

MTN, others plan 100% tariff hike in Nigeria
PAGE 6

Tinubu to commission key projects in Enugu tomorrow
PAGE 5

Badenoch demands national inquiry into UK rape gangs scandals
PAGE 18

The New Daily Prime



Mike Johnson reelected US House Speaker after tense vote

PAGE 17

Shettima lists gains of Tinubu's economic reforms
PAGE 4



I was raped five times – Iyabo Ojo
pg14



Bride poisons wedding guests in Jigawa, one killed, groom hospitalized
PAGE 2

Jealous husband stabs Bishop to death in Osun
PAGE 5



MIRACULOUS: Boy survives 5 nights among lions, hippos, elephants

PAGE 2

MIRACULOUS: Boy survives 5 nights among lions, hippos, elephants

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A young boy was rescued after surviving five days in a game park full of lions and elephants in Zimbabwe, a lawmaker in the east African country said on Wednesday.

Mutsa Murombedzi, a member of Zimbabwe's parliament, said in a Wednesday post on social media that Tinotenda Pudu had strayed into the Matusadona Game Park and ended up "sleeping on a rocky perch, amidst roaring lions, passing elephants... and just the unforgiving wild," before he was eventually found by rangers.

According to BBC News, Zimbabwe's National Parks & Wildlife Management Authority had confirmed the incident and said Pudu was just 7 years old.

The BBC cited the parks authority as saying the young boy had wandered about 30 miles from where he lives.

Murombedzi said Pudu survived thanks to his knowledge of the wild and survival skills, eating fruit and digging down into dry riverbeds to find water.

She said members of the local Nyaminyami community launched their own search and beat drums daily in hopes that Pudu would find his way back home, but in the end it was rangers who spotted "fresh little human footprints" and managed to track him down.

Matusadona Game Park covers about 570 square miles and is home to elephants, hippos and lions, all of which can present a threat to humans. According to the BBC, it is currently home to about 40 lions.

Murombedzi lauded the rangers and the local community for their tireless efforts to find Pudu, and called his safe return "a testament to the power of unity, hope, prayer and never giving up."



Bride poisons wedding guests in Jigawa, one killed, groom hospitalized

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

On a day that is supposed to be her happiest, a bride in Jigawa State enacted a horror show by allegedly poisoning the food served at the reception.

Her action, which took place in the Jahun Local Government Area, has left at least one guest dead and her would-be husband (groom) critically ill and hospitalised.

Sharing their thoughts, eyewitnesses suggested that the bride's actions might have been fueled by a long-nursed bitterness and personal vendetta.

Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Shi'isu Adam assured that an investigation was underway.

The PPRO said, "We received a report that the bride had tainted the food served at the wedding reception, leaving the groom critically ill.

"Police have arrested two suspects in

connection with the alleged food poisoning incident that occurred during a wedding ceremony in the state."

He revealed that the two suspects are the bride and another female, adding that they are in custody and being interrogated by the Criminal Investigation Department of the command.

The police spokesperson added, "We will do everything in our power to ensure that justice is served."

According to him, all the wedding attendants who consumed the poisoned food have been discharged from the hospital, except for the one person who was confirmed dead.

"The command is currently investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident, and we will provide more details as soon as possible.

"For now, we can confirm that the incident occurred, and we are working



tirelessly to unravel the facts. We urge the public to remain calm and assured that justice will be served," he concluded.

The identities of the deceased, the groom, and other victims have not been disclosed by the authorities.

The shocking event has left the community in disbelief, as authorities try to unravel the motive behind the tragic incident.

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
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
2X1	8,630.00
1X1	4,315.00

POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
HALF PAGE	213,250.00
QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,050,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	254,533.50
HALF PAGE	142,787.50
QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
8X6	170,725.00
8X3	70,390.00
7X4	58,666.50
6X4	67,048.00
6X3	53,361.50
6X2	37,694.00
5X6	83,850.00
5X4	55,900.00
5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
4X4	44,493.00
4X3	33,524.00
4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
2X1	5,588.50
1X1	2,795.50

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	280,690.00
HALF PAGE	164,178.00
QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
10X6	228,000.00
10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
10X3	127,108.00
9X6	201,600.00
9X5	169,050.00
9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	210,795.50
HALF PAGE	124,236.00
QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
14X2	76,128.35
10X6	194,961.00
10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
3x3	23,458.00
3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
2X6 BACK PAGE	300,000.00
2X6 INSIDE PAGE	155,000.00
3X6 FRONT PAGE	1,200,000.00
4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
EARPIECE FRONT PAGE(1.5X2)	246,500.00
EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PUBLIC NOTICE)	1,027,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PRODUCT)	929,000.00
CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
DOUBLE SPREAD COLOUR	721,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
CENTRE SPREAD B&W	835,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B &W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B &W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B &W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
HALF PAGE FRONT	5,500,000.00

ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD		806,250.00
ALLURE COVER		750,000.00
(IBC) Inside Back Cover		376,250.00
(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
Full Page		430,000.00
10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

PICTURE & CAPTION

SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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

GENERAL INFORMATION	
SERIES DISCOUNT 5 PAGES 2.5% 10 PAGES 5% 15 PAGES & ABOVE 7.5%	LOOSE INSERT LEAFLET, POSTERS 1,000 COPIES SPECIAL INSERTS (8 PAGES) 4 COPIES SPECIAL INSERTS (4 PAGES) 1,000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES FOR LESS THAN 35,000 COPIES HANDLING CHARGES MORE THAN 35,000 COPIES
SURCHARGE PAGE 3 (100%) PAGE 4, 5, 7 AND 8 (50%) PAGE 2 (75%)	CLASSIFIED ADVERT RATES CHANGE OF NAME GUIDE BLACK & WHITE GUIDE COLOUR
CONTACT US Correspondent Address: Real Group Plaza, No.1 Junaid Dosumu Street, CBD, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos Call the Editor on: 07025014298,09014323792	E-mail Address: info@newdailyprime.news Terms and Conditions apply

25,000.00
45,000.00
30,000.00
75,000.00
100,000.00

2,000.00
3,750.00
4,250.00

ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE

Shettima lists gains of Tinubu's economic reforms

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima, has reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to creating employment opportunities and expanding economic prospects through reforms initiated by President Bola Tinubu led administration.

Speaking today at the Combined Graduation Ceremony of the Wing Commander Abdullahi Ibrahim Vocational and Technology Institute in Lafia, Nasarawa State, Shettima stressed the relevance of technical and vocational skills acquisition in addressing youth unemployment and driving national development.

He said the danger of ignoring technical and vocational skills was one Nigeria cannot afford, noting that with President Tinubu's economic reforms and increased state allocations, the country is laying the groundwork for more prosperity.

He highlighted the historical success of Nigeria's agrarian economy and urged a renewed focus on agriculture and skills training to foster economic growth.

Shettima Vice President Kashim Shettima o Friday at the Combined Graduation Ceremony of the Wing Commander Abdullahi Ibrahim Vocational and Technology Institute in Lafia, Nasarawa State (PHOTO CREDIT: X)

He commended the institute for equipping over 9,000 youths with skills in its three years of operation, adding that the graduands symbolize the administration's dedication to poverty reduction, job creation, and economic transformation.

During his visit, Shettima flagged off the distribution of relief materials to flood victims and presented tractors



and paddy rice to farmers across Nasarawa's 13 local government areas.

He praised Governor Abdullahi Sule for his visionary leadership, particularly in promoting agricultural development and peaceful coexistence among the state's diverse communities.

Shettima also toured the Olam warehouse, which houses produce from the state's Nasarawa Rice Farm project, and commended the initiative as a model for agricultural transformation.

READ ALSO: Shettima urges recommitment to gender equity

In his remarks, Governor Sule highlighted the state government's focus on bridging skills gaps in critical sectors to empower young Nigerians.

Furthermore, former Plateau State Governor, Simon Lalong, and Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Hassan Kukah, lauded the state's

efforts to reduce poverty and empower its youth.

More so, the Executive Director of the vocational institute, Daniel Asele, disclosed that 1,000 graduands from the 2024 programme had acquired skills in welding, tailoring, ICT, and other fields, positioning them to tackle modern challenges.

The Emir of Lafia, Justice Sidi Bage Muhammad I (rtd) also pledged the traditional council's loyalty to federal government initiatives, while other dignitaries, including Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, and NECA Director General, Adewale Oyerinde, praised the impact of the skills development programmes on industrializing the economy.

The event featured the presentation of start-up packs and certificates to the graduands, signalling the administration's drive to upskill and reskill the Nigerian workforce.

Jealous husband stabs Bishop to death in Osun

By Friday Omosola

The Police has confirmed the death of Bishop Shina Olaribigbe, the founder of Rapture Empowerment International in Osogbo, Osun State, the state capital.

The spokesperson of the Osun State Police Command, Yemisi Opalola, said Bishop Olaribigbe was stabbed while mediating in the domestic dispute between a couple.

