

Tariff hike: Hard times Pg 2
await Nigerians as telcos
unveil costlier data plans

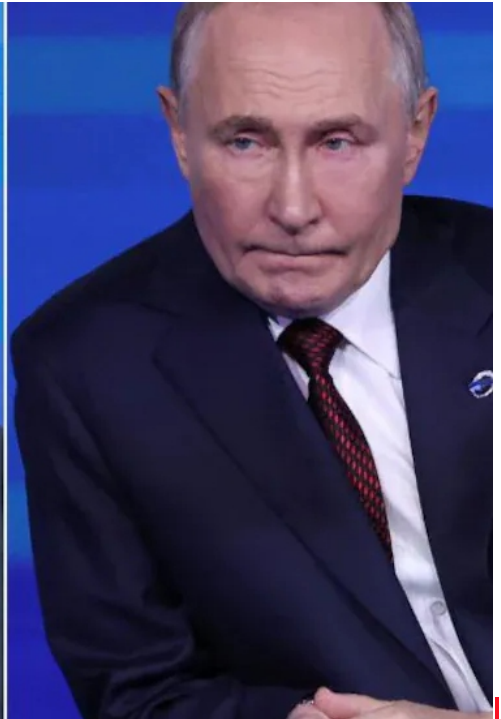
CBN moves against
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The New Daily Prime

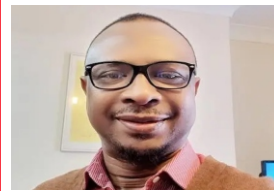
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operatives comb forests for
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political norms, Pg 22
left America divided

WORLD

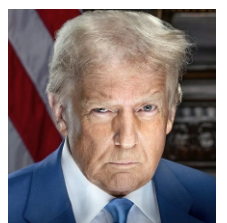
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Tariff hike: Hard times await Nigerians as telcos unveil costlier data plans

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following the approval of a 50% telecom tariff hike by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), telecommunication companies (telcos) in the country have introduced revised data prices.

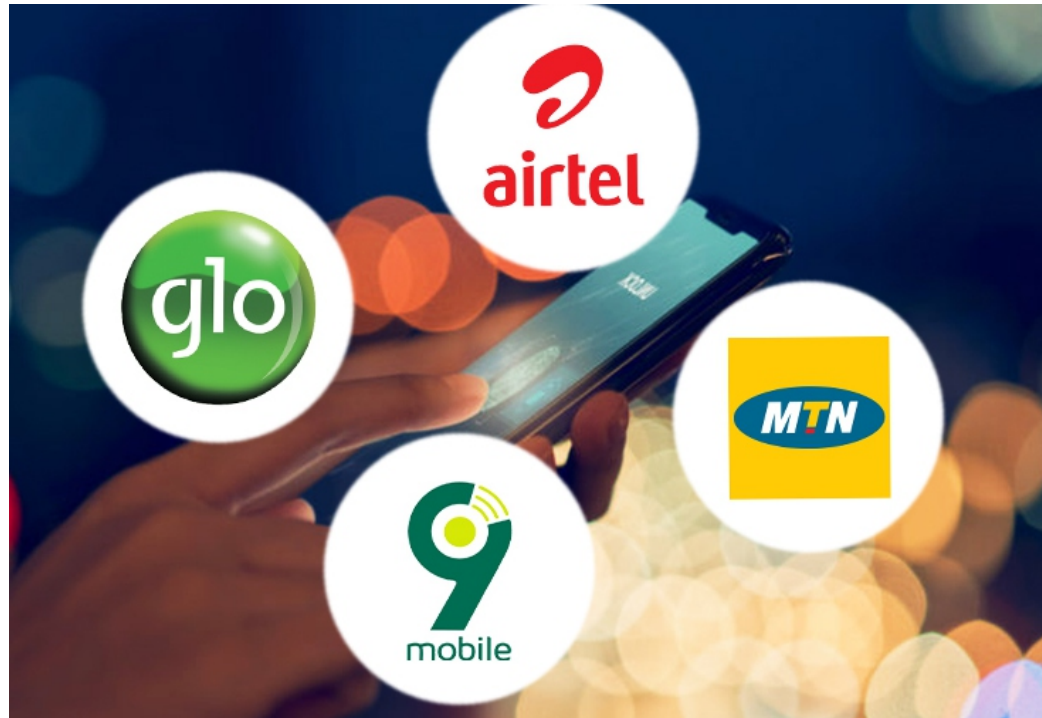
NEW DAILY PRIME reported that the NCC announced the tariff hike on Monday, enabling operators to adjust their pricing structures accordingly.

Consequently, major telecom providers such as MTN, Glo, Airtel, and 9mobile have released updated rates.

For MTN, the price for 25GB of data now stands at ₦9,750, up from the previous ₦6,500. Similarly, 10GB, 5GB, and 1GB now cost ₦5,250, ₦2,250, and ₦525, respectively, compared to their earlier prices of ₦3,500, ₦1,500, and ₦350.

Airtel's 23GB data plan has risen to ₦9,000 from ₦6,000, while 10GB is now ₦4,500, an increase from ₦3,000.

9mobile has adjusted its 22GB data plan to ₦7,500, up from



₦5,000, while 9.5GB is now ₦3,750, previously ₦1,500.

For Glo subscribers, the price for 24GB has increased to ₦7,500 from ₦5,000, while 10.8GB now costs ₦3,000, up from ₦2,500.

The tariff review has sparked reactions from users, as the increased rates reflect a significant rise in data costs nationwide.

The latest increase in data prices by telecom operators in Nigeria comes on the heels of the NCC's approval of a 50% tariff hike, a decision that has sparked significant public and industry reactions.

This move is part of efforts by

telecom operators to align their pricing structures with the rising costs of operations, which they attribute to inflation, increased fuel prices, foreign exchange fluctuations, and the rising cost of infrastructure maintenance.

While the NCC has justified the increase as necessary for the sustainability of the sector, it has raised concerns among Nigerians already grappling with the high cost of living.

This development underscores the ongoing challenges in balancing affordability for consumers with the viability of telecom operations in Nigeria's complex economic environment.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
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3X3	28,000.00
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

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CBN moves against buying, selling of Naira notes

By Dave Oludare Oso

Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Dr. Olayemi Cardoso, has declared that the buying and selling of Naira notes is an offence, hence anyone caught engaging in the act risks being prosecuted.

Irked by the trend, which he said had become widespread in the country, the apex bank supremo vowed to make it become a thing of the past.

Cardoso spoke in a keynote address at the inaugural Stakeholders' Conference of the Committee of Heads of Banks Operations (CHBO) in Lagos, with the theme "Commoditization of Naira: The Way Forward."

Represented by the Senior Special Adviser to the CBN Governor, Fatai Kareem, Cardoso stated that commoditization of the Naira poses a significant threat not only to the banking sector but also to the daily lives of Nigerians who rely on the currency for transactions.

He described Naira commoditization as a process by which the national currency is being treated as a tradeable asset with its intrinsic national value being subjected to the principles of capitalism rather than being seen as a means of exchange for economic and items of value.

According to him, "The Naira is not merely a currency; it embodies our



national identity. Its stability is vital for economic growth and development." Recent trends, however, have seen the Naira treated as a commodity rather than fulfilling its primary function as a medium of exchange.

"The commoditization of the Naira, our national legal tender, has become a critical challenge for Nigeria's financial ecosystem. It is a problem that not only affects the operations of the banking industry but also the lives of every Nigerian that relies on the currency for his day to day transactions."

He said the apex bank's strategies to tackle the commoditization of the Naira are: enhancing public engagement awareness on the responsible use of the Naira; strengthening cash management system to ensure fair distribution

across the country; collaborating with law enforcement agencies to enforce existing regulations and bring perpetrators to book; promoting digital payment channels to reduce the use of cash transactions and the need to escalate digital errors to the banks and the CBN.

Chairman of the Executive Committee of CHBO, Abraham Aziegbe attributed the commoditization of the Naira to severe scarcity which led to its monetisation.

He noted that over the past two years, Nigerians have faced significant challenges due to cash shortages, leading to instances where citizens pay premiums for everyday transactions. This situation raises concerns about cash availability and potential hoarding practices among banks.

S'West security: 2,000 Amotekun operatives comb forests for terrorists, bandits

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN), codenamed Amotekun Corps has mobilised over 2,000 personnel to flush out bandits and other criminals operating in forests in the South-West region.

According to reports, Ogun and Osun states top the list with targeted 1,000 recruits each, while Oyo recruited 480 men last October as part of efforts to curtail the influx of bandits.

The state commanders of the corps told journalists on Tuesday that more men would soon be recruited to strengthen the South-West Security Network and enhance its operations against bandits, kidnappers and other hoodlums hibernating in South-West forests and reserves.

This development follows reports of increased kidnapping incidents and other illicit activities by bandits from the Sahel countries and other shady characters.

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) revealed in a survey last December that Nigerians paid a total of N2.23 trillion as ransom between May 2023 and April 2024.

According to the NBS's Crime Experience and Security Perception Survey report, an estimated 51.89 million crime incidents were recorded across Nigerian households in the reference period.

The survey indicated that the South-



West recorded 6.9m crime incidences during the period.

The North-West region had the highest incidence of crime, with 14.4m cases reported, followed by the North-Central region with 8.8m incidents.

To bolster security in the southwest, the Ondo State Amotekun Corps Commander, Adetunji Adeleye, explained that "Amotekun rangers" had been deployed in the forests to evict the bandits.

Adeleye, who is also the Chairman of the Amotekun Commanders in the southwest, stated, "The Amotekun rangers are in the forest already to flush out the bandits who may want to use our forests as hideouts. Like I do say, no room for bandits in Ondo State."

He, however, sought more support for the corps in terms of weapons and other security hardware.

"What they provided for us is what we are using and that is what we will

continue to use. Automatic weapons are on the exclusive list and we will not go near there.

"I would also say we want technology for tracking the location of the criminals and other gadgets to enhance our operational capability and improve intelligence gathering. These are the major areas where we would want to improve upon."

The Ogun Amotekun Corps Commander, Brig-Gen. Alade Adedigba (retd.), disclosed that his men, numbering over 1,000, had been given the marching orders to move against bandits occupying forests in the state.

Adedigba announced plans to recruit more men, adding that Governor Dapo Abiodun has also given a directive that an additional 1,000 operatives should be recruited to further boost the efficiency of the security outfit.

**Continue reading
on next page**

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Speaking with journalists on Tuesday, the commander said, “Our current strength is over 1,000 and the governor on Saturday has also given a directive that an additional 1,000 officers should be recruited.

“All of these steps are geared towards strengthening the corps and make it much more responsive and combat any form of insecurity.”

The Corps Commander in Osun, Adekunle Omoyele, said the organisation would soon recruit about 1,000 new operatives in addition to the 320 men operating across the state.

Omoyele, who commended the state government for empowering Amotekun to prosecute offenders, said the corps personnel should be allowed to bear sophisticated weapons “since those criminals they would be contending with are also carrying dangerous arms.”

He noted, “We currently have 320 personnel but we plan to recruit 1,000 more. The process will commence soon. Our men will soon go for training and be properly placed to earn salaries, according to the civil service scale.

