

FG approves N4bn for 10 million vulnerable Nigerians Pg 2



Tariff hike: NLC plans nationwide telecoms boycott, telcos unmoved Pg 5

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US court temporarily blocks Trump's citizenship birthright order Pg 33




Trade wars would be 'catastrophic', WTO chief warns Pg 7



ChatGPT goes offline leaving thousands of users frustrated Pg 8




Court upholds Adedoyin's death sentence for killing OAU student Pg 8

WORLD



Trump's call for lower oil prices to end Russia, Ukraine War PAGE 30

SPORT Pg 34

Real Madrid break €1bn revenue barrier



Police rescues ex-AIG Odumosu's wife, kill kidnappers Pg 11

FG approves N4bn for 10 million vulnerable Nigerians

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal Government has approved N4 billion for conditional cash transfers to no fewer than 10 million vulnerable households in the country.

The Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Professor Nentawe Yilwada announced this on Thursday while speaking at the launch of the 2025 Nigeria Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) at the United Nations House in Abuja.

According to him, the initiative aimed at addressing the nation's growing humanitarian challenges.

The minister said the programme will assist at least 10 million displaced households, focusing on the most vulnerable members of society.

The cash transfers are scheduled to begin in February and run through April, targeting families affected by displacement, particularly in the Northeast.

Announcing the initiative, Professor Yilwada stated, "We are prioritising women, especially widows, pregnant women, and those with disabilities. The experiences of displaced women, particularly those with pregnancy or disability are especially challenging. We understand these vulnerabilities and will continue to support those who are most in need.

"The President has approved the Ministry's plan to begin paying conditional cash transfers to 10



million displaced households between February and April. This initiative aims to support those most in need, particularly vulnerable families affected by displacement."

N2 BILLION FOR INTEREST-FREE LOANS TO FARMERS

In addition to the cash transfer programme, the government has approved N2 billion for interest-free loans to farmers in rural areas to enhance food production and self-sufficiency.

"Additionally, the government has allocated N2 billion to provide interest-free loans to farmers in rural communities," Yilwada noted.

"These loans will range from N300,000 to N400,000 per household, helping farmers access necessary resources and linking them to market opportunities."

He further highlighted additional relief measures, saying, "A N4 billion provision has been approved to support vulnerable groups through

cash transfers, targeting families affected by natural disasters and other crises. These interventions are part of the government's broader strategy to alleviate poverty and provide relief to those in urgent need."

IDPS TOP PRIORITY

The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and affected communities nationwide.

He explained that the HNRP was developed through extensive consultations and designed to address the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected regions, including Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe.

The minister concluded. "We are combining the efforts of humanitarian, developmental, and peace-building platforms to ensure long-term resilience and sustainable solutions for these communities."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
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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2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

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EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
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(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
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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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Shettima: Nigeria to lead Africa's growth through education, innovation in agriculture

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has outlined Nigeria's strategy for leading Africa's growth by focusing on education, innovation, and smart agriculture.

Speaking at the Financial Times Global Risk Roundtable during the 2025 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Shettima emphasised that these investments are crucial for addressing both global and domestic challenges.

The Vice President acknowledged the pivotal role of African youth in driving the continent's transformation.

He pointed out that while crises abound, they also present opportunities for nations to rebuild stronger.

He quoted a Chinese proverb, stating, "The word for crisis in Chinese is 'Wei Ji'. Wei stands for danger, while Ji stands for opportunity."

Shettima stressed that the challenges faced by nations present opportunities to reshape societies for better outcomes.

Shettima reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to embracing innovation, particularly through investments in education, gender-focused initiatives, and agricultural advancements.

He expressed confidence that these efforts would propel Nigeria into the



fourth post-industrial revolution and position the country for global competitiveness.

"We are in a unique position to invest in people, especially in areas that will enable us to leapfrog our economies," he said, emphasising that crisis offers a chance for growth and innovation.

The Vice President also expressed his strong belief in self-reliance, rejecting dependency on foreign aid. "I don't believe in aid; I believe in partnership," he remarked.

"I'd rather carry my poverty with dignity and deal with people, nations, and companies on a pedestal of equality, not in a master-servant relationship."

Shettima highlighted the immense potential of Africa, stressing that the continent's vast resources and strategic importance to global growth would shape the trajectory of the world's future.

He remarked, "My continent is the richest in the world, and the trajectory of global growth is facing Africa. Nigeria will make or make that transition. The youths of Africa are the drivers of change."

In discussing global crises, including the conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East, and Sudan, Shettima acknowledged the resulting supply chain disruptions, humanitarian challenges, and peace concerns.

He called for multilateral collaboration to address these interconnected global issues.

"There is an incestuous relationship between economy and ecology in the African continent. But hope springs eternal in the hearts of men," he said.

"We must look inward to solve our problems, but multilateralism is key. These challenges are global, and we must fuse into one human family to overcome them."

Tariff hike: NLC plans nationwide telecoms boycott, telcos unmoved

By Dave Oludare Oso

In response to the Federal Government's recent approval of a 50 per cent hike in telecommunication tariffs, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has told Nigerians to prepare for a nationwide boycott of telecommunication services.

But telecommunication companies (telcos) remain unmoved, insisting that the tariff hike is essential for the long-term sustainability of the sector and the improvement of services for subscribers.

Meanwhile, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) has charged the telcos to prioritise service improvements following the approval to hike telecommunication tariffs.

Describing the increment as a grave injustice to citizens already burdened by economic hardship, the NLC in a statement by its President, Joe Ajaero, on Wednesday, expressed deep concern over the timing of the hike, which he said coincides with rising inflation and declining purchasing power.

Ajaero said telecommunication services have become a basic necessity, with the average Nigerian worker spending approximately 10 per cent of their income on telecom charges.

The statement read, "The Nigeria Labour Congress expresses its unequivocal condemnation of the Federal Government's recent approval, through the Nigerian Communications Commission of a 50 per cent increase in telecommunication tariffs. This decision, coming at a time when Nigerian workers and the masses are grappling with unprecedented economic hardship, is a clear assault on their welfare and an abandonment of the people to corporate fat cats.

"Telecommunication services are essential for daily communication, work, and access to information. Yet, an



average Nigerian worker already spends approximately 10 per cent of their wages on telecom charges. For a worker earning the current minimum wage of N70,000, this means an increase from N7,000 to a staggering N10,500 per month or 15 per cent of his salary – an unsustainable cost."

The NLC president criticised the government for fast-tracking the tariff approval within a month while taking nearly a year to implement the recently revised minimum wage.

He also argued that this disparity underscores the government's bias towards corporate interests over the welfare of its citizens.

Ajaero said, "This hike exemplifies the government's apparent ease in prioritising corporate profits over citizens' welfare. It is shocking that the government approved this 50 per cent tariff increase for telecom companies within a month, yet took nearly a year to approve the recent minimum wage for workers, despite the rising cost of living and inflation eroding purchasing power.

"This glaring disparity underscores a troubling reality: the government appears more aligned with the interests of wealthy corporations than with the needs of the workers and citizens it is

meant to serve.

"We must ask: When will the government stand for the people it swore to protect? When will the National Assembly rise to its responsibility and hold the executive accountable for policies that blatantly undermine the welfare of the majority? When will the common man heave a sigh of relief in Nigeria?"

The NLC president, however, urged Nigerians to reject the tariff hike and prepare for collective action, including the possibility of a mass boycott of telecommunication services, to compel a reversal of the increase.

"NLC is not opposed to a tariff review but disagrees with the approved rate of increase. We therefore call on the government, the NCC, and the National Assembly to stop the implementation of this ill-advised hike to allow a reasonable conversation around it. If the dialogue agrees on the need for the hike, then, we can all seek a more humane increase and definitely not this 50 per cent hike.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 5

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“The NLC calls on all Nigerian workers and masses to reject this unjustifiable tariff hike. We urge citizens to prepare for collective action, including the possibility of a nationwide boycott of telecommunication services, to compel the reversal of this punitive increase.

“This is for our dignity, our rights, and our survival as a people. The Nigeria Labour Congress remains resolute in defending the interests of Nigerian workers and the masses. We will not allow the people to bear the brunt of policies that further entrench poverty and inequality. Together, we will do our best to resist this injustice and demand that the government prioritizes the interests of its citizens over corporate interests,” the union stated.

No going back – Telcos

Meanwhile, since the announcement of the 50 per cent telecom tariff hike, both the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and Mobile Network Operators have been under intense scrutiny, with the latest opposition coming from the NLC.

Despite the backlash, telcos remain unfazed and have maintained that the tariff hike is essential for the long-term sustainability of the sector and the improvement of services for subscribers.

The Association of Telecommunications Companies of Nigeria (ATCON) insisted that the implementation of the approved tariff hike, which is expected to kick off in February, will proceed as scheduled.

The Chairman of ALTON, Gbenga Adebayor said, “Whether it’s today, tomorrow, or in the near future, the tariff implementation is set to proceed. The key question now is the value that the price adjustment will bring to subscribers.”

The ATCON chief explained that many systems within the telecom sector are outdated and equipment requires optimisation.

Adebayor said, “We are actively working on improving the cost-mile experience significantly.

“Our goal is long-term sustainability—no telecom operator wants to provide poor service quality. Every minute of uptime contributes to revenue, and it’s crucial that we show tangible improvements in user experience and deliver something better to subscribers.”

Agency urges service improvement

Meanwhile, the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCPC) acknowledged the financial pressures faced by telecom operators; however, it urged them to prioritise service improvements.

“We unequivocally state that consumer interests remain paramount,” the consumer watchdog said, stressing that any increase in telecom tariffs must lead to tangible improvements in the quality of service.

The commission welcomed a new NCC directive requiring telecom operators to ensure that tariffs are more

transparent.

It said operators must now disclose all critical details of their plans upfront, including costs, validity periods, and benefits. It noted that a mandatory disclosure table will also be introduced to help consumers make informed decisions and avoid unexpected charges.

“Consumers should no longer have to worry about hidden charges or unexpected costs,” the FCCPC emphasised.

The commission acknowledged ongoing consumer dissatisfaction with poor service quality, such as network congestion, dropped calls, inconsistent internet speeds, and inadequate customer service. It noted that consumers had consistently called for improvements in these areas before any tariff increase.

“It is crucial that tariff adjustments directly translate into demonstrable and tangible service enhancements,” the FCCPC said.

The FCCPC referred to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the NCC, which reaffirms their joint commitment to consumer protection, fair competition, and the elimination of exploitative practices in the telecom sector.

The MoU ensures that any regulatory or pricing adjustments made by telecom operators are balanced with the interests of consumers.

“Operators must prioritise visible and measurable improvements in network reliability, speed, accessibility, and customer service as part of any tariff adjustment,” the FCCPC stated.

Trade wars would be 'catastrophic', WTO chief warns

By Dave Oludare Oso

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said on Thursday that any tit-for-tat trade wars would have catastrophic consequences for global growth in a debate where US President Donald Trump's tariff threats were discussed.

