an important aspect of investment.

“We want to assure the French investment community that Nigeria is open for business. It shall be easy in, and easy out,” the President noted.

Macron's reaction

President Macron acknowledged

President Tinubu's state visit as a milestone heralding deeper bilateral relationships, particularly emphasizing collaborative growth in creative industries and youth-focused initiatives.

The French President noted that the global humanitarian challenges could only be solved with governments working together.

“We have confidence that you, Mr President will reinforce our relationship with Nigeria, and it will cover the West Coast region, with ECOWAS playing the leading role.

“I will seek your leadership to work as partners of progress. You are the great leader of the great country in Africa.

“We appreciate your visionary leadership and energy in transforming the economy of your country. We will work together for collective, global success,” he said.

President Macron had earlier assured that he would encourage more investments in the solid minerals sector, with the signing of an agreement, during a political meeting where the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Mr. Dele Alake, made a presentation on the potentials.

Earlier, President Tinubu and First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu were welcomed with full honours at Hotel Les Invalides and Palais De l'Élysée by President Macron and his wife, Brigitte Macron.

Minimum wage: Defaulting states, NLC move to avert workers' strike

By Dave Oludare Oso

In a bid to avert the impending strike called by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) for Monday, December 1, the few states yet to pay the N70,000 minimum wage for workers are making last-minute moves to implement the agreed amount.

Out of the 36 states, those yet to approve the monthly wage are Katsina, Cross River and Zamfara states.

Probably as a means to stave off the strike action, the Imo State government flagged off the implementation of the N70,000 wage on Tuesday.

By that, 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) have now complied with the 2024 National Minimum Wage Act.

Interestingly, some states have even resolved to pay higher than the N70,000 starting point, with Lagos and Rivers states offering the highest pay with N85,000.

The government of Lagos State even promised that its workers could earn up to N100,000 monthly from the first quarter of 2025.

Giving a state-by-state breakdown, civil servants in Niger, Enugu, Oyo and Akwa Ibom will earn N80,000 while Delta and Ogun states approved N77,000.

In Osun, Ebonyi, Kebbi and Benue states, their workers will get N75,000, while Ondo, N73,000; Kogi and Kaduna, N72,000; Kano and Gombe, N71,000.

Abia, Adamawa, Anambra, Jigawa, Borno, Edo, Kwara, Nasarawa, Taraba, Ekiti, Bauchi, Yobe, Imo and Plateau states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory, all settled for N70,000.

However, despite the NLC's warnings, Zamfara, Cross River and Katsina, have yet to implement the new wage, which could lead to a shutdown of activities in their states from Monday.

On Monday, labour unions in Cross River, who are demanding a new wage of N70,000 from the state

government, directed state civil servants to embark on a two-day warning strike over the non-implementation of the new minimum wage.

The warning strike was signed by the Nigerian Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress.

This followed a staged walkout from a scheduled meeting held on November 18 with state government officials, who

formed members of the wage implementation committee at the office of the state's Head of Service, Innocent Eteng, in Calabar, the state capital.

According to the labour leaders, last week, when the committee sat for the first time, the meeting ended in a stalemate when they perceived delayed tactics by the government to postpone the meeting to January.

The state's civil servants said they were utterly disappointed when Governor Bassey Otu announced a new minimum wage of N40,000 on May 1, during the International Workers Day celebration at the U.J Essueine Stadium in Calabar.

Otu said that due to the state's lean resources, caused by the statutory federal allocation aggravated by the unfavourable state Gross Domestic Product, the new minimum wage of N40,000 would be in line with realities rather than sentiments.

While giving instances of Edo, Lagos, Rivers and other governors, the workers said they were of high hope before the unexpected announcement of N40,000.

The strike action, which was signed by the Nigerian Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress, was set to commence from November 24 midnight to 26, 2024.

According to Punch, the Cross River State Chairman, Nigeria Labour Congress, Gregory Ulayi, have said that the union would embark on an indefinite strike if the state government failed to implement the new minimum wage for the workers.



Ulayi noted that the two-day warning strike was embarked upon by workers in the state between Monday and Tuesday, which he described as a call to act in to the government.

He said that after the two-day warning strike, all workers were mandated to return to work as they waited to hear from the state government.

"If the government does not negotiate and do the needful, we will embark on a total strike because it is a directive across the country," Ulayi said.

However, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor Otu, Nsa Gill, told our correspondent that the state government had set up a committee to negotiate with the labour leaders, as part of last-ditch efforts to prevent the looming strike on Monday.

He said that despite the nationwide deadline for the implementation of the minimum wage, the Otu-led government was working to ensure payment of a minimum wage of N70,000 or even above.

He said, "The state government has a negotiating team and they are at work. Though, they are yet to reach an agreement as at today (Thursday). The government is ready to pay the N70,000 new minimum wage, if not beyond.

"We recognize the fact that there is a national deadline from the labour union, which is slated for December 1, 2024, for all the states to pay the new minimum wage.

continue on page 9

the negotiation table for an amicable resolution.”

Katsina State is also likely to face labour's wrath after its failure to implement the compulsory new wage bill for the state workers.

Multiple sources in the NLC secretariat in Katsina, the state capital, told our correspondent on Thursday that the state was yet to approve the payment.

Last month, it was reported that the Katsina State Government inaugurated a 15-member committee to guide the implementation of a new minimum wage of N70,000.

Deputy Governor Faruk Lawal, while inaugurating the committee, said the government was aware of the hardship being faced by civil servants in the state.

“You are all aware that His Excellency, the Governor, Mallam Dikko Umar Radda, has set up a committee to implement the N70,000 minimum wage consequential adjustment to all categories of workers in the state.

“This includes the state civil servants, the Local Government employees and other categories of workers. The government is aware of the hardship being encountered by the civil servants,” he stated.

Led by Secretary to the State Government, Abdullahi Faskari, the committee was given three weeks to present strategies and recommendations, including the consequential adjustments for all categories of workers.

The committee includes prominent state officials such as the Head of Civil Service, Falalu Bawale; the state Commissioners for Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, and Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs. Others are the Special Adviser to the Governor on Labor Matters; as well as representatives from the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress, among others.

However, the latest reports suggest the committee has not been able to approve the wage.

“Katsina State is yet to implement the new minimum wage though the state has set up a committee in that regard,” a top NLC official, who spoke on

condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the matter, said.

“Negotiation between the labour unions and the government committee members are still ongoing. Anything can happen between now and in four days to come (as at Thursday), which is the December 1 deadline.”

Meanwhile, the Zamfara State government says it has concluded arrangements for the implementation of the new minimum wage adding that it had been talking with the labour leaders in the state.

Speaking to journalists, the Senior Special Assistant to Governor Dauda Lawal on Media and Communications, Mustafa Jafaru Kaura, said the state government would implement the new wage as soon as possible.

He said, “The state government has already set up a committee to work out modalities for the implementation of the new minimum wage of N70,000.”

He stated that the state government wanted to know the exact number of its civil servants and the amount involved before settling the new wage. Kaura added, “The committee has gone far in its assignment and I am telling you that as soon as the committee finishes its assignment, Governor Lawal will surely implement the new wage.”

Kaura stated that members of the committee included labour leaders and other stakeholders who were given the responsibility to work out the modalities on how best to implement the new wage.

He stressed that the state government would never fail the civil servants, adding that “Governor Dauda Lawal is one of the civil servants' friendly governors in the country.”

“Zamfara workers will never be left out in terms of the new minimum wage,” he added.

“I want you to remember that when he assumed office as the Governor of the state, he met the state's civil servants



collecting N18,000 as minimum wage.”

“He quickly directed the state's ministry of finance to start implementing the N30,000 minimum wage which was done.”

“So, I am assuring you that, the Governor will soon implement the new minimum wage for N70,000,” Kaura said.

Earlier in November, Governor Lawal reiterated his government's resolve to pay the minimum wage after working out all necessary modalities.

He said, “We have to know what comes in, the number of our workforce, and what we will pay as minimum wage,” adding, “The welfare of my workforce has been my priority since I assumed office.

“When we came on board, for four months workers of the state had not been paid their salaries, and the first thing I did was to pay the workers.

“Today, as from the 25th of every month, I make sure that workers are paid. So, in other words, I spend about N5bn on wages every month. I paid my workers. I improved the salaries of local government staff as well as paid pensioners.

“So every month, I boost the state's economy. If you go around, you will see how small traders are making brisk business from the goods they display in markets and streets.”

Ex-Liberian warlord, Prince Johnson dies, aged 72

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Prince Johnson, a former Liberian warlord notorious for his role in the country's brutal civil wars, passed away at the age of 72.

His death, caused by complications from high blood pressure, was confirmed by his family spokesperson, Wilfred Bangura.

Johnson gained global infamy for his involvement in the torture and execution of former Liberian President Samuel Doe in 1990, an incident gruesomely captured on video.

In the footage, Johnson is seen drinking beer and watching as his men mutilated Doe, slicing off his ear before killing him. The video became one of the most harrowing symbols of the atrocities committed during Liberia's civil wars.

Despite recommendations from Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for his prosecution, Johnson never faced trial. Instead, he transitioned into politics, serving as a senator and wielding significant influence as a political kingmaker until his death.

Liberia's civil wars, which raged from 1989 to 2003, left more than 200,000 people dead and displaced over a million. Countless others suffered from

mutilation, rape, and other atrocities. Johnson's death marks the end of a controversial and turbulent chapter in Liberia's history, one that continues to cast a shadow over the nation's efforts to achieve justice and reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission listed Johnson among eight leaders of warring factions, saying his group had committed massacres, torture and rapes. It also named him first on its list of "most notorious perpetrators."

While Johnson avoided prosecution, he later described regretting Doe's murder and seeking reconciliation with his family.

More recently, Johnson voted in favour of setting up a long-awaited war crimes court earlier this year. Once operational, the court will be backed by international institutions including the United Nations. The aim is to deliver long overdue justice to victims of the civil wars, but critics have said it risks reopening old wounds.

Johnson remained in politics after the wars ended and was elected as a senator in his Nimba county stronghold in 2006.

He went on to play a role as kingmaker in various presidential elections.

He threw his support behind former president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in 2011, then endorsed George Weah in the run-off against Sirleaf's ruling party successor Joseph Boakai in 2017.

However, he switched his support to Boakai in the 2023 election in which Boakai defeated Weah in a run-off.