The PPRO disclosed that the killer husband believed that the pastor was having an affair with his wife, leading to the action.

Opalola said, "The couple were not living together, though they were not legally separated.

"The pastor had been intervening in their quarrels, and on this occasion, he was at the wife's house when the estranged husband arrived.

"We were told that the husband stabbed the pastor multiple times, killing him. There is suspicion that the husband

believed the pastor was having an affair with his wife."

It was gathered that Bishop Olaribigbe was stabbed to death in the early hours of Thursday.

A source who proffered anonymity revealed that the wife was an interpreter at Olaribigbe's church located around the BCGA area in Osogbo.

He said the couple, although not officially divorced, had a history of frequent altercations that led to them living apart.

The source said the deceased cleric, who was known for intervening in their disputes, had gone to visit the wife, who had been ill for some time.

It was while the cleric was there that the husband arrived at the residence early on Thursday morning and found the clergyman in the room.

"Enraged by the situation, the husband allegedly attacked Olaribigbe.

"A heated argument ensued, and in a fit



of anger, the man took a knife and stabbed the pastor in the chest. Olaribigbe died on the spot," the source who is close to the church said. Following the stabbing incident, the couple were arrested and taken into custody at Nigeria Police, Dugbe Division, Osogbo.

Tinubu to commission key projects in Enugu tomorrow

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu is scheduled to visit Enugu State on Saturday to commission transformative projects executed under the leadership of Governor Peter Mbah. In a statement shared on X today, Governor Mbah announced that the President will inaugurate 30 fully completed and equipped Enugu Smart Green Schools, part of a larger project involving 260 schools currently under construction across the state.

Additionally, Tinubu will commission 60 completed Type 2 Primary Healthcare Centres, also part of a broader initiative to build 260 such facilities.

According to Mbah, these projects underscore his administration's dedication to delivering quality education and ensuring accessible healthcare for all residents.

He tweeted, "The completed multi-auditorium Enugu International Conference Centre, 90 urban roads, and our state-of-the-art Command and Control Centre with 150 patrol vehicles fitted with AI-embedded surveillance

cameras are repositioning our state as a hub of progress, safety, and opportunity.

"The President's visit will be a milestone for us; a testament to our shared vision that is taking shape. We are excited to welcome Mr President to Enugu State."

Furthermore, he announced that the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, PhD, visited the Government House in preparation for President Tinubu's state visit tomorrow.

The governor expressed delight in welcoming him and emphasised his administration's unwavering commitment to prioritizing the security of lives and property.

He highlighted security as a cornerstone of his strategy to drive Enugu's economic growth from \$4.4 billion to \$30 billion through innovative initiatives.

"As I noted during our discussion, businesses can manage financial and commercial risks, but security risks are a dealbreaker.



"His kind words and recognition of our modest efforts, including the establishment of the state-of-the-art Command and Control Centre and the deployment of 150 patrol vehicles fitted with AI-embedded cameras for the Distress Response Squad, underscores the progress we've made in creating a safer, smarter Enugu", he added.

MTN, others plan 100% tariff hike in Nigeria

By Dave Oludare Oso



Subscribers of MTN and other telecommunication companies (TELCOs) will face hard times as the operators move to increase their service tariffs in the country.

This comes after the Chief Executive of MTN Nigeria, Karl Toriola, disclosed that the telecommunications firms have sent a proposal to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) for a 100 percent service tariff increase.

Toriola spoke during an interview on Arise TV on Thursday, where he said the proposal aims to address rising operational costs, including inflation and increased service delivery expenses.

According to Toriola, the proposed tariff hike is necessary for the sustainability of the industry, which has been facing significant financial pressures due to rising operational costs.

The good news, however, is that the CEO said it remains uncertain whether the Nigerian Communications Commission, the telecom regulator, will approve the proposal owing to existing economic hardship in the country.

Toriola stated, "We've put forward requests of approximately 100 percent tariff increases to regulators.

"I doubt they're going to approve that quantum of increases because they are very, very sensitive to the current economic situation in the country."

Despite the challenges, Toriola expressed optimism that regulators would make the right decision, taking into account the realities of the sector. The CEO emphasised that the focus is on ensuring the long-term sustainability of the industry, rather than short-term profitability.

"I believe we're all on the same side, the policymakers, the regulators, our Chairman of ALTON, Gbenga Adebayo, and the industry. We're united because we share concerns about a few fundamental issues. First, human rights, are critical to driving any economy. Without a sustainable industry, the broader economy and the well-being of the people will be negatively impacted."

The proposal comes amid rising costs for telecom companies, driven by factors such as inflation, exchange rate fluctuations, and the increasing price of key operational inputs like diesel, power generation, and raw materials.

Toriola highlighted the pressure these rising costs have put on telecom businesses, making it difficult for many companies to maintain profitable operations.

Earlier this week, operators issued a statement warning that service disruptions are imminent unless tariffs are adjusted to account for escalating operational costs.

This comes amid heightened speculation of an imminent telecom service tariff hike in Nigeria, this year.

The Chairman of the Association of Licenced Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), Gbenga Adebayo, recently threatened a shutdown of operations without a tariff hike.

Adebayo described the telecom sector as being "under siege," citing soaring operational costs driven by inflation, volatile exchange rates, and rising energy prices.

He noted that despite these challenges, tariffs have remained unchanged, leaving operators struggling to maintain quality service and expand their networks.

Wanted female gangster trafficking girls to Dubai for prostitution nabbed

By Dave Oludare Oso

A wanted convicted leader of an international human trafficking network, Uadiale Christiana Jacob, aka Christy Evan Osagie, has been arrested by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja.

According to reports, the socialite, whose network operates across the Middle Eastern countries with an operational base in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was arrested on December 31, 2024, on arrival from Dubai for new year celebration.

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) Press Officer, Vincent Adekoye, who disclosed this in a statement on Friday, said the suspect, who is also called Christy Gold by her gang members, has been on the wanted list of NAPTIP for the past five years.

Adekoye noted that luck ran out on her on December 31, 2024, as NIS officers acting in respect of NAPTIP's request to put her on watchlist on February 22, 2023, nabbed her upon her arrival in Nigeria.

The statement reads, "Her suspected other accomplices, one Michael Nduka, Osas Wiseman, Vivian, and a certain Prophet John in Lagos along with others who are field officers who assist in the recruitment and subsequent transfer of victims to Christy Gold, are still on the run.

"It would be recalled that on the 18th March 2020, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Ikeja Airport Command shared intelligence with NAPTIP Joint Border Task Force/Benin Satellite Office (JBTF/BSO) in respect of one Uadiale Christiana Jacob, aka Christy Evan Osagie, aka Christy Gold of No 15 Osagie Street, off 2nd Power Line, Egbon Estate, Benin City, Edo State.

"Uadiale Christiana Jacob popularly known as Christy Gold is a senior member of an organized human trafficking syndicate notorious for the recruitment, trafficking and sexually exploiting of underage Nigerian girls in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

"Following the Agency's investigation into the alleged offence to establish culpability, Christiana Uadiale Jacob was arrested by NAPTIP in Ikpoba Hill area, Benin City on the 13th of October 2020 for her involvement in the trafficking of aged Nigerian girls to Dubai, United Arab Emirates for forced prostitution.

"She was charged to the Federal High Court, Asaba, Delta State on the 25th of November 2020, where she was granted bail.

"While on Court bail, Christiana Uadiale Jacob violated the terms of the bail and absconded to Dubai. After failing severally to appear before the Court, a Bench Warrant was therefore issued by the sitting Judge on the 3rd of November 2021 for her arrest.

"To get Christiana Uadiale Jacob to face justice for her crimes, NAPTIP sought the assistance and collaboration of the Honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, National Central Bureau (NCB), INTERPOL Nigeria, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and the United Arab Emirates Police for her arrest and extraction to Nigeria.



"Even while she tried to evade justice, NAPTIP did not relent and as a result of our diligent prosecution of the case, Christiana Uadiale Jacob was convicted for human trafficking in absentia by Honourable Justice F. A. Olubanjo of the Federal High Court, Asaba, Delta State on the 21st of March 2024 with sentencing being awaited whenever she is rearrested and brought before the Honourable Court.

"Luck however ran out on her on the 31st of December 2024, as Officers Nigeria Immigration Service acting in respect of NAPTIP's request for watchlisting dated 22nd February 2023, nabbed her on arrival to Nigeria."

Share

Niger woman pounds husband to death with pestle

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Fatima Dzuma, a 27-year-old woman, has been arrested for the alleged murder of her 25-year-old husband, Baba Aliyu, in Lafiyagi Dzwafu village, located in the Katcha Local Government Area of Niger State.

According to reports, Dzuma, who married Baba three years ago as his second wife, had not borne any children, while Baba's first wife recently gave birth and preparations were underway for the naming ceremony.

Eyewitnesses said the couple was known to have frequent disputes, and that tensions escalated the night before the incident when Baba reportedly assaulted Dzuma during an argument.

The sources said, after the altercation, Baba left the house.