“We are interested in carrying sophisticated arms. The government should come up with a law that will grant us that opportunity,” Omoyele further said.

Commandant, Oyo Amotekun, Col. Olayinka Olayanju (retd.), in a conversation with The PUNCH, said the state, last October, recruited, trained and deployed 480 forest rangers.

The forest rangers, he said, had been trained and deployed to 25 local government areas of the state with a specific task to address kidnapping, banditry and other illegal activities in forests across the state.

Olayinka said Amotekun, in conjunction with Community-Based Security Oriented Groups, had stepped up border patrols.

He added that the community-based groups, traditional and opinion leaders have been tasked with surveillance and intelligence-gathering tasks, particularly those around settlements and the state’s forests.

“All the security agencies within the state, including the military, have been mobilised by Governor Seyi Makinde to be on red alert to respond appropriately to any threats. More resources mobilised include community-based security-oriented groups for surveillance and intelligence-gathering tasks.

“Furthermore, border patrol activities have been stepped up by my operatives, in conjunction with CBAG, as well as sensitisation efforts by the traditional and opinion leaders, particularly around settlements at the fringes of our forest resources is on the upwards trajectory,” Olayanju said.

The commanders of Amotekun across the southwest states also spoke on the desire to have their personnel equipped with sophisticated arms to deal with banditry and other forms of criminality.

Speaking, Olayanju said the Oyo

Amotekun had consistently sought such approval for its personnel, adding that authorities kept responding that such approval would require amendments to the laws of the country.

“The state had been seeking approval for Amotekun operatives to use sophisticated weapons since 2023 and recently a reminder on the issue was activated and tabled before the appropriate superior authority. However, I’m aware it’s a constitutional issue that would require amendments to the LFRN,” Olayanju said.

Commenting on the need for sophisticated arms by the corps, the Ekiti commander of the corps, Brig. Gen. Olu Adewa (retd), noted, “It is part of the Act which established the Amotekun that they can bear light arms. So, from the outset, the corps has always operated that way.”

Adewa revealed plans to recruit more personnel for the security outfit of the state government.

Adewa said, “They (state government) said they would recruit. We are waiting, we are eager, we are on it. This will be made public.”

Disclosing that the outfit had a little over 300 personnel, the commander said the threat perception and the financial capacity of the southwest states would determine the operations of the corps in each state.

He said, “Amotekun in Ekiti State is barely 300. The threat perception or threat level, the purse and the land mass of the different states are different. These are the factors.”

Plans afoot to restart oil production in Ogoni – Tinubu, Fubara

By Dave Oludare Oso

Restarting oil production in Ogoniland topped the agenda of the meeting between President Bola Tinubu and critical stakeholders in Rivers State, led by Governor Siminalayi Fubara; and the president and governor were quick to identify the entrenchment of peace in the oil-rich community as a catalyst for its clean-up and development.

Most importantly, the President launched a passionate appeal to the Ogoni leaders to set aside their age-long differences and grievances, and join hands with the government to achieve the set goal in Ogoniland.

The Rivers delegation comprised Senators Lee Maeba, Magnus Abe, Bennett Birabi, Barry Mpigi, Joe Poroma and Olaka Nwogu, Chief Victor Giadom, Chief Kenneth Kobani, Monsignor Pius Kii, Leedom Mitee and Gabriel Piidomson.

Also present were the Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Mele Kyari; the Minister of Environment, Balarabe Abba; Minister of Information and National Orientation, Idris Mohammed; Minister of Regional Development, Abubakar Momoh and the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu.

Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister Nyesom Wike joined the meeting midway.

Talks on restarting oil production and environmental clean-up of Ogoniland, among other issues, topped the agenda at the meeting held at the President's instance.

According to a statement by his Special



Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the President assured Ogoni leaders that his administration would prioritise peace, justice, and sustainable development in the area.

“We cannot in any way rewrite history, but we can correct some anomalies of the past going forward.

“We cannot heal the wounds if we continue to be angry,” the statement quoted the President as saying.

President Tinubu, who called for inclusive consultation and mutual understanding, mandated National Security Adviser Mallam Nuhu Ribadu to coordinate negotiations.

He commended the delegation for embracing the Federal Government-led dialogue and emphasised the need for collaboration, trust, and inclusiveness to resolve lingering issues in the region.

“We must work together with mutual trust. Go back home, do more consultations, and embrace others.

“We must make this trip worthwhile by bringing peace, development, and a clean environment back to Ogoniland,” the

President said.

He directed the relevant ministers, the Nigerians National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) and the Rivers State government to cooperate with the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to achieve the mandate.

The President said: “It is a great honour for me to have this meeting, which is an opportunity to dialogue with the people of Ogoniland.

“It has been many years since your children and myself partnered to resist military dictatorship in this country. No one dreamt I would be in this chair as President, but we thank God.

“Many of your sons present here were my friends and co-travellers in the streets of Nigeria, Europe, and America.

“I know what to do in memory of our beloved ones so that their sacrifices will not be in vain.”

**Continue reading
on next page**

Follow-up to an assignment given to him

Cont from page 7

Thanking the President for his support for the Ogoni people by welcoming an all-inclusive representation to the State House, Fubara said the meeting was a follow-up to an assignment given to him by the President through the NSA.

Emphasising the importance of resuming oil operations in Ogoniland, the governor pledged the delegation's commitment to adhering to the President's instructions and providing the necessary support to achieve the government's objectives.

He said: "What we are doing here today is to concretise the love and respect we have for the President for being behind this meeting and for him to tell us to go back and continue the consultations with a timeline so that the resumption of oil production in Ogoniland will commence."

Ribadu also commended the Ogoni people for their trust in President Tinubu and for embracing dialogue as a path to meaningful progress and enduring solutions.

"Guided by Mr. President's vision that every voice is heard and every interest is considered, my office, the DSS, the government of Rivers State and the Minister of FCT embarked on a diligent and consultative process to assemble this delegation," the NSA said.

He noted that the over 50-member delegation that met with the President reflected the rich diversity of Ogoni society, representing various constituencies, interests, and viewpoints.

"The presence of this delegation is a

testament to the Ogoni people's readiness to engage constructively in the pursuit of peace, justice, and sustainable development," he said.

King Festus Babari Bagia Gberesaako XIII, the Gberemene of Gokana Kingdom, who spoke for the Ogoni leaders, expressed their willingness to engage in the process of finding lasting solutions to the lingering challenges in Ogoniland.

Relatedly, the Minister of the Environment, Balarabe Abbas Lawal, also yesterday, disclosed that the remediation of 36 polluted sites in Ogoniland has been completed.

He said seven additional water projects have also been done as part of the government's commitment to environmental restoration and development in the region.

The minister, who spoke after the meeting, highlighted the administration's significant strides in tackling longstanding environmental challenges in Ogoniland.

He said: "This administration has been doing very well because the project has been there for over five years, but the commitment of President Tinubu has moved it forward remarkably."

Noting that before the Tinubu Administration, only one water project was completed in Ogoniland, the minister added: "As I'm talking to you now, eight have been commissioned, so seven have been commissioned under the administration of President Tinubu."

In addition to water supply, the government has made substantial

progress in the remediation of polluted sites.

"In the area of remediation, we have done about 36 sites; they have been completed, and they've been certified as environmentally conducive for people," the minister confirmed.

On what the government is doing to address health concerns linked to pollution, Lawal explained that efforts were underway to build medical facilities and conduct comprehensive health assessments in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

He said: "We are doing a very comprehensive analysis of the kind of ailments in that area, and we are working to address the issues of pollution-related illnesses.

"Restoring Ogoniland's ecosystems has been another priority, with significant attention given to mangrove reforestation.

"So far, we have planted more than two million seedlings of mangroves in the last six months, and we're still on that. The mangroves are the source of livelihood for many, supporting fish, shrimp, and crab populations."

Lawal expressed optimism about the ongoing efforts to restore peace and economic activities, including oil prospecting, in Ogoniland.

"I feel that this administration, more than any other, has done so well for them in trying to bring them back to where they were," the minister said.

Tinubu appoints Opeifa as MD of Nigeria Railway Corporation

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has appointed Kayode Opeifa as the Managing Director of the Nigeria Railway Corporation.

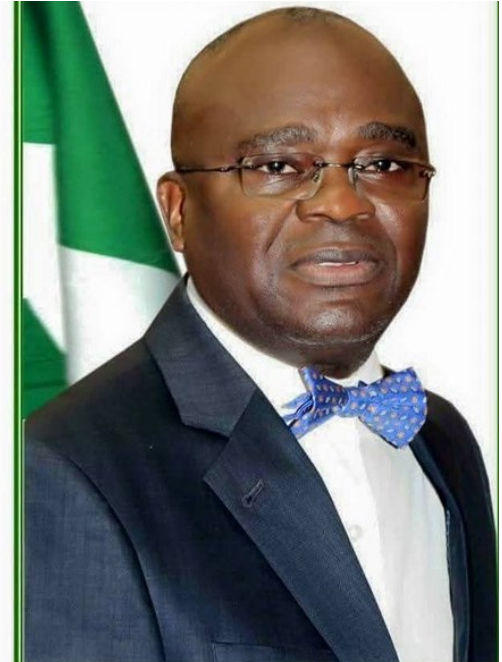
The appointment, announced via a statement on the Corporation's X page on Wednesday, has been widely praised for its strategic importance.

Opeifa, a seasoned transportation expert and former Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, boasts a distinguished career marked by impactful reforms.

As Commissioner, he introduced policies that significantly improved public transport and traffic management in Lagos, one of Africa's busiest cities.

His contributions helped ease congestion and laid a strong foundation for the state's rapid urban development.

He later served as the Transport Secretary for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where he continued implementing progressive policies to enhance



mobility in the nation's capital.

In his new role, Opeifa is expected to spearhead the modernization of Nigeria's railway network, a critical component of the country's economic growth.

His extensive experience in transportation planning and infrastructure development has raised high expectations among industry stakeholders, who view him as the ideal candidate to drive meaningful reforms.

His appointment has been met with widespread commendation, with many highlighting his deep understanding of Nigeria's transportation challenges and his

proven ability to implement sustainable solutions.

Under his leadership, efforts to enhance railway connectivity and efficiency could significantly boost trade, commerce, and overall national development.

This appointment underscores the Tinubu administration's commitment to selecting skilled professionals to execute its Renewed Hope agenda.

As Nigeria strives for a more efficient and accessible railway system, there are high expectations that Opeifa will deliver lasting, impactful progress.

Ekweremadu's wife leaves UK prison, returns to Nigeria

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Mrs Beatrice Ekweremadu, the wife of former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, on Tuesday, regained freedom from a United Kingdom (UK) prison, following the completion of her sentencing.

According to a competent source, who confirmed the development on Wednesday, Mrs Ekweremadu returned to Nigeria on Tuesday.

Recall that Senator Ekweremadu, the wife and one Dr Obinna Obeta were sentenced to prison by a UK court for their involvement in organ harvesting.

The former deputy senate president was sentenced to 10 years, while his wife was sentenced to six years.