Boakai praised Johnson's contributions to the national discourse.

"While we may not have always agreed on the path our nation pursued, we recognize the impact of his work and his dedication to representing the people of Nimba County," he said in a statement after Johnson's death.

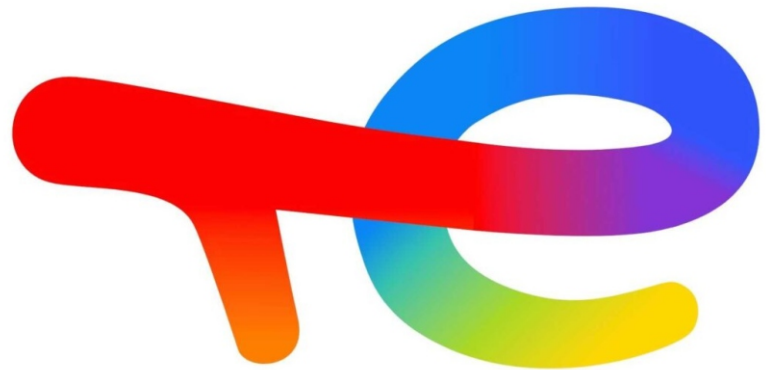
TotalEnergies eyes \$750m gas project in Nigeria to boost LNG supplies

By Agency Reporter

French energy major TotalEnergies SE may greenlight a \$750 million gas project in Nigeria next year, potentially signaling that the African nation's efforts to revive investment in its hydrocarbon production are making progress.

Earlier this year, the French company approved an investment of about \$500 million in a joint venture with state-owned Nigerian National

Petroleum Company Limited to develop the Ubeta onshore field. That project with output of 300 million cubic feet per day will boost supply to the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas plant.



Osun govt approves Jokotola Tunde as the new Olojudo of Ido-Osun

By Friday Omosola

The Osun State Executive Council has approved the appointment of Prince Jokotola Olayinka Tunde as the new Olojudo of Ido-Osun in Egbedore Local Government Area of the state.

The announcement was made in a statement signed by Oluomo Kolapo Alimi, Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment.

The appointment follows the passing of the late Oba Aderemi Adedapo, marking a significant transition for the Ido-Osun community.

According to the 1956 Registered Declaration governing the Olojudo stool, it was the turn of the Adenke Ruling House to occupy the position.

Alimi said the selection process adhered to due legal process and complied with relevant regulations.

Jokotola Olayinka Tunde, the new Olojudo of Ido-Osun in Egbedore Local Government Area of Osun State.

The Council urged the newly appointed traditional ruler to prioritize the peace

and progress of Ido-Osun and contribute to the development of the state as a whole.

Presiding over the Council meeting, Governor Ademola Adeleke reminded members of their collective responsibility to deliver democratic dividends.

“The public has delivered a strong positive verdict on our government,” the Governor said, adding that the recognition must motivate the Council to intensify efforts toward implementing the administration’s five-point agenda.

READ ALSO: Lagbaja: Osun govt declares 3 days mourning

“We must not slow down,” he emphasised. “All eyes are on us, and we



must not fail the thousands and even millions of admirers out there.”

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Governor, Kola Adewusi; Secretary to the State Government, Teslim Igbalaye; Chief of Staff to the Governor, Kazeem Akinleye; and various commissioners and cabinet advisers.

Tinubu applauds Okonjo-Iweala's reappointment as WTO Director-General

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has congratulated Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on her unanimous re-election as the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Nigerian economist, known for her expertise in global finance and development, will begin her second four-year term on September 1, 2025, following the expiration of her first term on August 31, 2025.

Okonjo-Iweala, who made history in 2021 as the first African and the first woman to lead the 164-member organisation, was reappointed due to her strong track record and the trust placed in her by the global community.

President Tinubu in a statement by his spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga praised her leadership, noting that her reappointment underscores international confidence in her ability to drive multilateral trade initiatives for sustainable global development.

He expressed optimism that her continued stewardship would further

enhance the WTO's role as a cornerstone of inclusive economic growth and governance.

Highlighting Nigeria's commitment to multilateral trade frameworks, Tinubu reaffirmed the country's support for the WTO, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

He also pledged unwavering backing for Okonjo-Iweala's efforts to implement bold reforms, champion equitable trade practices, and foster international cooperation.

The President's statement reflects



Nigeria's pride in Okonjo-Iweala's achievements and its commitment to advancing global trade policies that benefit all nations.

FIJ publisher, Soyombo detained by Army in Rivers

By Dave Oludare Oso

Renowned investigative journalist, Fisayo Soyombo has been detained by the Nigerian Army's 6 Division in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

His arrest, which occurred three days ago, was confirmed on Friday by the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ).

Sources suggest Soyombo's detention may be linked to his recent exposé on corruption and smuggling activities involving the Nigerian Customs Service. The FIJ has condemned his arrest, calling it a threat to press freedom and demanding his immediate release.

Soyombo, celebrated for his fearless reporting on corruption, abuse of power, and human rights violations, has faced numerous threats throughout his career. His arrest has sparked concerns about the growing risks journalists face in Nigeria.

"The 6 Division of the Nigerian Army in Port Harcourt has been detaining our founder 'Fisayo Soyombo 3 days running. Journalism is not a crime,'" FIJ said.

Earlier in November, SaharaReporters reported that Soyombo released more videos to establish his smuggling allegations involving Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) officers.

Fisayo, in a statement issued on his verified social media handles, had alleged that Nigerian customs officers

had conspired with Adeyemi Habeeb Abdulganiy, an alleged multi-billionaire-naira smuggler better known as Abuga, to illegally pass about 2000 cars and smuggle in bags of rice into the country.

He had said the illegal operation was slated to take place on Sunday, 10th of November, 2024.

The journalist wrote: "All is set. Your men, working with Adeyemi Habeeb Abdulganiy, the multi-billionaire-smuggler better known as Abuga, are primed to pass more than 2,000 cars containing at least 65 bags of rice each from Bebe in the Benin Republic into Sango, Nigeria.

"Some of these cars will enter Sango from the toll gate by driving against traffic, consequently endangering lives, while some will gain entry into Sango through Ifo; others will use the Oju-Ore-Ota route.

"Road users in Sango can expect traffic congestion early tomorrow morning unless this post prompts an about-face from the actors. I understand as well that soldiers from the 192 battalion at Owode will be patrolling during the journey to prevent any resistance.

"So, @CustomsNG, just so you know, the people are watching; they will be hysterically laughing at you when you announce "seizure of one million bags of rice and 25 cartons of guns" later this week."

However, the Nigerian Customs Service



(NCS) National Public Relations Officer, Abdullahi Aliyu Maiwada, had told SaharaReporters that Fisayo's claims were fictitious.

He had said it was illogical for anyone to believe their personnel were involved in the illegal operation.

In his another post, Fisayo had released two more videos to substantiate his smuggling allegations against the customs officers.

He said: "Since Maiwada considers my revelations 'tales by moonlight', I am supplying two more video evidence of smuggling-ready rice cars merely awaiting final clearance from rogue Customs officers."

"If, after this, Maiwada still considers my revelations fictitious, I'm happy to share more videos with you. I'm just trying to be useful to you, so you can in turn be useful to Nigerians rather than your pockets," the journalist added.

Sanwo-Olu, Wike, Umahi, others joins Tinubu in France

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, is currently in France, accompanying President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on a series of high-level diplomatic engagements.

The delegation also includes governors Sanwo-Olu (Lagos) and Dapo Abiodun (Ogun), and key ministers including David Umahi.

The visit, which aimed at

strengthening bilateral relations between Nigeria and France involves discussions on economic cooperation, security, and investment opportunities.

President Tinubu and his team, which included big businessmen like Aliko Dangote, Abdulsamad Rabiu, Tony Elumelu and Jim Ovia had engaged with French President

Emmanuel Macron and business leaders.

Observers anticipate that these engagements will bolster Nigeria's economic ties with France, particularly in sectors like infrastructure, energy, and agriculture.

Anniversary: FG to regulate, licence space sector

By Agency Reporter

Chief Uche Nnaji, Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, has said the Federal Government will soon commence the regulation and licensing of players in the space ecosystem for more revenues generation.

Nnaji said this at the inauguration of the Advanced Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Laboratory (AUAVL) of the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA) in Abuja on Thursday.

The inauguration of the laboratory was part of the activities to celebrate 25th Anniversary of Nigeria in Space.

Nnaji stated that there were lots of illegalities in the oil and gas sector and different sectors of the economy which satellite technology could detect and address.

“Very soon, we will start regulating and licensing the space sector, the upstream, mainstream and part of downstream, it is a major achievement and it is happening under President Bola Tinubu’s administration.

“With the application of our unmanned aerial vehicles, we are going to use it to monitor pipeline leakages, pipeline vandalism, beef up our revenue by monitoring the way ships come into the country.

“When some of these ships come in, they off their ignition and more than 80 per cent of ships coming into Nigeria ports don’t pay, they don’t pay bunker fees, they off their ignition.

“We cant monitor some of these things when we don’t have satellites, but with satellites, we can see all these things and even boost agricultural activities.

“With our satellites, we can monitor earth movements and all

these are part of the small benefits of satellite technology,” Nnaji said.

In his remarks, the Director-General of NASRDA, Dr Matthew Adepaju, said the agency deserved to go into deploying space spin offs and it was seriously engaging the private sector to develop the space ecosystem.

“We have done a lot of research, innovative breakthroughs and one of my major priority is how to turn these into products and services for direct benefit to Nigeria’s economy.

“We are looking at how it can impact security, agriculture and for the first time, we are collaborating with Nigeria Communication Satellite Limited and the Defence Space Administration to forge a renewed hope of relationship in our ecosystem.

“Part of our core mandate is to develop indigenous capacity not only in satellite, but also in astronomy and all facets of space science and technology, hence the AUAVL.

“The application of the UAV which we call drones has become a widely acceptable platform for environment monitoring, precision agriculture,” Adepaju said.

Adepaju appealed to Ministries, Departments and Agencies that required space technology to collaborate with NASRDA to achieve government’s mandate.

Dr Chichebe Akachukwu, Director and Coordinator of the AUAVL, corroborated that the idea was to ensure the implementation of the Presidential Executive Order 005 of local content development.

Akachukwu said the materials for the agency’s drones were locally



CHIEF UCHE GEOFFREY NNAJI

sourced and processed, adding that they were either designed and built in China or America, depending on where they got the correct specifications.