Confessing to killing him, Dzuma later recounted the events leading up to the crime.

She said, "When he came back, he went to bed. I used a rope to tie his neck, and he could not struggle. I hit

him with a pestle three times, twice on his head and once on his hand. I took advantage of his sleeping because his sleep is always deep.

"After I killed him, I put him inside a mat, threw him over the fence and dragged him to the bush in the backyard before coming back to wash the blood and excreta that came out of his body when I killed him."

When asked why she killed him, she said they had a misunderstanding where she told him that she did not love him anymore, and he beat her up.

When the family of Baba was looking for him, she claimed she had not seen him but confessed to the crime three days after she killed him.

According to her, she carried out the act without the help of anybody.

Speaking on the incident, the Niger State Police Public Relations Officer, DSP Abiodun Wasiu, said the body of Baba Aliyu was found in a bush close to the house, adding that the suspect is currently in police custody.

Abiodun said, "She confessed that she



used a pestle to hit her husband when he was asleep and she later tied the deceased with clothes and rope and rolled the corpse to a nearby bush with a mat.

"The corpse was taken to general hospital Bida for post-mortem while the suspect was taken to custody. She will soon be transferred to SCID Minna for further investigation and prosecution."

The incident highlights ongoing concerns about domestic violence and its tragic consequences.

Ondo gov Aiyedatiwa pledges inclusive, transparent governance in 2025

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has pledged that his administration will operate with inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, with a focus on the welfare and best interests of the state's citizens.

Speaking during the 2025 first working day prayer meeting at the Governor's Office in Akure on Thursday, Aiyedatiwa reaffirmed his commitment to selflessness, dedication, and love in governance.

Reflecting on 2024, the governor expressed gratitude for the successes achieved despite the challenges faced, highlighting that peace and stability had been restored in the state.

He emphasised ongoing infrastructure projects, the implementation of the new minimum wage, and various social welfare initiatives, including scholarships for indigenous students and the recruitment of critical personnel.

Aiyedatiwa also promised continued support for security efforts, underscoring the state's status as one of the safest in Nigeria.

He called on public servants and



political officeholders to remain committed to the state's progress and announced plans for a retreat to align top government officials with the administration's goals for the year.

Fintiri appoints Ribadu's brother, six others as new monarchs

By Dave Oludare Oso

The governor of Adamawa State, Ahmadu Fintiri, on Friday appointed seven new traditional rulers, among whom is Sani Ahmadu Ribadu, the younger brother of the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu.

The new appointments followed the recent creation of seven monarchies by the governor.

Governor Fintiri, in response to public outcry, created five chiefdoms and two emirates – comprising four second-class and three third-class statuses on December 23, 2024.

The newly appointed monarchs are Sani Ahmadu Ribadu, Emir of Fufore; Alheri Nyako, 'Tol Huba'; Bulus Luka Gadiga, 'Mbege Ka Michika'; Ali Danburam, 'Ptil Madagali'; John Dio, 'Gubo Yungur'; Aggrey Ali, 'Kumu of Gombi' and Ahmadu Saibaru, Emir of Maiha.

The spokesperson for the governor, Humwashi Wonosikou, in a statement emphasised that "their selections were

based on merit and their popularity among the people."

Wonosikou said in the statement on Friday said, "Adamawa State Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, CON, has approved the selection of 7 new Chiefs and Emirs for Chiefdoms and Emirates recently created.

"The newly selected Royal Highnesses are:

-HRH Alhaji Sani Ahmadu Ribadu: Emir of Fufore

-HRH Barrister Alheri B. Nyako: Tol Huba

-HRH Prof. Bulus Luka Gadiga: Mbege Ka Michika

-HRH Dr Ali Danburam (MBBS, FWACP, FCCP): Ptil Madagali

-HRH Aggrey Ali: Kumu of Gombi

-HRH Ahmadu Saibaru: Emir of Maiha

-HRH John Dio: Gubo Yungur.

"Governor Fintiri congratulated the new Majesties, emphasizing that their



selections were based on merit and their popularity among the people. He urged them to be fair, honest, and responsible in their duties. The approval takes effect immediately,"

This development brings the number of chiefdoms and emirates in the state to 11 and four respectively.

Why I didn't join Tinubu's House visit – Bauchi gov

By Dave Oludare Oso

Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has given reason for his absence from the governors' visit to President Bola Tinubu's Lagos home on New Year's Day, saying political meaning should not be read into it.

The governors, under the umbrella of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) visited the president at his Bourdillon Road home in Ikoyi, Lagos on Wednesday.

Among the governors in attendance were; Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos), Siminalayi Fubara (Rivers), Abba Yusuf (Kano), Sheriff Oborevwori (Delta), Lucky Aiyedatiwa (Ondo) and AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq (Kwara).

Others were Biodun Oyebanji (Ekiti), Peter Mbah (Enugu),

Abdullahi Sule (Nasarawa), Hope Uzodimma (Imo), and Usman Ododo (Kogi), Babagana Zulum (Borno) and Monday Okpebholo (Edo).

The Bauch governor, who also is the Chairman of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party's Governors' Forum, was notably absent from the visit.

Expectedly, his absence has sparked speculation, particularly against the backdrop of recent tiff between Governor Mohammed and the Presidency over the tax reforms proposed by President Tinubu.

Earlier in the week, the Presidency accused the governor of issuing threats against the President, while Mohammed countered by accusing the Presidency of blackmail and reiterating his opposition to the



reforms.

Responding to inquiries on Thursday, the governor's Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mukhtar Gidado, dismissed any political undertones to Mohammed's absence from the visit to Tinubu's house. Gidado explained that the governor had been mourning the loss of his 102-year-old stepmother, Hauwa Duguri, who passed away on New Year's Day.

"The stepmother of the governor, Hauwa Duguri, passed away on Wednesday, the same day as the New Year visit," Gidado

Aspiring monarch beheaded in Bayelsa, police hunt killers

By Friday Omosola

The abduction and gruesome murder of Mr. Clement Hamo, a candidate vying for the traditional leadership position of the serene riverside town of Agbere in Sagrama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State has thrown the community into confusion and mourning.

According to reports, Hamo was kidnapped from his residence on Christmas Day by unidentified gunmen who used the river as their escape route.

His decapitated body was discovered days later in the River Forcados in neighboring Delta State.

The motive behind the horrifying act remains unclear, as the assailants did not demand a ransom.

However, sources suggest that his candidacy for the traditional stool may have been a factor.

The shocking incident has left the Agbere community in mourning and

has heightened concerns about security in the region. Local authorities are yet to provide further details as investigations continue.

A source said, "We received information that a body was floating and got stuck somewhere on the River Forcados in Delta State.

"Some youths were dispatched to the scene where they discovered it was that of the victim. The body was without a head and they brought it for burial. He was contesting to be the traditional ruler.

"The deceased was a good man, who had been doing good from the beginning. I am sad and the community is in mourning over the sad incident."

Also speaking, another indigene of the community, said, "Social media had been awash with news of the incident surrounding the kidnap, beheading and



subsequent recovery of the headless corpse of our kinsman which had shaken Agbere community to its roots."

Contacted, Spokesman of the state police command, Musa Mohammed, said he was aware of the incident and that investigations were ongoing.

Catholic priest who killed boy in Imo arrested

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Rev. Father Joseph Enyinnaya, the Catholic priest, who reportedly shot dead a boy for allegedly throwing a knockout (explosive) into St. Columbus Catholic Church at Amaimo in Ikeduru Local Government Area of Imo State has been arrested.

Eyewitness account revealed that the Catholic priest brought out his pistol and shot the boy who allegedly threw the banger inside the church premises.

The incident occurred on December 31, 2024 with the police confirming the arrest of the cleric.

In his reaction, the Imo State Police Public Relations Officer, Henry Okoye, stressed that, "The priest has been arrested, and the body of the boy has been recovered and deposited at Atta Mortuary."

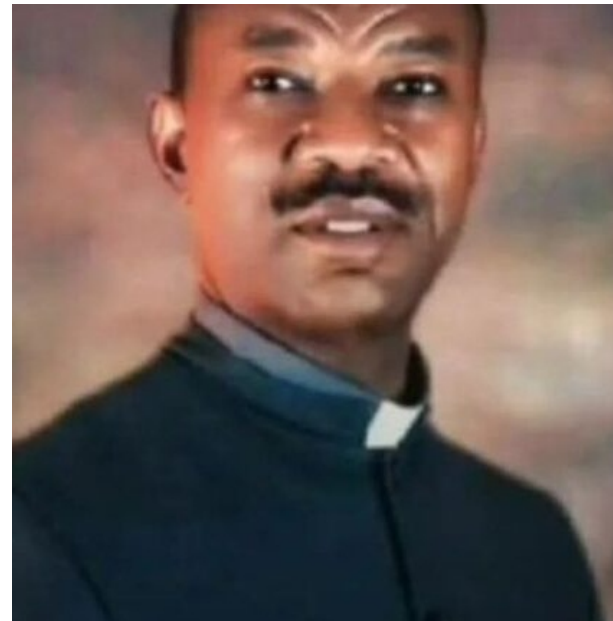
The PPRO disclosed that a detailed investigation has been put in place to ascertain the immediate and remote factors surrounding the ugly incident.

