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New Year Message: Your sacrifices will not be in vain, Tinubu tells Nigerians

By Oluwatosin Ologun

On New Year's Day, President Bola Tinubu assured Nigerians that all their sacrifices since he took over as the country's leader would not be in vain.

In his New Year message, the president, who promised to continue to serve every Nigerian diligently and wholeheartedly also listed some of his achievements in the year that just ended, despite the challenges his government faced.

However, setting agenda for the New Year, the president, who listed some of the plans in the offing, intended to make 2025 a much better year, urged the citizens, too, to play their part in collective interest.

This was as other leaders across political leanings and faiths, have sent out their New Year messages to the people, praying that 2025 brings with it better deals.

In his moderately long message delivered in an early morning broadcast, Tinubu said: "To all citizens, your sacrifices have not been in vain over the past 19 months. I assure you they will not be in vain even in the months ahead. Together, let us stay the course of nation-building.

"The New Year will bring us closer to the bright future we all desire and the Nigeria of our dreams.

"On a personal note, thank you for placing your confidence in me as your president. Your trust humbles me, and I promise to continue serving you diligently and wholeheartedly."

Starting by way of introduction, he said, "As we enter 2025, I wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year. May you be rich in joy, success, and good health.

"As the new year dawns, it brings many hopes, aspirations, and prospects for better days. By the grace of God, 2025 will be a year of great promise in which we will fulfill our collective desires.

"Though 2024 posed numerous challenges to our citizens and households, I am confident that the New Year will bring brighter days."

Sharing some good news on the state of play, he said, "Economic indicators point to a positive and encouraging outlook for our nation.

"Fuel prices have gradually decreased, and we recorded foreign trade surpluses

in three consecutive quarters. Foreign reserves have risen, and the Naira has strengthened against the US dollar, bringing greater stability.

"The stock market's record growth has generated trillions of naira in wealth, and the surge in foreign investment reflects renewed confidence in our economy. Nevertheless, the cost of food and essential drugs remained a significant concern for many Nigerian households in 2024."

However, in 2025, he said, "Our government is committed to intensifying efforts to lower these costs by boosting food production and promoting local manufacturing of essential drugs and other medical supplies.

"We are resolute in our ambition to reduce inflation from its current high of 34.6% to 15%. With diligent work and God's help, we will achieve this goal and provide relief to all our people.

"In this new year, my administration will further consolidate and increase access to credit for individuals and critical sectors of the economy to boost national economic output.

"To achieve this, the federal government will establish the National Credit Guarantee Company to expand risk-sharing instruments for financial institutions and enterprises

"The Company—expected to start operations before the end of the second quarter—is a partnership of government institutions, such as the Bank of Industry, Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Agency, and Ministry of Finance Incorporated, the private sector, and multilateral institutions.

"This initiative will strengthen the confidence of the financial system, expand credit access, and support under-served groups such as women and youth. It will drive growth, re-industrialisation, and better living standards for our people. "This initiative will strengthen the confidence of the financial system,



expand credit access, and support under-served groups such as women and youth. It will drive growth, re-industrialisation, and better living standards for our people.

"We will continue to embark on necessary reforms to foster sustainable growth and prosperity for our nation. I seek your cooperation and collaboration at all times as we pursue our goal of a one trillion-dollar economy. Let us stay focused and united.

"We are on the right path to building a great Nigeria that will work for everyone. Let us not get distracted by a tiny segment of our population that still sees things through the prisms of politics, ethnicity, region, and religion."

Appealing to the people as partners in the Nigerian project, he said, "To achieve our national goals and objectives, we must become better citizens and uncompromising in our devotion and allegiance to Nigeria.

"Citizens' moral rectitude and faith in our country are fundamental to the success of the Renewed Hope Agenda. In 2025, we will commit to promoting adherence to ethical principles, shared values, and beliefs under the National Identity Project.

"I will unveil the National Values Charter, already approved by the Federal Executive Council, in the first quarter of 2025. I will launch an ambitious national orientation campaign that fosters patriotism and love for our country and inspires citizens to rally together.

Nigeria moves to extradite Simon Ekpa, approaches Finnish Govt

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal Government has launched moves for the extradition of self-professed Prime Minister of Biafra in Exile Simon Ekpa by formally submitting the necessary requirements to Finnish authorities. Disclosing this on Channels Television on Tuesday, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, said, "Well, I'm sure he's cooling off somewhere. Legal action will be taken accordingly. I don't want to say too much, but I'm glad he's been arrested. "The Federal Government has provided most of the required documentation to the Finnish Government, so I'm confident the right steps will be taken." The Finnish authorities arrested Ekpa along with four others, on suspicion of involvement in terror-related

activities, including incitement to violence and financing terrorism in November 2024.

The Lahti District Court in Finland ordered Ekpa's remand based on probable cause for public incitement to commit a crime with terrorist intent in Nigeria.

The separatist leader was accused of using social media to promote separatist propaganda and violently advocating for the secession of southeastern Nigeria.

There are reports that he is been kept in one of the toughest prisons housing the most deadly criminals and felons in Finland, but many Nigerians still see his deportation to Nigeria as unlikely going by the fact that he is a



Finnish citizen.

However, the coming months will unveil answers as the Biafran agitator has his first day in court in Finland in May.

Tax bills: I can't be threatened, stand by my comments – Bauch gov

By Dave Oludare Oso

Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, said on Tuesday that he would not retract his comments on the tax reform bills put in place by President Bola Tinubu. The presidency, had on Monday, asked the governor to withdraw some of the statements he made on the controversial tax reform bills. The governor condemned the tax reform initiatives during a visit of the Bauchi State Christian Community to the Government House on Christmas Day, describing them as "anti-north" and favouring only a section of the country. Continuing, the governor, in what the Presidency deplored as a direct threat on the president, warned that should the policies be ratified, the north would "show Tinubu its true colours." He stressed that the President was calling for anarchy with the reforms, noting that the bills could lead to economic setbacks and threaten

national unity.