“The drone we have is for precision agriculture, precision agriculture makes you spend less energy and you have optimal harvest and you can also use it for surveillance.

“We also have a drone that can be used for long distance and long endurance missions, it can do pipeline monitoring, it can also do other surveillance activities,” he said.

The director, who said the agency already had laboratory in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, said the Abuja lab would offer its collaborators the ease of making use of the facility within the Federal Capital Territory.

Highlight of the event was the launching of NASRDA’s International Journal of Space Technology and Earth Sciences by Mrs Esuabana Nko-Asanye, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology.

Many feared dead as boat carrying 200 passengers capsizes in Niger

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A boat carrying over 200 passengers capsized along the Dambo-Ebuchi stretch of the River Niger, leading to multiple fatalities in the early hours of Friday.

According to eyewitnesses, the vessel, owned by Musa Dangana, was en route to the Katcha weekly market in Niger State with market women and farm laborers on board.

Rescue teams and local divers have recovered eight bodies so far, with efforts ongoing to locate the remaining passengers.

Initial reports suggest that the absence of life jackets contributed to the high casualty rate.

This incident echoes a similar tragedy on October 1, 2024, when a boat accident on the Muwo Gbajibo River in Mokwa, Niger State, claimed several lives.



Despite efforts by Nigeria's waterways authority to curb overloading and ban night travel on rivers, such regulations are often ignored, leading to recurring tragedies.

An investigation into the latest incident is expected as authorities work to prevent future occurrences.

Appeal Court frees popular Lagos doctor initially convicted of rape

By Agency Reporter

A Nigerian doctor convicted of rape and sexual assault has been acquitted by the appeal court.

Femi Olaleye, a Lagos-based doctor, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by the high court on a two-count charge of defilement and sexual assault by penetration of his wife's 16-year-old niece.

However, the Court of Appeal on Friday discharged and acquitted him. The appellant was freed after challenging his conviction and life imprisonment sentence.

Mr Olaleye, the medical director of Optimal Cancer Care, was arraigned in 2022 by the Lagos State Government at the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court, in Ikeja, Lagos.

After his conviction in August 2023, his lawyer, Kemi Pihinero, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), filed an appeal in November 2023, arguing that there was no direct evidence to confirm the alleged victim's age.

The appellant argued that there was no direct evidence to establish the alleged victim's age, claiming the prosecution failed to



provide documentation proving she was 16 years old at the time of the offence.

Nigeria seeks global partners for SAPZ-2 to boost agro-industrial growth **By Friday Omosola**

The Nigerian government has intensified efforts to attract international development partners to co-finance the second phase of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ-2) programme.

Vice President Kashim Shettima described the initiative as a transformative step towards achieving food security, job creation, and economic diversification under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

Speaking at the SAPZ-2 co-financiers meeting on Thursday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, Shettima emphasised the strategic importance of SAPZ in meeting Nigeria's food security goals and advancing its economic agenda.

"This meeting is crucial to mobilize additional financing for phase two of the program, which will allow us to include more states beyond the initial ten earmarked," Shettima said.

He revealed that the government has secured commitments of \$600 million from the African Development Bank (AfDB) and \$300 million from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to fund the programme.

The SAPZ initiative integrates the production, processing, and distribution of key crops and livestock. It aims to reduce Nigeria's 40% post-harvest losses, bolster food security, and enhance economic diversification.

Phase one of the programme has already begun implementing innovative Design, Build, and Operate (DBO) models to establish processing zone infrastructure by 2025.

Shettima noted that the SAPZ's



accelerated implementation plan for phase one and the onboarding of phase-two states will be pivotal in achieving Nigeria's food security agenda.

"Our focus includes increasing the production and processing of cassava, rice, maize, cocoa, tomatoes, and livestock in the seven participating states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)," he added.

The programme gained significant backing from global development agencies. AfDB Nigeria Country Office Director, Abdul Kamara, highlighted the program's potential to transform Nigeria's agro-industrial sector by creating opportunities for value addition and aligning with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Similarly, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Nigeria Country Director, Dede Ekoue, praised SAPZ-1's impact on smallholder farmers and agro-industries, particularly in Kano.

"This programme is a federal government priority that enhances food security, promotes agro-industrialization, and creates jobs," she stated.

Islamic Development Bank

representative Daniyar Abyl Khan reaffirmed his organisation's commitment to SAPZ-2, citing its alignment with global efforts to address food insecurity.

National Programme Coordinator, Kabir Yusuf, outlined SAPZ's infrastructure-driven approach, which includes providing power, access roads, and water treatment plants to reduce operational costs for investors.

This infrastructure is designed to position Nigeria as a hub for agro-industrial growth and sustainable economic diversification.

Currently, SAPZ spans eight states—Kano, Kaduna, Kwara, Oyo, Ogun, Imo, Cross River, and the FCT. The initiative aims to institutionalize the program as a government agency to ensure its sustainability.

The meeting brought together stakeholders from the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and others, all committed to advancing Nigeria's agro-industrial aspirations.

FG to fleet operators: Take advantage of technology in operations By Agency Reporter

The Federal Government (FG) has urged fleet operators to take advantage of technology to enhance safety and reduce road accidents in Nigeria.

The Minister of Transportation, Sen. Saidu Alkali, gave the advice during the Annual Safety Manager Retreat, organised by Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) in Abuja, which had the theme: "Driver Management: Enhancing Safety Through Technology."

Alkali, represented by Mr Abubakar Usman, the Transport Director at the Ministry, said that technology had a crucial role to play in reducing road accidents and improving fleet efficiency.

He also urged fleet operators to take advantage of innovations such as telematics and advanced driver assistance systems.

Alkali also emphasised the need for effective driver management, noting that drivers were the lifeblood of fleet operations.

He said that the retreat would provide a unique opportunity for fleet operators to reflect, strategise, and commit to making the roads safer while advancing the efficiency of their operations.

"As technology continues to evolve, so too must our approach to fleet management and safety increase.

"Today, we are tasked with exploring

how innovation can empower us to protect lives, enhance productivity, and set new benchmarks for excellence in transportation.

"At the heart of fleet safety, lies the driver. These individuals are the lifeblood of our operations, the ones who navigate our cities and highways, delivering goods, transporting people, and ensuring our economies thrive," he said.

According to him, managing drivers effectively is not just about maintaining schedules and meeting targets; it is about ensuring their well-being and equipping them with tools that prioritise safety above all.

"Statistics have shown us why this is vital. Road accidents remain a global challenge, often exacerbated by fatigue, distraction, or human error.

"However, these challenges are not insurmountable. By leveraging technology, we can shift the paradigm from reactive to proactive safety measures," he said.

Alkali said that the role of technology in enhancing safety could not be over-emphasised.

"Today, we are witnessing a technological revolution in fleet management.

"Innovations like telematics, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), artificial intelligence, and real-time



monitoring are no longer futuristic concepts they are practical solutions available to us now.

"Let us remember that technology is a tool and it is human commitment that brings it to life. When drivers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to embrace technological solutions and adopt safe driving habits," he said.

The minister said that the retreat was an opportunity to recalibrate, innovate and re-dedicate ourselves to our shared mission; safer roads, efficient fleets and Sustainable transport system.

He encouraged participants to collaborate and share their experiences, challenges, and successes, and to explore innovative strategies that align with the shared mission of protecting lives and enhancing fleet performance.

Business moguls, Elumelu, Dangote, others join Tinubu, Macron in high-level meeting By Dave Oludare Oso

Prominent Nigerian business leaders, which included Aliko Dangote, Abdulsamad Rabiu, Tony Elumelu, and Jim Ovia, accompanied President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to a strategic meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palais des L'Élysée in Paris.

The gathering, part of the Nigeria-France Business Forum, focused on enhancing bilateral

cooperation and fostering investment opportunities in critical sectors such as agriculture, energy, solid minerals, and defence.

President Tinubu, in his remarks, highlighted the vast potential of Nigeria's agricultural and financial sectors, urging French investors to explore the country's opportunities. He emphasized that ensuring food security and sustainable development requires

significant investment and international collaboration.

The presence of Nigeria's top business magnates underscored the importance of private sector participation in fostering economic growth and strengthening international partnerships.

Details of the discussions and photos from the event reflect a robust engagement between both nations aimed at driving mutual economic prosperity.

Federal Mortgage Bank ex-CEO arraigned for diverting \$65m housing fund

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has arraigned Gimba Ya'u, the former chief executive officer of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN), for allegedly diverting a \$65 million housing fund.

The money was for the construction of 962 units of residential houses at the Goodluck Jonathan Legacy City in Kubwa, a satellite town in Abuja.

Ya'u was arraigned alongside Bola Ogunsola, ex-FMBN director, and Tarry Rufus, managing director of T-Brend Fortunes Nigeria Limited, before Justice James Omotosho of the federal high court in Abuja, on Thursday.

The ICPC, in a five-count charge marked FHC/ABJ/CR/333/24, accused the trio of contravening the public enterprises regulatory commission act and the money laundering (prevention and

prohibition) act, 2022.

The ICPC accused Ya'u of authorising the payment of N3.78 billion to Good Earth Power Nigeria Limited, a contractor "lacking execution capacity."

It added that the project remains incomplete "as of today thereby amounting to economic adversity for the bank and in violation of Section 68(1) of the public enterprise regulatory commission act, CAP P39, laws of the federation, 2004."

The commission alleged that the project's decade-long incompleteness has incurred substantial financial losses for the bank.

The ICPC also accused the defendants of securing a N14 billion loan from Ecobank Nigeria PLC in 2012 for the project and mismanaging the funds.

One of the charges also detailed how the



defendants allegedly converted N991 million into \$3.55 million and "handed it in cash to Jason Rosamond, a foreign associate," who is reportedly at large.

The defendants, however, pleaded not guilty when the charges were read to them.

Following their plea, Omotosho granted them bail on liberal terms and adjourned the trial to February 6, 2025.

NAFDAC issues alert on 'fake' India-made malaria drug

By Agency Reporter

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) issued a public health warning on Thursday evening regarding the circulation of a "counterfeit" malaria medication.

The drug, Combiart Dispersible Tablets (20/120 mg), "is manufactured by Strides Arcolab Limited, based in India. The product was discovered in FCT and Rivers State during surveillance activities," NAFDAC said in a series of posts on X.

Strides Arcolab Limited has not reacted to the development.