"If we have tit-for-tat retaliation, whether it's 25 percent tariff (or) 60 percent and we go to where we were in the 1930s we're going to see double-digit global GDP losses. That's catastrophic. Everyone will pay," said Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The WTO director-general urged cooler heads to prevail, quipping: "Please let's not hyperventilate. I know we are here to discuss tariffs. I've been saying to everybody: could we chill, also. I just sense a lot of hyperventilation."

She recalled the fallout from the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in the United States during the Great Depression in 1930, which prompted retaliation and worsened the global economic crisis at the time.

"We are very much saying to our members at the WTO: you have other avenues. Even if a tariff is levied, please keep calm, don't wake up and without the necessary groundwork levy your own," she said.

"If we have tit-for-tat retaliation,



whether it's 25 percent tariffs, 60 percent, and we go to where we were in the 1930s, we are going to see double-digit global GDP losses, double-digit. That's catastrophic."

Also on Thursday, European Commission Executive Vice-President, Valdis Dombrovskis said the EU is open to discussing purchases of energy and arms from the US to ward off tariffs that Trump has threatened to impose on the bloc.

Trump has vowed to address a long-running deficit in goods trade with the EU, either through tariffs of more oil and gas exports.

Dombrovskis, who is in charge of the economy at the bloc's executive, said the EU would defend its rights and interests if tariffs were imposed and referred to the retaliatory duties the EU imposed on US imports when EU steel and aluminium were hit by tariffs during Trump's first term.

First and foremost though, the EU

wanted to engage with the new US administration, Dombrovskis told Reuters in an interview in Davos.

He said US liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports had proven helpful when Russia turned off most gas supplies to Europe in 2022 after the conflict in Ukraine started. The US is now the EU's largest LNG supplier.

"We're seeking alternative suppliers," he said. "So we had a good cooperation over the last couple of years, and from our side we are ready to see how to further that."

Europe has said another avenue could be military spending, given Europe's need to strengthen its defense capabilities, which would require strong cooperation within NATO.

"So certainly there is scope also to discuss how we further strengthen also our military cooperation and military-industrial cooperation," Dombrovskis said.

Court upholds Adedoyin's death sentence for killing OAU student

By Dave Oludare Oso

Justice crawls slowly, but surely, as the Court of Appeal sitting in Akure, the Ondo State capital has upheld the death sentence of a popular hotelier, Dr Ramon Adedoyin, who was found guilty in the murder case of Timothy Adegoke, a former Master's student of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

According to the court's judgment on Thursday, the appellate court noted that the judgment by the Osun State High Court which sentenced Adedoyin to death still stands.

The appeal court had reserved the judgment on October 29, 2024.

The judgement read in parts, "The



judgment of the High Court of Osun State stands. Adedoyin's appeal is dismissed in part. The Court of Appeal held that Adedoyin was properly convicted and sentenced to death."

It further noted that the "Order of forfeiture of Hilton Hotel quashed and set aside. Order of education scholarship to

children of Timothy Adegoke by Adedoyin and others quashed and set aside."

THE BACKSTORY

Adegoke lodged at Adedoyin's Hilton Hotels and Resorts in Ile-Ife, Osun State upon his arrival from Abuja on November 5, 2021, to enable him to arrive early for his examination at the OAU Distance Learning Centre, Moro, in the state, on November 6 and 7, 2021.

He later went missing and was found dead and buried in a shallow grave following an investigation by the police in November 2021.

ChatGPT goes offline leaving thousands of users frustrated

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A general gloom pervaded the air as thousands of users worldwide face disruptions with ChatGPT, the popular AI-powered chatbot, going offline, rendering it inaccessible and sparking frustration among its vast user base.

Reports of the service being unavailable began surging on Thursday morning, leaving many unable to access the conversational AI tool.

A website that tracks online service disruptions, Downtetector, reported a significant increase in user-submitted outage reports, surpassing 1,000 at the time of publication.

The cause of the disruption is currently unknown, though potential factors could include server overload, technical issues, or planned maintenance activities.



OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, has not yet issued an official statement regarding the outage. However, the company's status page (if available) or social media channels may provide updates as the situation develops.

This outage is likely to impact a wide range of users, including students, researchers, professionals, and those who

utilize ChatGPT for creative writing, content generation, and other tasks.

Users took to X (formerly Twitter) to express their frustration and share their experiences.

One user tweeted, "ChatGPT is down. Not sure what to do now..." highlighting the dependence many have developed on the AI chatbot.

Another user jokingly tweeted, "ChatGPT is down and I'm starting to think the robots are staging a coup."

A third user simply tweeted, "Every developer coming on X. Cause Chatgpt is down." reflecting the widespread impact of the outage on those who rely on the platform for their work.

NAFDAC boss laments, says 14.3m Nigerians abuse drugs

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has cried out, saying about 14.3 million Nigerians are victims of drug abuse.

Adeyeye stated this at the inaugural ceremony of the agency's youth programme, tagged 'Catch Them Young,' held at the Government Secondary School, Rumuokwuta, Port Harcourt, on Wednesday.

According to her, research findings show that one out of every four high-risk drug users has been arrested for drug-related offences.

She noted that the arrests include 73% for drug possession, 12% for theft, 5% for sex work, 4% for burglary, and 2% for shoplifting.

"This data only reflects the number of arrests; if we consider that most crimes go unreported, it becomes clear that we have a huge problem on our hands," she said.

However, Adeyeye noted the negative effects of drug abuse on families, society, and the nation's socio-economic development.

She explained that these concerns led NAFDAC to initiate a comprehensive, coordinated, and intensive program aimed at reducing the prevalence of drug abuse among secondary school students.



According to the DG, drug addiction can stem from both legal substances, such as prescribed medicines, and illicit drugs.

"This programme is not designed to scare anyone, but to have honest conversations with you. It will help you make informed decisions regarding illicit drug use, including alcohol consumption," she said.

Earlier, Mr. Onogwu Emmanuel, the State Coordinator of NAFDAC in Rivers, explained the decision to move the sensitization and capacity-building program to secondary schools.

He noted that secondary school students are the most vulnerable, emphasizing that the youth, as future leaders, should actively participate in preventing drug abuse.

He also mentioned that two schools

were selected from each of the three senatorial zones of the state for the pilot phase of the project.

In her remarks, the principal of the school, Gladys Iheumamme, commended NAFDAC for the initiative and urged the agency to sustain the project to safeguard the future of Nigerian youth.

Drug abuse involves the harmful or excessive use of substances such as prescription drugs, alcohol, or illegal drugs.

It leads to physical and mental health issues, including addiction, organ damage, and cognitive impairments.

The impact extends to social problems, including crime, family breakdown, and economic strain, affecting communities, healthcare systems, and productivity.

\$6bn Mambilla Fraud: Court approves EFCC's request to amend charges against Agunloye

By Friday Omosola

A Federal High Court sitting in Apo, Abuja on Thursday granted the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) permission to amend the charges against former Minister of Power, Olu Agunloye, over the alleged fraudulent award of the \$6 billion Mambilla Power Project contract.

Presiding over the case, Justice Jude Onwuegbuzie ruled in favor of the EFCC's application to amend the charges and ordered Agunloye to take his plea.

The former minister is facing a seven-count charge bordering on official corruption and the fraudulent handling of the Mambilla Power Project contract.

The EFCC's prosecution counsel, Abba Mohammed, had earlier, on July 1, 2024, urged the court to allow the amendment under Sections 216 and 217 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015.

However, Agunloye's defense counsel, Adeola Adedipe, argued that the EFCC must first



formally seek and obtain the court's leave before altering the charges.

In response, the court directed both parties to submit legal authorities supporting their positions.

The EFCC referred to the Court of Appeal's decision in *Bovoa v. FRN & Anor* (2017) to justify its request.

Delivering the ruling, Justice Onwuegbuzie stated that the amendment was not intended to prejudice the defendant or cause him injustice.

The judge emphasised that a court could permit alterations



or amendments to charges at any point before delivering judgment.

"The arguments of the learned counsel to the defendant are hereby discountenanced. The application is liable to succeed, and I so hold. Subsequently, the application is hereby granted as prayed on the face of the motion paper, and the defendant is hereby ordered to take his plea on the altered or amended charge. This is the ruling of the court," the judge ruled.

The case was adjourned to February 3, 2025, for Agunloye to take his plea on the amended charges.

Police rescues ex-AIG Odumosu's wife, kill kidnappers

By Helen Okechukwu

The wife of Hakeem Odumosu, a retired Assistant Inspector-General of Police, has been rescued from the hands of her abductors through the operatives of Ogun State Command.

Recalled that on 16 January, Mrs. Odumosu was kidnapped from her residential home in the Arepo area of Ogun State at approximately 9:45 PM.

New Daily Prime gathered that two abductors were neutralised while four others flee their camp at creek in the swampy area of Ikorodu and the sum of N10 million paid for her ransom was also recovered, following a manhunt search by the officers of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).



Other items recovered 4 Ak-47 rifles, 3 locally made single barrel rifles, ammunition of various calibers.

The Force spokesperson, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, confirmed that the retired AIG wife was rescued unhurt.

“Police Neutralise AIG Hakeem Odumosu’s wife Kidnappers, Recovers Ransom,” Adejobi noted. “She is currently undergoing medical evaluation as a precautionary measure and has since been reunited with her family.”

Meanwhile, their efforts culminated in a raid on January 23, 2025, at around 06:45 AM.

The spokesperson said Kayode Egbetokun, the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), commended the efforts of the police operatives and Ogun State Commissioner of Police, Lanre Ogunlowo, for the successful operation.

“We are committed to safeguarding Nigerian citizens and our dear country.”

Security operatives rescue 16 kidnap victims, three pastors in Kogi

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

After a two-hour gunfight, security operatives in Kogi State successfully rescued 16 victims, including three pastors, who were kidnapped in the Ofu Local Government Area.

The victims, abducted after attending a crusade in Ejule, regained their freedom through the intervention of a combined team of security personnel.

The pastors, who served as guest ministers at the crusade, were kidnapped on their way to their guest house after the second day of the three-day religious event.

They were ambushed by hoodlums around 11 p.m. on Monday, January 20,



on a street off the Ejule-Anyigba Eoad.

Upon being alerted, the Nigerian Army quickly mobilised other security operatives, launching a search that lasted two nights before locating the kidnappers in a forest.

After a two-hour gunfight, the kidnappers fled with varying degrees of injury, leaving behind the victims.

Kogi State Deputy Governor, Joel Salifu, on Wednesday lauded the bravery of the Nigerian Army and other security agencies involved in the rescue.

In a statement issued by his Press Secretary, Emmanuel Unubi, Salifu expressed his relief that the victims “were safely freed” and commended the security personnel for their efforts.

He also emphasised that under Governor Ahmed Ododo, Kogi would not be a safe haven for criminals, noting the state’s commitment to maintaining security and protecting lives and property.