Mohammed urged the Federal Government to reconsider and adopt more inclusive policies.

However, reacting on Monday, the Special Adviser on Media and Public Communication to the President, Sunday Dare, in a post on his X handle said the statements credited to Mohammed on the tax reform bills and other recent rhetoric were unbecoming of a state governor.

The presidential spokesman consequently asked the governor to retract his speech, particularly the one in which he threatened the president. Firing back, the governor, who featured in Channels Television's 2024 Year-End Review programme on Tuesday, said he stands by his comment on the tax reforms.



He urged the federal government to listen to the people, saying the tax bills, if allowed to sail through would threaten the survival of the states and impoverish them.

He warned that some states should not be allowed to die because they do not have the headquarters of companies in Nigeria.

2025: Tinubu's reforms will unlock Nigeria's economic potential – First Lady

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu's wife, Oluremi, has reaffirmed her husband-led administration's commitment to transformative reforms aimed at unlocking Nigeria's economic potential.

The First Lady in her New Year message shared on her X page emphasised that her husband is already implementing impactful changes designed to drive national progress.

She called on Nigerians to unite in support of these efforts by uplifting one another and ensuring no one is left behind.

According to her, collective action and solidarity are key to building the Nigeria everyone desires.

Mrs Tinubu wrote: "A Year of Prosperity and Abundance. I express my heartfelt gratitude to God Almighty, with great hope, and assurance in the promises for our great nation.

"As we journey through 2025, let us rise above our differences and rebuild the bridges that connect us—bridges of love, respect, and understanding. It is a year to invest in one another; nurture our youth and protect the dignity of our elders; to create a country where every Nigerian can thrive, regardless of where they are born, what they believe, or what



language they speak."

Anthony Joshua visits Tinubu

By Friday Omosola



Two-time former world heavyweight boxing champion, Anthony Joshua, visited President Bola Tinubu today at his Lagos residence.

Tinubu's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga shared details of the meeting on his X page.

He revealed that the Nigerian boxer gifted the President a signed boxing glove.

The inscription on the glove read: "To the Great Asiwaju Jagaban Borgu of Africa, Bola A. Tinubu."

He wrote, "AJ visits President Tinubu in Lagos. President Bola Tinubu

receiving an autographed glove from former World Heavyweight Champion, Anthony Joshua when he visited the President at his Ikoyi residence in Lagos. January 1, 2025."

In December 2024, The New Daily Prime reported that Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, appointed Joshua as a Sports Ambassador.

The governor commended Joshua's remarkable achievements in boxing, emphasising how they continue to inspire millions, including the people of the state.

He noted that Joshua's commitment,

discipline, and pursuit of excellence embody the core values the state upholds.

The boxer, accompanied by some family members, visited a special courtesy call.

Governor Abiodun further announced plans to build a new indoor boxing ring, which will be named in Joshua's honour.

Additionally, he disclosed that the 35-year-old boxer would light the torch for the Gateway Games National Sports Festival, now rescheduled for May next year.

Makinde delights Oyo workers with 13th month salary

By Dave Oludare Oso

In fulfilment of its promise, the government of Oyo State, led by the governor, Engineer Seyi Makinde, has paid a 13th-month salary to workers in the state civil service.

NEW DAILY PRIME learnt that the workers received the payment alert on their phones on the evening of Monday, December 30, 2024.

Confirming the payment, the state's commissioner for Information and Orientation, Prince Dotun Oyelade, said this was despite the cumulative payment of N77 billion, which the government spends yearly for salaries and wages of Oyo State workers.

The commissioner recalled that only two weeks ago, Governor Makinde approved the payment of N80,000 minimum wages for government workers after the negotiating council resolved the issue of the consequential adjustment.

Oyelade said that starting January 1, 2025, the government will pay a total of ₦143 billion on salaries and wages

annually by the approval of the new minimum wage.

The commissioner stressed that this represents a whopping 86 per cent increase in salaries and wages.

According to him, this puts Oyo State as having one of the three highest workers' packages in the federation.

Some of the workers spoken to by NEW DAILY PRIME, also confirmed the development, commending the governor for what they call an unprecedented kindness in the ancient state.

Tolu Onifade, who works in the state ministry of agriculture, said, "God bless our kind-hearted governor for this gesture. When he made the promise, we did not believe him; we thought it was his usual political talk. But receiving the alert yesterday, I



was so happy I started praying for him (Gov Makinde). He has done what nobody has ever done before. May God bless him and his government."

Terrorists kidnap six, raze vehicle in Zamfara

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Armed bandits on Tuesday, attacked travellers on the Shinkafi road near Kwanar Jalaf village under the Shinkafi Local Government Area of Zamfara State, abducting no fewer than six passengers.

The assailants abducted six passengers travelling in a Golf car and set the vehicle ablaze, in the early morning of Tuesday, further heightening fears among residents and commuters in the area.

The attack comes barely a week after notorious bandit leader Bello Turji issued threats to unleash violence on innocent citizens in Shinkafi and Zurmi communities in Zamfara State, as well as Isah and other local communities in Sokoto State in the New Year 2025.

According to Channels Television, residents of the area said the armed men blocked the road, forcing the vehicle to stop before carrying out the abductions and torching the car.

"Six travellers were abducted and their vehicle was set ablaze, we don't know if it was Turji group because he had recently threatened residents of Shinkafi and other local communities



around," a resident, who pleaded anonymity for security reasons said.

Residents of Shinkafi and other areas threatened by the terrorist kingpin have expressed growing concerns over the threat and are calling on the government to take decisive action

against the escalating activities of bandit groups in the region.