The drug contains zero active ingredients, rendering it ineffective in treating malaria, NAFDAC added.

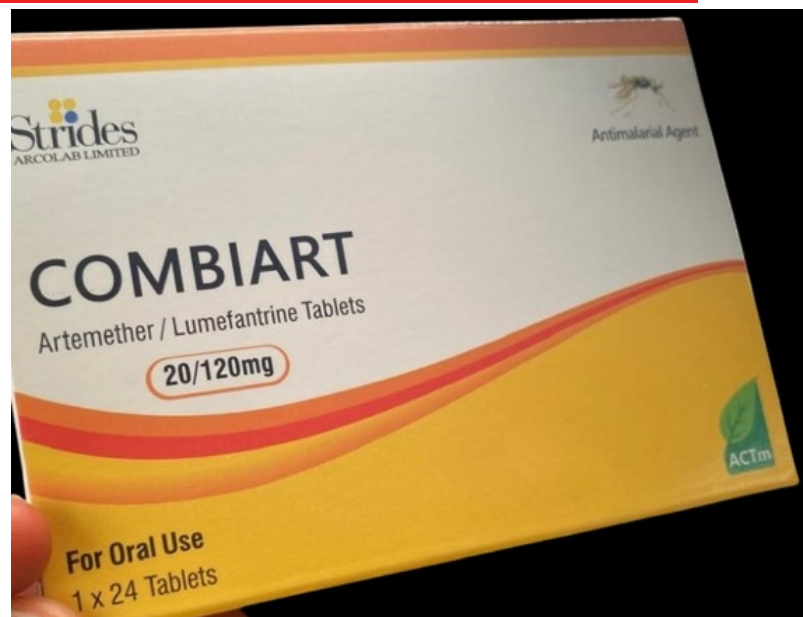
Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected mosquitoes, according to WHO.

The drug agency said the registration number on the drug packet was "incorrect" and that the drugs were manufactured between February and June 2023.

"Healthcare professionals and consumers are advised to report any suspicion of the sale of

substandard and falsified medicines or medical devices to the nearest NAFDAC office," NAFDAC urged on X.

The agency stressed the drug lacks proper quality control, potentially



leading to serious health consequences.

The drug also fails to effectively treat illnesses like malaria, allowing the disease to worsen, NAFDAC warned.

Police, immigration officers jailed 7 years for employment fraud

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two police officers and an immigration operative has been sentenced to seven years in prison over N1.6 million employment fraud by a federal high court in Gombe.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on Thursday, arraigned Yusuf Abdulkarim Bature and Musa Philip—the police officers—on a two-count charge of obtaining by false pretences and intent to defraud, and Nasiru Mohammed—the immigration personnel—on a one-count charge of obtaining by false pretences.

The charge sheet reads, “That you, Yusuf Abdulkarim Bature and Musa Philip, while being public officers with the Nigerian Police Force, sometime in 2022 in Gombe, within the Gombe Judicial division at the Federal High Court of Justice did with intent to defraud falsely obtained from one Asabe Hamed the total sum

of nine hundred and seventy thousand naira for the purpose of securing a job, a claim you knew to be false.

“That you, Nasiru Mohammed, sometime in 2022 in Gombe, within the jurisdiction of this honourable court, while being a staff of the Nigerian Immigration Service, did falsely obtained the sum of Six Hundred and Seventy Thousand Naira (N670,000) from Abdul Rahman Abubakar and Akwalo Adamu under the false pretence of securing them a job with the Nigerian Immigration Service, which you knew to be false, and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 1(1)(a) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 2006 and punishable under Section 1(3) of the same Act.”

The three defendants pleaded guilty to the charges.

After the guilty pleas, Tortema Joshua, the prosecution counsel, asked the court



to convict and sentence the defendants in line with the law. Babangida Mohammed and K.K. Jomoh, counsels to the three defendants, pleaded with the court to temper justice with mercy.

In his judgment, T.G. Ringing, the presiding judge, convicted and sentenced Bature, Philip, and Mohammed to seven years imprisonment apiece or a fine of N50,000 each.

The judge ordered the defendants to pay restitution of N1,640,000 to the petitioners and sign an undertaking to be of good behaviour.

NNPC refutes allegations on Port Harcourt Refinery operations

By Friday Omosola

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) has dismissed recent claims made by Timothy Mgbere, a self-proclaimed ‘community person’, regarding the state of operations at the Port Harcourt Refinery.

In a video circulating online, Mgbere alleged that the refinery’s much-publicised resumption of operations and recent Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) truck-out were fabricated.

In a press release issued on Friday, NNPC’s Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Olufemi Soneye labelled Mgbere’s assertions as a “crass display of ignorance,” clarifying operational facts to counter the misinformation.

NNPC revealed that the Old and New Port Harcourt Refineries have been seamlessly integrated, operating with shared utilities and a single terminal for product load-outs.

This integration ensures efficiency and operational cohesion, contrary to Mgbere’s claim that the refineries function separately.

The company confirmed that the refinery is operating at 90% of its 60,000 barrels-per-day capacity, producing 1.4 million litres of PMS daily, alongside diesel and kerosene.

NNPC emphasised that this achievement underscores its commitment to boosting local refining capacity and reducing dependency on fuel imports.

NNPC also countered claims of “old stock” being trucked out, explaining that products from the integrated refineries are loaded from a unified gantry.

Furthermore, Mgbere’s assertion that the refinery produces 1.4 million barrels per



day was dismissed as inaccurate, with the company clarifying the correct production figures.

NNPC urged the public to disregard misinformation, stating, “The operations at the Port Harcourt Refinery represent a significant step forward for Nigeria’s energy sector. We remain committed to transparency and delivering results that benefit all Nigerians.”

ASUU raises concerns over first-class degrees in private universities

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Professor Emmanuel Osodeke, President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), has voiced significant concerns over the growing trend of first-class degrees being awarded by private universities in Nigeria.

Speaking at a recent event in honour of Professor Andy Egwunyenga, the outgoing Vice-Chancellor of Delta State University (DELSU), Osodeke highlighted the implications of this development for the integrity of Nigeria's higher education system.

The ceremony, which marked the conclusion of Professor Egwunyenga's tenure at DELSU, was held on the university's campus in Abraka, located in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State.

In his address, Osodeke noted that while many primary and secondary schools in the country now produce students with impressive grades, their actual knowledge and understanding remain inadequate.

He warned that if public universities were to adopt similar practices without strict regulation, it could undermine the value of academic qualifications and erode genuine intellectual pursuits.

"Without careful oversight, we risk compromising the credibility of academic achievements in Nigeria. This could diminish the value of scholarly work and undermine the efforts of true scholars," Osodeke remarked.

The ASUU president also addressed the concerning trend of skilled professionals leaving Nigeria in search of better opportunities abroad. He linked this exodus to the country's structural failures and the declining standards in its educational institutions.

Osodeke lamented that despite past successes in the struggle for improved living conditions for academics, the current situation calls for renewed efforts to address the challenges facing the education sector.



"The fight for a decent standard of living for academics once yielded tangible results, but the present reality demands that we redouble our efforts to restore these standards. ASUU will continue to advocate for fairness and justice within the academic community," he stated.

Professor Omotoye Olorode, another prominent academic, also took the opportunity to criticise Nigeria's persistently low budgetary allocation to education. Despite international recommendations, the country's allocation has never exceeded seven per cent of the national budget, far below UNESCO's suggested 26 per cent threshold. Olorode described this as a reflection of stagnation in the nation's educational development.

The event also celebrated the legacy of Professor Andy Egwunyenga, who, during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor of DELSU, was credited with guiding the university through challenging periods. Dr. Paul Opone, ASUU's DELSU Chairman, lauded Egwunyenga for his leadership and his widespread respect

within the academic community.

"This is the first time ASUU has honoured a DELSU lecturer in this way. Professor Egwunyenga has far exceeded expectations, leaving behind a legacy that will be remembered for years to come," Opone said.

In response, Professor Egwunyenga expressed his gratitude for the recognition and shared that his approach to leadership had been shaped by the themes explored in Festus Iyayi's novel *Demons and Monsters*, which inspired him throughout his tenure.

The event not only marked the end of Egwunyenga's leadership at DELSU but also sparked vital discussions on the future of Nigeria's educational system, raising pertinent issues about the quality of degrees, the emigration of skilled professionals, and the persistent underfunding of education in the country.

Alleged N4m theft: Court arraigns banker, two others in Enugu

By Helen Okechukwu

A 26-year-old commercial banker, Ndulaka Okwudili, and two other suspects, Ifeanyi Nnamani and Philip Ozogwu, aged 44, have been arraigned in the Enugu North District Magistrate Court for the alleged theft of N4 million.

Okwudili and Nnamani were remanded in custody, and Ozogwu was granted bail. The case file has been forwarded to the Attorney General of Enugu State for legal review.

The three suspects were alleged to have conspired to withdraw huge sums of money after using the identity of an Australia-based Nigerian, Mba Ndukwe.

The force spokesperson, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Daniel Ndukwe, in a statement dated 28 November, disclosed the money was withdrawn from the victims account via fraudulent means.

According to Ndukwe, the management of the bank's branch, whose details were withheld, raised an alarm of fraud after observing the transaction activities made on the victim's account.

Details revealed from the Command's State Criminal Investigation Department's Crack Squad (D16) noted that Okwudili admitted to the crime.

Recounting the arrest, on October 2023, Okwudili said he found a bag containing various valuable items, including different SIM cards, at Nowas Junction in Trans-Ekulu in Enugu State.

The journey of withdrawing money from the victims account began in January 2024, according to Okwudili. After inserting the Airtel SIM card Okwudili found inside the bag, he received a large credit alert prompting further withdrawals from him and others by using a USSD banking code.

The primary suspect, Okwudili, was alerted in September 2024 to a "Post No Debit" status on the targeted



account.

He colluded with Nnamani, a 17-year bank employee, who advised him to alter his National Identification Number (NIN) details to match those of the legitimate account owner, Mba Ndukwe.

Okwudili paid NIN enrolment agent Ozogwu N40,000 to unlawfully modify his personal details, including his name and date of birth.

With the falsified NIN, Nnamani facilitated the fraudulent reactivation of the account, bypassing standard verification processes, including the BVN link.

Later, Okwudili withdrew N100,000, giving Nnamani N50,000 as compensation. He later withdrew ₦1.5

million, triggering alerts from the bank's Ohafia, Abia State branch, leading to the fraud's detection.