NUC approves new university in South-East

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has officially approved the establishment of the Ebonyi State University of ICT, Science and Technology in Oferekpe.

This makes it the 66th state university and the 278th in Nigeria's university system.

Executive Secretary of NUC, Prof. Abdullahi Ribadu presented the recognition letter to Governor Francis Nwifuru on Thursday.

The recognition letter will also be sent to key education bodies like JAMB, TETFund, NYSC, and NELFUND.

However, academic activities will only begin after a thorough resource verification.

The NUC explained that it will assess the university's infrastructure, classrooms, library, and staff before granting full approval for operations.

"We want to say on the part of the Commission, we are ready and willing to support this young university.

"However, we need to indicate that giving a recognition letter is not equated with starting or commencement of academic activities. We will still have to undertake what is called resource



verification.

"The Commission will visit when the university is ready, it will invite the Commission to go and look at the state of affairs, to look at the infrastructure, to look at the classrooms, look at the library, look at the staffing.

"After that, the Commission will give the go-ahead for commencement of academic activities. It is pertinent to note that this university becomes the 66th state university," he said.

Governor Nwifuru noted that the university, proclaimed in 2021, aims to expand access to quality education for Ebonyi residents and address technological manpower needs.

"The reason for the establishment of this university is to ramp up the access to quality and affordable tertiary education particularly for the State

indigenes and grant everyone the opportunity to tertiary education in order to address the needed technological manpower requirements of the State in particular, and the Nation in general, especially now that the World is fast-changing because of the Tech-Driven Phenomenon," he said.

He assured that the state government has made significant investments in campus facilities, including buildings for administration, staff, students, and faculty, which are nearing completion.

To ensure skilled manpower, the governor shared that 1,000 students are currently pursuing advanced degrees through the state's scholarship program. Upon graduation, these individuals will strengthen tertiary education within Ebonyi.

2nd Abuja airport runway: N532bn variation unacceptable – Keyamo

By Dave Oludare Oso

Citing inexplicable staggering increase, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, has said the Federal Government will not accept the N532 billion contract variation requested for by the contractors handling the Abuja International Airport second runway.

The minister spoke when he appeared before the National Assembly Joint Committee on Aviation to defend the ministry's 2025 budget.

Keyamo said that the variation was against the initial N90 billion for execution of the project.

The minister, while responding to a question on the reported stalled execution of the project, said that the contractor had moved to site after the initial release of N30 billion and payment of compensation to communities on issues related to land.

He said that the contractor had also done excavation on the site and carried out other works from the funds released and thereafter requested for the N532 billion variation.

This, he said, was unacceptable to the government.

“The variation that the contractors are bringing is a variation that I totally disagree with. I will not go ahead with that variation; the president himself doesn't like variation.

“If a contract was awarded for N90 billion, and they are proposing N532 billion variation within a space of two years, I will not accept it. The option I have is to cancel the contract.



“So, with the situation now, we have two proposals on the table which I will take to the president, and I will consult my chairman. So we are considering various options.

“This country cannot go on with such unreasonable variations,” the minister said.

He said that the ministry proposed a total of N71 billion in the 2025 budget, with capital projects put at N69 billion, personnel, one billion naira while overhead was N745 million.

Keyamo said that a significant number of the projects listed for completion were already ongoing in the ministry.

Earlier, Chairman of the Joint Committee, Sen. Abdulfatai Buhari, said that the committee must ensure efficient use of the funds allocated in order to achieve tangible results.

According to him, the committee will strengthen its oversight on the ministry and the firm spending the funds.

He said that the projects were so important to the aviation sector.

Buhari also said that the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency

(NAMA) which was removed from the Federal Government's budget in 2023-2024, had been included in the 2025 budget.

“Therefore, this budget event will be a critical step in our efforts to ensure that our nation's resources are allocated efficiently and effectively,” he said.

The senator commended the minister and his team for their commitment and the improvement recorded in the sector since the inception of the present administration.

He urged Keyamo to prevail on the agencies under the ministry to always respond promptly to invitations by the National Assembly.

He said that the national assembly had the power to invite the agencies in exercise of its oversight responsibility.

“The only thing we just want to take and appeal to you is your agencies; whenever we call them, we don't want to issue a second warning; we don't want a situation where we will call them and they won't come; we have the power to invite them.

“So we want to appeal to you to appeal to your people that whenever they see a letter from the national assembly, they should show up,” he said.

Nnamdi Kanu wants trial transferred to South East

By Dave Oludare Oso

Following Justice Binta Nyako's withdrawal, detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, has called for a new judge to handle his case at the Federal High Court, Abuja.

Alternatively, Kanu, who has been standing trial on charges bordering on terrorism and treasonable felony since 2015, called for his case to be transferred to the south-east if no judge within Abuja apart from Justice Binta Nyako is willing to preside over it.

Kanu's lead counsel, Aloy Ejimakor, disclosed his client's request on Thursday after a meeting with the IPOB leader at the Department of State Services (DSS) facility in Abuja.

Justice Nyako had, on September 24, 2024, recused herself from handling Kanu's case after the IPOB leader expressed a lack of confidence in her ability to handle the trial fairly.

Following the development, the case was returned to the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho, for reassignment, but he returned it to Justice Nyako for continuation.

Kanu has openly expressed a lack of trust in Justice Nyako and directed his



legal team to ensure she does not preside over the case again.

Ejimakor said Kanu suggested that his trial be moved to the southeast, where the alleged offences were said to have been committed.

"The routine visitation to Onyendu Mazi Nnamdi Kanu continues unabated, as the legal team just concluded a crucial visitation today.

"The central issue arising at today's visitation is the upcoming court date for the continuation of MNK's case.

"Due to its constitutional implications, Onyendu instructed the legal team to take certain prompt steps to ensure that his case is not handled by the same Justice Binta Murtala-Nyako, who had withdrawn from the case by virtue of the order of recusal entered on 24th September 2024.

"The point was stressed that should the case still lie with Justice Murtala-Nyako, it would mean that the same court is disobeying an order that it made."

Kanu's legal team emphasized the importance of assigning a new judge to the case and suggested that, if necessary, the trial be moved to any Federal High Court within the Southeast, where the alleged offences were said to have occurred.

"If no other judge in Abuja is willing to handle the case, the Chief Judge is free to transfer the case to Umuahia, Awka, Enugu, Asaba, Port Harcourt, or any other Federal High Court within the former Eastern Nigeria, where the alleged offences were said to have occurred or had their impact," read his the statement.

New Alaafin pauses traditional rites, returns to Canada

By Dave Oludare Oso

The new Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Akeem Abimbola Owoade, has yet to begin the month-long traditional rites to pave the way for his coronation 10 days after receiving the staff of office and certificate of appointment from Governor Seyi Makinde.

NEW DAILY PRIME reports that Governor Makinde on January 13, 2024, at the Oyo Governor's Office, State Secretariat, Ibadan, presented the staff of office to Owoade.

During the presentation, he said the coronation of the new Alaafin would take place in four weeks' time.

"The coronation proper will take place in four weeks, but today I will hand over the certificate and staff of office," Makinde had said.

After receiving the certificate and staff of office, the Alaafin-elect had, that day, headed to Oyo town where he was given a triumphant entry by the residents of the town.

He also visited his family house in Oyo town where he was received by family and friends.

However, contrary to some quarters' belief that the Alaafin-elect would immediately commence traditional rites to beat the four-week deadline of the Oyo State Governor for coronation, Oba Owoade jetted out to Canada the following day.

It was gathered Owoade had to return



to his Canadian base to officially resign from his workplaces and engagements in Canada.

"He (Owoade) is still in Canada. He has to resign from the places he works in Canada and perfect all those papers before returning to Oyo," The PUNCH quoted a source as saying, on Wednesday.

The Alaafin-elect is a Nigerian and Canadian entrepreneur, philanthropist, and President of 100279 Manitoba Limited, a real estate investment and financial services business in Manitoba, Canada.

Owoade is the Project Coordinator at one of the largest electric power and natural gas utility providers in Canada, Manitoba Hydro.

As of Wednesday, individuals and groups that the Alaafin-elect is mandated to visit, to carry out enthronement rites, said they still awaited Owoade to begin the rites.

"He is yet to commence the traditional rites. We believe he is still preparing himself and getting ready. The process is long as he has to offer several sacrifices and do rituals. It is non-stop, once he starts, he has to visit many places, so he has to be ready.

"I can't specifically state the number of days that the rituals will take, but it will be close to a month; as that includes the Ipebi rituals too," one of those involved in the traditional rites said.

Documents relating to the Alaafin installation indicate that the divinely selected candidate goes to Ipebi for traditional rites and is installed as the new king after the completion of all the traditional rites.

Shots fired as Navy personnel, youths clash in Badagry

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A fierce gunfight broke out on Thursday between Nigerian Navy personnel and local youths in Farasime village, located in the Owode Apa border area of Badagry West, Lagos State.

The confrontation reportedly began when naval officers launched an operation to apprehend suspected smugglers transporting Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), also known as petrol to neighboring Cotonou.

Eyewitnesses revealed that the youths resisted the Navy's attempts to arrest



the smugglers, sparking a violent clash.

A local source, speaking from his hiding spot, described the tense situation, saying, "I'm not sure of my safety right now. The gun battle is still

ongoing in Farasime village near the Owode Apa border.

"It is that the Navy that came to arrest people who are smuggling fuel through there to Cotonou and youths are resisting, so the Navy officers are shooting.

"Please, somebody help us. My house is by the roadside.

"I'm not involved in smuggling. I don't do that kind of business. Youths have put a big fire in front of my house to block the road. I'm very scared."

Gunmen kill popular Imo lawyer, police hunt for perps

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Unknown assailants on Wednesday killed a prominent lawyer, Chinedu Nwogu, in Mgbidi, Oru West Local Government Area of Imo State

Sources reported that the incident occurred around 7 p.m. while Nwogu was driving along the Mgbidi highway. The assailants intercepted his vehicle and carried out the attack.

Details about the motive behind the killing remain unclear, and local authorities have yet to issue an official statement.

One source recounted, "We just saw a car overtake the man's car dangerously, and right before our eyes, the boys carrying guns jumped out and stopped the man's car.

"The gunmen dragged him out of the car



and shot him many times. Then they entered their car and drove off. We were lying on the floor for fear of our lives and watching helplessly.

"The incident did not last up to five minutes to enable people to rally help from the security operatives."

The source further revealed, "People later came out and rushed him to a nearby

hospital, but he was pronounced dead on arrival."

When contacted, the spokesperson for the Imo State Police Command, Henry Okoye, confirmed the incident to our correspondent on Thursday and assured the public that the police had begun an investigation into the killing.

He said, "The police are pained by this incident but I can assure you that we will apprehend the hoodlums behind this dastardly act. We have already commenced an investigation and will stop at nothing to catch the gang."