Efforts to reach the spokesperson of the Zamfara State Police Command, ASP Yazid Abubakar for further details have so far been unsuccessful.

PDP tasks Tinubu on N25trn allegedly stolen by APC chieftains

By Dave Oludare Oso

The leading opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has called on President Bola Tinubu to investigate and recover the N25 trillion allegedly stolen by All Progressive Congress leaders and government officials.

Making the call in its New Year address titled 'Address Insecurity, Fuel, Food Crisis,' PDP's National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba on Tuesday, also urged the president to address the critical challenges of insecurity, food and fuel supplies to ease suffering among Nigerians.

The party wrote, "@OfficialPDPNig congratulates Nigerians on the dawning of the year 2025 and charges President Bola Ahmed Tinubu @officialABAT not to taint the new year with an address that will not proffer immediate and concrete steps to reduce the price of fuel, address widespread hunger, and provide clear-cut measures to guarantee the security of lives and property in the country.

"This position by the PDP is predicated on the fact that previous addresses by Mr. President in the last 18 months dwelt only on hopeless rhetoric, unsubstantiated statistics, false promises, conjured performance claims and validation of flawed elections without concrete mechanisms to address insecurity, resuscitate the economy, create jobs, ensure credible elections and guarantee better living standard for Nigerians.

"The PDP maintains that President Tinubu must speak to the issues of unbridled corruption, deceit, budget padding, reckless and wasteful spending directed to fund luxury appetite of APC.

"@OfficialAPCNig leaders, insensitivity to the pains of citizens

and total disregard to the obligation of government which has made life unbearable for Nigerians under his watch.

"The Party also challenges President Tinubu to use the address to give account of the billions of Naira officially reported to have accrued from the removal of subsidy on petroleum products. "Furthermore, Mr. President should come clean on his public commitment to fight corruption by ordering an investigation and recovery of the over N25 trillion reportedly stolen by APC leaders and officials in government who have turned government agencies to Automated Teller Machines (ATM) to siphon funds for their benefit while other Nigerians wallow in abject poverty, hunger and starvation.

"Equally worrisome is the failure of the APC government to revisit and address the reported cases of alleged State-backed killings in various parts of the country, particularly the 2020 EndSars killings and inhuman denial of the massacre of promising Nigerian youths in that sad and repulsive incident.

"The last 18 months have been the most excruciating period to Nigerians since the Civil War with citizens now resorting to suicide and slavery mission aboard due to the hopeless situation foisted by the anti-people policies of the suppressive, exploitative and insensitive APC government which continues to reject every appeal and suggestion for review of such policies. "More disheartening is that while Nigerians die of hunger and insecurity, APC leaders and officials in



government continue to flaunt their luxury appetite and lifestyle in utter disdain to the feelings of millions of impoverished citizens.

"The PDP cautions the APC not to carry over such attitude into 2025 as such would further exasperate the patience and sensibility of Nigerians"

The party, however, urged Nigerians to keep on believing in the country.

"Our party however urges Nigerians not to lose hope in the nation but remain law-abiding and approach 2025 with optimism of a new dawn in their determination to defend our nation's Constitutional Democracy, adherence to the Rule of Law, demand for transparency and accountability in government; in firm resistance to suppression and pervasive violations by the APC.

"This, the PDP believes is the sure step in the quest by our Party and Nigerians to return our country to the path of stability and economic prosperity which has eluded her since the calamitous coming of the APC in 2015. The PDP salutes Nigerians and wishes all a Happy 2025."

First Lady welcomes first baby of 2025

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu's wife, Oluremi, today celebrated the arrival of Abuja's first baby of the year at the Asokoro District Hospital.

In a statement released by Kwapchi Bataz, Special Assistant to the First Lady, it was revealed that the baby girl, Favour Stephen Odion, was born at exactly 12:27 a.m. to the family of Odion and Chioma Oyinbo.

Baby Favour weighed 3.6kg at birth.

Mrs Tinubu also extended her warm wishes to other newborns at the hospital, including Zimchikachim Ejiofor, the first baby boy of the year.

Born to the family of Ejiofor and Delight Nworie at 7:14 a.m. on New Year's Day, baby Zimchikachim weighed 3kg.

Represented by Hajiya Shettima, wife of the Vice President, Mrs Tinubu presented baby gifts such as post-natal care items, nutritional supplies, and cash donations to the families.

First Lady

First Lady Oluremi Tinubu represented by Hajiya Shettima, wife of the Vice President (PHOTO



CREDIT: X)

She offered prayers for the children, asking for God's protection, long life, good health, and prosperity for them.

She said, "I am here to represent the mother of the nation to welcome the first baby of the year and other children. So, I'm presenting this token and a beautiful package to our dear daughter. I want to wish her well – long life, prosperity, good health. Insha Allah, they (the first baby and other babies) are the next generation to take over from us. I wish you all the best. Please take good care of her."

The First Lady, while congratulating and comforting the mothers of the newborns, emphasized the importance of proper care, including exclusive breastfeeding, immunization, and timely post-natal care.

READ ALSO: 2025: Tinubu promises to reduced inflation to 15 per cent

She said, "Good enough, this (Asokoro General Hospital) is closer to my house; I'm sure for the post-natal, they're going to take good care of you."

She also presented birth certificates to the first baby of the year and the first baby boy before touring the maternity ward to congratulate other newborns and their mothers.

Earlier, the Acting Chief Medical Director of Asokoro District Hospital, Abuja, Rosemary Nwokorie, praised the First Lady during her visit.

She acknowledged President Tinubu's administration for its steadfast efforts to transform the nation's health sector and enhance healthcare delivery for all Nigerians.

Nwokorie further commended the First Lady and the wife of the Vice President for initiating impactful intervention programs, particularly the Renewed Hope Initiative, aimed at supporting vulnerable Nigerians, especially women and children.



