

**Dangote refinery cuts petrol loading price to N890** Pg 4



**CBN intensifies efforts to control inflation - Cardoso** Pg 2



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## Trump imposes tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China — White House Pg 22



**Ondo election petition tribunal begins sitting** Pg 10



**At least 56 killed as fighting grips Sudan's capital** Pg 24



**Nigerians condemn corruption but support corrupt leaders - EFCC boss Olukoyede** Pg 5

**WORLD Pg 23**

**US Democrats pick new leader to take on Trump for 'working people'**



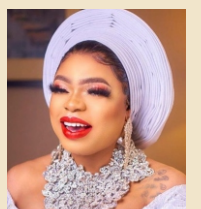
**SPORT Pg 26**

**Rashford close to Aston Villa loan - Reports**



**ENTERTAINMENT Pg 16**

**I impregnated a lady in University — Bobrisky**



# CBN intensifies efforts to control inflation— Cardoso

By Friday Omosola

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, has emphasised the bank's commitment to combating inflation and stabilizing the nation's economy.

Speaking in Abuja at the Monetary Policy Forum 2025, which brought together fiscal authorities, legislative members, private sector representatives, development partners, experts, and scholars, Cardoso outlined the bank's ongoing efforts to achieve economic stability.

Addressing the theme, 'Managing the Disinflation Process,' the CBN governor reiterated the importance of maintaining a forward-thinking, adaptive, and resilient monetary policy.

He stressed that the CBN's disciplined approach to monetary policy continues, focusing on long-term economic stability.

"Successfully managing disinflation amidst ongoing challenges requires not only strong policies but also collaboration between fiscal and monetary bodies to shape expectations and build investor confidence," Cardoso said.

"Our primary focus remains on price stability, the transition to an inflation-targeting framework, and strategies to restore purchasing power while alleviating economic



hardships."

Cardoso highlighted that the CBN's measures have led to notable achievements, including relative stability in the foreign exchange market, a reduction in exchange rate disparities, and an increase in external reserves, which surpassed \$40 billion by December 2024.

The CBN governor also shared the bank's commitment to bolstering the banking sector, including the introduction of new minimum capital requirements for banks, effective March 2026.

These measures are designed to

enhance the resilience of the sector and position Nigeria's banking industry for a \$1 trillion economy.

"As we transition from unorthodox to orthodox monetary policies, the CBN remains dedicated to restoring confidence, enhancing policy credibility, and staying true to its core mission of ensuring price stability," Cardoso added.

He also announced the launch of the Nigeria Foreign Exchange Code, marking a significant step towards improving the integrity, fairness, transparency, and efficiency of the nation's foreign exchange market.



# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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# Dangote refinery cuts petrol loading price to N890

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The Dangote Petroleum Refinery has reduced the loading price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), also known as petrol from N950 to N890.

The refinery's spokesperson, Anthony Chiejina, made this known in a statement on Saturday, adding that the reduction takes effect from Saturday, 1st February 2025.

He noted that the strategic adjustment is a direct response to the positive outlook within the global energy and gas markets, as well as the recent reduction in international crude oil prices.

Chiejina explained that the price reduction demonstrates the refinery's unwavering commitment to transparency and fairness.

Read also: Marketers may abandon Dangote for less-costly imported petrol

He further noted that it shows the ongoing fluctuations in global crude oil markets, as highlighted in the refinery's statement on 19th January, when a modest increase was implemented due to the previously rising international crude oil prices.

"Dangote Petroleum Refinery firmly believes that this reduction from N950 to N890 will result in a meaningful decrease in the cost of petrol nationwide, thereby driving down the prices of goods and services, as well



as the overall cost of living, with a positive ripple effect on various sectors of the economy.

The statement partly read, "In addition, Dangote Petroleum Refinery calls upon marketers to collaborate in this effort to ensure that these benefits are passed on to the Nigerian populace."

New Daily Prime reported that Oil marketers in Nigeria have revealed a significant reduction in the landing cost of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) as of Friday, with the price dropping to N922.65 per litre, down N32.35 from the N955 per litre at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery.

This decrease has sparked fresh debates about the ongoing price structure of petrol in the country and the role of oil imports in Nigeria's energy market.