He said, "The police investigation is expected to throw more light on the events leading up to the incident."

The incident, which drew wide condemnation from people continue to generate tension in the community with youths making several attempts to burn down the church.

The intervention of the police which deployed several operatives to guard the church has prevented the youths from achieving their plans.

Meanwhile, the family of the offending cleric has disappeared from



the church mission where they reside and members of the church have also kept away from the church for fear of being attacked by the angry youths who are still laying siege to the church.

Obasanjo invited to tour P'Harcourt, Warri refineries

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) on Thursday invited former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to a tour of the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries to confirm their operational status.

This move by NNPCL is to assure the former president that the days of inefficiency were gone and that the one-time corporation is now a profit-driven company.

The company was reacting to an interview Obasanjo granted Channels Television, in which he said Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) told him that the NNPCL could not run a refinery.

In the interview, the former president said SPDC was invited to buy equity in the plant but complained that corruption would never allow it to function.

Obasanjo expressed the view that NNPCL had been very deceptive about the functionality of the refineries.

The Port Harcourt Refinery started working in November, while Warri began operation last month.

Reacting to Obasanjo, NNPCL Chief Corporate Communications Officer, Mr. Olufemi Soneye, extended the company's invitation to the former president for a tour of the refineries.

He said, "We extend an open invitation to President Obasanjo for a tour of the rehabilitated refineries to witness firsthand the progress made under the new NNPC Limited.

"We invite our esteemed former president to join us in this effort as we continue to deliver energy security for our nation and provide tangible benefits to Nigerians.

"His wisdom and experience are invaluable, and we assure him that his advice will always be welcomed and appreciated."

According to Soneye, NNPCL did not merely carry out turnaround maintenance but did a complete overhaul of the refineries.

He said: "As part of this transformation, NNPC Limited has

gone beyond oil and gas to become an integrated energy company.

"One of our notable achievements is the

complete rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt Refining Company (PhRC) and Warri Refinery.

"This process was not merely the Turnaround Maintenance (TAM) of the past but a full-scale overhaul designed to meet world-class standards.

"Similarly, we are currently conducting the same comprehensive rehabilitation of the old Port Harcourt Refinery and Kaduna Refinery."

The spokesman said NNPCL has also moved on from being a loss-making organisation to profit-driven international energy firm.

The new NNPC Limited, Soneye said, is committed not only to enhancing the refineries but also to maintaining them to global standards.

He said: "The NNPC has undergone a transformative journey, evolving from a government corporation into a private entity—NNPC Limited.

"This transition has marked a significant shift from being a loss-making organisation to a profit-oriented global energy company.

"We deeply respect and hold President Obasanjo in the highest regard as a distinguished statesman who has contributed significantly to the progress of our nation.

"He has every right to share his perspectives on national issues, and we value his insights and counsel.

"We remain grateful for his leadership and enduring commitment to the growth and development of Nigeria.

"Together, we can continue to build a brighter future for our great nation."

Obasanjo said his successor, the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua rejected a \$750 million offer from Aliko



Dangote to manage the Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries in 2007

Speaking on the television programme, the former president said he sought external help to rehabilitate and manage the facilities but faced resistance.

"When I was president, I wanted to do something about the three refineries: Port Harcourt, Warri, and Kaduna.

"Aliko got a team together after I asked Shell to come and run it for us. And Shell said they wouldn't.

"Later on, I called them. I called the boss of Shell to come and tell me what the problem was and he gave me four or five reasons.

"He (Shell boss) said, first of all, they make a major profit from upstream, not from downstream. He said they run downstream just to keep their head above water.

"Two, our refineries were too small: 60,000 barrels, 100,000 barrels and I think 120,000 barrels. He said that at that time, the average refinery was going for 250,000 barrels.

"Three, he said our refineries were not well maintained. Four, he said there was too much corruption around the activities of our refinery and they would not want to get involved in that.

"After that, Aliko got a team together and they paid \$750 million to take part in PPP (Public Private Partnership) in running the refineries.

NELFUND disburses N23bn to students, 128 schools

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The official federal government agency in charge of student loans in Nigeria, the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), has disbursed a total of N23 billion to several individuals and 128 tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Speaking to senior journalists in Lagos during the week, managing director, NELFUND, Akintunde Sawyerr, disclosed that N18 billion has been channelled to the institutions while about N5 billion has been disbursed for students' upkeep.

He said, "So far, we have had 326,000 individuals apply for the loan.

"A total of about N23 billion has left our account and gone to the accounts of the institutions and the accounts of individuals."

NELFUND was set up by the federal government to ensure that students who are in school do not drop out due to lack of funds.

Students register for the loans online, and all the approval process happen online.

"NELFUND is saddled with the responsibility of providing loans to Nigerian citizens who are able to gain admission, or already have admission into tertiary institutions owned by the government, both at federal and state ownership levels.

"So, students who are Nigerian citizens, who are either already in those institutions or in future gain admission into institutions, can apply for loans. And we can provide those loans for their tuition or their institutional charges, and we are also able to provide them with stipends, or pocket money, if you like," he disclosed.

He said applications occur only once a year, noting that once accepted, NELFUND pays monthly upkeep to the students directly to their bank accounts.

"We're also saddled with the additional responsibility of vocational and skills training to Nigerians who are interested or have the capacity to go and take on



education on the skills side and handcrafts. So, we can also provide loans for those sorts of candidates at government-approved institutions," he said.

On sources of funding, the NELFUND chief noted that the law stipulates that the agency will be funded by receiving 1 percent of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)'s collections.

"So, we think that will end up being something like N19 billion or so. This agency should receive about N194 billion."

He further said that the law allows the agency to solicit for funds from other sources.

"One is to solicit for funds from other sources. So, it may be those who want to invest in education in Nigeria, not necessarily for a financial return, or those who want to donate either to the Fund across the board or for specific types of applicants.

"We also have the power to invest the funds that we have for return. So there are many opportunities for us to grow the funds and to try to make it sustainable.

"We already have certain interventions that have been made. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), for example, donated N50 billion in proceeds of crime. We also have had a directive to TETFund to provide us with N141 billion, of which they've given us N71 billion.

"We've had an appropriation of N60 billion, of which we've received N10

billion, and we are expecting another N50 billion. And, then, I believe there's a bill going through the National Assembly at the moment where we'll be receiving, I think, 20 percent of TETFund's proceeds. So there are funding sources.

He noted that NELFUND will not put pressure on graduates to repay the loans unless they get jobs.

"There's no obligation on the loanees to repay the loans until two years after they have completed their NYSC. And even after two years, there's no obligation to repay the loans unless a person has a job.

"Two years after NYSC, there's a reporting requirement for us to know what the status of the individual is. If they don't get jobs for the next 10 years, which is not the plan, then they don't pay the NELFUND any money. Additionally, the obligation to repay is on the employer who is obliged by law to give us a proportion of the funds that they are paying as a salary to the employee.

"Our guidelines have determined that to be 10 percent. So, even after this two-year moratorium, it's designed to ensure that the employer, who's really benefiting from the intervention of NELFUND, is the one obliged to take 10 percent and repay the fund."

After 35 years service,retired police chief decries N1.7m gratuity

By Friday Omosola

A retired Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Esther Marcos, has expressed frustration over the meagre monthly pension she receives from the Federal Government each month. Marcos shared her pension ordeal in a video posted today on X (formerly Twitter) by Omoyele Sowore, the 2023 presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC).

In the video, the retired DSP shed light on the challenges faced by Nigerian police retirees under the controversial contributory pension scheme.

Marcos disclosed that she retired on November 1, 2018, after 35 years of service, receiving a gratuity of just N1.7 million and a monthly pension of only N40,000.

She further revealed that since her retirement, she has attended numerous meetings concerning her pension, questioning the necessity of the process.

She said, "My name is Esther Marcos, a retired DSP in the Nigerian Police Force. I retired on November 1, 2018. I just want to use myself as a case

study and it applies to every other police officer under this dirty contributory pension scheme. So, I'm using myself as a case study. After serving for 35 years, I joined the Nigerian Police Force at a very young age.

"I didn't go there to join, I led my friend there but unfortunately she's not taken I was recruited due to my height because I was tall, but I was not up to sixteen years of age when I joined and when I retired in 2018, I waited for like a year plus, and I was given N1.7m after 35 years. After waiting for another three months or so, they started paying me 40,000 as my monthly pension."

Reacting to the video, Sowore questioned the government's decision to pay Marcos such an amount after 35 years of service.

The Ondo-born politician highlighted that Senators are paid N29 million



monthly, while the police, who risk their lives, receive a mere pittance.

He tweeted, "How on earth is anyone who worked for 35 years paid N1.7m (\$1,100) as gratuity? This is a retired DSP of Police speaking about her pension and gratuity after retiring from the Nigerian Police Force, this is so sad!"