Aisha Maikudi emerges UniAbuja VC

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Governing Council of the University of Abuja, under the chairmanship of Air Vice-Marshal Saddiq Ismaila Kaita (retd), has approved the appointment of Professor Aisha Sani Maikudi as the 7th Substantive vice-chancellor of the university.

The appointment was announced during the 77th Extraordinary Meeting of Council on Tuesday.

According to a statement by Acting Director, Information and University Relations, Dr Habib Yakoob, the appointment, which takes effect on January 1, 2025, is for a non-renewable five-year tenure.

He said Maikudi emerged as the best among 10 shortlisted candidates and interviewed by the Joint Council and Senate Selection Board of the University, in line with the extant regulations governing the process.

The woman Maikudi

Aisha Sani Maikudi is a Nigerian professor of international law and the current acting vice chancellor of the University of Abuja.

She was appointed as acting vice chancellor following the end of professor Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah's tenure and resumed office on 30 June 2024.

Early life and education

Aisha was born on 31 January 1983 in Zaria. She obtained her Secondary School Certificate from Queens College in Lagos in 1999. She obtained her Bachelor of Law degree in 2004 from the University of Reading, UK, and she obtained her Master of Laws degree (LLM) from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2005. In 2015, she obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in International Law from the University of Abuja and became a professor in 2022.

Career

Aisha joined the University of Abuja in September 2008 as a Lecturer II. In 2014, she was appointed as Head of the Department of Faculty of Law in 2014,



in 2018, she became the Deputy Dean and also the pioneer Director University of Abuja. In 2024, she was appointed as the Vice Chancellor.

Membership

She is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association and the International Federation of Women Lawyers.

Asari Dokubo crowned king in Rivers

By Dave Oludare Oso

Former Niger Delta freedom fighter and militant leader, Mujahid Asari Dokubo has become a royal father after being presented staff of office and certificate, alongside four others as recognised monarchs by Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State.

Dokubo was installed as His Royal Highness, the Amanyanabo of Torusarama Piri in Degema Local Government Area of the state.

The other recipients included His Royal Majesty Winston Odize Alamina Oputibeya XII, the Amanyanabo of Koniju in Okrika Local Government Area; His Royal Majesty Eze Noble Friday Uwoh (CSP rtd), the Eze Igbu-Ehuda (Ahoada) IV in Ahoada-East Local

Government Area; and His Royal Highness Prince Ike Ehie, the Eze Igbu Orilukwoe, also in Ahoada-East Local Government Area.

The event, held at the Rivers State Government House in Port Harcourt on Tuesday, marked the government's recognition of the monarchs as cultural custodians and community leaders.

He said, "Let me first of all, on behalf of the government, congratulate the four of you. It has not been an easy journey to get to this point. I know a lot of you have been working very hard to ensure the success of this day."

"Your appointment in terms of this recognition is not for personal aggrandizement, but a call for service, a responsibility to help us protect lives and property in your



domains."

The governor stated that though the government has the power to withdraw the recognition from any traditional ruler found wanting, it is not his intention to exercise such authority.

He also warned them not to use the privileged positions to create problems in their domains but to join forces with the government to ensure the success of the administration in its avowed commitment to deliver dividends of democracy to the people.

Ekiti Airport set for operation, says Oyebanji

By Friday Omosola

Ekiti State Governor, Biodun Oyebanji, has announced the completion of the state's airport, declaring it ready for operations.

In December 2024, New Daily Prime reported that the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) granted the airport a six-month license to commence non-scheduled flight activities.

During his New Year broadcast aired across all radio and television stations in the state, the governor explained that the six months would be used to test the airport's systems and finalize preparations for full operations starting June 15 this year.

Describing the airport's readiness as the best New Year gift for the people of Ekiti, Oyebanji expressed his optimism about its impact on the state.

"For us in Ekiti, the commencement of flights at the airport is a validation



of our continuity mantra, it also marks a significant milestone in our strategic vision of linking the economy of our State to the rest of the world, as well as the expansion of Ekiti economy into a new arena of prosperity and

opportunities.

"Our ultimate hope is to become the Agro-Allied export hub of the country. We are very thrilled by the potential that this breakthrough portends for our State", he added.

2025: Tinubu promises to reduce inflation to 15 per cent

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to reducing costs, increasing food production, and promoting the local manufacturing of essential drugs and medical supplies in 2025.

He noted that the high cost of food and essential drugs remained a major concern for many Nigerian households in 2024.

In his New Year message to Nigerians, Tinubu pledged to reduce inflation from its current rate of 34.6 per cent to 15 per cent.

He expressed confidence that, with diligent effort and divine support, his administration would achieve this goal and bring much-needed relief to Nigerians.

Tinubu highlighted positive economic indicators, emphasising that fuel prices have steadily decreased while Nigeria recorded

foreign trade surpluses for three consecutive quarters.

He further disclosed that foreign reserves have increased, the Naira has strengthened against the US dollar, and economic stability has improved.

Additionally, he noted that record growth in the stock market has generated trillions of naira in wealth, while the surge in foreign investment reflects renewed confidence in Nigeria's economy.

"In this new year, my administration will further consolidate and increase access to credit for individuals and critical sectors of the economy to boost national economic output. To achieve this, the federal government will establish the National Credit Guarantee Company to expand risk-sharing instruments for financial institutions and enterprises.

"The Company—expected to start



operations before the end of the second quarter—is a partnership of government institutions, such as the Bank of Industry, Nigerian Consumer Credit Corporation, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Agency, and Ministry of Finance Incorporated, the private sector, and multilateral institutions", the President added.

2025: Gov Adeleke commits to comprehensive soft infrastructure development

By Friday Omosola



Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, has pledged to prioritise the extensive implementation of soft infrastructure in 2025.