Efforts on Thursday morning to speak with the Owerri branch chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association, Chris Ihentuge, proved unsuccessful, as he neither answered calls nor responded to messages sent to his phone.

Traders under Lagos bridge get 2-day quit notice

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Lagos State Government on Thursday issued a 48-hour ultimatum to traders operating under the Apongbon Bridge and along drainage setbacks in Lagos Island to vacate the areas.

Announcing this on Thursday, Commissioner for the Environment and Water Resources, Mr Tokunbo Wahab, said the directive is part of the state's urban regeneration initiative aimed at improving infrastructure and tackling environmental challenges.

Wahab spoke during an inspection of the Savage/Elegbata/Bombata Drainage Channel.

Speaking in a statement by the Director of Public Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Kunle Adeshina, Wahab highlighted the impact of human activities in the area, including flooding and threats to lives and property.

The commissioner said, "I have instructed that the shop/stall owners be served abatement notice. We are going to clear these infractions and keep the maintenance work going while ensuring that the contract is revisited to accommodate these two collectors."

He noted that the illegal conversion of spaces under the Apongbon Bridge into livestock markets and ordered the immediate relocation of traders to designated areas.

He said, "What we saw is not something that we are happy about. People have fully built on setback and drainage channels and when you build



structures on these infrastructure, how do you expect these infrastructure to be maintained?

"We have abused these infrastructure and I have given directives to the appropriate department to serve notice of abatement and if compliance is not carried out enforcement will commence."

Wahab warned that the state would enforce environmental laws if compliance is not achieved.

He emphasised that all affected traders would be monitored after the 48-hour deadline, with violators facing penalties.

In addition, two buildings under construction on Alakoro Martins Street and in Ebute Ero Market were sealed for illegally stacking materials on drainage systems.

Wahab stated that offenders must clear the blockages and restore the drainage system before the buildings can be unsealed.

He said, "The buildings were sealed because they stacked their building materials on the drainage system and this is illegal because they block the drainage system in the process. Such offenders will be required to remove the materials and clean the drainage system before they are unsealed."

Wahab reaffirmed the state's commitment to working with local governments to maintain market spaces and enforce environmental laws.

He also stressed the importance of public cooperation in preserving infrastructure and preventing illegal activities such as refuse dumping and trading on drainage channels.

Addressing concerns raised by the Lagos State House of Assembly on stolen manhole covers, Wahab noted that the Ministries of Environment and Works are collaborating to resolve the issue.

114 bag first class as OOU graduates

6,066 **By Alade Adisa**

A total of 114 are graduating in the first class category, as Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), Ago Iwoye, Ogun State holds its 34th convocation ceremony.

Disclosing this on Thursday at a press briefing held as part of the events for the ceremony in Ago Iwoye, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ayodeji Agboola, said a total of 6,066 would be bagging degrees and diplomas in various programmes during the ceremony.

This is just as the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), Mr Sonny Echono would deliver the convocation lecture titled, “TETFund and Educational Development in Nigeria: The History, the Treasures and Future.”

As part of the programmes lined up, a Health Walk for staff and students will hold on Friday, 24th January at the Main Campus which will be followed by an Agriculture and Engineering Show and later, a Special Jumat Service.

On Sunday, 26th January, a Convocation Service will take place at the Chapel of Abundant Life, Main Campus by 10.00am, while there will be a Convocation Play and Novelty Match on Monday, 27th January and Tuesday, 28th January respectively.

The University will on Wednesday, 29th January award Bachelor Degrees to graduands from the Faculties of Arts, Basic Medical Sciences, Education, Law, Pharmacy and Social



Sciences.

The Convocation train will, on Thursday, 30th January, confer degree awards on graduands from the Faculties of Administration and Management Sciences, Agricultural Management and Rural Development, Agricultural Production and Renewable Resources, Clinical Sciences, Engineering, Environmental Studies and Science.

The high point and grand finale of the Convocation Ceremonies will come up on Friday, 31st January by 10.00am with the conferment of postgraduate degrees and award of prizes as well as the conferment of Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science on a globally acclaimed Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, who is also the Chief Medical Director, Eye Foundation Hospital Group, Dr. Adekunle Olubola Hassan.

Prof. Agboola said, “On same day, the Convocation Lecture entitled, ‘TETFund and Educational

Development in Nigeria: The History, the Treasures and Future’ will be delivered by the Executive Secretary, TETFund, Arch. Sonny Echono.

“For the record, a total number of 6,066 graduands, including regular students as well as those from the Centre for Continuing Education programmes will convoke.

”The breakdown shows that there are 114 graduands that earned First Class; a total number of 1,848 in Second Class Upper Division; 3,092 in Second Class Lower Division, while 707 others obtained Third Class. A total of 33 graduands had pass degree.

“The Visitor to the University, who is also the Governor of Ogun State, His Excellency Prince Dapo Abiodun, who will commission some projects at the Main Campus, will also be the Special Guest of Honour at this occasion which is expected to attract distinguished academics, government functionaries, captains of industry and eminent Nigerians from all walks of life,” he said.

Lagos announces new fare for 2025 Hajj

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board has announced the total fare of ₦8,784,085.59 for intending pilgrims participating in the 2025 Hajj exercise in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the state.

Board Secretary Saheed Onipede made this announcement in a statement on Monday, following the fare announcement by Abdullahi Usman, the Chairman/CEO of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON).

The Board urged intending pilgrims who have already paid the initial deposit of ₦8.5 million to pay the remaining balance of ₦284,085.59.

Those who have obtained the intention form but have yet to pay the initial deposit are encouraged to begin making payments immediately to secure their spots for the pilgrimage.

Intending pilgrims are reminded to pay the full Hajj fare by the deadline of January 31, 2025.

Onipede explained that



NAHCON set the specific fare for each zone in the country with the approval of the Vice President of Nigeria.

He further clarified that after extensive consultations with stakeholders, the fare for intending pilgrims from the Southern states, including Lagos, is ₦8,784,085.59.

Those from Borno and Adamawa zones are expected to pay ₦8,327,125.59, while pilgrims from the Northern zone will pay ₦8,457,685.59.

Recognising the challenges posed by the current economic situation, the Board's Secretary acknowledged that raising such a substantial amount for a holy pilgrimage is not an easy task.

He urged pilgrims not to lose

hope, reassuring them that Allah, in His infinite mercy, would provide for them and reward them abundantly for answering His call.

Onipede also highlighted the many benefits pilgrims will receive by embarking on the journey with the state, including comfortable accommodations in hotels close to the Haram (Kaabah) in Makkah and Masjid Nabawih (Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah.

Additionally, intending pilgrims will be airlifted by a reputable airline known for its excellent service, with provisions for breakfast and dinner that include local delicacies.

Regular spiritual counseling by Islamic clerics will also be provided, among other benefits.

Minister cautions as Nigerians named largest users of bleaching cream

By Helen Okechukwu

The Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Dr. Iziac Salako, has urged citizens to refrain from the usage of bleaching cream to avert health risks.

Salako, while speaking in Gabon on Wednesday in a regional awareness-raising workshop on the elimination of lightening cosmetics products, emphasised the widespread use in Africa, particularly among women.

He revealed in a document made available to pressmen in Abuja that the Nigerian government is making plans to develop a national policy on cosmetics to ensure quality cosmetic production.

“Recognising the pervasive use of unsafe cosmetics and the health risks they pose, the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has taken proactive steps to educate the populace.”

The Minister highlighted that men are also responsible for mounting pressure on women directly or indirectly, who tend to patronise sellers of bleaching cream.

According to the document, it noted that “Nigeria may have been called ‘the world capital of skin bleaching,’ or ‘the skin-lightening hothouse of the world,’ potentially due to its recognition as having the highest usage rates of SLPs across the globe, put at 77 percent among Nigerian women by WHO. This rate is the highest in the world, reinforcing the



prevalence of a cultural and societal preference for lighter skintones in the country.”

“Skin-whitening products include skin-lightening or whiteners that are widely used among a wide range of demographic groups regardless of age, socio-economic status, or education level,” he said.

Speaking on the survey taken, he said, “The Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (through the Cosmetics Safety Management Programme) sampled the opinion of manufacturers and regulatory agents on skin lightening agent usage and found that 52 percent of manufacturers use skin lightening agents in their formulation.”

Nigeria Opinion Institute, a dominating public opinion polling organisation, noted that about 64 percent of Nigerians believe skin bleaching is highly prevalent, while 97 percent believe it is common among Nigerian women.

Read Also: Malpractice Men’s Health

Clinic

Salako explained that the ingredients of bleaching cream, such as mercury, hydroquinone, steroids, and other heavy metals like arsenic, lead, and cadmium, can lead to cancer and other health issues.

Due to the alarming usage rate in Africa, he stressed the public health campaigns, stricter regulatory enforcement, and community-based advocacy to address this issue. He mentioned efforts have been made to eliminate unregistered and counterfeit products from circulating.

Salako said, “Community outreach programmes and media campaigns to educate the public on the risks of using unsafe cosmetics and the importance of verifying product authenticity before purchase are conducted. The introduction of the MedSafety app is being used to ease the reporting of all forms of adverse reactions, including adverse cosmetic events.”

Up to one in 12 in London is an illegal migrant

By Sam Ashworth-Hayes , Charles Hymas

Government ‘must do more on deportations’ as new estimate suggests more than 1m people are illegally living in UK

London is home to as many as 585,000 illegal migrants, equivalent to one in 12 of the city’s population, according to a previously confidential report.

There is mounting concern over the failure to control Britain’s borders and the pressure that places on public services such as schools and the NHS. The use of illegal migrants in the black economy, working in roles such as food delivery drivers, is also a concern.

Despite this, no official figures on the scale of the problem are provided by the Home Office.

The new estimate has emerged in a study commissioned by Thames Water, obtained by The Telegraph under freedom of information-style laws for the environment.

In total, there are estimated to be more than one million illegal migrants in the UK, with 60 per cent of those in the capital.

The report suggests most illegal migrants arrived in the UK on work, study or visitor visas and then overstayed.

Migration experts suggested that the figures could be an underestimate as



some of the underlying data dates from 2017, before the surge in migrants crossing the Channel.

On Tuesday, the Home Office confirmed 1,000 migrants had crossed so far this year, following 38,816 in 2024, the second highest total on record.

Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, said the figures in the report were “deeply alarming”.

“Having lost control of illegal immigration over the Channel, the Labour Government must now urgently start deporting far more illegal immigrants,” he said.

“It is totally unacceptable to have these numbers of illegal immigrants in the UK. The law needs to be looked at so that spurious human rights, modern slavery and asylum claims cannot be used to delay or prevent removals of illegal immigrants.”

Alp Mehmet, chairman of think tank Migration Watch, said: “A population underestimate on this scale has colossal implications for utility and local authority planning. Utilities, housing, the NHS, GP surgeries and schools will all come under severe pressure, further risking community cohesion.”