"Nigeria does nothing but evil to its workers. It is the same country where a Senator takes home N29 million per month, but the irony is that these Police officers will kill you in a heartbeat for fighting the system that oppresses us all!"

Ghana to implement visa-free travel for all African passport holders

By Friday Omosola

Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo announced on Friday that, starting from the beginning of this year, all African passport holders will enjoy visa-free travel to Ghana.

This move is a significant step towards greater economic integration across the continent.

The announcement was made during Akufo-Addo's final State of the Nation address, as he prepares to step down on January 6 after completing two terms in office.

He expressed pride in the decision, noting that it would contribute to the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the world's largest trading bloc.

"I am proud to have approved visa-

free travel to Ghana for all African passport holders, with effect from the beginning of this year," President Akufo-Addo declared during his speech to parliament.

The President added that the move was a logical progression towards achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions a more integrated and connected Africa by the year 2063.

He emphasised that the policy would further cement Ghana's role as a key player in fostering continental unity and cooperation.

This new policy aligns Ghana with several other African nations, including Rwanda, Seychelles, Gambia, and Benin, which have already implemented visa-free entry for African travellers. Prior to this, Ghana had already extended



visa-free access to citizens of 26 African countries and offered visas on arrival to travellers from 25 others. Only Eritrea and Morocco had previously required a visa before entry.

The introduction of visa-free travel is also part of Ghana's broader efforts to strengthen its international profile, particularly

I was raped five times – Iyabo Ojo

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

Nigerian actress, Iyabo Ojo recently shared her painful experiences as a rape survivor, revealing she endured the trauma five times and now fights for justice.

In a heartfelt conversation on the talk show *Talk to B*, hosted by Biola Bayo, Iyabo revealed that she had been raped five times. Her candid revelations highlight her resolve to fight against sexual violence and challenge societal attitudes toward it.

Survivor of repeated trauma

Iyabo Ojo shared her story with raw honesty, describing the trauma she endured. “I was raped five times in my life,” she disclosed, her voice steady but emotional.

She expressed deep frustration with those who excuse or justify sexual violence. “We have too many rape apologists. I don’t care who the person is—if they are guilty, I will hold them accountable, even if it’s my son.”

Her declaration of zero tolerance for rape struck a chord with many. Iyabo’s willingness to confront the stigma surrounding survivors aims to inspire others to speak out and seek justice.

Family struggles and personal growth
Beyond her experiences with sexual violence, Iyabo discussed her complicated family history. Her father’s battle with addiction left a lasting impact on her life. “My dad struggled with alcohol and drugs, which ruined him at a young age,” she said.

Nigerian Veteran Actress Iyabo Ojo
Tragically, he passed away at 49. Despite this, she reflected on how these challenges shaped her resilience and determination.

Iyabo’s childhood was far from conventional. She revealed that she was raised by her grandmother and didn’t meet her mother until she was seven years old. “Growing up with my grandmother, who is half Delta and half Igbo, taught me strength. But



not knowing my mother until I was seven was hard,” she shared.

Rejection and independence

Iyabo also recounted a pivotal moment in her life when she faced rejection from her father. This happened during a relationship with a man she was determined to marry. “I insisted he was the one, but my father disowned me,” she said.

This estrangement, combined with her father’s personal struggles, underscored the challenges she faced as a young woman trying to navigate life and love.

Addressing rumors

The actress clarified rumours linking her to popular musician Naira Marley. “I have never met Naira Marley in my entire life,” she stated firmly, shutting down any speculation about their association. Her straightforward approach reflects her determination to address false narratives and maintain her integrity.

Advocating for justice

Iyabo’s revelations are not just about her personal pain—they are a call to action. She wants society to stop blaming victims and start holding perpetrators accountable.

By sharing her story, she hopes to encourage other survivors to break their silence and find strength in their vulnerability.

Conclusion

Iyabo Ojo’s courage in sharing her traumatic experiences is a powerful reminder of the resilience of the human spirit. Her message is clear: sexual violence must never be tolerated, and survivors deserve justice and support.

Her journey—from a troubled childhood to becoming a fearless advocate—serves as an inspiration to many.

Eniola Badmus seeks prayers for motherhood

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian actress and politician Eniola Badmus stole the hearts of many as she broke down in tears during her annual charity event.

The star, known for her vibrant personality and dedication to her community, made an emotional appeal, asking supporters to pray for her dream of becoming a mother.

Emotional appeal to the crowd

Standing on the stage, Eniola struggled to hold back tears. Her voice trembled as she openly shared her deepest longing. She asked the audience to join her in prayer, seeking divine blessings for the chance to experience motherhood.

“Please, always mention me in your prayers,” she implored. “I am waiting upon the Lord for children. Pray for me so I can be blessed with the fruit of the womb.”

Desire to give back

Eniola’s heartfelt plea went beyond personal desire. She expressed her wish not just to have children but to provide for them and continue supporting her community. Her words carried a sense of purpose and hope, as she highlighted the connection between her personal aspirations and her commitment to helping others.

“I need your prayers for more opportunities to serve and support you better,” she said. “With your support and God’s guidance, I will keep working towards a brighter tomorrow for our people.”

Audience responds with love

The audience, deeply moved by her honesty, showed immense compassion. Many could be seen nodding, wiping tears, or holding their hands in prayer. Eniola’s vulnerability struck a chord with attendees, fostering a shared sense of humanity and solidarity.

Star with a heart for charity

Over the years, Eniola Badmus has become known for her philanthropic efforts. Her charity events have provided much-needed relief to countless families and individuals in



need. Her openness about her personal struggles only deepened the admiration many feel for her.

This year’s event was no different. Alongside her emotional speech, Eniola ensured the event remained focused on giving back. Donations, scholarships, and food packages were distributed to underprivileged members of the community.

Strength in vulnerability

Eniola’s emotional moment showcased the strength in vulnerability. In a society where public figures often shy away from revealing personal challenges, her courage to share her journey openly was a powerful reminder of the shared struggles many people face.

Her appeal also highlighted a universal truth — the importance of hope and community support. By asking for prayers, she invited others to join her in faith, creating a sense of collective strength.

Actress and Politician Eniola Badmus

Actress and Politician Eniola Badmus

Looking ahead with hope

As the event concluded, Eniola thanked the audience for their continuous love and encouragement. She reiterated her commitment to serving her community and expressed confidence in a brighter future.

“With your prayers and God by my side, I will keep working with you to achieve better days for many people,” she said. “Thank you today, thank you always, and thank you forever.”

A Message that resonates

Eniola’s story is a reminder of the human side of celebrities. Beyond the glitz and glamour, they face personal challenges just like anyone else. Her courage to voice her struggles and her unwavering faith left a lasting impression on those present.

Her plea for prayers resonated far beyond the walls of the event. It sent a powerful message about the importance of empathy, faith, and the collective strength of a

Basketmouth: I'm going into movies, music full-time in 2025

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Stand-up comedian Basketmouth plans to shift his focus to music and filmmaking in 2025, aiming to explore his true passions beyond comedy.

In a candid interview with Pulse, the comedian outlined his ambitious plans, expressing a desire to take music more seriously by releasing EPs and collaborating with other artists.

Additionally, he emphasized his long-standing passion for filmmaking, describing it as his "first love."

Music: A new beginning

Basketmouth's venture into music is not entirely new, as he had initially pursued a career in music before transitioning into comedy.

In his interview, he said, "I'm going to take music more seriously in 2025. I want to create EPs because there are certain artists I'm eager to work with. I want to dedicate myself fully to music and movies. To be honest, movies have always been my priority. It has always been my first love—it's just that I haven't made the movie yet."

Basketmouth explained that his relationship with music began long before his comedy career took off. "I started with music, but I realized it wasn't going to work out. I've always been funny since primary school, but music was something I considered as a talent I could play around with. Rap was my thing, but after a while, I saw that it wasn't heading in the direction I wanted. So, I tried comedy, and it happened by chance. I thought, 'This one seems to be working. Maybe this is the one.'"

His move into music comes from a place of rediscovery. Basketmouth has now decided to re-explore his roots in music, with a clear intent to take it seriously this time. "It's about going back to the basics and finding my original passion," he added.

Filmmaking: The first love

Basketmouth has been vocal about his desire to fully immerse himself in filmmaking. He referred to it as his "first love," emphasizing that it has

always been his true passion. "I want to go into music and movies full-time. To be honest, movies are my first choice. I prioritize movies over comedy. It has always been like that—it's just that I haven't made the movie yet."

His deep connection with filmmaking stems from his early interest in storytelling and visual expression.

Even before he became a household name in comedy, Basketmouth harbored a desire to create and direct films. However, comedy offered him a more immediate path to success.

"Filmmaking has always been my passion. I've always wanted to tell stories, bring characters to life, and create worlds. But comedy was what worked first, and I took it as my new path," he admitted. Basketmouth believes that while his comedy career brought him fame and recognition, his love for filmmaking has never faded.