In his New Year message, the governor emphasised that his administration's goal is to complement good roads with healthy bodies, empowered citizens, and resilient residents.

He further assured that he would remain a responsive, empathetic, and attentive leader throughout the year.

According to him, the well-being of the people will continue to be his sole motivation.

“Akun odun. Imole ama tan si ile gbogbo wa. My good people of Osun, I kept faith with my pledge for transparency and accountability as your state governor. In the last one year, we got and processed several requests for information based on the Freedom of Information Act. We ensured access to information as a transparent and accountable

government.

Adeleke

“In the last one year and since I assumed office, our projects have been financed mainly from state resources. This includes internally generated revenue and allocations from the federation account. Just as I have not been accessing security votes, I had not borrowed a single kobo to run the state government”, Adeleke added.

He noted that Osun, as a responsible state in Nigeria, actively participates in the programmes and activities of the National Economic Council and the Nigerian Governors' Forum.

The governor emphasised that his administration inherited several national programmes from the previous All Progressives Congress (APC)-led government.

According to him, his administration has continued and sustained these programmes whenever they serve the best interests of the people.

“As democracy is a government for the

people of the people and by the people, I call on those seeking specific data on government programmes to take advantage of the Freedom of Information Act. Specifically, I enjoy the opposition to join the state government as we turn the fortune of our state for the better. We are all stakeholders.

“My people, in 2024, we won several medals and awards. Osun state won the global school competition debate in Malaysia. Osun again came first on access to Primary Health care in the South West. The leadership newspapers just awarded me Governor of the year 2024. Our successes are collective testimony to good governance in our dear state.”

Adeleke pledged to tackle the state's issues and challenges while building on past successes to achieve new, deeply pro-people outcomes.

2025: Alia vows to revolutionize agriculture in Benue

By Friday Omosola



Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to supporting farmers through the consistent supply of subsidised agricultural inputs, including fertilizers, pesticides, and improved seedlings.

Speaking at the Chapel of Grace, Government House, Makurdi, the governor emphasised that these efforts aim to boost agricultural output across the state.

Governor Alia also highlighted his administration's dedication to infrastructure development.

He noted that in 2024, contracts were awarded for the construction of roads and the refurbishment of classroom blocks at over 100 public primary school sites.

Reiterating his focus on education, the governor described it as a critical tool for societal liberation and reaffirmed its position as a top priority in his administration.

“Barely two days ago, I signed into law the 2025 budget of ‘Human Capital Development, Food Security and Digital Economy’. This coincided with the launch of the ‘Benue State 10-year Development Plan’, amongst other blueprints. I dare to tell you that Benue is yet to see the best under our belt.

“Fellow Benue citizens, I have only chosen to highlight a few out of so much that we did last year which you have been seeing and feeling the impact already. Let us be reminded that the task of building a new and better Benue lies in your hands and mine; it is a task anchored on mutual trust and bound by clearly defined obligations, all subsumed in our He reassured the residents that concerted efforts were underway across all tiers of government—federal, state, and local—to foster development, promote self-reliance, and ultimately improve living standards.

He acknowledged that while these efforts might take time, they represent a necessary and gradual process of sacrifice that the state must embrace for

the benefit of both the present and future generations.

“Change never comes about easily, especially positive change in our new Benue. Naturally, it meets resistance, suspicion, fear of the unknown, and insistence on the maintenance of the status quo.”

He emphasised that his administration is committed to creating a system that benefits all individuals and groups in Benue—regardless of their socio-economic status, age, or race.

Alia reaffirmed his determination to channel resources into building institutions, facilities, infrastructure, and policies that foster growth and development, transcending barriers of tribe, race, or religion.

The governor pledged to build on the existing successes, stating, “Our administration embraces new ideas and innovative thinking to drive progress.”

Nigeria tax spat opens country's smouldering north-south divide

By New Daily Prime

Critics warn President Bola Tinubu's proposed changes to VAT distribution will help wealthier southern states

Nigeria's government is facing stiff opposition to a controversial tax reform bill that northern leaders say favours more productive southern states, reawakening a historic regional divide in Africa's most populous country.

Nigeria's parliament late last month began deliberating on four bills proposed by President Bola Tinubu's administration, including the so-called "Nigeria Tax Bill", to streamline tax codes and generate more revenue for a government whose tax collection lags behind its African counterparts.

But the proposal on how VAT should be shared among Nigeria's 36 states and capital city Abuja has become the subject of vociferous debate.

The reforms would allow states that generate more VAT — the largest line item Nigeria's federal government distributes — to receive a larger share of total revenue while reducing the amount allocated by population.

Northern states, which are typically more populous, say this will disadvantage them and exacerbate inequality. Inuwa Yahaya, chair of the Northern Governors Forum, which represents the 19 governors across Nigeria's vast north, said it "could jeopardise the wellbeing of our people".

"The economic hardship faced by many Nigerians today is undeniable and given the north-south disparity in economic inequality, it is even more pronounced in northern Nigeria," Yahaya, who is governor of Gombe State in the north-east, said.

Nigeria's north-south divide has long

been a bitter element of the country's politics. The predominantly Muslim north and Christian south, with their varied ethnic groups, were fused together as one country by British colonialists more than a century ago, leaving mutual suspicion that still reverberates.

After Tinubu — who is from Lagos in the south — threatened military intervention in Niger following a coup last year, he was forced to back down by northern elites whose states share a long border with the country.

Poverty and illiteracy rates are higher in Nigeria's north. Annual GDP per capita is about \$292, less than half of the south's, and 65 per cent of the country's poorest people live in the north.

Currently, 50 per cent of the total VAT distributed to states is shared equally, while 30 per cent is allocated based on population size and 20 per cent by their tax contribution, or derivation. Tinubu now wants 60 per cent to be allocated based on contribution, while cutting the population quota to 20 per cent.