It was gathered that the return of Mrs Ekweremadu is being celebrated across Enugu State, with many praying to have the Deputy Senate President back in the shortest possible time.

THE BACKSTORY

Senator Ike Ekweremadu, 60, and his wife Beatrice, 56, wanted a new kidney for their



25-year-old daughter Sonia.

The pair and Dr Obinna Obeta, 50, consequently brought a man to the UK from Lagos.

Their victim, a poor street trader in Lagos, was brought to the UK to provide a kidney for the Ekweremadus' daughter.

He fled in fear of his life and walked into a police station to report what had happened after the Royal Free Hospital called a halt to the private £80,000 procedure, leading to the arrest of the trio.

They were previously convicted of conspiring to exploit the man.

It is said to be the first such case under modern slavery laws.

Ike Ekweremadu, who was described by the judge as the "driving force throughout", was sentenced to nine years and eight months in prison.

Dr Obeta was sentenced to 10 years after the judge found he had targeted the potential donor who was young, poor and vulnerable.

Beatrice Ekweremadu was jailed for four years and six months due to her more limited involvement.

Shettima arrives at AfCFTA Digital Trade Forum in Davos

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has arrived in Davos, Switzerland, for the high-level dialogue, “Forum Friends of African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Turning Digital Trade into a Catalyst for Growth in Africa,” at the World Economic Forum.

Earlier, The New Daily Prime reported Shettima’s departure from Abuja to represent Nigeria at the 2025 WEF Annual Meeting.

In a statement on Wednesday, Shettima’s spokesperson, Stanley Nkwocha, confirmed the Vice



President’s arrival.

The forum, focused on digital trade and private sector engagement, aims to explore the implementation of the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol.

Key stakeholders will discuss strategies to leverage digital technologies for enhancing intra-African trade and economic growth.

“This is part of the Nigerian government’s commitment to the successful implementation of the AfCFTA and its role in advancing digital trade across the continent. VP Shettima is chairing the session.

“The forum serves as a platform to explore innovative approaches to harness digital technologies for expanding trade opportunities within Africa”, the statement added.

Akwa Ibom approves N80,000 minimum wage for workers

By Dave Oludare Oso

In compliance with the national minimum wage agreement between labour unions and the federal government last year, Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State has approved the payment of a new minimum wage of N80,000 to civil servants in the state, effective from November 2024.

This development was announced on Tuesday in a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Ekerete Udoh.



According to the statement, the decision followed the submission of the Minimum Wage/Personnel Verification Report by the Head of Service, Mr. Effiong Essien, to the

governor on Monday.

The new wage will be paid to 45,000 civil servants who successfully underwent the verification exercise.

Udoh stated, “Governor Umo Eno has authorized the commencement of the payment of the new minimum wage of N80,000 to 45,000 duly verified public service workers, starting at the end of this month but backdated to November 2024.”

Mother, child, many others killed in Chibok bomb explosion

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A yet-to-be-determined number of individuals, including a mother and her child, have lost their lives following a vehicle's collision with an improvised explosive device (IED) reportedly planted by the Islamic State-affiliated faction of Boko Haram, known as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).



According to reports, the incident happened on Monday in Sikarkur village, Chibok Local Government Area of Borno State.

The IED was said to have been planted by the terrorists for military patrol vehicles conveying troops around the area.

Improvised explosive devices and ambushes have continued to pose a major threat to soldiers fighting Boko Haram and ISWAP in Northern Nigeria.

A villager told Sahara Reporters, "Yesterday, Boko Haram set a trap bomb on a road in Sikarkur village for soldiers, sadly a civilian vehicle ran over it and killed many people including a mother and her baby.

"The sister who was with her and others are currently receiving treatment at Chibok General Hospital. This and more are happening here daily but are not being reported."

This comes a few days after the terror group launched a brutal attack on two communities in same Chibok Local Government Area.

The attack resulted in significant loss of lives, with the militants also setting fire to a church and several homes.

Chibok gained international attention in April 2014, after insurgents launched a daring raid

on the Government Girls Secondary School, abducting 276 students in a notorious incident that shocked the world.

Since the death of JAS leader, Abubakar Shekau, ISWAP has been consolidating its grip in locations around Lake Chad.

The sect's membership has swollen with the defection of hundreds of Boko Haram fighters formerly under Shekau.

The terror group has killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions of individuals mainly in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states.

FG alerts Nigerians of anthrax outbreak in Zamfara

By Helen Okechukwu

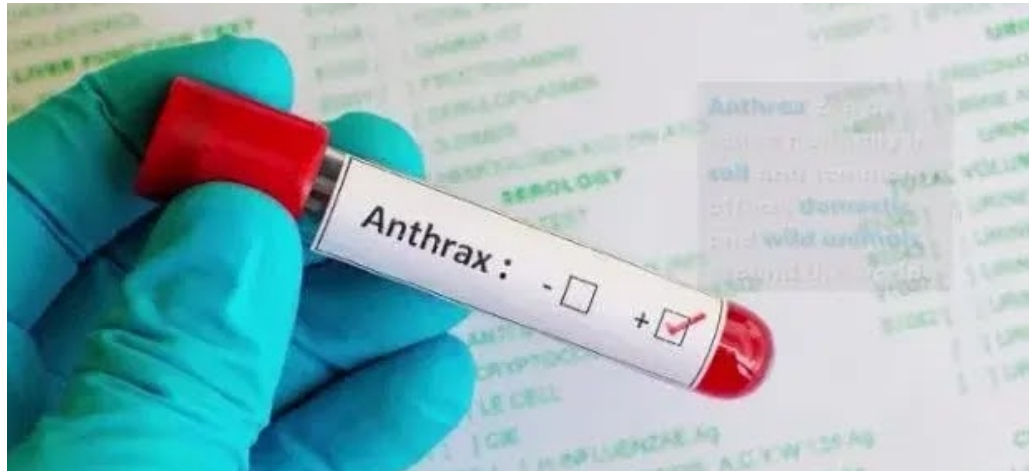
The Federal Government has alerted Nigerians through the Federal Ministry of Livestock Development over the outbreak of anthrax in Zamfara State while calling for proactive measures to mitigate the risk.

The Director of Information and Public Relations Department of the ministry, Ben Goong, in a document disclosed this and urged Nigerians to remain vigilant over the health implications linked with anthrax.

Educating the public of the targeted warm-blooded animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and wildlife including humans, Goong said it is caused by a bacterium, bacillus anthracis described under zoonotic disease.

Anthrax, known for its high morbidity and mortality, has been marked by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) as a notifiable disease.

Describing the symptoms, the Director said it comes with fever, coughing, vomiting, nausea, diarrhoea, sore throat and swollen lymph nodes, headaches, itching, and bleeding from major openings.



While addressing this outbreak, Goong highlighted the preventive measures to risk assessment, surveys and ring vaccination of susceptible animals in high-risk areas, prompt detection and response are critical to containing its spread.

Calling on stakeholders to take action against the spread of the disease, he said, “In light of the outbreak, the ministry calls on stakeholders, especially states bordering Zamfara, to take immediate steps to prevent further spread of the disease.”

Similarly, the Rivers State Government has confirmed the outbreak of avian influenza, commonly known as ‘bird flu,’ at a 3,000-capacity poultry farm in Iriebe in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of the state.

The information was disclosed on Tuesday by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Victor Kii, noting that the affected area has been placed

under quarantine, depopulated the infected birds, and decontaminated the premises.

The commissioner stated that the Ministry of Agriculture has collaborated with the Nigerian Veterinary Association of Nigeria to combat the spread, describing it as a threat to both poultry and human health.

He said, “The signs of the disease include high mortality of up to 100 percent without premonitory signs, swollen comb and wattles, reduced egg production, respiratory distress, and redness in the shank.”

“The Ministry of Agriculture is committed to safeguarding the health of our poultry industry and the public, and we ask for the cooperation of all stakeholders. By working together and remaining vigilant, we can mitigate the impact of this outbreak.”

FUNAAB set to hold 3rd convocation with 3,567 graduates

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), is set to hold its 3rd convocation on Saturday, marking the graduation of 3,567 students, including 120 with First Class honours.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof Babatunde Kehinde, disclosed this during a media briefing on Wednesday, January 22.

The breakdown of the graduating students shows that 1,626 students completed their programmes with Second Class Upper, while 1,624 earned Second Class Lower, and 164 finished with Third Class.

Additionally, 33 students are graduates of Veterinary Medicine.

The convocation will also feature 30 Postgraduate Diplomas, 274 Master's degrees, and 136 PhDs.

Prof Kehinde highlighted the university's academic expansion, with eight new programmes added, including Library and Information Science, Industrial Chemistry, Cyber Security, and Software Engineering.

FUNAAB now offers 38 fully accredited programmes across 54 departments.

He also celebrated the university's



research achievements, with the National University Commission approving six research proposals worth over N171 million.

Furthermore, many of the university's scholars won international grants, contributing to the institution's growing reputation.

The Vice-Chancellor lauded the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for supporting 19 ongoing projects aimed at improving the university's academic and research infrastructure.

He also stressed the importance of Public-Private Partnerships in addressing the country's food crisis, citing FUNAAB's successful collaborations with 30 organisations and the promotion of backyard farming.

FUNAAB has also made significant strides in student welfare, receiving over N133 million from the National Education Loans Fund to assist 1,300 students in the first batch, with more expected in 2025.

The convocation will feature a lecture by Mohammed Ibrahim, Executive Secretary of the National Agricultural Development Fund, and the honouring of two former Vice-Chancellors, Prof Olusola Oyewole and Prof Kolawole Salako, with monuments in their names.

The event will also showcase farming machinery, reflecting the university's commitment to agricultural development.

ATBUTH Bauchi reduces kidney dialysis costs by 70%

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital (ATBUTH) in Bauchi made a significant move to ease the financial burden on kidney patients by reducing the cost of kidney dialysis by 70%.

In a press release issued on Wednesday, January 22, the hospital's Head of Public Relations, Usman Koli, disclosed that the price for one dialysis session was slashed from ₦40,000 to ₦12,000.

This price reduction was introduced as part of the hospital's efforts to address the financial challenges faced by patients suffering from kidney-related ailments.

Koli further explained that the initiative was in line with the hospital's mission of providing affordable and high-quality healthcare.

He noted that the Chief Medical Director, Professor Yusuf Bara, expressed optimism about the



positive impact this program would have on patients in need of dialysis treatments.

He added that the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare played a vital role in this initiative by ensuring a consistent supply of necessary consumables and providing a new dialysis machine to support the hospital's efforts.

Over 45 beneficiaries have already accessed the subsidised dialysis services, bringing relief to many who could previously not afford treatment. Koli emphasised that this initiative reflects the government's commitment to making quality healthcare accessible to all, particularly during these trying times.

He also reassured the public that ATBUTH would continue collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to sustain and expand similar programs in the future.

Magaji Galadima, a kidney patient currently receiving treatment at the hospital, expressed deep gratitude for the program. He stated, "This program has brought hope to many of us who could not afford treatment before. It is truly life-changing."

The reduction in dialysis costs at ATBUTH Bauchi has been hailed as a major step towards improving access to life-saving treatments for kidney patients in the region.