On October 18, 2024, Okwudili was arrested at the Enugu branch during another transaction attempt, alongside Nnamani. Ozogwu was apprehended shortly after.

Enugu State Police Commissioner Kanayo Uzuegbu commended the bank for exposing the fraud and urged the public to safeguard personal identification information to prevent similar crimes.

Share

Tinubu: Nigeria's reforms will transform Africa

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has reaffirmed his commitment to reforms aimed at repositioning Nigeria and Africa for global economic relevance, asserting that the continent's future is intertwined with transformative leadership.

He made this statement during a State Dinner organised in his honour by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palais des Elysée in Paris on Thursday night.

President Tinubu, accompanied by First Lady Oluremi Tinubu, top Nigerian officials, and prominent businessmen, expressed optimism that the partnership between Nigeria and France would yield enduring benefits for Africa.

He also praised Macron's continued interest in the continent's progress.

"It is a great honour for me to be here. Your warmth, commitment, and foresight in Africa are remarkable. Together, we must build a continent that resonates with its people, connecting them to a brighter future," Highlighting Nigeria's ongoing economic reforms, Tinubu assured that the country is determined to break from past inefficiencies.

"We have embarked on strong reforms with no looking back. These changes are in the interest of not just Nigeria but the entire African continent. We must embrace the future with courage and optimism," he said.

President Tinubu also recognised the role of French investors in Nigeria's economic sectors, including oil, gas, construction, and food security, while encouraging further collaboration in emerging industries like solid minerals, technology, and the creative sector.

In response, President Macron acknowledged Nigeria's pivotal role as a leader in Africa.

He described the country as a "formidable nation" and lauded its

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nce and intellect, citing global icons like Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka and Afrobeat pioneer Femi Kuti as testaments to Nigerian excellence.

"Nigeria is a beacon of hope and strength in Africa. You have overcome challenges to claim your liberty. Under President Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria is on a transformative mission," Macron stated.

He emphasised France's dedication to deepening its ties with Nigeria and supporting Africa's development, pledging continued investment in key sectors.

"Nigeria and France will forge a path forward, leading together," Macron affirmed.

The dinner also saw the presence of

notable figures, including the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and Nigerian business leaders such as Aliko Dangote, Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, and Tony Elumelu.

The visit underscored Nigeria's role as a critical player in Africa's economic and political future, with both leaders pledging to strengthen bilateral relations and foster progress across the continent.

TGLF, RBM boost health workers in anti-malaria fight

By Helen Okechukwu



The Geneva Learning Foundation (TGLF), in collaboration with the RBM Partnership to End Malaria (RBM), has announced its move to empower community health workers to tackle the malaria surge globally.

The initiative aims to improve the role of community health workers with a platform to impact knowledge of fighting against malaria in burden countries like Nigeria by using the approach Teach to Reach 11.

Also, the initiative seeks to ensure that local experiences influence global actions.

The programme, Teach to Reach 11, is scheduled to hold from December 5-6, 2024, and will focus on local health workers in malaria-prone areas.

In order to make sure that global goals align with local realities and

the experiences of frontline workers, pre-event insights will be used to help establish the agenda for a special malaria event on December 10, 2024.

Despite the fact that malaria is still a serious health concern, particularly in Africa and Asia, 80% of the experts involved operate at the district and facility levels. Regardless of advancements, health systems continue to face difficulties.

On 29 November, Vanguard reported that the partnership will prioritize gathering and promoting the perspectives of local health experts who assess the various factors affecting malaria in their regions.

The TGLF's Teach to Reach initiative, in partnership with the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, is connecting over 60,000 community-based health workers in a peer-learning network to combat malaria.

The focus is on empowering local health workers who understand the unique challenges in their

communities.

Michael Adelunle Charles, CEO of RBM Partnership, stated that to end malaria requires empowering frontline health workers.

Adding that the partnership ensures their insights shape global strategies toward elimination.

Reda Sadki, Executive Director of TGLF, added, "Health workers' leadership is vital for locally-driven, effective malaria responses. Together, we aim to amplify their knowledge and actions."

Public health specialist Obiageli Victoria Okeke from Abuja, Nigeria, emphasised the disease's impact, noting they lost her niece to malaria, describing malaria as a huge challenge.

What you need to know about scabies

By Helen Okechukwu



Scabies is a highly contagious skin infection that affects the human body with traces of rashes after being infected.

It is categorized as a skin condition caused by *Sarcoptes scabiei var hominis*, birthing discomfort, which leads to intense itching.

When this skin condition is left untreated, scabies can spread rapidly among individuals in close contact, making it crucial to understand its symptoms, transmission, treatment, and prevention.

In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that at least 200 million people suffer from scabies worldwide at any one time and 400 million people per year, leaving children the most vulnerable victims of scabies.

WHO estimated that 5 to 50% of children in underdeveloped areas are affected by scabies and can be transmitted in hot, tropical countries and in areas of high population density.

Scabies in 2017 was added to Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by the WHO.

Causes of scabies

Scabies occurs when the female mite burrows into the skin to lay eggs. This triggers an allergic reaction that causes the hallmark itching and inflammation. The mites are so small that they are nearly impossible to see with the naked eye, but their presence is enough to wreak havoc on the skin.

How Do Scabies Spread?

Scabies is primarily spread through prolonged skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. This makes it particularly common in crowded living conditions, such as families or households, schools and daycare centres, nursing homes, and prisons.

Symptoms of Scabies

The signs of scabies usually appear within three to six weeks after initial exposure. Key symptoms include: intense itching, especially at night. Rashes are usually small, red bumps or blisters that often form in a line or track, and burrow marks.

Commonly affected areas include: between the fingers, wrists, and elbows, armpits, around the waist and groin, and on the buttocks and thighs.

For infants and young children, scabies may also appear on the scalp, face, neck, palms, and soles.

Home Care and Management

In addition to medical treatment,

proper hygiene and cleaning are essential to eliminate mites.

Prevention Tips

To prevent scabies, one needs to follow these steps critically:

Avoid prolonged physical contact with infected individuals.

Do not share personal items like towels, bedding, or clothes.

Practice good hygiene and maintain a clean environment.

When to Seek Medical Attention

It is advisable to seek medical assistance immediately whenever you or a family member experiences persistent itching or rash.

Early diagnosis and treatment are critical to prevent complications such as bacterial skin infections caused by excessive scratching.

However, scabies is a treatable condition, but its highly contagious nature makes awareness and prompt action vital. With proper medical care, hygiene practices, and preventive measures, you can effectively manage and stop the spread of this skin infection.

I fought for my life, actress Omotola Jalade says after life-saving surgery

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

After surviving a life-threatening health scare, legendary Nigerian actress, Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, has given thanks to God for saving her life.

Fondly called Omosexy, the delectable actress detailed how she underwent emergency surgery after enduring severe back and chest pain, persistent vomiting, and debilitating stomach discomfort in a lengthy post on Instagram.

The actress revealed that her ordeal began while she was busy working on her films and attending the Academy Voting Members' screening of *Gladiator II*.

She said despite her enthusiasm for the event, she struggled to remain upright during the screening as her symptoms worsened.

The actress, who described her recovery as a "fight for her life," used the moment to reflect on the importance of gratitude and the fragility of life.

Sharing a video, she wrote, "Happy thanksgiving! please join me as I thank God for life and good health. (so my first caption didn't post and this is another not as passionate as the first one) arghhh.

"Have you been told by a doctor 'There's nothing more we can do at this time'? And you still feel like you're dying? Aread

"As you know by now, I had been getting my films ready and after the day's edit, I proceeded for the Academy Voting Member's viewing of the *Gladiator II* ... but all through the viewing, I could not sit up... you see, I had been rushed to the ER twice that week already for back – chest pains that would come intensely and leave the next day! The doctors were checking for my now Hbp and intense acid reflux ! On the second admission, the doctor gave all the drips, blood work and sent me home to manage? Luckily it left ...

"However ... after the movie, I knew there would be no talks with Denzel



or Ridley Scott today. I needed to go! I threw up all night till there was nothing to throw up anymore. By morning, the most filapidating stomach pain started and so I was rushed again to emergency... the third time! This time, I was wheeled in, straight for a CT scan, ultrasound and the MRI. Then the doctor came in and said you have to go in immediately for surgery! ... to remove your ball-gladder!!! It was so dilated, the doctors wandered how I was not in more pain.

More pain????!

"So the fight for my life began and today, I am returning to give all the glory to God. So on this day, whether you're in the US or not, there's so much to thank God for, take some time to join in and give thanks. Not only the gift of life, but the gift of good health. The gift of a complete body or a sane mind to even dream of a better day."

Jerry Eze forgives mom's attacker

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Jerry Eze Recounts Forgiveness Tale, Inspires Many

Jerry Eze shares a personal story of forgiving a woman from his past who caused his family pain, sparking discussions on the power of forgiveness.

Eze opened his story by describing a harrowing childhood memory. He recalled witnessing this woman violently assault his late mother. "She threw my mum on the floor and hit her so hard," Eze wrote. He explained how that moment left him scarred for years. As a child, the incident not only caused him emotional distress but also shaped his understanding of justice and pain.

Years later, the same woman approached him not as an antagonist, but as a seeker of help and prayer. She had been moved by Eze's popular prayer platform, the New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations (NSPPD). Through this program, she experienced a personal transformation and sought his guidance.

Eze admitted that the meeting stirred old emotions. "Anyone who knows me would know how much I adore my mum," he shared. Confronting the woman who had once caused his family harm could have reignited bitterness. However, Eze chose a different path he forgave her.

He detailed the moment of reconciliation. "It's amazing how I extended help to her, and she broke down in tears," he wrote. Both of them remembered the painful event, but Eze emphasized that forgiveness had already taken root in his heart. He had made peace with the past, allowing him to assist her sincerely.

This act of grace, he explained, was not just about offering aid to someone in need. It was about the liberating power of forgiveness. "Forgiveness is so liberating," Eze declared. He acknowledged the emotional difficulty of letting go but encouraged his followers to take that step, emphasizing that forgiveness is a



divine principle.

In his post, Eze urged his audience to reflect on their own lives and relationships. "I know it hurts," he wrote, "but please forgive!" He expressed hope that the Holy Spirit would empower others to release their pain and forgive, as God has forgiven humanity.