Northern lawmakers, including some from Tinubu's All Progressives Congress, have stalled the bills in parliament amid calls for further dialogue. But Senate president Godswill Akpabio, a staunch Tinubu ally, said in late December the bills would eventually pass and claimed critics had not taken the time to understand them.

Waziri Adio, executive director at Agora Policy, an Abuja-based think-tank which published an analysis of Nigeria's VAT system, said all parties involved had mishandled what were otherwise important reforms. The federal government tried to rush through the



proposal and northern leaders were misguided in labelling it "anti-north" in a country with long-standing ethnic tensions, he said.

"The arguments in favour of reforming Nigeria's tax system cannot be over-made," Adio said. "But reforms are as political as they are technical. You need the buy-in of the various stakeholders . . . Just because it seems like the right thing to do doesn't mean you don't have to consult."

Nigeria lags behind most other African nations in tax collection

While there have long been arguments that the current arrangement benefits lower productivity states with higher populations, opponents of the new proposal argue it risks misstating Nigeria's true economic picture.

Because the largest taxpaying companies are in the south, particularly in states such as Lagos and Rivers, critics say they could be benefiting from "headquarters effect" as VAT derivation is calculated based on where revenues are collected and not necessarily where goods and services are consumed.

Greater Lagos Countdown: Wizkid, Burna Boy captivate Sanwo-Olu, fans

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Bigshot performers, Wizkid, Burna Boy, and other A-list artistes on Wednesday left their fans, including the governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and his deputy, Obafemi Hamzat, in awe as they gave mind-blowing performances during the Greater Lagos Countdown to usher in the New Year.

Held at the iconic Tafawa Balewa Square, the event, organised by the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture was an unforgettable night of music, excitement, and celebration.

The annual end-of-year celebration brought together people from all walks of life, united by their love for music and desire to celebrate the start of a new year.

Other stars in the show included Queen of Afrobeats, Tiwa Savage, Niniola, Olamide, Adewale Ayuba, Runtown, Bnxn, Nice, Seyi Vibe and several others.

Wizkid, known for his captivating stage presence, got the audience singing along to his hit tracks, while

Burna Boy brought his signature energy and passion to his performance.

Tiwa Savage delivered a sultry and energetic set, showcasing her impressive vocal range and captivating stage presence.

Niniola, the soulful songstress, delivered a heartfelt and emotive performance, showcasing her powerful vocals.

Fuji maestro, Adewale Ayub, took his fans to a heightened level of excitement as he performed his old musicals like “Ejo”, “Ijo Fuji”, and others.

Nice also brought back the “Alapomeji” vibes back on stage with ‘steeze’.

Another highlight was the moment host of the show, renowned comedian, Gbenga Adeyinka, taught Governor Sanwo-Olu the popular ‘Oblee’ moves.

Earlier, Sanwo-Olu appreciated Lagos residents for demonstrating resilience throughout 2024. Governor Sanwo -Olu addressing Lagosians at the Countdown.

Sanwo-Olu said: “It is indeed another honour to be here at the Tafawa Balewa Square for the countdown 2024 to 2025.

Last year, we were all together, and this year, even bigger, better and brighter.

“We are all together at the Tafawa

Balewa Square for the countdown to the year 2025. I want to say that indeed this outgoing year was a year of tremendous opportunities for the young.

“It is a year that you have shown true resilience that makes you true Lagosians. If we are together we can succeed together.

“So, for your resilience and productivity, I want to say thank you for staying with our government throughout the year 2024, and we wish all of us as we go into 2025 that the very best will happen to each and everyone of us.

“2025 will be a better year for you, for you and for you. To my people in Ajeromi, Ajegunle, Victoria Island, Ajah, Ibeji-Lekki, Ojokoro, Oworoshoki, we will see you bigger and better in 2025.”

The Greater Lagos Countdown 2025 held simultaneously at the five divisions of the state.

Jerry Eze forgives mom's attacker

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Fave, the Nigerian singer, unveils her love for Jamaican culture. The artist reveals a deep connection to dancehall and reggae.

Her collaboration with Davido on the hit song "Kante" has catapulted her to global recognition, shared these insights in a recent interview, offering a glimpse into the multifaceted nature of her artistry.

Connection to Jamaican culture

In her own words, "I know I don't have many songs out there, so people often see me as just a sultry singer.

But there's a whole side of me that's deeply connected to dancehall and Jamaican culture. Everything about it feels raw, real, and authentic.

I constantly find myself unintentionally drawing inspiration from that sound—whether it's dancehall, reggaeton, or something similar."

At just 24, Fave explained that while she initially started her career producing somber, introspective music influenced by her early musical inspirations, she has never been one to stick to one genre.

Growing up, her musical influences came from a variety of sources, and this diversity has shaped her artistic journey.

Embracing versatility in music

"I don't believe in limiting myself to one genre of music. I thrive on exploration. When I started breaking into the industry, I told myself to step out of my comfort zone and see what happens if I try different styles.

To my surprise, I realized I have the potential to explore various genres. It's still thrilling for me to discover what I can do.

Though I once avoided Afrobeats because it felt too upbeat, now I'm embracing it. Bring it all on—I want to showcase a different side of myself."

Fave's openness to experimentation and her natural inclination toward diverse musical influences are shaping a unique artistic journey that transcends traditional boundaries.

Her fusion of influences from Jamaica and other genres is set to carve a distinctive space in the global music scene.

"I've always felt like music is more than just one style or genre," Fave continued. "It's about expressing different aspects of who you are.

I've found that these different sounds all bring out unique emotions, and I want to tap into all of them.

Dancehall and reggae, for instance, have a raw energy and authenticity that I find incredibly inspiring.

I didn't consciously start incorporating those elements into my music, but they've always been there, subtly influencing my sound."