The Telegraph has previously revealed accusations that the NHS is giving undocumented migrants priority for appointments and at A&E, as the health service continues to battle to bring down waiting lists.

Richard Tice, the deputy leader of Reform UK, said: “One in 12 people in London are here illegally, probably working illegally using taxpayer-funded public infrastructure and services. It is totally unacceptable.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 21

“It’s another reason why we need to properly control our borders.” It based its analysis on academic estimates of illegal migrants nationally including the respected Pew Research Center in the US, the London School of Economics, Office for National Statistics data and other research.

The report for Thames Water, by Edge Analytics, demography and data experts at Leeds University, aimed to quantify the “hidden” and “transient” users of their services to enable them to better meet demand.

It then used National Insurance registrations for non-EU foreign nationals over a nine-year period to estimate the number of “irregular” migrants in each London borough.

For the whole of London, it produced a range of 390,355 illegal migrants at its lowest to 585,533 at its highest, with a median figure of 487,944. With an estimated population of 7,044,667, that would mean up to one in 12 of the capital’s population is an illegal migrant.

When other areas outside London covered by Thames Water are included such as Henley, Guildford, Reading, Swindon and Newbury, the range for the number of illegal migrants rises to between 415,568 and 623,351.

Home Office fails to keep track

The Home Office does not publish any comprehensive data estimating the number of illegal migrants in the UK. Only since 2018 has it produced figures on the number of illegal Channel migrants reaching the UK.

However, there have been unofficial estimates by insiders over the years. In 2019, David Wood, a former director general of immigration enforcement, said illegal immigration was “probably” running at around 150,000 a year.

The report cites Home Office calculations that between 150,000 and 250,000 foreign nationals fail to return to their home country each year.

It also cites estimates by Migration Watch that there is a net addition to the population of 70,000 irregular migrants a year owing to visa overstayers, illegal arrivals and failed asylum seekers.

The report notes that there are an estimated further 165,000 legal migrants who are working illegally in the UK economy. However, these were not included in the overall calculation by the researchers because they were officially recorded users of water utilities so not part of the “hidden” total of “irregular” migrants.

A Thames Water spokesman said: “Water companies have a regulatory obligation to undertake a ‘water balance’, which includes understanding how much water our customers use on a per-person basis, and how it is distributed across our supply area.

“Analysis to estimate ‘hidden and transient’ populations is carried out by an independent firm of consultants, who draw from publicly available sources including census, surveys, and published academic research. Thames Water played no part in the writing of the report and the conclusions drawn are those of the independent firm that carried out the research.”

A Home Office spokesman said: “This Government is strengthening global partnerships and rooting out the criminal gangs who profit from small boat crossings which threaten lives.

“We have also removed 16,400 illegal migrants in just six months, the highest figure in half a decade, making it clear that those who arrive illegally will be returned.”

Home Office sources said the underlying data were out of date and there was no officially recognised way of measuring how many illegal migrants are in Britain.

Femi Adebayo, Mercy Aigbe, Eniola Badmus, others pay condolence visit to Kwam 1

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Nollywood personalities industry have been paying condolences visit to legendary Fuji musician, Wasiu Ayinde Marshal, popularly known as KWAM 1 or K1 De Ultimate, in his palatial mansion in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State.

Only last week, the popular singer lost his mother, Alhaja Halimah Abike Akeredolu Adesanya (Anifowoshe), on January 18, 2025, at the age of 105. Her demise greatly affected the musician, as he was seen crying in videos that trended online.

According to the Islamic customs, Alhaja Anifowoshe was laid to rest on the same day, attracting a large number of crowds to the burial

ceremony.

Following K1's mom's death, several dignitaries and A-list celebrities have mourned with the Fuji music star. Clip captured the moment President Bola Tinubu called K1 De Ultimate to commemorate with him.

Days after the tragedy, some top Nigerian celebrities travelled from Lagos to Ijebu Ode to visit Kwam 1 and share their condolences.

A series of photos and videos from the visit made the rounds online. Some of those present included Eniola Badmus, Dayo Amusa, Mercy Aigbe and her husband Kazim Adeoti, aka Adekaz, Femi Adebayo, Aliu Gafar and more.

Femi Adebayo engaged in an emotional conversation with the Fuji maestro, during which Kwam1 offered heartfelt prayers for the actor. He also paid his tribute to Alhaja Halimah.

Mercy Aigbe and her husband were also seen exchanging comforting words with the singer's wife, Emmanuella Ropo.

Dayo Amusa made her visit even more personal by bringing along her newborn child. The actress, who welcomed her first child just two months ago, is known to share a close friendship with Kwam1. Her presence, accompanied by her baby, added a poignant touch to the occasion.

Jaywon criticizes Odumodublvck for controversial diss remark

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Singer Jaywon took the opportunity to address comments made by fellow artist Odumodublvck, who mockingly referred to Jaywon's hit song, "This Year."

The exchange has sparked discussions among fans and industry insiders alike.

Accusations of relevance

Jaywon did not hold back in his response. He accused Odumodublvck of mentioning his name during interviews to maintain his relevance in the music scene.

This pointed remark highlights the competitive nature of the industry, where artists often rely on the success of their peers to stay in the spotlight.

"Odumodu will always mention my name in his interviews because that's the only way he stays relevant," Jaywon tweeted, making it clear that he believes Odumodublvck is leveraging his name for publicity. He further noted, "Even he admits that none of his other beefs trend because they're not Jaywon." This statement underscores the notion that Jaywon's popularity continues to overshadow other disputes Odumodublvck may have.

Clarifying intentions

Jaywon also clarified that his previous remarks about Odumodublvck's talents were not intended as insults but rather as straightforward observations.

"When I said he's not all that, it wasn't beef; it was just facts," he asserted. This distinction is crucial as it reflects Jaywon's desire to be seen as honest rather than confrontational.

A call for focus

Moreover, Jaywon urged Odumodublvck to redirect his focus



toward his own career instead of repeatedly referencing him. "I can't stand the fact that Odumodu thinks I'm beefing with him," he expressed. The implication is that Jaywon is more interested in his own artistic journey than in engaging in a public feud.

"Yo, get over it and focus on your career, bro," Jaywon continued in his tweet. This message serves as both a reminder and a challenge to Odumodublvck. It emphasizes that constant comparisons to Jaywon may hinder Odumodublvck's growth as an artist.

The dynamics of celebrity rivalry

Jaywon's statements have ignited a conversation about the dynamics of celebrity and the lengths to which some artists go to maintain their status.

In an industry where attention is currency, it is not uncommon for artists to use their peers as stepping stones.

Celebrated Nigerian singer Jaywon and Rapper Odumodublvck. [Photo credit: Google]

Celebrated Nigerian singer Jaywon and Rapper Odumodublvck. [Photo credit: Google]

However, Jaywon's assertive stance suggests that he prefers to be acknowledged for his own

achievements rather than be a pawn in someone else's narrative.

Looking ahead

As the dust settles on this exchange, fans are left to ponder the implications of Jaywon's comments.

Will this public back-and-forth influence Odumodublvck's approach to his music and public persona? Or will it simply fuel a rivalry that continues to captivate audiences?

Conclusion: Authenticity in the spotlight

In conclusion, Jaywon's response to Odumodublvck serves as a reminder of the complexities within the music industry.

It highlights the importance of authenticity and the potential pitfalls of relying too heavily on the success of others.

As both artists continue to navigate their careers, it will be interesting to see how this situation evolves.

For now, Jaywon remains unapologetic, standing firm in his beliefs while encouraging his fellow artists to prioritize his path.

Wumi Toriola becomes Nollywood's second highest-grossing producer for 2024

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

In a stunning development for the Nigerian film industry, actress and producer Wumi Toriola has emerged as the second-highest-grossing producer for 2024.

This impressive feat comes courtesy of her film, *Queen Lateefah*, which has earned a prestigious spot on the Nigeria Box ranking list.

Box office success

According to the latest figures, Wumi Toriola's *Queen Lateefah* grossed an astounding N365 million at the box office.

She shares this honour with fellow producer Judith Audu, who also reached the same impressive revenue.

However, it is Funke Akindele who has claimed the top position, with her film raking in a remarkable N1.124 billion.

This competitive landscape showcases the thriving nature of Nollywood, with producers pushing boundaries and elevating the industry's global profile.

Gratitude and celebration

Wumi Toriola took to social media to express her heartfelt gratitude for this achievement. In her post, she congratulated her fellow producers and acknowledged their hard work. "Grateful still. Congratulations to all the film producers. *Queen Lateefah* is sitting pretty at No. 2. E clear still. Congratulations @judithaudu. We did a thing," she wrote, highlighting her camaraderie with her peers.

Successful collaborations

The actress did not stop there. She also celebrated her successful collaboration with Captain of the Sea Productions.

This partnership has been recognized as the highest-grossing Nollywood collaboration, further solidifying Toriola's impact on the industry.



"Grateful for the healthy collaboration for *Queen Lateefah* with @cinemaxng @iamopeajayi. Thank you for making it hitch-free and still healthy. We hope for greater works in 2025," she shared, expressing her optimism for future projects.

Impact on female representation

Wumi Toriola's rise as a prominent figure in the industry is no accident. Her dedication to her craft and her ability to collaborate effectively with others have set her apart.

The film *Queen Lateefah* reflects her talent as both an actress and a producer. The film's success speaks volumes about her vision and leadership.

A shift in audience preferences

In the competitive world of Nollywood, Toriola's achievement is significant. It underscores the growing influence of female producers in the industry.

Yoruba actress Wumi Toriola. [Photo credit: Google]

Yoruba actress Wumi Toriola. [Photo credit: Google]

Women are increasingly taking the reins and breaking new ground in film production. They are not just participants; they are leaders, innovators, and trailblazers.

The positive reception of *Queen Lateefah* also highlights a shift in audience preferences. Viewers are eager for fresh stories and compelling characters.

Toriola's film has resonated with many and has captured the attention of both local and international audiences.

This success is a testament to the rich storytelling tradition in Nigeria and the growing global interest in Nollywood.

Looking ahead

As 2024 progresses, Wumi Toriola's focus remains on creating impactful content. She aims to continue exploring diverse narratives that reflect the realities and aspirations of her audience.

Her ambition is evident as she looks ahead to 2025, eager to produce even more groundbreaking works.

An inspiration for future generations

The journey of Wumi Toriola serves as an inspiration for aspiring filmmakers and actors. Her story demonstrates that hard work, perseverance, and collaboration can lead to remarkable achievements.

As she continues to make her mark in the industry, she sets a powerful example for the next generation of filmmakers.

Conclusion: A bright future for Nollywood

In conclusion, Wumi Toriola's recognition as the second-highest-grossing producer in Nigeria is a significant milestone in her career.

It reflects her hard work, dedication, and passion for filmmaking. As she celebrates this achievement, she also acknowledges the contributions of her fellow producers and collaborators.

The future looks bright for Toriola and Nollywood as a whole. With talent like hers driving the industry forward, audiences can expect even more exceptional films in the years to come.