The message struck a chord with many. Eze's story is not just a testament to his faith but also a powerful reminder of the human capacity for compassion. Forgiveness, as he demonstrated, is not about forgetting the wrongs done. It's about breaking free from the chains of resentment and allowing healing to take place.

Pastor Jerry Eze

Forgiveness can often feel impossible, especially when the wounds are deep. Yet, Jerry Eze's story highlights its transformative potential. By letting go of anger and embracing reconciliation, people can experience profound emotional and spiritual freedom. His example serves as a beacon for those struggling to overcome past grievances.

Jerry Eze's platform, the NSPPD, has been a source of hope and inspiration for millions worldwide. Known for its fervent prayer sessions and impactful testimonies, it has become a hub for those seeking divine intervention in their lives. This story adds another layer to his ministry, showcasing not just his faith but also his humanity.

The incident also underscores the complex nature of forgiveness. It is rarely straightforward and often requires immense courage. His ability to confront his trauma and extend grace to someone who wronged him is a testament to his character and spiritual growth.

As the story gained traction, many followers took to social media to share their thoughts. Some praised him for his humility and strength, while others reflected on their own struggles with forgiveness. The post became a rallying cry for those seeking emotional release and a deeper connection with their faith.

Zlatan, Olamide drop new song

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Zlatan and Olamide Drop Electrifying Single “Gimme Your Love”

Zlatan and Olamide reunite for “Gimme Your Love,” a fiery new single sparking excitement and rekindling their iconic chemistry from seven years ago.

The collaboration is not just another entry in their respective discographies—it’s a statement. A statement of growth, artistry, and the power of teamwork. With this track, they demonstrate why they remain at the forefront of the industry.

A perfect fusion of street and style Gimme Your Love stands out for its unique sound. It’s a seamless blend of raw street energy and sleek, modern production. The beat, pulsating yet refined, hooks listeners from the very first second. Zlatan’s high-energy delivery pairs perfectly with Olamide’s sharp, evocative lyricism. Together, they create a song that feels both nostalgic and cutting-edge.

Fans who have followed these artists over the years will recognize echoes of their early work. At the same time, Gimme Your Love is fresh proof of how far they’ve come. The production, polished yet gritty, bridges old-school vibes with new-school innovation, giving the track universal appeal.

Chemistry that keeps delivering

This is not the first time Zlatan and Olamide have teamed up, but it’s clear their connection only grows stronger. Their musical partnership dates back to Zlatan’s breakout moment in 2016 when Olamide played a key role in propelling him into the spotlight. Since then, their paths have intertwined, and each collaboration has been a testament to their shared vision and respect for one another’s craft.

The synergy between them is undeniable. Zlatan’s energetic presence, characterized by his signature ad-libs and street-smart persona, meshes seamlessly with Olamide’s razor-sharp delivery and poetic insight. It’s a partnership that

pushes boundaries while staying true to their roots. Track made for the dance floor

Gimme Your Love is not just a song—it’s an experience. With its infectious rhythm and sing-along chorus, it’s poised to dominate airwaves and playlists alike. Clubs, parties, and events will undoubtedly feel its impact as it becomes a go-to anthem for celebration.

Listeners can expect a track that doesn’t just entertain but also resonates. It’s a song that invites movement, sparks joy, and reminds audiences why music is such a powerful force.

Growth and evolution

Both Zlatan and Olamide have grown significantly as artists. This track is a reflection of their journey. Zlatan, known for his streetwise swagger and knack for crafting anthems, brings a maturity to this release that shows his evolution. Olamide, a consistent force in the industry, proves once again why he is regarded as a master of reinvention.

Their ability to balance authenticity with innovation is evident throughout Gimme Your Love. The track is a nod to their past while also looking forward, signaling that their best days might still be ahead.

Zlatan and Olamide

Zlatan and Olamide

Fans Reaction

Fans have taken to social media to express their excitement about the collaboration. Comments flood platforms like Twitter and Instagram, with many calling the track an instant classic. One fan wrote, “This is the Zlatan and Olamide we’ve been waiting for! Pure fire!” Another added, “The chemistry is unmatched. They’ve done it again!”

Road ahead

While Gimme Your Love is already making waves, it’s clear this is just the beginning of a new chapter for both artists. If this single is any indication,



listeners can expect more groundbreaking collaborations in the future.

For Zlatan and Olamide, this track isn’t just about making music it’s about creating moments. Moments that fans will remember, dance to, and cherish for years to come.

Conclusion

With Gimme Your Love, Zlatan and Olamide prove why they are two of the most celebrated figures in Nigerian music. The song captures their essence energetic, innovative, and undeniably authentic.

As the single continues to gain traction, one thing is clear: this collaboration is more than a hit. It’s a reminder of the magic that happens when two artists, at the top of their game, come together. If you haven’t hit play yet, now is the time. This is one track you don’t want to miss.

Read Also: Shallipopi describes Olamide ‘king of Nigerian street music’

D’banj, Yemi Alade, Olamide set to perform at the African Military Games ceremony

Bruce Willis unites with daughters Tallulah, Scout during family's Thanksgiving celebration

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Bruce Willis' daughters Scout and Tallulah Willis celebrated Thanksgiving by spending time with their father at home.

The "Die Hard" star's daughters cozied up to their dad for a rare family photo shared via a joint Instagram post on Thursday.

"Grateful," they captioned the carousel of snapshots with the 69-year-old actor.

Bruce Willis posed with daughters Scout and Tallulah Willis for a Thanksgiving family photo shared via Instagram. Instagram/buuski

His daughters, whom he shares with ex-wife, Demi Moore, presented him with a plaque that read "Best Dad Ever."

In the post, Tallulah, 30, sweetly held onto Bruce's ear while Scout, 33, placed her hand on her dad's chest. The second slide featured Scout and Bruce putting their foreheads against each other's and sharing a sweet embrace.

The Willis girls also presented Bruce with a special plaque for the holiday that read, "Best Dad Ever."

Although Bruce and Moore ended their marriage nearly 30 years ago, they continue to spend time together with their blended family.

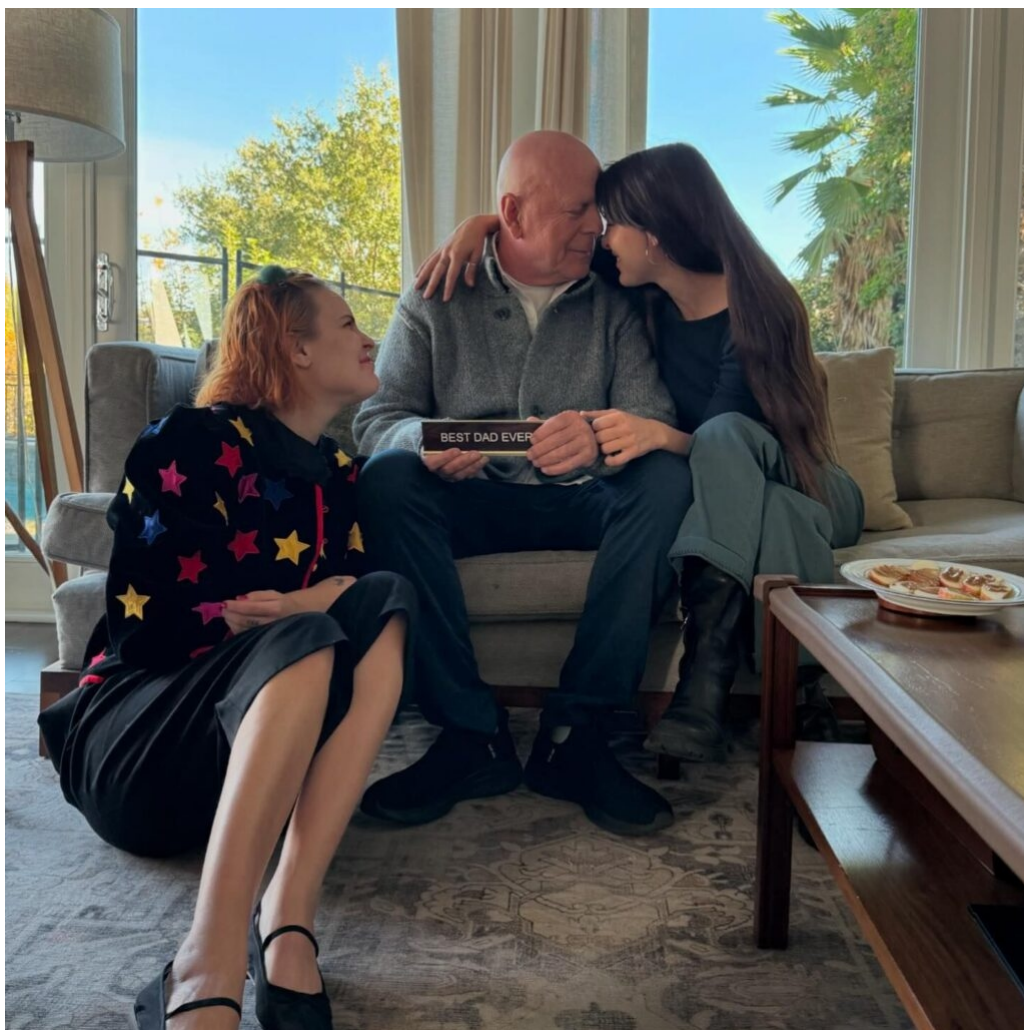
It's unclear whether or not Rumer Willis, 36, was in attendance as she was not pictured in her sisters' post. Bruce shares his three eldest daughters with ex-wife Demi Moore.

Shortly after Bruce and Moore's daughters shared the post with their followers, many fans took to the comments section to react to the rare family snap.

"Happy Thanksgiving, ladies! You are both amazing daughters! I'm sure his heart is full! ❤️," one admirer gushed.

"Pure love. Holding your precious family in light and love," a second fan penned under the post.

Even Nicky Hilton chimed in, leaving a red heart emoji for the Golden



Globe winner and his family.

Bruce's holiday with his loved ones comes amid his ongoing frontotemporal dementia and aphasia diagnosis, which his family revealed in March 2022.

His wife, Emma Heming Willis — whom he married in 2009 — recently opened up about his condition during an interview with Town & Country Magazine.

"Finally getting to a diagnosis was key so that I could learn what frontotemporal dementia is and I could educate our children," she explained in October.

The couple share two daughters, Mabel, 12, and Evelyn, 10. Emma admitted to the outlet that she is not "trying to shield" them from Bruce's declining health.