Accidental comedy career

Basketmouth's entry into comedy wasn't entirely planned. In fact, he describes it as accidental. He said, "I started with music, but I saw that it wasn't going to work. I've always been funny since primary school, but music was just a talent I felt I could use as a plaything. Rap was my thing, but after a while, I realized that it wasn't going the way I wanted. Then I tried comedy, it was even by fluke. I was like, 'this one is working. It must be the one.'"

Comedian Basketmouth

His success in comedy came unexpectedly but quickly became his focus. "When I entered comedy, the beginning was turbulent, but immediately I cracked the code, my career skyrocketed." He believes that the early challenges helped him sharpen his skills and build a reputation.

However, despite his success in comedy, the itch to return to music and filmmaking remained.

Shift towards authentic passions

Now, Basketmouth is ready to embrace



these passions more fully. His decision to return to music and filmmaking marks a significant shift in his career trajectory. "It's not about abandoning comedy," he clarified. "Comedy will always be a part of me. But music and movies have been my true calling. I've reached a point where I want to take control of my narrative and pursue what makes me truly happy."

Basketmouth's upcoming plans for 2025 reflect a commitment to authenticity. By focusing on music and filmmaking, he hopes to explore new creative frontiers and expand his artistic endeavors.

Looking ahead

As Basketmouth prepares to launch his music and filmmaking career, he remains optimistic about the future. His journey is far from over, and the comedian believes that these creative pursuits will complement rather than replace his successful comedy career.

In his own words, "I'm not leaving comedy behind. It has paved the way for me, and I'll always be grateful for that. But music and movies are my first loves, and I'm ready to dive deeper into those areas."

Mike Johnson reelected US House Speaker after tense vote

By Dave Oludare Oso

Incumbent Mike Johnson was reelected House Speaker on January 3 after a tense roll call, overcoming opposition from hard-right Republicans. Despite Trump's support, his narrow majority and past struggles signal ongoing challenges as Congress prepares for key tasks.

Republican Mike Johnson won reelection to the House speakership on a first ballot Friday, pushing past GOP hard-right holdouts and buoyed with a nod of support from President-elect Donald Trump.

A collection of hardline Republicans convened in the back of the House chamber during a tense roll call on the first day of the new Congress, one by one declining to vote or choosing another lawmaker.

The standoff sparked fresh turmoil signaling trouble ahead under unified GOP control of Washington.

In the end, however, Johnson was able to flip two remaining holdouts who switched to support him, drawing applause from Republicans.

As the most recent speaker, Johnson's weak grip on the gavel threatens not only his own survival but President-elect Trump's ambitious agenda of tax cuts and mass deportations as Republicans sweep to power.

US Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, Republican from Louisiana, receives applause after winning the vote for Speaker of the House, during the first day of the 119th Congress in the House Chamber at the US Capitol in Washington, DC, on January 3, 2025. (Photo by ROBERTO SCHMIDT/AFP)

Newly-elected House lawmakers started casting votes as Johnson's name was put forward for nomination by the GOP Conference Chair Rep. Lisa McClain, R-Mich.

"No speaker's perfect," she said. But the goal is to make progress toward shared priorities for the country, she said. "None of us will get exactly what we want."

Democrats put forward their own leader, Hakeem Jeffries of New York,

as the only one with a track record of compromise and achievement in the face of "chaos and dysfunction" under the GOP majority.

"House Democrats are united behind the most powerful legislative leader in this chamber," said Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif., of Jeffries,

recounting the many times their votes bailed out Johnson to ensure passage of important legislation.

With opposition from his own GOP colleagues, Johnson arrived with outward confidence after working into the night to sway hardline holdouts. A flop by Johnson could throw Monday's congressional certification of Trump's 2024 election victory into turmoil without a House speaker. Even backing from Trump himself, usually a sure bet for Republicans, was no guarantee Johnson will stay in power.

"We don't have time for drama," Johnson said as he walked into the Capitol.

The Louisiana Republican received a renewed nod of support from Trump. "A win for Mike today will be a big win for the Republican Party," Trump posted on social media.

What was once a ceremonial day with newly elected lawmakers arriving to be sworn into office, often with family, friends and children in tow, has evolved into a high-stakes vote for the office of House speaker, among the most powerful elected positions in Washington. Vice President Kamala Harris was swearing in the senators.

While the Senate is able to convene on its own and has already elected party leaders — Sen. John Thune as the Republican majority leader and Sen. Chuck Schumer for the Democratic minority — the House must first elect its speaker, a role required by the Constitution, second in the line of succession to the president.

Congress has been here before, when it took Republicans nearly a week and 15



rounds of voting to elect Kevin McCarthy as speaker in 2023, a spectacle unseen in modern times. McCarthy was then dumped by his party, a historic first, but he was also part of a long list of GOP speakers chased to early exits.

The stakes are higher this year as Trump prepares to return to the White House with the House and Senate in GOP control and promising to deliver big on a 100-day agenda.

Johnson has been working diligently to prevent defeat, spending New Year's Day at Mar-a-Lago as he positions himself alongside Trump. The speaker often portrays himself as the "quarterback" who will be executing the political plays called by the "coach," the president-elect.

But Johnson also warned that without a House speaker there would be a "constitutional crisis" heading into Jan. 6, when Congress by law is required to count the electoral votes for president, weeks before Trump is set to be inaugurated Jan. 20.

"We don't have any time to waste, and I think that everybody recognizes that," he said.

Johnson commands one of the slimmest majorities in modern times, having lost seats in the November election. With the sudden resignation of Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., the tally dropped to 219-215. That leaves Johnson relying on almost every Republican

Badenoch demands national inquiry into UK rape gangs scandals

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Conservative leader, Kemi Badenoch has called for a full national public inquiry into the UK's "rape gangs scandal."

It comes after Home Office Minister, Jess Phillips rejected Oldham Council's request for a government-led inquiry into historical child sexual exploitation – saying the council should lead it instead.

Her decision, taken in October, was reported by GB News on Wednesday, then picked up by Elon Musk on his social media platform X and several senior Tories.

The Home Office has been approached for comment.

A Labour spokesperson said: "The Home Office supports police investigations and independent inquiries to get truth and justice for victims."

They said Labour had supported the 2022 national inquiry into child sexual abuse under Professor Alexis Jay, adding the government was "working at pace" to implement its recommendations.

Posting on X, Badenoch said: "Trials have taken place all over the country in recent years but no one in authority has joined the dots. 2025 must be the year that the victims start to get justice."

There have been numerous investigations into the systematic rape of young women by organised gangs, including in Rotherham, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Rochdale and Bristol

The sexual abuse of young girls by grooming gangs has fuelled a number of far-right campaigns which have focused on cases of large-scale abuse carried out mainly by men of Pakistani descent.

An inquiry into abuse in Rotherham found 1,400 children had been

sexually abused over a 16-year period, predominantly by British Pakistani men.

An investigation in Telford found that up to 1,000 girls had been abused over 40 years – and that some cases had not been investigated because of "nervousness about race."

In Oldham, an inquiry was set up after rumours spread online that children were being groomed in council homes, shisha bars and by taxi drivers.

The report found there was no evidence of "widespread" child sex abuse in those settings, or of a cover-up by the council, but the review did point out other serious failings among safeguarding services in the area.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA), which published its final report in 2022, knitted several of these inquiries together alongside its own investigations.

Professor Alexis Jay, who led the inquiry, said in November she felt "frustrated" that none of its 20 recommendations to tackle abuse had been implemented more than two years later.

She said: "It's a difficult subject matter, but it is essential that there's some public understanding of it."

"But we can only do what we can to press the government to look at the delivery of all of this."

"It doesn't need more consultation, it does not need more research or discussion, it just needs to be done."

Philp told Radio 4's World at One programme he supported Oldham Council's call for a government-led inquiry, despite the previous Conservative government rejecting a similar request from an Oldham



councillor in 2022.

But, he added, "rape gangs" were "a bigger question than just Oldham."

Asked why the Tory government had not conducted a national public inquiry into such gangs, Philp pointed to IICSA but added "I don't think it was, frankly, as comprehensive on this topic as it should have been."

Philp said: "We need a proper national inquiry to look at all of these issues across all of the towns affected. And I'm afraid to say there are something like 15 to 25 different towns involved, covering thousands and thousands of victims."

Questions about the conduct of local authorities, the police and social care needed answering on a national scale, he argued. Philp also did not rule out the inquiry looking at the role of Sir Keir Starmer, who was director of public prosecutions from 2008 to 2013.

He said an inquiry should examine why perpetrators in "grooming gangs and rape gangs" appeared to be "overwhelmingly of South Asian background."

Responding to Badenoch, Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said: "Talk is cheap. The Conservatives had 14 years in government to launch an inquiry."

Two killed, 18 injured as plane crashes in California

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

At least two people were killed and 18 injured after a small plane crashed into a commercial building in California, United States on Thursday, the police have said.