Ebuka urges politicians to embrace traditional attires

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Fashion icon Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, also called Ebuka, urges Nigerian politicians and officials to wear traditional attire during international engagements.

The renowned Big Brother Naija host made this suggestion via his social media platform, X (formerly Twitter). "I think Nigerian politicians/officials should wear traditional attire even more when they're out of the country," he wrote, sparking widespread conversation online.

Championing Nigerian fashion

Ebuka, celebrated for his bold and innovative fashion choices, has long been an advocate of Nigerian fashion.

Over the years, his use of local fabrics like Ankara and Aso Oke has thrilled fans and elevated the country's fashion industry.

His influence as a style icon has positioned him as a key figure in promoting Nigeria's cultural identity through clothing.

<https://twitter.com/Ebuka/status/1882005298011095291>

Global appeal of Nigerian fabrics

Nigerian fashion is no longer confined to local events or celebrations. Fabrics such as Ankara, Adire, and Aso Oke have gained global popularity.

International fashion shows now feature these vibrant materials, and celebrities worldwide proudly wear them.

This rising global interest presents an opportunity for Nigerian officials to highlight the nation's cultural heritage on the world stage.

Cultural identity through clothing



Politicians and public officials represent their countries in more ways than one. By wearing traditional attire during international engagements, Nigerian leaders can express the richness of their heritage.

These outfits serve as a visual statement of cultural pride, fostering respect and admiration from foreign counterparts.

Enhancing diplomatic relations

Traditional clothing can also enhance diplomatic efforts. Officials wearing distinctive Nigerian designs like Aso Oke or Ankara create opportunities for cultural exchange.

Such attire often attracts interest and sparks conversations, paving the way for stronger international relationships.

Learning from other nations

Countries like India and Japan have long used traditional clothing to make an impression on the global stage.

Nigeria, with its vibrant and diverse fashion culture, has a similar opportunity to leverage clothing as a form of cultural diplomacy.

By doing so, the country can strengthen its position as a leader in African fashion.

Fashion icon Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, [PHOTO CREDIT: Google]

Fashion icon Ebuka Obi-Uchendu, [PHOTO CREDIT: Google]

Public reactions and challenges

Ebuka's suggestion has resonated with many Nigerians. Social media platforms have been abuzz with support for the idea.

Many believe traditional attire could redefine how Nigerian politicians are perceived globally. However, some have raised concerns about practicality, citing the need for comfort and versatility in varying climates.

Promoting Nigeria's rich heritage

Ebuka's advocacy highlights the importance of celebrating culture. By embracing traditional attire during international appearances, Nigerian officials can make bold statements about their identity.

With Nigerian fabrics already gaining traction worldwide, this move could further cement the country's influence in the global fashion scene.

Conclusion

Ebuka's call to action is timely and impactful. Encouraging politicians to wear traditional attire abroad is a powerful way to showcase Nigeria's rich cultural heritage.

It reinforces the idea that fashion can be a tool for diplomacy and national pride, positioning Nigeria as a beacon of African creativity and culture.

Funke Akindele addresses backlash over wearing marriage ring

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Funke Akindele responds to criticism over wearing a ring on her “marriage finger” despite being divorced, addressing a netizen’s comments.

The critique sparked a lively debate online, with fans and followers weighing in on the matter.

The commenter, identified as @OriretanHonour on X, disapproved of the actress’s choice. He claimed that wearing the ring might send the wrong message to potential suitors.

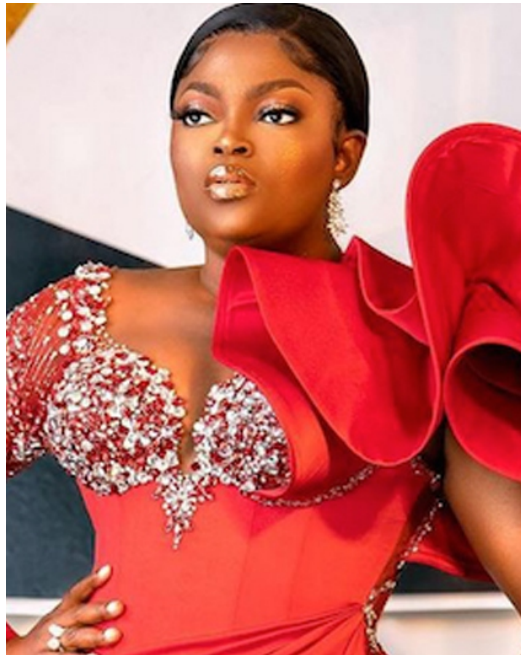
In his post, he wrote: “Funke, it’s unwise to still wear a ring on your marriage finger knowing you’re divorced. Even worse, it might chase away your future husband. Little things count now that you’re still famous, hot, and rich. Mind your public acts. Remove the ring now. You need a man in your life ASAP. Act fast. Be wise.”

Akindele shuts down criticism

The unsolicited advice was met with a straightforward response from Akindele. Rather than addressing the ring directly, she shifted the conversation to her current priorities.

She responded simply, “I need money! That’s the koko,” implying that financial goals precede societal expectations or public perceptions.

Her comment underscored her practical approach to life and work. Despite personal challenges, Akindele has often highlighted her determination to achieve financial



independence and stability.

A look at Akindele’s marital history

Akindele’s marital journey has been a topic of public interest for years. She married her first husband, Mr. Kehinde Oloyede, on May 26, 2012. Unfortunately, the marriage ended in divorce in July 2013 due to irreconcilable differences.

Her second marriage was to music producer JJC Skillz. The couple tied the knot and welcomed twins during their relationship. However, the marriage ended in 2022.

In a previous interview with Wazobia FM, Akindele openly discussed her experiences. She acknowledged the challenges of her two divorces but rejected the idea that they defined her. “Being divorced twice doesn’t make me a failure,” she asserted, emphasizing her resilience and focus on her career and personal growth.

Fans rally behind the actress

Akindele’s response to the criticism resonated with her fans, many of whom praised her confidence and ability to prioritize her goals over societal expectations.

Related news: Funke Akindele: Life is too short, don’t let worries bring you down

Her fans admired her for standing firm and maintaining her independence, even in the face of public scrutiny.

Her approach reflects a broader conversation about the pressures women in the public eye face. Societal expectations often impose rigid norms, particularly concerning relationships and personal choices.

Akindele’s refusal to conform serves as a reminder of the importance of individuality and self-worth.

A role model in Nollywood

As one of Nollywood’s most influential figures, she continues to inspire through her work and resilience.

Her ability to stay focused despite challenges, both personal and professional, sets an example for many.

By prioritizing her financial goals and rejecting unnecessary judgment, Akindele sends a clear message: success and happiness stem from personal choices and achievements, not from meeting others’ expectations.

Trevor Noah to host 2025 Grammy Awards for fifth time

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Renowned South African comedian and producer Trevor Noah will return as the host for this year's much-anticipated Grammy Awards ceremony.

This marks Noah's fifth consecutive year at the helm of the prestigious music awards show, a role he has embraced since 2021.

His charisma and humour have made him a favourite among audiences, and his return is highly anticipated.

Event details

The 67th Grammy Awards will take place in Los Angeles on February 2, 2025. As the event draws closer, the excitement surrounding the nominees is palpable.

This year, Nigerian Afrobeats artists are making waves, particularly in the African Song Performance categories.

The genre has gained significant international recognition, and its influence is evident in the nominations.

Afrobeats artists shine

Burna Boy, a prominent figure in the Afrobeats scene, has received a nomination for his hit song "Higher." This track showcases his unique style and has resonated with fans around the globe.

Asake also stands out, having earned a nomination for his collaboration with the well-known artist Wizkid on the song "MMS."

Their partnership has created a buzz in the music industry, highlighting the growing synergy among African artists.

Tems leads the way

Additionally, Tems has made a remarkable impact this year. She is the only African musician with three



nominations across various global music categories.

Her talent and versatility have not gone unnoticed, and her nominations reflect her rising star status in the international music arena.

Celebrating more talent

Other notable artists who have received nominations include Davido, Yemi Alade, and Lojay. Each of these musicians has contributed to the vibrant sound of Afrobeats, pushing the genre to new heights.

Their nominations not only celebrate their accomplishments but also shine a light on the rich musical talent emerging from Africa.

Anticipation builds

As the Grammy Awards approach, the spotlight will undoubtedly be on these artists and their performances.

The event promises to be a celebration of music, culture, and creativity. With Trevor Noah leading the show, viewers can expect a night filled with laughter and memorable moments.

Noah's unique hosting style

Noah's ability to connect with audiences has made him a standout host. His unique perspective and wit bring a refreshing energy to the stage.

Fans eagerly await his comedic insights and entertaining commentary as the night unfolds.

A celebration of diversity

In addition to the excitement of the nominees and the performances, the Grammy Awards serve as a platform to recognize the diverse musical landscape of our world.

This year's nominations reflect a growing appreciation for African artists and their contributions to the global music scene. It is a testament to the power of music in bridging cultural gaps and fostering unity.

Looking ahead

As February 2 approaches, anticipation continues to build. The Grammy Awards promise to be a night of celebration, showcasing the best in music while honouring the achievements of artists across the globe. With Trevor Noah at the forefront, this year's ceremony is set to be unforgettable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 67th Grammy Awards are poised to be a landmark event, especially for African artists. As they take centre stage, their talent and innovation will undoubtedly inspire many.

The combination of Noah's hosting prowess and the exceptional nominees guarantees a night filled with excitement and celebration. Fans around the world will be tuning in, eager to witness history in the making.

Man City's new star Omar Marmoush names Burna Boy as favourite

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Manchester City's new signing, Omar Marmoush, recently opened up about his tastes, including his favourite musician and football idol.

The Egyptian forward, who joined City from the German club Eintracht Frankfurt, shared these insights during a recent interview.

The conversation was posted on the club's social media platforms, offering fans a closer look at the player behind the jersey.

When asked about his favourite musician, Marmoush didn't hesitate. "Burna Boy," he responded confidently.

The Nigerian singer, known for his Grammy-winning hits, holds a special place in the heart of the 25-year-old forward. Burna Boy has gained global recognition for his unique blend of Afrobeat, reggae, and dancehall, and Marmoush's admiration for the artist is a testament to his eclectic taste in music.

Football idol: Ronaldinho's influence

The interview also revealed his early inspirations in football. As a child, the Egyptian forward looked up to the legendary Ronaldinho, a Brazilian international known for his dazzling dribbling skills and charismatic playing style.

Marmoush spoke fondly of the former Barcelona star, expressing how Ronaldinho's creativity and flair on the field shaped his approach to the game.

Padel: A favourite hobby

Beyond his passion for football, Marmoush shared his love for another



sport: padel. The fast-growing racket sport has become a favourite hobby for many footballers, and Marmoush is no exception.