Again, Niger residents rush to scavenge from another fallen tanker **By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

Not minding the deadly fuel tanker explosion that killed over 90 people few days earlier, residents in Bida town, Niger State, gathered around another fallen truck on Monday.

Video footage showed young people collecting liquid from the broken-down vehicle, while others ran away to avoid potential danger. Local resident Yinusa Jiya said, "The people were not even afraid despite the earlier assumption that it was petrol."

However, another witness, Fatimah Mohammed, explained the truck carried groundnut oil: "It fell around AYM Shafa filling station yesterday (Monday) and residents stole huge



amounts of the groundnut oil dripping from the tanker."

This incident followed Sunday's devastating explosion near Dikko Junction, where the death toll has reached 98 as more injured victims died in hospital. The Niger State Emergency

Management Agency buried 86 bodies in a mass grave, while many survivors continue receiving treatment for severe burns.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu ordered the National Orientation Agency to increase awareness campaigns against fuel scooping, as authorities blame the casualties on people trying to collect fuel from the crashed tanker.

The Nigerian Governors' Forum expressed concern about the high number of deaths and serious injuries. Niger State has experienced similar tragedies before, including a tanker explosion that killed more than 50 travellers on the Agaie-Badeggi road in September 2024.

Troops kill Bello Turji's son, several terrorists, rescue many hostages **By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

The Defence Headquarters (DHQ) has announced that troops from Operation Fansan Yamma successfully killed the son of terrorist leader, Bello Turji and several of his fighters during a major clearance operation in Zamfara State.

The operation, which took place on January 19, targeted key areas including Shinkafi, Kagara, Fakai, Moriki, Maiwa, and Chindo.

It was learnt that the troops also destroyed a logistics base used by the terrorists.

Outgoing Director of Media Operations, Major General Edward Buba in a statement on Tuesday revealed that Turji's son was killed in an attack on the



Fakai high ground, where the terrorists had set up camp.

Turji himself was branded a coward for fleeing the area and abandoning both his son and his fighters during the battle.

The DHQ highlighted that Turji had long taunted the military, even challenging

them in December 2024 to confront him at his hideout after his associate, Baka Wurgi, was captured by troops. The military vowed to neutralize him in 2025.

In addition to killing several terrorists, the operation also led to the rescue of numerous hostages who had been kidnapped by Turji's group.

The statement partly read, "On January 17, 2025, a coordinated operation between troops of Operation Fansan Yamma as well as the air component conducted clearance operations along the Shinkafi, Kagara, Fakai, Moriki, Maiwa and Chindo axis. The operations killed scores of terrorists, including notorious terrorist leader Bello Turji's son, on Fakai high ground, where the terrorists were hiding.

UI students protest 82 day blackout at UCH

By Friday Omosola

Students of the University of Ibadan (UI) staged a peaceful protest on Wednesday over an 82-day power outage at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan.

The blackout, which has severely disrupted academic activities, stems from debts owed to the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC).

UCH serves as the teaching hospital for UI's medical students, and the prolonged lack of electricity has caused significant challenges.

Speaking, the President of the UI Student Union Government (SUG), Comrade Bolaji Aweda, condemned the situation, describing it as unacceptable.

“This blackout has persisted for over 82 days, crippling the ability of our students to study effectively. It is a clear case of a power struggle between the UCH authorities and IBEDC,”



Aweda said.

The protesting students demanded the immediate restoration of electricity at UCH and called for nationwide improvements in power supply to healthcare facilities.

The students urged the Federal Government to implement the 50 per cent electricity tariff reduction announced by the Ministry of Power in 2024 and to prioritize reforms in the healthcare sector.

They vowed that if the situation remained unresolved, the students would escalate their actions to push for a solution.

The protest began at UCH and concluded at the Oyo State Government Secretariat in Ibadan, where the students were received by Sunday Odukoya, the Executive Assistant on Security to Governor Seyi Makinde.

Odukoya assured the protesters that the state government would engage with the Federal Government to resolve the crisis.

The peaceful demonstration reflects the growing frustration among students and staff over the impact of the power outage on academic and healthcare services in Ibadan.

NLC wants power minister fired over frequent grid collapse

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) has called on the Federal Government to sack the Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, over the repeated collapse of the national power grid.

The NLC, in a statement by its President, Joe Ajaero, late Tuesday night expressed deep concern over the worsening state of Nigeria's electricity sector, which it described as being on the brink of total collapse.

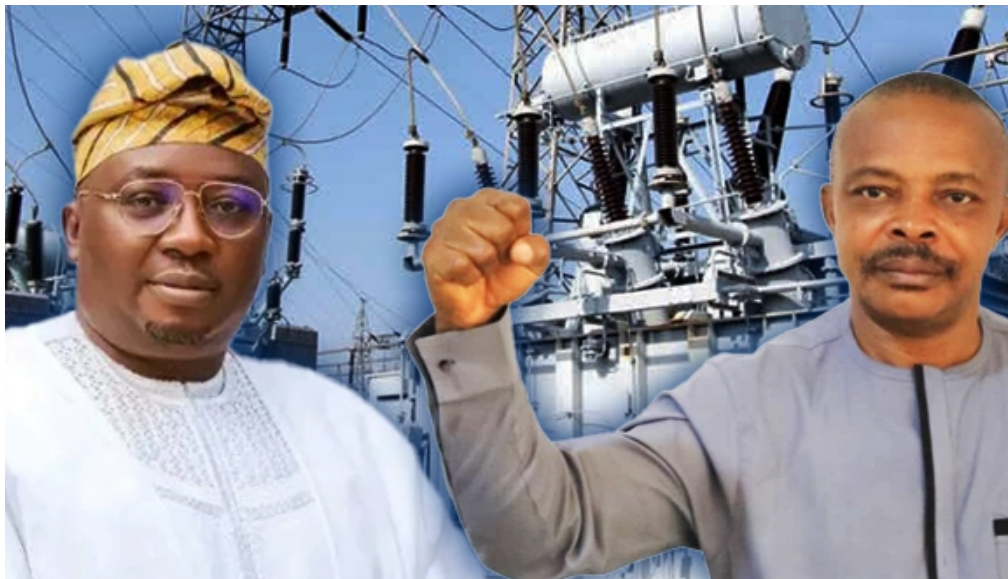
According to Ajaero, "If the Ministry of Power is manned by competent officials, the now embarrassing constant grid collapse would have been averted instead of the worrying statement by the Minister that this will continue as if this has always been the norm.

"We believe that this is a clear admission of incapacity and failure by the Ministry and we wonder why they would not do the honourable thing by resigning.

"It has to be noted that the number of times the National Grid has collapsed under these helmsmen is more than all the previous leaders in the history of our nation combined. Rather than the garrulous remarks, Nigerians expect more seriousness in handling their affairs."

The labour leader also slammed the minister over the proposed allocation of ₦8 billion in the 2025 budget for "sensitisation of Nigerians on the need to pay electricity bills, accusing the Ministry of Power of prioritising frivolous projects over critical infrastructure.

He said, "The power sector in Nigeria is at the brink of collapse as the helmsmen have repeatedly shown gross incompetence. It is a sector where the National Electricity Regulatory Commission, despite the enormous power invested in it by the Electricity Act of 2023, has continuously demonstrated



incapacity to regulate or outrightly refused to discharge its responsibilities to electricity consumers in Nigeria while the Minister in charge is enamoured with seeking about N8bn to teach Nigerians how to pay electricity bill.

"It is therefore not surprising that power grid collapse is now a constant as it has continued to succumb to greed and crass incompetence."

The NLC president stated that the N8bn was a misplaced priority, especially when contractors in the Transmission Company of Nigeria are owed over ₦200 billion.

Ajaero said, "Whereas the Minister seeks N8bn to educate us, contractors in the Transmission Company of Nigeria who help in delivering capacity are owed over N200 billion. If not for the intervention of the Unions in the sector in December 2024, the procurement Committee would have added to this burden by sitting down to award more contracts."

The union also criticized the National Electricity Regulatory Commission for failing to fulfil its regulatory duties.

According to the NLC president, the commission has demonstrated a lack of capacity and an unwillingness to protect electricity consumers.

He cited a recent incident where NERC allegedly colluded with the board of a distribution company to sack its managing director for exposing unethical practices.

"It is unimaginable that NERC, an organization tasked with ensuring transparency and efficiency, would punish a whistleblower instead of rewarding and protecting them.

"This is a clear indication that NERC is not prepared to discharge its mandate."

The NLC president noted that the union would continue to monitor developments in the sector and warned against any attempt to use the budget process as a vehicle for wasteful expenditures.

He called on the federal government to urgently reinvigorate the electricity sector to avert total collapse, adding that failure to address these issues would further erode public confidence in governance.

"We will not stand idly by while public funds are wasted in the name of governance.

"Our position is clear: incompetence must not be rewarded, and those responsible must be held accountable."

Kano gov shares 7,158 goats to 2,386 women

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State has empowered 2,386 women by distributing 7,158 goats as part of an economic empowerment initiative.

The initiative is the second phase of the women's empowerment programme under the Livestock Fattening Programme of the Kano Agro-Pastoral Development Project (KSADP).

This was disclosed on Tuesday by the governor's spokesperson, Sanusi Dawakin-Tofa, in a statement issued in Kano.

According to the statement, the program involves the distribution of livestock to women across the 44 Local Government Areas of the state.

Each beneficiary received three small ruminants (goats) to support their livestock entrepreneurship.

Speaking during the flag-off ceremony, Governor Yusuf reaffirmed his administration's commitment to addressing poverty through innovative and inclusive approaches.

He announced that under this phase, a total of 7,158 goats have been distributed to 2,386 women beneficiaries. Additionally, the program will provide 1,342 cows and 1,822 rams to women and youth in subsequent phases.

The governor emphasized that the



initiative is part of his administration's broader strategy to empower vulnerable groups and foster economic independence among women and youth in the state.

Governor Yusuf issued a firm warning against diverting the livestock for purposes other than the intended goal, stressing the importance of accountability and responsibility among beneficiaries.

"This groundbreaking initiative, worth N2.3 billion, underscores the administration's focus on sustainable development and empowering communities to drive economic growth from the grassroots"

"By integrating women and youth into the agricultural value chain, the program aims to enhance household income and reduce dependency on government aid."

"The initiative has been widely applauded as a significant step toward improving livelihoods, strengthening food security, and creating wealth for

Kano's rural communities." he stated.

The Kano State Agro-pastoral Development Project (KSADP) is a 5-year program funded by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Lives and Livelihood Funds (LLF), and the government of Kano State in Nigeria. The project is expected to reach 450,000 farmers in 44 Local Government Areas (LGAs) for the 5-year project period.

The project aims to support the government's efforts to enhance agricultural productivity and competitiveness through access to inputs, value addition and market access, extension services delivery and capacity strengthening.

The private sector, especially seed companies and agro-processors, has played a central role in the project and postharvest-handling, climate-smart agriculture and market linkage are also key activities.

Abuja doctors commence three-day strike

By Helen Okechukwu

Following the three-week ultimatum issued last year over the unpaid salaries, allowances, and other demands, the Association of Resident Doctors, Federal Capital Territory Administration (ARD FCTA), has begun a three-day warning strike.