"I've never tried to sugarcoat anything for them. They've grown up with Bruce declining over the years," the 46-year-

old shared.

Emma explained that her husband was initially diagnosed with aphasia before he was eventually diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia (FTD).

FTD is a condition that affects the "frontal and temporal lobes of the brain," and can affect one's ability to write, speak, and understand both verbal and written language, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Amid Bruce's health condition — which resulted in his retirement from acting — his family has been by his side and continuously showing their support.

Cucumbers recalled across U.S., Canada over salmonella contamination

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



An Arizona produce company is recalling whole cucumbers distributed in 26 states and Canada because they could contain salmonella.

In a filing posted by the Food and Drug Administration on Thursday, SunFed said the recalled cucumbers were sold between Oct. 12 and Nov. 26 and are being pulled from store shelves over possible contamination by the bacteria. Salmonella can cause fatal infections in young children, elderly people or other individuals with weakened immune systems.

The recall applies to all sizes of SunFed whole, fresh cucumbers. The produce came packaged in bulk cardboard containers with a "SunFed" label, or could also have been displayed in a generic white box or black plastic grate. A sticker on such containers would indicate the cucumbers' grower's name, the company said.

The produce was shipped to

customers in the following states: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. Some of the recalled cucumbers also could have ended up at retail outlets beyond those states.

The cucumbers were also sold in the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Calgary, Ontario and Saskatchewan.

Grower's labels on product could indicate it's under recall, SunFed said. SunFed labels on containers indicate the cucumbers under recall.

Consumer are urged to check their own produce against images of the potentially affected products and to refrain from consuming or distributing suspect cucumbers. Recalled products should be destroyed, SunFed said.

"As soon as we learned of this issue,

we immediately acted to protect consumers. We are working closely with authorities and the implicated ranch to determine the possible cause," SunFed President Craig Slate said in a statement.

Consumers who may have bought the recalled products or who have questions can contact SunFed's recall hotline at (888) 542-5849, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Earlier this year, an outbreak of salmonella linked to recalled cucumbers from two Florida growers sickened at least 449 people in 31 states and the District of Columbia.

Salmonella bacteria cause about 1.3 million infections, 26,500 hospitalizations and 420 deaths in the U.S. every year, with food being the source for most of the illnesses, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Trump tariffs threats: Dire consequences for both countries – Mexican President

By Dave Oludare Oso

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has warned U.S. President-elect Donald Trump of dire economic consequences for both countries from tariffs and suggested possible retaliation following his threat of 25% tariffs on Mexico and Canada.

Retaliation from Mexico

“One tariff will follow another in response and so on, until we put our common businesses at risk,” Sheinbaum said in a letter to Trump, which she read aloud in a press conference, warning that tariffs would cause inflation and job losses in both countries.

Why Trump wants to impose tariffs

Trump justified the imposition of new tariffs as a way to make the southern neighbor pay for the entry of drugs and the “invasion” of migrants into the United States.

Mexico’s efforts to stop migration

However, according to Sheinbaum, since December of last year, migration entering through the US border has been reduced by 75%, she recalled according to EL PAÍS.

Willingness to fight the fentanyl epidemic in the US

Moreover, she said her administration had shown Mexico’s willingness to help fight the fentanyl epidemic in the US and noted that criminal groups in Mexico were still receiving guns from their northern neighbor.

“The crime is responding to the demand in your country”

Hinting at the United State’s responsibility in the fentanyl epidemic she wrote: “We do not produce weapons, we do not consume synthetic drugs. Unfortunately what we do have is



the people who are being killed by the crime that is responding to the demand in your country.”

Cooperation and mutual understanding needed

In the letter she intends to send to Trump, she also wrote that “threats and tariffs are not the way to address the migration phenomenon or drug use in the United States,” saying that the “major challenges require cooperation and mutual understanding,” CNN reported.

She ants to address the root causes of migration

The president insisted that her policy would be to address the root causes of migration. In fact, at the last G20 meeting, which was held recently in Brazil, she asked that a percentage of what is spent on wars be devoted to addressing the needs of poor countries.

Loss of jobs in the automotive industry

Sheinbaum also noted that binational companies exporting from Mexico to the United States, such as General Motors or Ford Motor Company, will be vulnerable to such taxes and pointed out that the main risk will be the loss of jobs.

Economic impacts in the United States

The president also reported that Mexico’s Secretary of Economy, Marcelo Ebrard, will participate in the country’s morning conference to explain the economic impacts on the United States if the taxes on Mexico are implemented.

Trump’s tariffs could violate trade treaty

According to the BBC, Sheinbaum also called for respect for what was established in the trade agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada, signed in 2020, and that is set to be reviewed in 2026.

The main trading partners of the US

Canada, Mexico and China (all countries on which Trump has promised to raise tariffs) are, in that order, the main trading partners of the United States.

Over a trillion dollars in imports
In 2023, US imports from these three countries amounted to almost 1.5 trillion dollars, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis in Washington.

Remains of WWII airman from Tennessee identified 80 years after plane shot down

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The remains of a World War II airman were identified 80 years after his plane was shot down during a bombing mission in Germany, military officials said this week.

In the spring of 1944, U.S. Army Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sanford G. Roy, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was assigned to the 732nd Bombardment Squadron in the European Theater, according to a news release from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Roy and several other airmen were aboard the B-24H Liberator "Little Joe" on a bombing mission to Brunswick, Germany on April 8. The plane was shot down by German forces and other airmen flying near the aircraft did not report seeing any crew members exiting "Little Joe" before it crashed. His name was engraved on the Walls of the Missing at the Netherlands American Cemetery.

Though military members saw the incident, the crash site could not be located during the war. The remains of Roy and eight other crew members were listed as unaccounted for after the war.

In 1946, the American Graves Registration Command began investigating bomber losses like the one that Roy died in in the region. Those efforts still failed to find any crash or burial sites associated with the crew of Little Joe.

The crew of Little Joe, with Sanford G. Roy circled in red.

An independent research group finally shed new insight into the crash in 2015. The Missing Allied Air Crew Research Team contacted historians from the DPAA to inform them of a possible crash site near Wistedt, Germany.

The DPAA conducted interviews with local residents, which led to the realization that there had been two crash sites, but only one had been examined and had remains recovered from it during the war.

DPAA investigators found the second



crash site and recovered various pieces of wreckage and possible human remains. Those remains were transferred to the DPAA's laboratory, but no identifications could be made.

Between 2021 and 2023, the agency conducted more research at the crash site, including excavation and recovery of more remains. By the end of November 2023, all evidence from the crash site had been transferred to the DPAA laboratory. Scientists used anthropological and dental analysis, as well as DNA analysis, to identify the remains. One set of remains from the crash site were identified as those of Staff Sergeant Ralph L. Mourer. Another set of remains

was identified as Roy's.

Roy's surviving family has been informed of his identification. He will be buried in his hometown on April 8, 2025, the 81st anniversary of his loss. A rosette has been carved next to his name on the Walls of the Missing to indicate that he has been identified.



Nigeria, France forge strategic partnership as Zenith Bank opens Paris branch

By Friday Omosola



Nigeria and France have entered into a strategic partnership to bolster critical infrastructure and ensure food security through the signing of two key letters of intent.

President Bola Tinubu's spokesperson, Bayo Onanuga in a statement on Friday said the collaboration was formalised during the President's state visit to Paris, where he met with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palais des Elysée.

The agreements, signed by top government officials and business leaders, promise over €300 million in financial and technical assistance spread across Nigeria's geopolitical zones.

The focus areas include healthcare, transportation, renewable energy, agriculture, and human capital development.

During the visit, President Tinubu and President Macron witnessed a landmark moment as the United Bank for Africa (UBA) took its

first step into France.

UBA Group Chairman Tony Elumelu and French Economy Minister Antoine Armand formalized the agreement to establish UBA's Paris operations.

Zenith Bank also inaugurated its services in Paris, marking another milestone in Nigerian-French financial ties.

Nigeria's Minister of Finance, Wale Edun, and Antoine Armand signed the primary Letter of Intent, committing both nations to collaborate on critical infrastructure projects.

These include urban development, transportation networks, and renewable energy initiatives. The agreement also aims to enhance cross-border trade and remove fiscal barriers while upholding labour rights.

A second letter of intent was signed between Minister Edun and the Chief Executive Officer of the French Development Agency (AFD), Remi Rioux.

The AFD pledged long-term support

for President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, focusing on energy access, sustainable agriculture, and STEM education.

Commitments were made to improve agro-logistics hubs and support Nigeria's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in high-impact sectors.

The agreements underscore a shared commitment to fostering socio-economic growth, advancing sustainable agriculture, and enhancing trade relations.

Both nations emphasised the importance of implementing these projects efficiently to maximize impact.

With this development, the presence of Nigerian banks like Zenith and UBA in Paris signals stronger economic ties and increased opportunities for cross-border financial services.

Chad cuts military ties with France to 'assert full sovereignty' **By Agency Reporter**

Chad has ended an agreement with France aimed at strengthening cooperation in security and defence between the two nations.

"The Government of the Republic of Chad informs national and international opinion of its decision to terminate the defence cooperation agreement signed with the French Republic," a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Thursday said.

The statement, signed by Foreign Minister Abderaman Koulamallah, said that after decades of independence, it is time for the country to "assert its full sovereignty and to redefine its strategic partnerships according to national priorities."

It said the decision to terminate the agreement, which was revised in September 2019, was in no way

indicative of a deterioration of the historical relations and bonds of friendship between the two nations.

OFFICIAL TALKS

Chad "remains determined to maintain constructive relations with France in other areas of common interest, for the benefit of both peoples."

The authorities promised to respect the modalities provided for in the provisions of the agreement, including the notice period, and to collaborate with French authorities to ensure a smooth transition.

The decision was announced as French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot visited the West African country.

Barrot, who arrived in the capital N'Djamena on Wednesday, held talks with Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Deby on Thursday.

SUDAN CONFLICT

Their discussions focused in particular



on Sudan's war, the humanitarian emergency in the eastern Chad resulting from an influx of Sudanese refugees fleeing the war, and prospects for bilateral cooperation, the president's office said in a statement.

Gulf of Guinea nations ready to tackle insecurity in maritime environment – CNS **By Agency Reporter**

The Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Adm. Emmanuel Ogalla, has expressed optimism that the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) nations are ready to work together to tackle insecurity in the region.