When asked about his interests outside of football, he said, "Padel is my biggest hobby." His enthusiasm for the sport underscores his competitive spirit and desire to stay active even off the pitch.

Marmoush's key football attributes

In terms of his footballing abilities, he highlighted three key attributes that he believes define his style of play: dribbling, speed, and danger.

He described himself as a player who can take on defenders with ease, using his dribbling skills to navigate tight spaces. His pace is another asset that allows him to break away from opposition players, making him a constant threat in counter-attacking situations.

Marmoush's ability to be dangerous in front of goal is a quality that will no doubt make him an asset to Manchester City in the upcoming season.

A versatile and dynamic new addition

These insights give fans a better

understanding of the man who is now part of one of the most successful teams in Europe.

As he settles into life at Manchester City, it's clear that he has much more to offer than just his footballing talent.

With his love for music, admiration for legendary players, and passion for padel, the forward is not only a versatile athlete but also someone with diverse interests and a well-rounded personality.

Looking ahead: Marmoush's future at City

As Manchester City's newest star continues to find his feet in the Premier League, fans will undoubtedly be eager to see how his skills on the field match his infectious energy off it.

Marmoush is expected to bring much-needed dynamism to the City attack, and his candidness in the interview only adds to his appeal as a new fan favourite.

With his blend of speed, skill, and personality, Omar Marmoush is certainly one to watch in the coming months as he strives to make his mark at Manchester City.

Trump's call for lower oil prices to end Russia, Ukraine War

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Come make your product in America, and we will give you among the lowest taxes of any nation on Earth – Donald Trump

President Donald Trump has called on Chinese President Xi Jinping to leverage China's influence to help end the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. Speaking via video link at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Trump stated that China holds significant power over the conflict and revealed that he had discussed the issue directly with President Xi during a recent phone conversation.

“Hopefully, China can help stop the war between Russia and Ukraine. They have a great deal of power over that situation, and we'll work with them,” Trump said. He added, “I mentioned this during our phone conversation with President Xi, and hopefully, we can work together to bring this to an end.”

China, however, has been criticized for its indirect support of Russia through the continued importation of Russian oil and its alleged provision of components used in the manufacturing of missiles.

Lower Oil Prices as a Strategy

Trump also proposed lowering global oil prices as a strategy to undermine Russia's war efforts. He urged Saudi Arabia and OPEC countries to reduce oil prices, which would cut Russian energy revenues



significantly.

“I was surprised to learn that if oil prices dropped, the Russia-Ukraine war could end almost immediately,” Trump said. In 2024, Russia earned an estimated £89 billion from oil and gas exports, making energy sales a critical source of funding for its military operations. With 47% of its crude exports going to China and 37% to India, Russia has continued to benefit from energy trade despite Western sanctions.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has had far-reaching consequences globally, including in Nigeria. As one of the world's largest wheat importers, Nigeria previously sourced 26% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. The war disrupted these imports, leading to soaring food prices and worsening food insecurity.

Additionally, Nigeria's economy has been affected by rising global

commodity prices, although the country has benefited from increased liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports to European countries seeking alternatives to Russian gas.

During his address, Trump criticized the Biden administration's green energy policies, calling them a “green new scam.” He announced plans to boost fossil fuel production in the U.S., emphasizing the importance of coal as a “backup” energy source to stabilize manufacturing.

Trump also addressed international trade, taking aim at the European Union for what he described as unfair tariffs and environmental regulations. He proposed new tariffs on products imported into the U.S., while encouraging businesses to manufacture domestically. “Come make your product in America, and we will give you among the lowest taxes in the world,” he said.

US ICE arrest over 300 immigrants on first day of raid

By Friday Omosola

On Tuesday, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials apprehended 308 migrants across the country.

The New Daily Prime earlier reported that President Donald Trump, in the early stages of his 2024 presidential campaign, promised to focus on reducing legal migration and deporting individuals living in the U.S. without legal status.

During his inauguration on Monday, Trump signed several executive actions related to border policy.

Some of the orders include “realigning” the Refugee Admission Programme, designating cartels as foreign terrorist organisations, declaring a national emergency at the southern border, and ending the automatic citizenship of children born in the U.S. to parents without legal status.

This newspaper learned that just a day after President Trump was inaugurated, ICE conducted its first raid, arresting several migrants in their homes and on the streets, as well as taking individuals from local jails.

This newspaper earlier reported that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection, announced that immigration authorities can now enter schools, healthcare facilities and places of worship to conduct arrests.

Additionally, agency field offices that were able to send officers out were instructed to do so.

Some of the migrants who were detained had final orders of removal, while others



taken from jails had been arrested for serious crimes, including murder and sexual assault, some involving minors.

Officials confirmed that no minors were arrested during the raids. The detained migrants will now enter custody under enforcement removal operations until they are deported or until another ruling is made by an immigration court.

They will be held in an ICE detention facility near the locations of their arrests or be transported to facilities in other jurisdictions.

However, President Trump’s Nation’s Borders (The Border Czar) expressed satisfaction with the arrests.

During an interview with Fox News on Wednesday, Tom Homan, former ICE Director, and stalwart on Border Control stated that they are focusing on public safety threats and national security concerns, which he categorised as the most urgent matters.

Homan clarified that the arrests were not random raids, as officials were aware of whom they wanted to arrest and their

locations.

Homan praised ICE for its actions, saying, “They’re going to continue every day.”

In the aftermath of the arrests, many migrants across the country began to avoid work and public places due to fears of mass deportation raids initiated by Mr Trump.

This newspaper earlier reported that the President put on immediate paid administrative leave all US government staff working on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) schemes.

In California, for instance, Central Valley farmworkers failed to show up for work, causing a significant slowdown in the state’s citrus harvest.

Additionally, union officers from the United Farm Workers, a labour union that advocates for migrant farmworkers, received bulletins urging them to “report illegal aliens at schools, at work, at church, at restaurants, and in your neighbourhood. There is nowhere to hide.”

Musk, Wikipedia founder clash over 'Nazi salute'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The gesture was controversial enough, but now come the sub-controversies: Elon Musk is trolling Wikipedia and encouraging its defunding after a description of his recent flourish, seen by some as a Hitler salute, appeared on the encyclopedic website.

The fight pits two of the internet's best-known tech giants against each other — and highlights the starkly different ethos behind Musk's X social media site and Wikipedia, founded by American entrepreneur Jimmy Wales.

Musk, as the majority owner of X, is behind recent easing of content moderation rules, which has allowed for rampant disinformation across his social media platform, while simultaneously positioning himself as President Donald Trump's right-hand man.

While Musk's animosity towards Wikipedia may focus outwardly on the hand gesture, Wikipedia's goal of factual neutrality makes it a natural adversary to X, a platform increasingly synonymous with heated culture wars, hate speech and disinformation.

Wikipedia and the media at large, which Musk has increasingly criticized, also pose a threat by holding him accountable as he thrusts himself into the center of US politics.

In a December interview with New York magazine's *Intelligencer*, Wales said the aim at Wikipedia is for editors to create content that is "clear and acknowledges the different viewpoints out there" even amid "the rise in divisive feelings, partisanship, culture wars, all of that."

At present, the site is regarded as generally reliable despite being written by a community of volunteers.

The dustup between Musk and Wales



began after the billionaire raised eyebrows Monday with his gesticulation at a Trump inauguration event.

Thanking a crowd for returning Trump to the White House, Musk tapped the left side of his chest with his right hand and then extended his arm with his palm open. He then turned around to the crowd behind him and did it again.

As of Wednesday, both Musk's biographical Wikipedia page as well as the page on the "Nazi salute" mention the episode.

On Tuesday, Musk reposted what appeared to be part of that Wikipedia entry, although the wording found on Wikipedia as of Wednesday was slightly different.

The reposted text read: "In his speech during the second Trump inauguration, Musk twice extended his right arm towards the crowd in an upward angle. The gesture was compared to a Nazi salute or fascist salute. Musk denied any meaning behind the gesture."

Alongside the repost, Musk attacked both Wikipedia and the news media, another favorite target, suggesting that each is a purveyor of disinformation.

"Since legacy media propaganda is considered a 'valid' source by Wikipedia, it naturally simply becomes an extension of legacy media propaganda!" Musk wrote.

He additionally called on his supporters to "defund" Wikipedia.

Trolling Musk for his 2022 purchase of X for \$44 billion, Wales shot back that: "I think Elon is unhappy that Wikipedia is not for sale."

Run by the non-profit Wikimedia Foundation, Wikipedia is an outlier among today's internet landscape, dominated by the likes of Google and Meta — instead harking back to the web's early, idealistic days when the open-source movement harnessed the talents of volunteers to offer free access to tools and knowledge.

Wales asked Musk whether there was "anything you consider inaccurate in that description?" and added that it wasn't propaganda but "fact. Every element of it."

Founded on January 15, 2001, the Wikipedia website started in English but within two months had already launched in German and Swedish. It is now available in hundreds of languages.

US court temporarily blocks Trump's citizenship birthright order

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

A United States federal district court has temporarily blocked President Donald Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship.

John C. Coughenour, US district judge, gave the ruling on Thursday, January 23, 2025.

The order to end birthright citizenship had originally been slated to take effect on February 19 but 18 states' attorneys general filed lawsuits on Tuesday challenging it.

The Democratic officials also filed a request asking the court to put the case on a fast track and rule on whether to block enforcement before it takes effect.

On Wednesday, the president ordered the deployment of t 1,500 US troops to "guard" the borders from illegal immigrants.

Local reports said up to 10,000 troops could actually be deployed.

BARRAGE OF LAWSUITS

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 on Tuesday.

The 22 states and civil rights groups filed several lawsuits challenging Trump's bid to roll back birthright citizenship in the hours after Trump signed the executive order, kicking off the first major court



fight of his administration

Two similar cases were filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), immigrant organisations, and an expectant mother

The lawsuits aim for 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.

STOPPED IN HIS TRACKS

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.

Trump designates Iran-backed Houthi rebels 'foreign terrorist organisation'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to once again designate Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels a "foreign terrorist organisation," the White House announced Wednesday.

When former president Joe Biden took over from Trump in 2021, he removed the designation that Trump had signed near the end of his first term.

Biden's move came in response to concern from aid groups that they would need to pull out of Yemen as they are obliged to deal with the rebels, who are effectively the government in vast areas including the capital Sanaa.



But weeks after the war in the Gaza Strip broke out on October 7, 2023, the Houthis began launching attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in what they said was support for the Palestinians. They also declared US and British interests to be "legitimate targets."

The US, UK and Israel have carried out dozens of airstrikes in Yemen since.

In response, the Biden administration last year put the Houthis – formally known as Ansar Allah – back on the list of "specially designated global terrorist" groups.

That slightly less severe classification still allowed for humanitarian aid to reach the war-torn country.

The Trump administration's Wednesday move aims to reimpose the more restrictive label of foreign terrorist organisation.