Embracing afrobeats and breaking boundaries

Fave's rise to fame has been marked by her ability to blend these influences seamlessly, creating a sound that feels fresh and exciting.

Her versatility is not just a testament to her talent but also to her commitment to artistic growth.

Despite her initial hesitation toward Afrobeats, Fave now embraces the genre fully, finding joy in its rhythm and tempo.

Nigerian Singer Fave [Photo Credit: Google]

Nigerian Singer Fave [Photo Credit: Google]

"I used to feel like Afrobeats was too fast-paced for me," she confessed. "But as I've grown, I've realized it's not about keeping up with what others expect—it's about embracing what resonates with me.

I've come to appreciate the energy and vibrancy of Afrobeats. Now, I see it as another opportunity to express myself."

Fave's exploration of different musical styles reflects her desire to remain authentic while expanding her creative boundaries.



By blending her love for Jamaican culture with contemporary Afrobeats and other genres, she is carving out a sound that is uniquely her own.

This approach not only showcases her versatility but also positions her as an artist who refuses to be confined by genre labels.

Staying true to herself

"I want people to know that there's more to me than what they might initially see or hear," she added. "I'm constantly evolving, and my music reflects that.

I'm not afraid to take risks or explore different sounds because I believe that's how you grow as an artist."

As Fave continues to push the boundaries of her sound, her fusion of influences from Jamaican culture, Afrobeats, and beyond is setting her apart from her contemporaries.

Wizkid & Ayra Starr: 2024's top global Artists

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian artists Wizkid and Ayra Starr have been celebrated among the world's top musicians of 2024, as recognized by Chart Data.

The platform, known for tracking music performance and streaming metrics, unveiled its prestigious list of top artistes on New Year's Eve.

Wizkid claimed the 11th spot, while Ayra Starr followed closely at 18th. This acknowledgment underscores the global reach and influence of Nigerian music.

Wizkid's inclusion continues his journey as one of Africa's most prominent voices in the global music scene.

Over the years, his unique blend of Afrobeat, R&B, and pop has garnered international acclaim, earning him multiple Grammy nominations and a dedicated global fan base.

Ayra Starr, on the other hand, has emerged as a leading voice among the new generation of Nigerian artists.

Her distinct style and powerful vocals have made her a standout figure, blending elements of Afrobeat, soul, and contemporary pop.

African representation on the global stage

In addition to Wizkid and Ayra Starr, Tyla from South Africa also made the list, securing the 12th position.

This growing representation from African artists reflects the continent's increasing influence on the global music landscape.

African music, especially genres like Afrobeat, Amapiano, and Afro-pop, continues to gain traction worldwide, breaking cultural and geographic boundaries.

The success of African artists on platforms like Chart Data highlights the rising prominence of the



continent's music scene.

Tyla's recognition further emphasizes the diversity of African talent and the global appreciation for different styles of music from the region.

Nigerian Afrobeat Stars Wizkid and Ayra Starr

Top global icons of 2024

In the top 10 list dominated by international superstars, South Korean singer Jimin claimed the top spot, followed by American megastars like Taylor Swift, Ariana Grande, Sabrina Carpenter, Beyoncé, and rapper Kendrick Lamar.

British icons such as Charli XCX, Lady Gaga, Billie Eilish, and Nicki Minaj rounded out the elite positions.

These global names continue to set benchmarks in their respective genres, influencing music trends and maintaining strong international followings.

The inclusion of African artists like Wizkid, Ayra Starr, and Tyla showcases the growing diversity and inclusivity in the global music industry.

It signals a shift toward recognizing talent beyond traditional markets, paving the way for more African voices to shine on the international stage.

Davido, Wizkid, and Burna Boy: Icons shaping the future

In addition to Chart Data's top artiste rankings, Active World's "Top 20 Music

Global Icons Shaping The Future" featured Nigerian stars Davido, Wizkid, and Burna Boy.

Davido emerged in the 3rd position, solidifying his place as one of Africa's most influential musicians.

Wizkid followed at 6th, reinforcing his status as a leading figure in Afrobeat. Burna Boy secured the 8th spot, further showcasing the global impact of Nigerian music.

These recognitions highlight the significant contributions of Nigerian artists to the future of global music.

Their success not only reflects their individual talents but also underscores the growing prominence of African music in shaping global cultural landscapes.

As these artists continue to push boundaries and break new ground, their influence is likely to expand even further.

Read Also: Ayra Starr, Tyla Earn 4 EMANods

Ayra Starr to unveil lover in video

US Senator's son jailed 28 years for deadly car chase

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

4 3-year-old son of Senator Kevin Cramer, Republican of North Dakota, was at the center of a high-speed highway pursuit that tragically resulted in the death of a sheriff's deputy.

Ian Cramer, the 43-year-old son of Senator Kevin Cramer, Republican of North Dakota, was sentenced on Monday to 28 years in prison following a high-speed chase that ended in a crash and the tragic death of a sheriff's deputy. The incident occurred in December 2023 and has drawn national attention due to its devastating consequences and the mental health crisis that precipitated it.

The chase began on December 6, 2023, when Ian Cramer fled from a hospital in Bismarck, N.D., where his mother had taken him for treatment of what authorities later described as a severe mental health crisis. After speeding away in the family's vehicle, he was located roughly 70 miles away in Hazen, N.D., by law enforcement. The pursuit ended violently after Mr. Cramer crashed into an unoccupied patrol car parked on the side of a highway. The impact fatally struck Mercer County Sheriff's Deputy Paul Martin, 53, who was standing nearby preparing to deploy tire deflation devices. Deputy Martin, a respected member of the Mercer County Sheriff's Office for 18 years, was pronounced dead at the scene.