Ogalla disclosed this at the end of the 8th edition of the Symposium of Heads of Navies and Coastguards in the GoG, on maritime environment in Abuja.

The symposium with the theme "Maritime Security and Sustainable Development in the Gulf of Guinea" is hosted by the Nigerian Navy in partnership with the European Union (EU) and the French Navy.

He said the meeting had recorded tremendous success, adding that the 8th edition recorded the largest attendance since the history of the symposium.

According to him, all the deliberations they had are quite

informative.

"And we all had a common understanding of the problem, and what the solution should be.

"The takeaway here is that the Gulf of Guinea nations are ready to work together to address issues of insecurity in our maritime environment," he said.

The CNS disclosed that all the heads of navies and coastguards in attendance had unified resolutions that reflected genuine commitment, with non-consensus issues excluded to maintain alignment.

He expressed optimism that nations would continue implementing the agreed resolutions in their respective countries.

He added that the next meeting, scheduled in Senegal in 2025, aims to evaluate progress on current resolutions, address emerging issues, and potentially consolidate ongoing efforts.

This collaborative approach, according to him, signals a proactive stance toward dynamic maritime security challenges.



Vice Admiral EI OGALLA AM 055 (ret) (N) 88c MSc
CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF

Heads of navies from more than 30 nations as well as representatives of regional organisations and other partners, participated in the symposium.

Chelsea not in Premier League title race – Maresca

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Enzo Maresca does not believe his Chelsea side are in the Premier League title race despite an impressive start to the season in his first campaign at Stamford Bridge.

Victory over Aston Villa on Sunday would be a seventh in 13 league games under the Italian, who was appointed as Mauricio Pochettino's successor in June.

Ahead of the weekend action, Chelsea were third in the table, level on 22 points with Arsenal and Brighton, a point behind Manchester City and nine points adrift of leaders Liverpool.

Chelsea are in the hunt to return to the Champions League after two seasons away and Maresca has fashioned an

effective team from a bloated squad.

But the Italian, 44, was keen to play down suggestions that the Blues could be the team to end Manchester City's four-year title streak this season.

"No," he said when asked whether they were in the title race. "I said many times I didn't like the pressure. I didn't like to say 'Yes we are there', but we are not there.

"Arsenal are ahead of us, City is ahead of us, Liverpool showing they are ahead of us. The important thing is we improve game after game and then we will see.

"For me, it is not about points or the table, it is about the process

and the programme. Five years together (Arsenal), nine together (City). Liverpool is different but they didn't make too many changes from before. It's not about the points difference on the table, it is about the time together."

Liverpool and City are meeting on Sunday, giving Chelsea the chance to make up ground on the teams above them but Maresca urged caution.

"You have to be realistic," said Maresca. "You can see the difference between us and the rest in this moment. It doesn't mean we are not going to compete and win games. We will do that to the end. The main focus has to be the feeling we are improving game after game."

Halep criticizes “different approaches” after Swiatek’s one-month doping ban

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Simona Halep, the two-time Grand Slam champion, has expressed strong dissatisfaction with the handling of doping cases in tennis, following Iga Swiatek’s recent one-month suspension. The controversy centers around the differing treatment of doping violations by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), which Halep believes unfairly targets her while offering more lenient treatment to others.

On Thursday, the ITIA announced that Swiatek, the world number two, had tested positive for trimetazidine (TMZ), a banned heart medication, after providing an out-of-competition sample in August 2024. Despite the violation, the ITIA accepted that Swiatek’s contamination was unintentional, resulting from a regulated melatonin supplement, which she had been using to alleviate jet lag and sleep problems. As a result, the five-time major winner received a one-month ban. Halep, whose career has been marred by doping controversies in recent years, took to social media to voice her concerns. She questioned why there is such a “big difference” in the way the ITIA handles doping cases, pointing out that the organization took a much harsher stance on her own violations.

“I stand and ask myself, why is there such a big difference in treatment and judgment?” Halep wrote on Instagram. “It can only be bad will from ITIA, the organization that has done absolutely everything to destroy me despite the evidence.”

Halep, who was provisionally suspended in October 2022 after testing positive for



roxadustat, an anti-anaemia drug, argued that her case was unfairly handled. She was banned for four years but had her suspension reduced to nine months following an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Halep has consistently maintained her innocence, claiming that the contamination came from a supplement she took unknowingly. In her Instagram post, Halep reflected on the personal toll the suspension took on her career, describing the emotional and mental strain of having her reputation questioned. “I lost two years of my career, I lost many nights when I couldn’t sleep, thoughts, anxiety, questions without answers,” she shared.

Swiatek’s case has raised questions

within the tennis community, particularly due to the contrasting treatments of similar situations. While Swiatek’s contamination came from a regulated medication, Halep’s violation involved a supplement, which is generally viewed with greater suspicion in anti-doping protocols.

The ITIA has defended its actions, stating that “no two cases are the same” and that each case is handled based on its specific circumstances. A spokesperson for the organization told BBC Sport that the product involved in Swiatek’s case was a regulated medication, not a supplement, which they believe is an important distinction.

Lampard faces high stakes at Coventry: A defining moment in his managerial career

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Frank Lampard's return to management with Coventry City marks a pivotal moment in his career after a series of mixed fortunes. Following an unsuccessful second spell at Chelsea, which ended in January 2021, Lampard now takes charge of Coventry with high expectations to rebuild his reputation.

Lampard replaces the beloved Mark Robins, whose near-miss in the 2023 play-off final and FA Cup heroics left a strong legacy. Coventry's current position in 17th place in the Championship, just above the relegation zone, makes Lampard's task difficult but not impossible. The club's owner, Doug King, has placed immense trust in Lampard, believing his experience in the Premier League can propel the Sky Blues back into the top flight.

Lampard's previous managerial stints at



Derby, Chelsea, and Everton have been a mixed bag. While he guided Derby to the 2019 play-off final and helped Chelsea qualify for the Champions League, his tenure at Everton ended in relegation battles and his second spell at Chelsea was a failed interim stint. Nevertheless, Lampard remains determined to prove his critics wrong and make a success of his latest challenge.

With a talented but inconsistent squad, Lampard will be expected to extract the best from players like Ellis Simms and Brandon Thomas-Asante, as well as improve Coventry's leaky defense. The task ahead is challenging, but Lampard's ambition and the faith of Coventry's ownership give him a strong platform to rebuild his managerial career.

Haaland and Rodri nominated for 2024 Fifa best men's award

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Manchester City stars Erling Haaland and Rodri have earned nominations for the 2024 FIFA Best Men's Player Award, marking the Premier League's sole representation. The duo's inclusion follows City's historic achievement of winning four consecutive league titles, a first in English football.

Rodri, who claimed the 2023 Ballon d'Or, is considered a leading contender for the prestigious award, alongside Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr., the runner-up in October's Ballon d'Or voting. Jude Bellingham, the third-place finisher, is also a strong contender and could become the first Englishman to win the FIFA Best award.

Other notable nominees for the prize

include Kylian Mbappé (Paris Saint-Germain), Lionel Messi (Inter Miami), and Real Madrid's Dani Carvajal, Federico Valverde, and Toni Kroos. Haaland's inclusion further solidifies his standing after a prolific season with City, where he played a key role in their dominance.

In the coaching category, Pep Guardiola, who led City to a historic treble in 2023, is again nominated, alongside notable figures like Carlo Ancelotti (Real Madrid) and Lionel Scaloni (Argentina).

The award winner will be determined by a combination of votes from national team captains, coaches, media representatives, and fans.

Men's Player Nominees

Erling Haaland (Norway/Manchester City)

Rodri (Spain/Manchester City)

Jude Bellingham (England/Real Madrid)

Vinicius Jr (Brazil/Real Madrid)

Lionel Messi (Argentina/Inter Miami)

Men's Coach Nominees

Pep Guardiola (Manchester City)

Carlo Ancelotti (Real Madrid)

Xabi Alonso (Bayer Leverkusen)

Goalkeeper Nominees

Ederson (Brazil/Manchester City)

David Raya (Spain/Arsenal)

Emiliano Martinez (Argentina/Aston Villa)

Is Liverpool clash make-or-break for Manchester City?

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Manchester City faces a defining moment in their season as they prepare to take on Premier League leaders Liverpool at Anfield on Sunday. With Pep Guardiola's side enduring their worst form in years, the stakes could not be higher.

Winless in their last five games across all competitions, City sits eight points behind Liverpool in the title race. A defeat could widen the gap to a daunting 11 points, leaving Guardiola's treble-winning side at risk of falling out of contention for the Premier League crown.

City's Unprecedented Struggles

For a club accustomed to dominance, the current downturn is unfamiliar territory. Since their last victory—a 1-0 win over Southampton more than a month ago—City has suffered three consecutive Premier League losses, exited the EFL Cup, and stumbled in the Champions League.

Adding to the woes are injuries to key players like Kevin De Bruyne, Rodri, Ruben Dias, and John Stones, exposing vulnerabilities in both attack and defense. The once-formidable City defense has conceded two or more goals in six consecutive matches for the first time since 1963.

The Weight of History

Statistically, City's predicament looks grim. No Premier League champion has ever recovered from an 11-point deficit to win the title, and City themselves have never overturned such a gap. However, Guardiola's teams are known for their resilience; in four of their six title-winning campaigns under him, they have



clawed back deficits of eight points or more.

What the Pundits Say

The importance of Sunday's clash is not lost on analysts. Former Everton midfielder Leon Osman pointed to City's defensive frailties, saying: "They concede one, and it feels like the doors open. It's a mental issue as much as tactical."

Chris Sutton, the former Blackburn striker, described City as "fragile" and lacking belief, while Don Hutchison declared: "If they lose at Anfield, there is no way back."

Yet, hope remains. Glenn Murray, formerly of Brighton, believes a victory at Anfield could reignite City's season:

"If they win, they can string a run of results together and turn their form around."

The Guardiola Factor

Guardiola, who recently extended his contract, has turned City into a winning machine over the past eight years. However, this challenge could be one of his toughest yet. If City triumph at Anfield, it could be the turning point they need. If they falter, it might signal the end of their title hopes for this season.

For Manchester City, the Liverpool match isn't just another game—it's a test of their resolve, mentality, and championship mettle. All eyes will be on Anfield this Sunday to see if Guardiola's men can rise to the occasion.