Dr. George Ebong, the President of ARD FCTA, made this known on Wednesday during a conference in Abuja, emphasising that the ultimatum has elapsed.

In this regard, all activities across the state government hospital have been halted.

“The three-day strike is being implemented across all government hospitals in Abuja—from Wuse to Asokoro, Maitama, Kubwa, Zuba, Kwali, Abaji, Nyanya, and all other hospitals in



Abuja.”

Ebong, speaking on behalf of the union, lamented the overdue neglect towards the doctors and hospital welfare at the capital of Nigeria while calling on the Minister of FCT, Nyesom Wike, to avert an indefinite strike.

“Honestly, doctors have been abandoned projects. Just as the roads are being constructed, the welfare of doctors should be considered by the minister.”

This decision came shortly after the members of the doctors association held a Congress on Tuesday.

“We gave the government a three-week ultimatum to meet our demands, and after that, we met with them and dialogued on several occasions. They pleaded for two weeks, but after that elapsed, nothing has been done. Not even the minimum thing. We expected them to pay for the six months of unpaid arrears to doctors.”

“After this three-day strike, we will do an appraisal. If nothing is done, we will go on an indefinite strike.”

Also, in December 2024, the ARD FCTA issued a warning about a potential shutdown due to unmet demands.

Nigeria records 143 confirmed cases of Lassa fever, 22 deaths in early 2025

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) has reported 143 confirmed cases of Lassa fever, with 22 deaths, between December 30, 2024, and January 12, 2025.

The cases were spread across seven states and 32 local government areas, with a Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 15.4%. The states affected include Ondo, Edo, Bauchi, Taraba, Ebonyi, and Gombe, where the majority of the fatalities occurred.

According to the NCDC's Lassa fever situation report, the deaths were as follows: six in Ondo, five in Edo, two in Bauchi, six in Taraba, two in Ebonyi, and one in Gombe.

Lassa fever, an acute viral haemorrhagic illness, is caused by the Lassa virus, which is typically transmitted through exposure to food or household items contaminated by the urine or faeces of infected *Mastomys* rats.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has highlighted that person-to-person transmission can also occur, particularly in healthcare settings with inadequate infection prevention and control measures.

The NCDC noted that the number of new confirmed cases increased in the second week of 2025, with 89 cases



reported compared to 54 in the first week.

The total number of confirmed cases, as of the second week of January 2025, was 143, with 22 deaths, representing a CFR of 15.4%. This CFR is lower than the 16.4% reported for the same period in 2024.

The majority of confirmed cases, 77%, were concentrated in three states: Ondo (38%), Edo (22%), and Bauchi (17%). The remaining 23% of cases were spread across other states, including Taraba, Gombe, Kogi, and Ebonyi.

The report also revealed that the predominant age group affected by Lassa fever is 21-30 years, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:0.7 among confirmed cases.

The number of suspected cases was reported to have decreased compared to the same period in 2024. The second reporting week saw one new healthcare worker among the

affected cases.

To manage the outbreak, the NCDC activated the National Lassa Fever multi-partner, multi-sectoral Incident Management System, which coordinates response activities at all levels.

The NCDC continues to work closely with health officials to contain the spread of the disease and mitigate further fatalities.

Lassa fever remains endemic in parts of West Africa, including Nigeria, and it continues to pose significant public health challenges in the region.

The NCDC urges the public to take precautions to reduce exposure to the virus, including maintaining proper hygiene and ensuring proper infection control measures in healthcare settings.

How Trump redefined political norms, left America divided

By Kayode Adebisi

Trump's politics are entirely unconventional. He operates without restraint, saying what he wants to say in the manner he chooses

Oftentimes, our positions on political issues are strong and uncompromising, especially when rooted in ideological principles tied to our identity, faith, or cultural upbringing. This is particularly true when these beliefs are viewed as essential to human life and existence.

In Africa, particularly Nigeria, the factors shaping presidential choices are influenced by the unique challenges of a developing nation. These include assessing candidates' abilities to address issues such as economic management, infrastructural development, and their track records in leadership. For some, however, decisions are swayed by ethnicity or religious affiliation due to a limited understanding of leadership's broader responsibilities.

In contrast, in the United States—a highly developed and wealthy nation—the considerations for choosing a president differ significantly. With two major political parties espousing starkly opposing ideologies, elections often divide the country deeply over which candidate is best suited to lead.

The arrival of Donald Trump on the U.S. political stage in 2016 disrupted the nation's political climate dramatically. Trump evokes extreme emotions from both supporters and detractors, not only within the U.S. but globally. His mere mention on social media often ignites fierce reactions from both sides, reflecting the deeply polarizing nature of his politics.

Trump's approach to politics is unconventional. He speaks and acts without restraint, often disregarding political correctness and engaging in transactional politics. Personal loyalty is central to his worldview—Trump equates loyalty to himself with loyalty to the



nation.

Initially a long-time businessman with ties to the Democratic Party, Trump chose to align with the Republican Party when he entered politics. He resonated with its opposition to “woke” liberal policies, particularly on issues like LGBTQ+ rights, transgender matters, and immigration.

Personally, I did not support Trump during his 2016 campaign and welcomed his loss in 2020. While I align with some of his and the Republican Party's ideological positions, I strongly oppose his governance style and lack of respect for democratic institutions, especially his behaviours during and after the 2020 election. His actions desecrated democratic norms and encouraged his supporters to do the same.

However, Trump's potential return to power has made me reconsider my stance. I am increasingly weary of the extreme left-wing ideologies disrupting societal norms. Living in the West, I feel stifled by the constant need to tread carefully to avoid offending others. For example, being compelled to address someone by non-binary pronouns or witnessing policies that allow biological men identifying as women to commit crimes and be incarcerated in women's prisons, leading to further harm—these trends feel

absurd and concerning.

That said, I find Trump's stance on immigration problematic. His decision to terminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, introduced during President Obama's administration, is an example. DACA was a bipartisan initiative to address the plight of undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children.

DACA recipients—many of whom arrived in the U.S. as toddlers—have lived in the country for over 20 years. They contribute to society by serving in the military and working in various sectors. The program offers protection from deportation, work permits, and a pathway to citizenship. Ending it leaves over 700,000 recipients in limbo. Deporting them is not only unjust but also impractical. How does one deport a person whose only home is the U.S.?

Trump elicits mixed feelings. Some of his supporters refuse to acknowledge his flaws, while others, like me, appreciate certain aspects of his policies but reject others. Ultimately, U.S. citizens elected him, and they bear the consequences of his governance. As for those of us observing from the sidelines, as we say in Nigeria: *na siddon look we dey* (we are just watching).

Bobrisky responds to Trump's two-gender order

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

U.S. President Donald Trump recently issued an executive order recognizing only two genders—male and female—across all government policies.

This directive, signed on his first day back in office, has triggered global conversations and reactions from various quarters.

During his inaugural address, Trump stated firmly, “As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders, male and female.”

Among those who responded was popular Nigerian crossdresser and social media personality, Idris Okuneye, famously known as Bobrisky.

Known for her bold and unapologetic personality, Bobrisky addressed the announcement with her trademark confidence.

She took to Instagram to share her thoughts, dismissing any concerns the policy might raise about her identity.

Trump's controversial order

The new policy is part of Trump's broader approach to redefine cultural and social norms during his presidency.

By insisting on a binary understanding of gender, the executive order seeks to standardize government policies on education, healthcare, sports, and legal documentation. Trump emphasized that this move aims to “restore clarity” to societal standards.

However, the policy has reignited global debates on gender identity and inclusivity. Critics argue that such measures erase the existence of non-binary and transgender individuals. Many view it as a step backward for LGBTQ+ rights in the United States.

Bobrisky speaks out

Bobrisky, a prominent figure in Nigeria's entertainment scene, is no stranger to controversies surrounding gender and identity.

She has openly embraced her transition and confidently refers to herself as a woman. Responding to Trump's announcement, Bobrisky posted a defiant message on Instagram.



“I don't have business with Trump,” he wrote. “Trump said we have only two genders, right? And I said I am now a woman that has undergone everything. If they ask for evidence, I will show them, simple.”

Her statement was clear: regardless of policies or opinions, her identity remains valid. Bobrisky's confidence in her gender identity underscores her resilience in the face of societal criticism.

Global reactions to the policy

Trump's policy has drawn mixed reactions. Supporters believe it aligns with traditional values and simplifies bureaucratic processes.

On the other hand, activists and advocacy groups argue it undermines decades of

progress for LGBTQ+ rights.

For Bobrisky, the debate over gender recognition highlights her own journey and the challenges faced by individuals who step outside societal norms.

Her unapologetic stance serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for inclusivity and acceptance.

Bobrisky's role in the conversation

As a public figure, Bobrisky wields significant influence, particularly among her Nigerian audience.

Her response to Trump's policy not only reflects her personal journey but also contributes to the broader dialogue on gender identity.

By speaking openly, she empowers others to embrace their identities, regardless of societal expectations or governmental decrees.

Bobrisky's words resonate beyond her Instagram followers. They echo the sentiments of many who feel marginalized by rigid definitions of gender.

Her boldness in challenging norms provides a source of inspiration for those navigating similar paths.

Looking ahead

Trump's policy is likely to face legal challenges and widespread criticism from human rights organizations.

Meanwhile, voices like Bobrisky's highlight the resilience of individuals who refuse to be confined by traditional labels.

The conversation surrounding gender is far from over, and figures like Bobrisky play a pivotal role in keeping the dialogue alive.

Misbehave again, face detention – Burna Boy warns Speed Darlington

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Grammy-winning Nigerian singer, Burna Boy, has broken his silence following the release of fellow artist Speed Darlington from Kuje Prison.

Darlington, known for his controversial remarks and public clashes, had been arrested weeks ago. He accused Burna Boy of being involved in an improper relationship with embattled American rapper and music executive Diddy.

Darlington's detention sparked conversations among fans and observers, with some defending his actions while others criticized his approach.

After spending several weeks behind bars, Darlington was granted bail, and on Tuesday, he was officially released.

In a swift and direct reaction, Burna Boy made his stance clear through a post on his Instagram account.

He issued a stern warning to Darlington, who is popularly referred to as "Akpi" by his followers. Burna Boy threatened to ensure Darlington's return to detention if his behaviour crossed the line again.

"Don't even think about misbehaving again," Burna Boy wrote in his post, which quickly gained traction on social media. "You'll go back to where you came from. And this time, there will be no mercy!" His firm tone left no room for doubt about his intentions.

History of tension

The feud between Burna Boy and Speed Darlington is not new. Over time, Darlington has made several inflammatory statements about the "Last Last" hitmaker.

However, his recent accusations involving Diddy appear to have escalated the tension between the two artists. Darlington's claim caused a stir online,



leading to his arrest by the police.

Supporters of Burna Boy saw Darlington's comments as defamatory and baseless. Meanwhile, Darlington's fans argued that his arrest was unnecessary and a violation of free speech. These divided opinions fueled heated discussions on social media platforms.