The crash took place early in the afternoon near Fullerton Municipal Airport, 25 miles (40 kilometres) southeast of Los Angeles. The cause remains unknown.

“There are two confirmed fatalities,” Fullerton police said on X.

Additionally, 10 people were hospitalized and eight others were treated at the scene.

Investigators do not yet know if the deceased were plane passengers or if they were workers at the building where it crashed, a police officer told local station KTLA.

Television footage showed a gaping hole in the roof of the building, with smoke pouring out.

“All we hear is like a loud noise, boom, and that’s it. Then we started

running out of the building,” Jerome Cruz, one of the workers who witnessed said.

The plane was a single-engine Van’s RV-10, a small model with four seats, according to the Federal Aviation

Administration, which has opened an investigations.

This incident comes few days on the heels of Jeju Air flight from Seoul on Monday, which was forced to return after encountering a landing gear problem.

Earlier, South Korea’s most deadly plane crash killed 179 people after coming down without its landing gear engaged on Sunday.

Jeju Air Flight 7C101, which departed



Seoul’s Gimpo International Airport for Jeju island “at around 6:37 am, returned to Gimpo at 7:25 am” after a landing gear issue was detected shortly after takeoff, the South Korean airline said.

“Shortly after takeoff, a signal indicating a landing gear issue was detected on the aircraft’s monitoring system.”

Biden set to block \$14.9b US steel acquisition by Japan’s Nippon steel

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

US President Joe Biden has decided to block the proposed \$14.9 billion acquisition of US Steel by Japan’s Nippon Steel, according to sources close to the administration.

The Washington Post reported on Thursday that a formal announcement of the presidential decision is expected as soon as Friday, unless Biden has a last-minute change of heart, which officials do not foresee.

Despite pressure from senior advisers who cautioned that blocking such a significant investment could harm relations with Japan, Biden is poised to reject the deal.

The transaction was brought to Biden after the Committee on Foreign

Investment in the United States (CFIUS) was unable to reach a consensus in late December on whether the acquisition posed a national security risk.

Biden has voiced opposition to the deal for several months, aligning with critics, including President-elect Donald Trump and incoming Vice President JD Vance, who have condemned the acquisition.

The controversy intensified when the deal became a focal point in the 2024 US presidential campaign, especially in Pennsylvania, where the steelworkers’ union strongly opposed it.

While Nippon Steel has argued that the acquisition could revive Pennsylvania’s struggling steel industry, US Steel and Nippon Steel have signalled plans to pursue legal action against the government, accusing it of not adhering



to proper procedures during the review process.

There was no immediate comment from the White House on Thursday evening.

Trump to attend Jimmy Carter's funeral despite years of mutual criticism

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

US President-elect, Donald Trump has said he will attend former President Jimmy Carter's funeral despite a history of mutual criticism.

Carter, who died on December 29 at the age of 100, will be honoured with a state funeral at Washington National Cathedral on Thursday, January 9.

President Joe Biden is expected to deliver the eulogy. "I'll be there. We were invited," Trump told reporters on Thursday night, though he declined to say if he'd spoken with any members of the Carter family.

Trump's attendance at the funeral will come after years of public sniping between Trump and Carter, including Trump's recent jabs at Carter on the 2024 campaign trail.

Though after the 39th president's passing, Trump issued a statement praising Carter's service to the country.

"The challenges Jimmy faced as President came at a pivotal time for our country and he did everything in his power to improve the lives of all Americans. For that, we all owe him a debt of gratitude," Trump wrote. "Melania and I are thinking warmly of the Carter Family and their loved ones during this difficult time. We urge everyone to keep them in their hearts and prayers."

In another post, Trump commended Carter as a "truly good man" and praised his humanitarian work post-presidency.

"While I strongly disagreed with him philosophically and politically, I also realized that he truly loved and respected our country, and all it stands

for. He worked hard to make America a better place, and for that I give him my highest respect," Trump wrote of Carter. "He was a truly good man and, of course, will be greatly missed. He was also very consequential, far more than most Presidents, after he left the Oval Office."

But previously, Trump had labelled Carter as the country's "worst president."

Trump also repeatedly criticized Carter as he lashed out at President Joe Biden when the two were opponents in the 2024 race before Biden dropped out.

"Crooked Joe Biden is the worst president in the history of our country. He's the most incompetent and he's the most corrupt president in the history of our country," Trump said last January as he ramped up campaign events. "And it's not even close. In fact, I said the happiest person alive today is Jimmy Carter because his presidency looks brilliant. Brilliant by comparison."

Carter, who had been in hospice care since early 2023, was out of the public eye during the presidential race but his family said he was trying to live until he could cast his ballot for Vice President Kamala Harris, which he did in mid-October.

During the presidential transition, Trump's denounced a signature achievement of Carter's presidency — the Panama Canal Treaty that gave the Central American nation eventual control of the critical waterway.

Trump recently said the U.S. "foolishly"



ceded the Panama Canal and suggested his incoming administration might try to regain control of it.

During Trump's first term, Carter didn't mince words when discussing what he thought about his presidency.

Carter told the Washington Post in 2018, "I think he's a disaster."

"In human rights and taking care of people and treating people equal," Carter said of Trump.

Carter also cast doubt at one point on Trump's 2016 victory, suggesting that a full investigation into Russian election interference would show Trump "didn't actually win." Trump hit back to those comments by saying Carter was "a nice man" but "a terrible president" who was "trashed" by his own party.

Though notably the two men spoke in 2019 when Trump called Carter to discuss China and trade negotiations. Prior to the call, Carter had sent a "beautiful" letter to Trump sharing some advice on the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Beijing, Trump's White House said at the time.

Meghan Markle hits major Instagram milestone just 1 day after unveiling account

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Meghan Markle's namesake Instagram account has attracted one million followers in the first 24 hours since she published her first post.

On Jan. 2, the Duchess of Sussex, 43, garnered one million followers on her @meghan Instagram page that she launched on New Year's Day.

A click into the page's "About this account" tab revealed that the verified account was created in June 2022, though Meghan didn't post for the first time until Jan. 1.

The Duchess of Sussex kicked off the new year in a major way by posting on a public Instagram account for the first time in years. The first post on the page was a video of Meghan shot by Prince Harry and showed her running on the beach to write "2025" in the sand.

PEOPLE understands the video was captured at a beach by Harry near their Montecito, California home, where the couple lives with their children Prince Archie, 5, and Princess Lilibet, 3.

The reports also said the Duchess of Sussex is excited to return to social media as a way to reconnect with communities worldwide and share updates about what she's working on, eager to lead by example in using social media to spark joy and positive connection.

While she hinted at an Instagram return by launching the American Riviera Orchard profile (and website) in March 2024, the account has not published any posts yet and both landing pages remain the same.

A close look showed that Meghan's debut post included a relatable social media move — a little practice for the perfect shot! The video opened with footage of Meghan running on the beach towards the sea, and a lookalike "2025" to the one she wrote with her hand in the sand later in the snippet was spotted to the side.

The subtle detail hinted that she had

attempted at least two takes to get it just right, with her careful handwriting calling back to her previous job as a calligrapher.

On Jan. 2, the Duchess of Sussex surprised with a second post on her @meghan account and shared the official trailer for her upcoming Netflix series titled *With Love, Meghan*. Meghan served as both host and executive producer for the lifestyle show, which will premiere in eight episodes on Jan. 15.

"I have been so excited to share this with you! I hope you love the show as much as I loved making it," Meghan wrote below the video. "Wishing you all a fantastic new year! Thanks to our amazing crew and the team @netflix. Beyond grateful for the support — and fun! As ever, Meghan."

Set to the song "Do You Believe in Magic" by The Lovin' Spoonful, the trailer showed Meghan cooking, gardening, flower shopping, beekeeping and baking with friends including Mindy Kaling, Abigail Spencer (her former *Suits* costar) and Delfina Blaquier. Prince Harry, 40, also appeared in the video and wrapped his wife in a hug as they stood with champagne glasses on a sunny patio.

In a statement shared with PEOPLE, Netflix described the show (filmed in Montecito) as an "inspiring series, produced by Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, that reimagines the genre of lifestyle programming, blending practical how-to's and candid conversation with friends, new and old."

"Meghan shares personal tips and tricks, embracing playfulness over perfection and highlights how easy it can be to create beauty, even in the unexpected," it continued. "She and her guests roll up their sleeves in the kitchen, the garden and beyond, and invite you to do the



same."

The Duchess of Sussex is ringing in the new year on a high by revealing the series and going live with her eponymous Instagram profile. The themes highlighted in *With Love, Meghan* are reminiscent of the lifestyle content she spotlighted on her blog *The Tig*, which she ran from 2014 to 2017 while starring on *Suits*.

She shuttered the blog in April 2017 and closed down her Instagram page the following January, shortly after her engagement to Prince Harry was publicly announced and she geared up for her royal role.

Shortly after splitting offices with Prince William and Kate Middleton in March 2019, Prince Harry and Meghan launched the Instagram profile @SussexRoyal to showcase their royal work with a personal feel.