In September, Mr. Cramer pleaded guilty to all nine charges against him, including homicide while fleeing a peace officer, reckless endangerment, and multiple drug- and driving-related offenses. During sentencing, Judge Bobbi Weiler of the South Central Judicial District of North Dakota addressed Mr. Cramer directly, emphasizing that he had significant resources available to seek help. "You had more support than 99 percent of the people I've seen," She



sentenced Mr. Cramer to 38 years, with 10 years suspended, and credited him for the time already served. He will also serve three years of probation following his release. It is likely that Mr. Cramer may not serve the full 28 years due to the absence of mandatory minimum sentences for the charges and the North Dakota Department of Corrections' policies on sentence reduction.

At the sentencing, Ian Cramer expressed remorse, addressing the family of Deputy Martin. "I had no intention to do any of this. It was an accident, and I just hope that someday they can forgive me," he said. He also acknowledged his need for further treatment, stating, "I think the best thing for me is to go to a hospital and get more help." His mother, Kris Cramer, also spoke at the hearing, offering a heartfelt apology and acknowledging her son's long-standing struggles with mental illness. "I really do feel responsible for what happened," she said, referring to the events that led to her son's flight from the hospital.

Senator Kevin Cramer, who has publicly addressed his son's mental health issues in the past, did not respond to requests for comment. In a 2023 statement following Ian's arrest, the senator described his son's mental health challenges as "serious mental disorders which manifest in severe paranoia and

hallucinations." The senator detailed how his wife, Kris, had driven Ian to the hospital for treatment on the day of the incident. After arriving, Ian fled in the family's vehicle, leaving his mother's phone behind. Authorities tracked the vehicle using the phone's location.

Deputy Paul Martin, who lost his life in the collision, was honored for his nearly two decades of service to Mercer County. The North Dakota State Highway Patrol reported that he was struck while working to stop Mr. Cramer's vehicle using tire deflation devices. Judge Weiler acknowledged Mr. Cramer's ongoing struggles with addiction and mental health during sentencing and recommended treatment as part of his incarceration. For Deputy Martin's family and the Mercer County community, however, the loss remains a painful reminder of the risks law enforcement officers face daily.

Read Also: Elon Musk, Zuckerberg top 2024 World's Richest Billionaires ranking

Read Also: 15 year old girl kills

Ivory Coast announces withdrawal of French troops

By New Daily Prime



Reduction of military presence is latest sign of weakening western influence in region. French troops will begin to withdraw from Ivory Coast in west Africa this month, marking the latest reduction of France's military presence and a further weakening of western influence in the region.

Ivorian president Alassane Ouattara made the announcement in a new year's address that French troops would pull out from a base in the capital Abidjan this month.

"We can be proud of our army, which has now been effectively modernised. It is in this context that we have decided the concerted and organised withdrawal of French forces from Ivory Coast," he said.

France has around 600 troops in the country, one of its former colonies. The withdrawal will involve the handover of a military infantry battalion to Ivorian troops.

The announcement comes after Chad and Senegal have also sought to loosen their ties with France in recent months, and is the latest indication of

a reduction of the long-standing French military presence on the continent.

Ouattara is considered one of France's strongest allies in west Africa and has formed a close alliance with French President Emmanuel Macron. He has previously condemned countries such as Mali for turning to Russian private military contractors such as the Wagner group.

But Ouattara, who is expected to run for a contentious fourth term in the October elections, may be calculating that announcing a symbolic break with France could benefit him politically in a region where growing anti-French sentiment has taken hold, particularly among young voters.

France's armed forces did not respond immediately to a request for comment, but Macron has previously acknowledged that France is reducing its military footprint across Africa.

"We are not shirking our responsibilities, but building a humble, demanding and long-term partnership," he said in a July speech on French defence policy.

In Senegal, President Bassirou Diomaye Faye said in his new year's message that the country would end the presence of all

foreign military powers in the country in the year ahead. Faye had already announced the closure of French military bases in the country in November.

Chad's president abruptly ended the Sahel country's military agreement with France in November, and last week France handed over its first military base to the country.

French forces fighting jihadist groups in the Sahel region have also been forced out of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger by military governments that are hostile to France, amid rising anti-French sentiment in the population.

The departures have marked a significant reduction in France's presence in the Sahel region, where several governments have turned towards Russia in recent years.

In all, France is withdrawing 1,000 troops from Ivory Coast and Senegal. After the French were kicked out of Niger, the US was also forced last year to withdraw about 1,000 troops there and give up its \$100mn drone base near Agadez on the southern edge of the Sahara.

West Ham's Michail Antonio discharged from hospital after car accident

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



West Ham United striker Michail Antonio has been discharged from the hospital after more than three weeks of recovery following a serious car accident on December 7.

The 34-year-old, who is West Ham's all-time leading scorer in the Premier League with 68 goals in 268 appearances, sustained a broken leg in the crash, requiring surgery to treat a lower limb fracture. Antonio was trapped in his vehicle after the accident, which occurred in Epping, Essex, and had to be freed by emergency responders before being rushed to a central London hospital.

Antonio's recovery has been nothing short of remarkable, with West Ham manager Julen Lopetegui calling it a "miracle" that the Jamaican international is now stable. Despite his injury, Antonio remained connected with his teammates via a video call, offering support before West Ham's vital 2-1 victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers on December 9. The players honored Antonio by wearing "Antonio 9" shirts before kick-off.

In a show of appreciation for the emergency services and medical staff who supported Antonio, West Ham United announced they would

donate nearly £60,000 to the NHS and Air Ambulances UK charities, the proceeds coming from the auction of the commemorative shirts.

"Everyone at the club would like to reiterate their heartfelt thanks to the first responders, emergency services, air ambulance staff, and the NHS for the incredible support given to Michail in the wake of the accident," a West Ham statement read.

The club has been buoyed by the outpouring of support from fans and fellow players alike, and Antonio's recovery continues to inspire hope as he begins the next chapter of his healing process.