Burna Boy's stern warning

Burna Boy's warning comes as no surprise to those familiar with his no-nonsense persona. Known for speaking his mind, the Grammy winner rarely shies away from addressing controversies.

His Instagram post was widely shared, sparking reactions from fans and industry watchers alike. While some praised Burna Boy for standing up against what they viewed as slander, others criticized him for appearing unforgiving.

One fan commented, "Burna Boy is setting boundaries, and I respect that. People need to stop dragging his name into baseless drama." Another, however, expressed a different view, writing, "There's no need to keep threatening Darlington. Let's just move on from this."

A divided audience

The feud has undoubtedly divided fans of both artists. Some believe that Darlington's outspoken nature often gets him into trouble, while others see him as a fearless voice unafraid to challenge the status quo.

Burna Boy, on the other hand, enjoys a

strong reputation as one of Africa's biggest music stars. His global success and multiple awards, including a Grammy, have cemented his place as a leader in the Afrobeat movement.

This has led many to question why he would respond so strongly to Darlington, whose career trajectory is markedly different.

What's next?

For now, it remains unclear whether Darlington will heed Burna Boy's warning. The public, however, will be watching closely to see if this marks the end of their feud or the beginning of another chapter.

As the story unfolds, one thing is clear: Burna Boy's message to Darlington is loud and clear. Whether or not Darlington chooses to change his approach remains to be seen.

This incident highlights the growing trend of public figures using social media to address disputes directly. While some see it as a way to maintain transparency, others argue that it fuels unnecessary drama.

In a world where the entertainment industry thrives on controversies, the interactions between Burna Boy and Speed Darlington offer another reminder of the delicate balance between freedom of expression and personal accountability. Fans can only hope that both artists focus on their music and steer clear of further conflicts.

Adekunle Gold to co-produce Yoruba music documentary “The Odyssey”

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Renowned Nigerian singer-songwriter Adekunle Gold has officially joined the production team of White House Productions’ upcoming documentary, *The Odyssey*.

This exciting project focuses on the rich history and transformation of Yoruba music, tracing its journey through the years and its significant influence on contemporary Afrobeats.

The Odyssey: A tribute to Yoruba music
The documentary celebrates a century of Yoruba music and its evolution across various genres. It aims to showcase the diverse subcultures within Yoruba music and highlight their role in shaping modern Nigerian soundscapes.

The project is expected to be a deep dive into the vibrant musical traditions of Yoruba culture, providing audiences with an immersive and informative experience.

A star-studded production team
The production team behind *The Odyssey* is an impressive lineup of creative minds. Leading the charge is Executive Producer Bobo Omotayo, a respected name in the Nigerian entertainment industry.

He is joined by producers Tosin Ashafa and Papa Omotayo, along with the highly acclaimed director Abba Makama, known for his distinctive storytelling style.

With Adekunle Gold now on board as a co-producer, the team’s creative force has been amplified. His expertise in Yoruba music and personal connection to its heritage make him a perfect fit for this role.

The announcement was shared with great enthusiasm by the production team. “We are thrilled to welcome Adekunle Gold as the co-producer of *The Odyssey*,” they stated. “His passion for Yoruba music and his unique perspective will bring incredible depth to this documentary.”



Adekunle Gold: A voice for Yoruba heritage

Adekunle Gold has long been celebrated for his dedication to preserving Yoruba culture through his music.

His songs often blend traditional elements with modern sounds, creating a distinctive style that resonates with audiences worldwide.

As a co-producer, he will bring his artistic vision and cultural insights to *The Odyssey*, ensuring the documentary captures the essence of Yoruba music.

In a social media post announcing his involvement, Adekunle Gold expressed his excitement about the project.

He emphasized the importance of preserving and celebrating Yoruba music’s legacy for future generations.

His fans, who admire his commitment to cultural storytelling, have shown overwhelming support for his new role.

The vision behind *The Odyssey*
According to the team, *The Odyssey* will not only explore the roots of Yoruba music but also celebrate its journey into modern genres like Afrobeats.

The documentary aims to highlight how Yoruba music has influenced global sounds and contributed to the rise of Afrobeats as an international phenomenon.

Director Abba Makama, known for his bold and innovative approach to filmmaking, promises a visually stunning and emotionally impactful narrative. “This documentary will be a love letter to Yoruba music,” he said. “It’s a story of resilience, creativity, and the power of culture.”

Anticipation builds for the documentary. With production now underway, *The Odyssey* is already generating buzz among fans of Nigerian music and culture.

The collaboration of such talented individuals has raised expectations for a groundbreaking documentary that will honor Yoruba music’s legacy.

Adekunle Gold’s involvement has added a layer of excitement to the project. His contributions are expected to enhance the storytelling, making the documentary not just informative but also deeply engaging.

As the team works to bring this ambitious project to life, fans eagerly await updates on the documentary’s progress.

With its focus on celebrating Yoruba music’s influence and evolution, *The Odyssey* promises to be a landmark production in Nigerian entertainment.

A new chapter for Yoruba music

In an era where Afrobeats continues to dominate global charts, *The Odyssey* serves as a timely reminder of the roots that paved the way for its success.

By shining a spotlight on Yoruba music’s history, the documentary will inspire appreciation for the cultural foundations of modern Nigerian music.

Adekunle Gold’s role as co-producer underscores his commitment to showcasing Yoruba heritage on a global stage.

I never wanted fame or wealth – Odumodublvck

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian rapper Odumodublvck has made it clear that achieving fame is not his ultimate goal; he values authenticity and artistic expression in music.

Speaking on Hip TV's program Trending, the artist revealed his primary focus is to make a meaningful impact rather than chasing fame or wealth.

During the interview, Odumodublvck explained, "I have never tried to be famous. The way people talk about wanting fame or money, I don't think like that. I have never wanted fame. It has never crossed my mind."

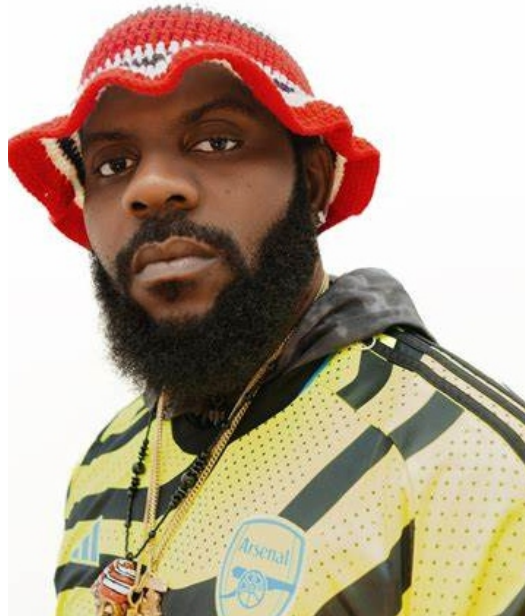
This statement highlights his unique perspective in an industry often associated with glamour and the pursuit of recognition.

Staying true to his roots

The rapper elaborated on his motivations, stating, "When I started my music career, I didn't dream about fame. I only wanted to create great music and make an impact on people's lives."

He expressed that his approach to self-promotion is not about seeking widespread recognition but about connecting with his audience genuinely.

Odumodublvck also distinguished between the type of fame he experiences and the typical image of celebrities portrayed on television. "Promoting myself equates to being famous, but that kind of fame is



different from the TV's 'rich and famous.' I have never bought into that context," he clarified.

The rise of Odumodublvck

The rapper's journey to recognition began in 2022, when he gained attention for his hit single Picanto, featuring Ecko Miles and Zlatan Ibile. The song resonated with fans and marked the beginning of his rise in the industry.

In March 2023, Odumodublvck released another chart-topping single, Declan Rice. The track not only showcased his lyrical talent but also solidified his place as a prominent figure in Nigerian music. The song gained even more traction when Arsenal, a major English football club, used it to announce their signing of the player Declan Rice on July 15, 2023.

Fame on his own terms

Despite his growing popularity, Odumodublvck remains grounded. He is focused on staying true to his

artistic vision and avoiding the distractions of fame.

His approach reflects a refreshing mindset in a world where many artists are drawn to the allure of stardom.

The rapper's philosophy underscores the importance of authenticity and purpose. By prioritizing impact over fame, he has positioned himself as a role model for aspiring musicians. His story serves as a reminder that success doesn't have to come at the cost of one's values or personal vision.

A Legacy of meaningful music

Odumodublvck's journey is a testament to the idea that music can be a powerful tool for change. Through his lyrics and dedication, he continues to inspire his fans while breaking away from the stereotypical image of a celebrity.

As he navigates his career, Odumodublvck remains focused on his mission to create meaningful music. His ability to stay true to himself sets him apart in an industry often driven by trends and superficial goals.

For Odumodublvck, the journey is about more than just fame or fortune. It's about leaving a legacy that resonates with people long after the music stops playing.

With his unique outlook and undeniable talent, he is carving a path that is both inspiring and impactful.

My music isn't mid, Joeboy rejects criticism

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian music sensation Joseph Akinwale Akinfenwa-Donus, popularly known as Joeboy, has fired back at critics who labelled his music as “mid.”

Speaking candidly on the latest episode of the Backstage Banter podcast, the young artist defended his craft and dismissed negative opinions as baseless.

Joeboy, known for his hit songs and rising fame, has recently faced harsh criticism on social media. Critics have described his work as average, using the slang term “mid” to undermine his efforts. However, the singer remains unfazed, standing firm in his belief that his talent and achievements speak for themselves.

Standing strong against critics

Addressing the backlash, Joeboy confidently stated, “There is nothing ‘mid’ about my existence.” He highlighted the progress he has made in his career at such a young age, emphasizing that his journey and accomplishments are far from average.

The singer also pointed out that maintaining humility and focus amidst success is a testament to his character.

Joeboy believes the criticism says more about the detractors than it does about him. “I also feel like the people criticizing me are generally not happy with life,” he said.

He suggested that genuine happiness would not drive someone to attack others online. Instead, he argued, unhappy individuals often project their dissatisfaction onto others.

What does “mid” even mean?

The term “mid,” slang for mediocre, has gained popularity on social media



as a way to dismiss creative work or performance.

Joeboy dismissed the term as overused and often meaningless. “I think it was just a word that got too popular, and people just started using it,” he said, brushing off the label.

For Joeboy, the criticism seems more like a passing trend than a serious critique of his music. He encouraged his fans and followers to look beyond such shallow judgments and focus on the positive aspects of his career.

Achievements that speak volumes Joeboy’s career has been marked by remarkable milestones. From releasing chart-topping hits to earning widespread recognition, he has become one of Nigeria’s most prominent young artists.

Songs like “Baby” and “Beginning” have garnered millions of streams, showcasing his talent and appeal to a global audience.

Despite the negativity, Joeboy continues to inspire his fans with his music and message. His resilience in the face of criticism underscores his

commitment to his craft.

By refusing to let social media trolls dictate his narrative, Joeboy sets an example for young artists navigating the pressures of fame.

A message to critics

In addressing his critics, Joeboy’s tone was firm yet measured. He refrained from lashing out, choosing instead to reflect on the reasons behind their negativity.

His message was clear: success is not defined by the opinions of naysayers. Instead, it is measured by growth, perseverance, and the impact of one’s work.