The account stopped being updated after Harry and Meghan stepped back from their royal roles in 2020, and the couple has been logged offline since.

While Meghan's new Instagram page is not following any other accounts and comments are so far disabled, her inner circle is celebrating her fresh start on social media.

Grooming gangs: You're misinformed, UK minister tells Musk

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Elon Musk's attack on the government's handling of grooming gangs is "misjudged and certainly misinformed," Health Secretary, Wes Streeting has said. Tech multi-billionaire, Musk has posted a series of messages on his social media site X, accusing Sir Keir Starmer of failing to prosecute gangs that systematically groomed and raped young girls, and calling for safeguarding minister Jess Phillips to be jailed.

Asked about his comments, Streeting said, "This government takes the issue of child sexual exploitation incredibly seriously."

He invited Musk to "roll up his sleeves and work with us" against rape gangs.

The Tories have also criticised Musk for "sharing things that are factually inaccurate."

While visiting a care home in Carlisle on Friday, Streeting said Labour was getting "on with the job" of implementing the recommendations of the independent inquiry into child sexual abuse led by Professor Alexis Jay "in full."

He told reporters: "Some of the criticisms Elon Musk has made I think are misjudged and certainly misinformed."

"But we're willing to work with Elon Musk who I think has got a big role to play with his social media platform to help us and other countries tackle these serious issues."

"If he wants to work with us and roll his sleeves up, we'd welcome that."

Musk, a key adviser to US President-elect Donald Trump, has accused Sir Keir Starmer of failing to properly prosecute rape gangs while he was Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), and has repeatedly retweeted Reform UK and Conservative MPs calling for a national inquiry.

He also suggested safeguarding minister, Jess Phillips "deserves to be in prison" after she rejected a request

for the Home Office to order a public inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Oldham. She said the council should commission a local inquiry instead, as happened in Rotherham and Telford.

The decision was criticised by several senior Tories, despite the previous Conservative government turning down a similar request in 2022.

Tory leader, Kemi Badenoch has also called for a full national public inquiry into what she called the UK's "rape gangs scandal."

But the party has also criticised Musk for "sharing things that are factually inaccurate" and distanced itself from his call for Phillips to be jailed.

Alicia Kearns – who shadows Phillips as the Conservative spokesperson on safeguarding – told BBC Radio 5 Live Musk had "fallen prone" to sharing things on his X platform "without critically assessing them."

She accused Musk of "drawing away attention from the survivors and from the victims" of rape gangs, and "lionising people like (far-right activist) Tommy Robinson – which is frankly dangerous." Reform UK leader, Nigel Farage has told the BBC that Musk, the world's richest man, is in talks about making a donation to the party. The two men met at Trump's Florida retreat last month.

Jay inquiry

There have been numerous investigations into the systematic rape of girls and young women by organised gangs, including in Rotherham, Cornwall, Derbyshire and Bristol.

Inquiries into Greater Manchester Police's handling of historical child sex abuse cases in Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale have also been carried out.

Earlier on Friday, health minister,



Andrew Gwynne suggested Musk "ought to focus" on US politics, where he is set to act as an unelected adviser to the Trump administration on cutting federal spending.

Speaking to LBC Radio, Gwynne added that child grooming was a "very serious issue," pointing to previous investigations which had taken place into sexual abuse scandals.

"There comes a point where we don't need more inquiries, and had Elon Musk really paid attention to what's been going on in this country, he might have recognised that there have already been inquiries," he said.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA), which published its final report in 2022, described the sexual abuse of children as an "epidemic that leaves tens of thousands of victims in its poisonous wake."

It knitted several previous inquiries together alongside its own investigations.

Professor Jay said in November she felt "frustrated" that none of her report's 20 recommendations to tackle abuse had been implemented more than two years later.

She said: "It's a difficult subject matter, but it is essential that there's some public understanding of it."

"But we can only do what we can to press the government to look at the delivery of all of this."

Barcelona in crisis: Dani Olmo saga highlights financial, leadership turmoil

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Dani Olmo, a marquee £51 million summer signing and a key figure in Spain's Euro 2024 triumph, finds himself sidelined from La Liga, embroiled in Barcelona's ongoing financial and administrative crisis. As of 1 January, Olmo and Pau Víctor were removed from Barcelona's official list of registered players due to the club's failure to meet La Liga's stringent wage cap regulations. This debacle has further tarnished the reputation of the Catalan giants and their president, Joan Laporta.

A Sporting Setback

Olmo, who has scored six goals in 15 appearances this season, was registered temporarily for the first half of the campaign under special exemptions. However, the courts twice rejected Barcelona's appeal to extend this arrangement. La Liga's governing body cited a lack of necessary conditions to grant the precautionary registration.

The failure to secure Olmo's registration leaves Barcelona without one of their most valuable assets on the pitch, forcing head coach Hansi Flick to navigate the remainder of the season without the influential forward. Meanwhile, the club must still honor the full payment of Olmo's transfer fee to RB Leipzig and his long-term contract, which runs until 2030, creating a financial liability of approximately €120 million (£100 million).

Financial Turmoil

Barcelona's financial struggles are at the core of this crisis. Accumulating over €1 billion in debt, the club has been unable to meet La Liga's financial controls. Additionally, the ongoing renovation of the Spotify Camp Nou has added approximately €1.5 billion in debt, further straining the club's resources.

A failed attempt to generate revenue through the sale of VIP seats at the future

stadium highlighted Barcelona's desperation. While the funds from this deal reportedly arrived after La Liga's deadline, the governing body has refused to consider the late payment. The inability to meet these financial deadlines has forced Barcelona to explore controversial measures, including selling off parts of its identity and renegotiating player contracts.

Leadership Under Fire

The crisis has intensified scrutiny of Laporta's leadership. Since assuming the presidency in 2021, Laporta's tenure has been marked by financial instability, failed promises, and controversial decisions. From the departure of Lionel Messi to delays in the Camp Nou's reopening, critics argue Laporta's populist rhetoric has failed to translate into effective governance.

Compounding the issue is Laporta's decision to leave critical executive roles unfilled following the resignations of Ferran Reverter and Eduard Romeu. This vacuum of leadership has left Laporta solely accountable for the fallout. Legal defeats in the courts and the lack of support from the Spanish Football Federation have left Barcelona isolated and exposed.

The Road Ahead

Barcelona's immediate options are limited. The club has explored agreements to terminate the contracts of deregistered players like Olmo and Víctor, allowing them to leave for free and potentially



return in the summer. However, this depends on player consent, and Olmo, despite his contract clause permitting him to leave without compensation, remains committed to the club for now. The possibility of seeking provisional measures in a civil court offers a glimmer of hope but risks further legal entanglements. Meanwhile, opposition groups within the club are calling for drastic changes in leadership and strategy, warning that Barcelona's future hangs in the balance.

A Crisis of Identity

This debacle transcends financial and sporting issues, striking at the heart of Barcelona's identity. Once a symbol of footballing excellence, the club now faces questions about its values and direction. Fans and stakeholders are left grappling with the reality that years of mismanagement and short-term fixes have left Barcelona vulnerable to external pressures and internal discord.

For Olmo, the uncertainty mirrors the chaos surrounding his registration. Initially a sensation, his recent form has dipped, reflecting the instability at the club. For Barcelona, resolving this crisis will require more than temporary fixes; it demands a fundamental shift in leadership and strategy to restore the club's standing as one of football's most iconic institutions.

Rashford set to miss Liverpool match with illness

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Manchester United's Marcus Rashford will miss Sunday's match against Liverpool due to illness, manager Ruben Amorim confirmed. Rashford, who has been struggling with form and attitude issues recently, returned for the Newcastle match but was benched.

Napoli has expressed interest in Rashford, with United open to a loan move if his high wages are covered. Meanwhile, United confirmed they'll extend Harry Maguire's contract to 2026, with Amorim demanding more leadership from the former captain.



Amad Diallo is also close to a long-term deal after excelling under Amorim, highlighted by his Manchester derby-winning goal. Amid challenges, United,

currently 14th in the league, look to experienced players to lead the squad out of a difficult period.

Celtic in pre-contract talks with Arsenal's Kieran Tierney

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Celtic have initiated discussions to bring back former defender Kieran Tierney on a pre-contract agreement from Arsenal. The 27-year-old, who departed Celtic in 2019 for £25m, has struggled with injuries throughout his time in English football.

Tierney's Arsenal career has been marked by 125 appearances and several injury setbacks, including shoulder, knee, and hamstring issues. Despite his challenges, the Scotland international remains highly regarded for his professionalism and work ethic.

Amid interest from multiple European clubs, it is unclear if Arsenal will sanction a loan move for Tierney in January ahead



of a potential permanent transfer in the summer. A return to Celtic would mark a significant homecoming for the talented defender, whose last appearance for Arsenal came in a Carabao Cup win over Crystal

Palace in December.

As talks progress, fans in both north London and Glasgow await clarity on Tierney's next move, hoping the gifted left-back can revive his career.