178 Bangladeshi paramilitary troops released after 16 years in jail

By Olamilekan Botti

Bangladesh released 178 former paramilitary troops from prison on Thursday, nearly 16 years after their arrest for involvement in a violent mutiny that claimed the lives of dozens of senior army officers.

The mutiny, which erupted in 2009, was led by disgruntled members of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), who brutally murdered 74 people during a two-day rebellion. The revolt began in the capital, Dhaka, and rapidly spread across the country, causing chaos and destabilizing the newly formed government of Sheikh Hasina just weeks after she assumed office.

In the aftermath, thousands of BDR personnel were arrested, and over 150 were initially handed death sentences in controversial trials that drew criticism



from human rights organizations for alleged procedural flaws. Those released on Thursday had been acquitted of murder charges but remained in custody for more than a decade on accusations of violating explosives laws. Their legal cases remained unresolved until now.

For many of the released prisoners, the

moment marked a poignant return to freedom. "I can't express my feelings in words. I am returning to my family. I came out of a life full of darkness into the light," said Abul Kashem, 38, one of the newly freed individuals, in an interview with AFP.

The mass release follows political shifts in Bangladesh, including the recent ousting of Sheikh Hasina after a student-led uprising against her 15-year rule. Crowds of relatives gathered outside Dhaka prisons early Thursday morning, eagerly awaiting the reunion with their loved ones.

This event represents a turning point in a decades-long chapter of legal and political turmoil, offering hope for reconciliation in a nation still grappling with the scars of the 2009 mutiny.

Real Madrid break €1bn revenue barrier

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Real Madrid have become the first football club to surpass €1bn in annual revenue, as revealed in Deloitte's Money League report.

The Spanish giants recorded revenue of €1.05bn (£883m) for the 2023-24 season, during which they clinched the La Liga and Champions League titles. This milestone secures their top spot in the rankings, with Manchester City (£826m/£708m) and Paris St-Germain (€796m/£681m) following in second and third, respectively.

Record-Breaking Revenues

The top 20 clubs collectively generated £9.47bn, a 6% increase from the previous year. Matchday revenues were the fastest-growing segment, rising by 11% to £1.77bn, driven by stadium renovations, higher ticket prices, and premium hospitality offerings.

Real Madrid led the matchday surge, doubling their revenue to



£210m following extensive renovations to the Santiago Bernabeu. Conversely, Barcelona saw their matchday income drop by £53m due to a temporary move to a smaller stadium during Nou Camp redevelopment.

Premier League Dominance

Nine Premier League clubs, including Arsenal, Liverpool, and Newcastle, feature in the top 20, with Aston Villa entering for the first time since 2011. Brighton narrowly missed the cut, ranking 21st after their Europa League debut.

Commercial Revenue Leads

Commercial activities accounted for 44% of total revenue, driven by sponsorships and non-football events like concerts, which boosted income to £4.14bn.

“Money League clubs continue to break records with ongoing growth in commercial and matchday revenues,” said Tim Bridge, lead partner at Deloitte's sports business group.

The rankings highlight the financial strength of European football's elite, with Real Madrid setting a new benchmark in revenue generation.

Okocha was a magician, incredible talent—Arteta

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has paid tribute to former Super Eagles midfielder Austin Jay-Jay Okocha, describing him as an “unbelievable” talent and one of the best players he has ever shared a pitch with.

Arteta and Okocha’s paths crossed briefly during the 2001/2002 season at Paris Saint-Germain, with the young Spaniard on loan from Barcelona and Okocha in his final season at the French club before moving to Bolton Wanderers in the Premier League.

Despite only playing together for a short time, the duo formed a memorable midfield partnership, with Arteta going on to join Glasgow Rangers permanently after his loan spell at PSG.

In a Sky Sports documentary, *Transfer 360: How Bolton secured the signing of Jay-Jay Okocha from PSG*, Arteta fondly recalled his time alongside the Nigerian legend. “Unbelievable, one of the best players I ever played with; he was a



joy to watch. Incredible natural talent. He was a magician,” Arteta said.

“He could do anything that he wanted with the ball. He could play any pass. He is very charismatic and has a very good personality. I learned a lot from him.”

Though their time together was brief, Okocha’s influence on Arteta has remained significant. Arteta, who went on to enjoy successful Premier League careers with both Everton and Arsenal, credits the experience as one that shaped his playing style.

Okocha’s skill and flair have long been lauded, with Arteta not the

only former teammate to recognise the Nigerian’s impact. Arteta has also spoken positively about other PSG colleagues, including Nicolas Anelka, Mauricio Pochettino, and Ronaldinho.

After his playing days, Arteta went on to become Pep Guardiola’s assistant at Manchester City before taking charge of Arsenal, where he has built a promising managerial career.

Okocha’s legacy in football remains strong, with his influence continuing to resonate, even for those who played alongside him for only a season.

Kyle Walker set for AC Milan loan move

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Manchester City captain Kyle Walker is set to join AC Milan on loan for the rest of the season, with an option to make the move permanent in the summer.

The 34-year-old defender, who has made 316 appearances for City since his £50m move from Tottenham in 2017, will travel to Italy for a medical.

Walker, a six-time Premier League champion under Pep Guardiola, last played for City on 4 January against West Ham. Following the match, he expressed a desire to explore opportunities abroad, favoring a move to Serie A over the Saudi Pro League.



The England international, with 93 caps, has been a key figure at City, serving as joint-captain since 2023 as part of a leadership group elected by teammates.

AC Milan, restricted by Italy's registration rules, prioritized Walker over Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford as their sole UK signing this window.

Meanwhile, Manchester City have spent £123m in January, securing Egypt forward Omar Marmoush from Frankfurt for £59m, Vitor Reis from Palmeiras for £30m, and Abdulkodir Khusanov from Lens for £33.6m.

Walker's move signals a new chapter in his illustrious career as he looks to make an impact in Serie A.

Michael Kayode set to join Brentford from Fiorentina in looming transfer

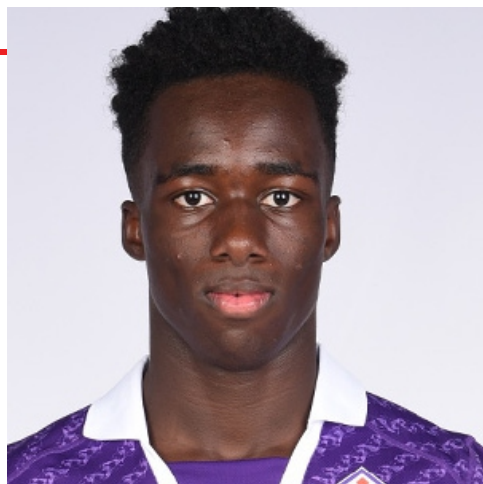
By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Nigeria-eligible defender Michael Kayode is on the verge of joining Premier League side Brentford from Fiorentina, with negotiations reportedly at their final stages.

This comes after transfer expert Fabrizio Romano confirmed the impending move on Tuesday via X, stating that the deal is close, with key details being finalised between the two clubs.

The 20-year-old full-back's exclusion from Fiorentina's squad for their recent Serie A match against Torino raised further speculation about his exit from the Italian side.

Reports from Violanews suggest that Brentford is looking to secure Kayode on a paid loan deal, with an option to make the transfer permanent at the end of the season.



However, Fiorentina are reportedly keen on including a buy-back clause in the arrangement.

Kayode's move to England follows his struggle for consistent playing time under Fiorentina's new manager, Raffaele Palladino, who favours Dodo for the right-back role. Despite making 26 Serie A appearances last season, Kayode has found himself sidelined.

Born in Borgomanero, Italy, Kayode began his youth career at Juventus before moving to Serie D club Gozzano, where his performances helped secure promotion to Serie C.

He joined Fiorentina in 2021, where he won the Coppa Italia Primavera and Supercoppa Italiana Primavera with their youth team before breaking into the senior squad.

Although he has represented Italy at U-18, U-19, and U-21 levels, Kayode remains eligible to play for Nigeria at the senior international level, adding intrigue to his potential future with the Super Eagles.

His transfer to Brentford marks the latest step in his promising career, with the Premier League club reportedly beating out interest from Liverpool for his signature.

Monaco eye loan move for Wilfred Ndidi

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

AS Monaco are reportedly interested in signing Leicester City midfielder Wilfred Ndidi on a six-month loan with an option to buy.

The 28-year-old defensive midfielder, who has been a key figure for Leicester City since joining from KRC Genk in 2017, was close to leaving the club last summer after his contract expired. However, after negotiations with then-manager Steve Cooper, Ndidi signed a new three-year deal to stay at the King Power Stadium.

Despite this, AS Monaco have identified Ndidi as one of their main targets for the final days of the transfer window. Transfer expert Fabrizio Romano



confirmed the club's interest, though he noted that Leicester City are reluctant to allow Ndidi to leave at this stage.

"AS Monaco consider Wilfred Ndidi one of their main options, but the loan move with a buy option clause is not easy at all,"

Romano wrote on social media platform X. "Leicester are not opening doors to a loan yet."

Ndidi, who has made 289 appearances for Leicester City, has featured 16 times this season but has not played since early December due to a hamstring injury. His potential move to Monaco could provide the Nigerian international with an opportunity to continue his career in Ligue 1 while offering the French club a much-needed boost to their midfield.

As the transfer window nears its close, it remains to be seen whether Leicester City will be open to letting Ndidi go on loan or if Monaco will need to explore other options.

Ejike elated to return to action after injury layoff

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Chidera Ejike has expressed his excitement after making his long-awaited return to the pitch following a significant hamstring injury that sidelined him for approximately three months. The 27-year-old Nigerian winger, who sustained the injury during Sevilla's La Liga clash with Barcelona last October, was forced to watch from the sidelines as he worked tirelessly to recover.

Ejike marked his return to competitive action in Sevilla's hard-fought 2-1 victory over Girona last weekend. The talented winger came on in the final stages of the match, playing for eight minutes and contributing to the team's effort as they secured all three points.

Speaking about his comeback, Ejike shared his delight at being back in action: "I was happy to be with the team again because I hadn't been in this routine for a



long time. I was excited to contribute in the final minutes. It felt like a good step forward for me," he told El Correo de Andalucía.

Ejike's absence had been a notable one for Sevilla, as his skill and flair on the wing were missed. The former CSKA Moscow star has made 10 league appearances for the Rojiblancos this

season, scoring once. His return to fitness is a significant boost for manager José Luis Mendilibar, as the team looks to improve its standing in La Liga.

Although Ejike's time on the pitch against Girona was brief, it provided a glimpse of the potential he brings to the squad. His pace, creativity, and ability to stretch the opposition make him a key player for Sevilla, and his return is expected to bring more dynamism to their attacking play in the second half of the season.

Sevilla will hope that Ejike's comeback marks the beginning of a strong run of performances from the winger, as the club looks to challenge for a European spot. With a full recovery now behind him, Ejike will be eager to make up for lost time and help Sevilla achieve their goals for the season.