Joeboy’s response highlights a broader issue many public figures face in the age of social media. The ease of online criticism can often overshadow genuine talent and hard work. However, Joeboy’s approach reminds us that staying true to oneself is the best way to rise above the noise.

Looking ahead

As Joeboy continues his journey, he remains focused on his goals. With a growing fanbase and an impressive portfolio, the singer is determined to keep pushing boundaries and creating music that resonates with his audience.

His ability to rise above criticism and stay grounded is a testament to his character and resilience.

His story serves as a reminder to all: negativity is inevitable, but how one responds to it defines their path. By addressing his critics with confidence and grace, Joeboy shows that success is not just about talent but also about attitude and determination.

America's departure from the WHO would harm everyone

By The Economics

Whether it is a negotiating ploy remains to be seen

DONALD TRUMP has once again set his sights on the World Health Organisation (WHO). On January 20th America's newly inaugurated president signed an executive order signalling that his country would withdraw from the UN agency. The order cites the WHO's mishandling of covid-19, failure to reform and lack of independence as reasons for withdrawal.

Mr Trump's previous attempt to arrange America's departure from the WHO began in July 2020, when he issued a similar order which his successor (and now predecessor) Joe Biden rescinded in January 2021. Withdrawal from the WHO requires a year's notice to the UN. António Guterres, the UN's secretary-general, will therefore need to decide whether the new notification "unpauses" the old one, leaving only six months before it takes effect, or resets the clock back to a full 12 months.

There could be legal challenges, too. One may come from Lawrence Gostin, a professor of global-health law at Georgetown University who said on social media that the decision required congressional approval since it was Congress that put America in the WHO in the first place.

America has been a cornerstone of the WHO since its foundation in 1948—as it was previously of the Pan American Health Organisation, founded in 1902, which was folded into the WHO and became its western-hemisphere arm. But although it provides the organisation with \$1.3bn a year, most of this is earmarked for specific programmes such as "polio" or "health emergencies" that it chooses to fund. America's actual subscription for 2025 is just \$218m—a minuscule fraction of the \$1.7trn the federal government spends on health.

The WHO also collaborates with



American agencies like the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (which, itself, has offices in 60 countries), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health. Loss of this collaboration is more concerning for many inside the WHO than the loss of income.

Mr Trump has been keen to criticise the WHO for its response to the covid-19 pandemic. An independent inquiry requested by UN member countries did indeed find the organisation had been too slow to declare a public-health emergency, and that international alert systems (set by UN members, but within which it had to work) were not swift enough.

The inquiry also found, however, that February 2020 was a "lost month" for many countries—America not excepted—and that there was a failure by authorities all over the planet to take measures to halt the covid virus's spread. Moreover, Mr Trump, who was president at the time, has been widely criticised elsewhere for playing down the severity of the virus in the outbreak's early stages, along with failures to implement a national testing strategy or any national strategy at all. His administration also pushed the FDA to make a drug called hydroxychloroquine available on the

back of flaky evidence that it helped, and even after it was tied to 87 deaths.

WHO loves ya, baby?

Nor would the WHO (and, by extension, the non-American world) be the only loser from the United States withdrawing. America itself would lose. Its absence would limit its access to global-health data such as those American drug firms use to help design annual flu vaccines. And it could also hurt in a way that even Mr Trump might find disturbing. Leaving the WHO's councils would give China an opportunity to increase its soft power by presenting itself as the leader of efforts to keep the world healthy.

This week's executive order might not, though, be the end of the matter. As happened in 2020, it could be a prelude to negotiation. In 2020 Tedros Ghebreyesus, then and now the WHO's director-general, told The Economist that America asked for concessions in order not to leave. On that occasion he felt unable to comply with them. However, if further negotiations are not on the cards, America's departure would weaken the apparatus of global-health security and might sow the seeds of future outbreaks of disease from which it, too, would be at risk.

Deportation crackdown: Trump authorises raid on hospitals, schools, churches

By Dave Oludare Oso

Immigration authorities can now enter schools, healthcare facilities and places of worship to conduct arrests, according to a new policy from the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, announced the change in a statement, emphasizing the importance of eliminating spaces where individuals could evade arrest.

Churches and schools are previously classified "off-limit" for enforcement.

The policy change ends more than a decade of restrictions that protected these "sensitive areas."

"Criminals will no longer be able to hide in America's schools and churches to avoid arrest," a DHS spokesperson said in a statement.

"The Trump administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement, and instead trusts them to use common sense."

The directive, which covers agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border



Protection, rescinds guidance from the Biden administration that created "protected areas" that primarily consisted of places where "children gather, disaster or emergency relief sites, and social services establishments."

The Biden-era guideline mandated that immigration enforcement operations shouldn't take place in or near a location that would limit peoples' access to "essential" services or activities.

A second directive DHS announced on Tuesday also followed through on one of President Trump's executive orders signed Monday night to "terminate all categorical parole programs that are contrary to the policies of the United States established in my Executive Orders," including the humanitarian parole program for people from Nicaragua, Cuba,

Haiti and Venezuela.

Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, told CNN on Tuesday that "ICE is back doing their job, effective today," and that agents are focused on migrants considered a public safety threat.

Homan said arrests of migrants without a criminal record could also be swept up by ICE, especially those living in sanctuary jurisdictions: cities where local law enforcement is prohibited from assisting federal immigration officials.

He declined to provide specific information on locations.

"There are going to be more collateral arrests in sanctuary cities because they forced us to go into the community and find the guy we are looking for," Homan said.

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs, sanctions over war with Ukraine

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Donald Trump threatened to impose “high levels” of tariffs and sanctions on Russia if there is no deal to end the war in Ukraine.

Trump called out Russian President Vladimir Putin by name in the social media post, arguing that he always had a good relationship with the leader, but that it was time to settle “this ridiculous War!”

“We can do it the easy way, or the hard way – and the easy way is always better,” Trump wrote on his social media website. “It’s time to MAKE A DEAL. NO MORE LIVES SHOULD BE LOST!!!”

During his campaign, Trump repeatedly said he could settle the war between Russia and Ukraine in one day if he was elected president. He would go on to claim that Putin would never have invaded had Trump been president.

It’s unclear how much impact economic penalties would have on the Russian government. The Biden administration already imposed various sanctions on Russia’s economic sectors.

Trump said in his post that he was not “looking to hurt Russia” and that he’s offering Putin “a very big FAVOR,” considering the number of lives lost and the impacts on Russia’s economy.

“Settle now, and STOP this ridiculous War! IT’S ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE,” he also wrote.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Trump said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy would like to have peace, “but it takes two to tango.”

“We’ll see what happens anytime they want,” Trump said. “I mean, I’d like to



see that end. Millions of people are being killed, and they’re being killed. It’s a vicious situation.”

On Inauguration Day Monday, Putin congratulated Trump and said he was open to dialogue and a deal for “long-term peace.”

HOW THE RUSSO-UKRAINE WAR BEGAN

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War, which had started in 2014.

The invasion, the largest and deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II, has caused hundreds of thousands of military casualties and tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilian casualties.

As of 2024, Russian troops occupy about 20% of Ukraine. From a population of 41 million, about 8 million Ukrainians had been internally displaced and more than 8.2 million had fled the country by April 2023, creating Europe’s largest refugee crisis since World War II.

In late 2021, Russia massed troops near

Ukraine’s borders and issued demands to the West including a ban on Ukraine ever joining the NATO military alliance.

After repeatedly denying having plans to attack Ukraine, on 24 February 2022, Russian president Vladimir Putin announced a “special military operation”, saying that it was to support the Russian-backed breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, whose paramilitary forces had been fighting Ukraine in the Donbas conflict since 2014.

Putin espoused irredentist and imperialist views challenging Ukraine’s legitimacy as a state, baselessly claimed that the Ukrainian government were neo-Nazis committing genocide against the Russian minority in the Donbas, and said that Russia’s goal was to “demilitarise and denazify” Ukraine.

Russian air strikes and a ground invasion were launched on a northern front from Belarus towards the capital Kyiv, a southern front from Crimea, and an eastern front from the Donbas and towards Kharkiv. Ukraine enacted martial law, ordered a general mobilisation and severed diplomatic relations with Russia.

Convicted US Capitol rioter turns down Trump pardon

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

...Says we were wrong that day

One of the people who served jail time for taking part in the US Capitol riot four years ago has refused a pardon from President Donald Trump, saying: “We were wrong that day.”

Pamela Hemphill, who pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 60 days in prison, told the BBC that there should be no pardons for the riot on 6 January 2021.

“Accepting a pardon would only insult the Capitol police officers, rule of law and, of course, our nation,” she said.

“I pleaded guilty because I was guilty, and accepting a pardon also would serve to contribute to their gaslighting and false narrative.”

Hemphill, who was nicknamed the “Maga granny” by social media users – in reference to Trump’s “Make America great again” slogan – said she saw the Trump government as trying to “rewrite history and I don’t want to be part of that.”

“We were wrong that day, we broke the law – there should be no pardons,” she told the BBC World Service’s Newsday programme.

Trump’s decision to pardon or commute the sentences of nearly



1,600 people involved in the attempt to violently overturn the 2020 election came just hours into his presidency.

In a news conference on Tuesday at the White House, he said: “These people have already served years in prison, and they’ve served them viciously.”

“It’s a disgusting prison. It’s been horrible. It’s inhumane. It’s been a terrible, terrible thing.”

However, the move has drawn an uneasy reaction from some Republican politicians.

Senator Thom Tillis, from North Carolina, said he “just can’t agree” with the move, adding that it “raises legitimate safety issues on Capitol Hill.”

Another Republican US senator, James Lankford from Oklahoma,

told CNN: “I think we need to continue to say we are a party of law and order.”

He added: “I think if you attack a police officer, that’s a very serious issue and they should pay a price for that.”

Also among those pardoned was one of the riot’s most recognisable figures, Jacob Chansley, the self-styled QAnon Shaman, who was released from jail in 2023 after serving 27 months of his 41-month jail sentence.

He told the BBC that he heard the news from his lawyer while he was at the gym.

He added: “I walked outside and I screamed ‘freedom’ at the top of my lungs and then gave a good Native American war cry.”

22 States sue Trump over Birthright Citizenship Order

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

Twenty-two Democratic-led states and civil rights groups filed several lawsuits challenging US President Donald Trump's bid to roll back birthright citizenship on Tuesday in an early bid by his opponents to block his agenda in court.

After his inauguration on Monday, Trump, a Republican, ordered U.S. agencies to refuse to recognise the citizenship of children born in the U.S. if neither their mother nor father is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident.

Consequently, 22 Democratic-led states along with the District of Columbia and the city of San Francisco filed a pair of lawsuits in federal courts in Boston and Seattle asserting Trump had violated the U.S. Constitution.

Two similar cases were filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), immigrant organisations, and an expectant mother in the hours after Trump signed the executive order, kicking off the first major court fight of his administration.

The lawsuits take aim at a central piece of Trump's sweeping immigration crackdown.

If allowed to stand, Trump's order would for the first time deny more than 150,000 children born annually in the United States the right to citizenship, said the office of Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell.

"President Trump does not have the authority to take away constitutional rights," she said in a statement.

Losing out on citizenship would prevent those individuals from having access to federal melike Medicaid health insurance and, when they become older, from working lawfully or voting, the states say.

"Today's immediate lawsuit sends a clear



message to the Trump administration that we will stand up for our residents and their basic constitutional rights," New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin said in a statement.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment.

More lawsuits by Democratic-led states and advocacy groups challenging other aspects of Trump's agenda are expected, with cases already on file challenging the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency and an order Trump signed weakening job protections for civil servants.

Three of the four lawsuits were filed in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Any rulings from judges in those New England states would be reviewed by the Boston-based 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the only federal appeals court whose active judges are all Democratic appointees.

Four states filed a separate case in Washington state, which the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over. U.S. District Judge John Coughenour in Seattle has scheduled a Thursday hearing on whether he should issue a temporary

restraining order blocking enforcement of Trump's order.

A fifth lawsuit was filed in federal court in Maryland by a group of pregnant women and immigrant rights groups, including CASA.

The various lawsuits argue that Trump's executive order violated the right enshrined in the Citizenship Clause of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment that provides that anyone born in the United States is considered a citizen.

The complaints cite the U.S. Supreme Court's 1898 ruling in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, a decision holding that children born in the United States to non-citizen parents are entitled to U.S. citizenship.

The plaintiffs challenging the order include a woman living in Massachusetts identified only as "O. Doe" who is in the country through temporary protected status and is due to give birth in March.

Temporary protected status is available to people whose home countries have experienced natural disasters, armed conflicts, or other extraordinary events and currently covers more than 1 million people from 17 nations.

DOGE sued minutes after Trump took office

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

President Donald Trump's new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is already under threat of being shut down after a lawsuit was filed almost immediately after he took office.

DOGE has been one of Trump's most touted plans leading up to being sworn in as he tapped tech billionaire, Elon Musk to help cut government waste.

It was one of dozens of executive orders the president signed with the flourish of his pen on day one.

But the same day, the government watchdog group, Public Citizen, organization, State Democracy Defenders Fund and the American Federation of Government Employees union filed a lawsuit on Monday minutes after Trump was sworn in.

They point out that despite its name, DOGE is not actually a government agency.

They sued to make sure it complies with the the law governing the formation of advisory committees and named Trump and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as defendants.

They argue the formation of DOGE violates the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because members do not have balanced viewpoints, meets are secretly held and records and work are not available to the public.

They sued to make sure it complies with the the law governing the formation of advisory committees and named Trump and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as defendants.

They argue the formation of DOGE violates the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) because members do not have balanced viewpoints, meets are secretly held and records and work are not available



to the public.

'As constructed, DOGE's mission to advise OMB and the White House on how to slash regulations and cut expenditures puts at risk important consumer safeguards and public protections,' said Public Citizen co-president Lisa Gilbert.

They argue the leadership under Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, who is already on his way out as he plans to run for governor in Ohio, pose conflicts of interest and threat of extremist views.

President Donald Trump signing an executive order on the Department of Government Efficiency on Monday. He has already been sued over DOGE

'This is not about cutting redundant staff; this is about billionaires gutting important programs that American citizens across the country rely on every single day without adequate transparency or accountability,' said Norm Eisen, co-founder of the State Democracy Defends Fund.

Before filing the lawsuit, the groups said they reached out to the Trump transition team with their concerns and asked for representation on the advisory group, but their request was rejected.

They filed their lawsuit in the District of

Columbia and asked the district court to block the administration from using DOGE as an advisory committee and prohibit them from meeting and advising the Trump and OMB.

However, the lawsuit filed may have gotten ahead of what DOGE will actually do as the language of the order has now been revealed.

Trump tapped Vivek Ramaswamy and billionaire Elon Musk to lead DOGE, but Ramaswamy is already headed out as he is planning to launch a bid for Ohio governor soon, DailyMail.com has learned.

According to the executive order signed by the president on Monday, DOGE looks like it would function less as an advisory committee but within the government.

It states that DOGE is actually the public renaming of the U.S. Digital Service (USDS), which was a technology agency created under President Obama, to U.S. DOGE Service.

The order states that within it, there will be a temporary DOGE organization which will last 18 months and end July 4, 2026.

The wording of the order also suggests it is less about government waste as Trump and allies has been publicly saying and more about modernization.

'This Executive Order establishes the Department of Government Efficiency to implement the President's DOGE Agenda, by modernizing Federal technology and software to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity,' the order reads.

On Monday night while signing the order, Trump said that Musk would not have an office in the West Wing, but he indicated DOGE would hire 20 employees to carry out his effort.

Europa League: Besiktas thrash Athletic in Solskjaer's first game

By Dave Oludare Oso



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer enjoyed a dream start to life as Besiktas coach on Wednesday as his new team powered to a 4-1 Europa League win over Athletic Bilbao.

Besiktas were outside the top 24 places in the standings before kick-off but moved into the knockout round berths after a brilliant second-half display.

Solskjaer was back on the bench for the first time since being sacked by Manchester United in November 2021.

“Since we started working with the players, we’ve worked on confidence,” said the Norwegian.

“Football is about feeling good. We got everything we wanted tonight. We worked together as a team. It’s easier to win when you work hard and work smart.”

Previously unbeaten Bilbao remain second in the table, level on points with leaders Lazio.

Besiktas took the lead in the 17th minute as Milot Rashica finished off a flowing counter-attack with a fine strike into the top corner.

The visitors levelled on the stroke of half-time through Unai Gomez, but Rashica restored Besiktas’ advantage on the hour mark.

Rafa Silva’s strike with 13 minutes remaining and Joao Mario’s injury-time penalty added further gloss to the scoreline.

Solskjaer was named permanent Besiktas coach last weekend, replacing Dutchman, Giovanni van Bronckhorst who was sacked at the end of November.

European Champions League results

By Dave Oludare Oso

These are the scores across Europe. An awful day for Manchester City and Bayern Munich.

Leipzig	2	1	Sporting
FT			
Shakhtar D	2	0	Brest
FT			
AC Milan	1	0	Girona
FT			
Arsenal	3	0	Dinamo Zagreb
FT			
Celtic	1	0	Young Boys
FT			
Feyenoord	3	0	Bayern Munich
FT			
PSG	4	2	Man City
FT			
Real Madrid	5	1	RB Salzburg
FT			
Sparta Prague	0	1	Inter Milan
FT			

Man City get their revenge! Wonderkid Lily Murphy downs United Ladies

...Claim Women's League Cup semi-final place

By Dave Oludare Oso

Wonderkid Lily Murphy inspired Manchester City to derby revenge as they downed Manchester United to claim a Women's League Cup semi-final spot.

*Man City won 2-1 to grab derby bragging rights

*Murphy stole the show with goal and assist

*United looked lacklustre and devoid of motivation

TELL ME MORE

City set out on a mission to avenge the loss against their bitter rivals. They started strongly, maintained control, and dictated tempo to heap pressure on United's backline. And in the 12th minute, Murphy gave the Cityzens the breakthrough.

Murphy darted past the full-back and delivered a precise low cross into the box. Laura Coombs was perfectly positioned to meet the ball and clinically finish at the near post, giving goalkeeper Phallon Tullis-Joyce no chance.

After City drew first blood, the game slipped to a lower gear as both teams took up a safety-first approach. While City were happy to knock it around, United patiently kept looking to break on the counter. In the 35th minute, their perseverance bore fruit.

Melvine Malard floated a cross towards the back post, which found Millie Turner in an advanced position.



The centre-back controlled the ball with composure before unleashing a powerful strike into the top corner past Khiara Keating to equalise for the Red Devils.

However, United's joy was short-lived as City restored their lead through an electric Murphy, right on the stroke of half-time. The 18-year-old continued to torment Aoife Mannion on the left wing, cutting inside with precision before unleashing a curling effort that struck the far post and nestled into the net.

The second period saw City manage the game effectively, maintaining their lead despite United's attempts to rally. While the visitors pushed for an equaliser, City's defensive organisation and midfield control ensured they stayed in command.

It was not a classic Manchester derby by any stretch of imagination, thanks to a snooze-fest in the second-half, but Gareth Taylor will not care less as City grabbed the derby bragging rights.

THE MVP

It was one peach of a finish from Murphy! The left-winger brushed Mannion aside with little effort and kept her composure before firing a shot past a hapless Tullis-Joyce to score a sensational solo goal for the winner. Not to forget, she was also the provider for City's first goal!

·THE BIG LOSER

Mannion has to shoulder the blame for both the goals. For the first, she allowed Murphy to fire in the cross inside the box, and for the second, she put up little resistance to prevent the forward from taking aim at goal. She was simply second best to Murphy and United paid the price.

·WHAT COMES NEXT?

After ensuring their progress in the Women's Leagues Cup, City will now shift their focus back to the Women's Super League, where they are set to face Aston Villa next on Saturday. Meanwhile, United will host Brighton a day later at Leigh Sports Village.

Liverpool secure Champions League Last-16 spot with hard-fought win over Lille

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**

Liverpool continued their unbeaten streak in this season's Champions League with a 2-1 victory over Lille at Anfield, sealing their place in the competition's last 16.

Mohamed Salah opened the scoring in the 34th minute, netting his 50th European goal for the Reds. The Egyptian forward latched onto a sublime through ball from Curtis Jones and chipped past Lille goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier to give Liverpool the lead.

Despite Lille's impressive 21-match unbeaten run across all competitions, their resilience was tested further when Aïssa Mandi received a second yellow card for tripping Luis Díaz in the 59th minute, leaving the visitors to finish the game with 10 men.

Lille found a brief glimmer of hope just three minutes later as Jonathan David pounced on a rebound from Hák on Haraldsson's blocked shot to equalize. However, Liverpool regained the advantage swiftly when Harvey Elliott's deflected strike found the bottom corner following a cleared corner in the 67th minute.

Darwin Núñez had a late effort disallowed for offside after



Federico Chiesa's shot was saved, but the Reds held on comfortably to secure their seventh consecutive victory in the league phase.

The win ensures Liverpool's place in the seeded pot for the last 16 draw, set to take place in March. Manager Arne Slot will now focus on the team's upcoming busy schedule, which includes critical matches in the Premier League, FA Cup, and the EFL Cup semi-final second leg against Tottenham.

Professional Display from Liverpool

Liverpool's performance may not have been their most scintillating, but it was efficient. Slot's men overcame a strong Lille press early in the game before finding their rhythm. Salah's opener, expertly set up by Jones, showcased the attacking precision that has been a hallmark of Liverpool's

European campaign this season.

Though Lille managed to equalize against the run of play, Liverpool's persistence and quality proved decisive. Elliott's goal, albeit aided by a deflection, underscored the team's ability to capitalize on set-piece opportunities.

What's Next?

Liverpool will face PSV in their final group game on January 29, needing just a point to secure top spot in their group. Lille, meanwhile, remain in contention for an automatic last-16 spot but will require a strong finish to their campaign to climb into the top eight.

As the competition heats up, Liverpool fans will be optimistic about their team's chances of adding another European triumph to their storied history.