Marketers say the drop in landing cost

reflects a reduction in expenses like shipping, import duties, and exchange rates, which could help drive the profitability of petrol imports.

Despite the decrease in the cost of importing the fuel, the retail price of petrol remains high in Nigeria, with major marketers selling it between N990 and N1,010 per litre in the Federal Capital Territory.

A key aspect of the price reduction is the drop in the cost of Brent crude oil, which was quoted at \$78.29 per barrel on Friday.

This, coupled with an exchange rate of N1,550 per dollar, has helped to make imported petrol more affordable. However, despite this relief, the retail prices remain elevated, and marketers have expressed interest in returning to petrol imports due to the lower cost of sourcing the product.

# Nigerians condemn corruption but support corrupt leaders – Olukoyede

By Friday Omosola

The Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ola Olukoyede, has expressed concern over Nigerians' contradictory stance on corruption.

While many decry corrupt leadership, he noted, they often rally behind the same leaders when they face prosecution.

Speaking in Abuja during a visit by officials of the Centre for Crisis Communication (CCC), led by Chris Olukolade, Olukoyede emphasised that national development would only be possible if all citizens viewed corruption as a common enemy.

“Everyone complains that Nigeria is corrupt, that the system is broken, and that corruption is destroying our country”, he said.

Olukoyede stressed the importance of collaboration with organisations like the CCC to enhance strategic communication and public engagement.

He highlighted that public support is crucial to the EFCC's success and announced plans to raise awareness about the agency's activities and the importance of integrity among Nigerians.

“When we investigate high-profile cases and take individuals to court, the same people



protesting against corruption will turn around and carry placards in support of corrupt leaders.

“This inconsistency undermines the fight against corruption, which should be a collective effort. No single agency can win this battle alone. Society, policymakers, and the welfare of citizens all have critical roles to play,” he said.

The EFCC Chairman also outlined his leadership priorities, stating that he has focused more on prevention than enforcement since assuming office.

He emphasised the importance of intelligence gathering in the commission's recent breakthroughs.

“We are shifting our emphasis to prevention, which is a key part of our mandate. Instead of waiting for funds to be stolen before

acting, we have created a new directorate—Fraud Risk Assessment and Control (FRAC)—to proactively block financial leakages,” Olukoyede explained.

He added that the EFCC now has access to the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), enabling it to track public funds and ensure capital projects are properly executed.

“By preventing corruption, there will be less to enforce. However, we are not abandoning enforcement; in fact, we are intensifying our efforts.

“But prevention is more cost-effective than reacting after the damage has been done. That is one of our key focus areas moving forward,” he added.



# Obasa fights back! ex-speaker seeks Tinubu's help amid APC crisis

By New Daily Prime

Obasa's impeachment deepens APC crisis as opposition parties woo him. He seeks Tinubu's help, while supporters push for reinstatement amid rising tensions.

The removal of former Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, continues to create divisions within the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State. The impeachment, which took place on January 13, 2025, was carried out by a majority of lawmakers who accused Obasa of misconduct and financial misappropriation. Since then, tensions have escalated within the party's ranks, with conflicting reactions from key political stakeholders.

Members of the Governance Advisory Council (GAC), the highest decision-making body in the Lagos APC, remain divided on the matter. Two of Obasa's supporters within the council, Senator Anthony Adefuye and Chief Muraina Taiwo, have voiced strong opposition to the impeachment, criticizing the process and questioning its legality. Their stance has been met with resistance from Senator Musiliu Obanikoro, who has urged party leaders to exercise caution and avoid making hasty statements that could further destabilize the party.

In a message sent via WhatsApp, Taiwo described the impeachment as an act of total disregard and disrespect for leadership. Meanwhile, reports indicate that the GAC remains split, with some members seeking urgent intervention from President Bola Tinubu to prevent the situation from escalating further.

The Secretary of the GAC, Mr. Mutiu Are, called for calm, assuring that the matter would be resolved internally. He emphasized that the GAC has established mechanisms to handle internal disputes and expressed confidence that a resolution would be reached. Although he refrained from



making direct comments on the impeachment, he reassured party members that discussions were ongoing.

Amid the turmoil, the Convener of the Assembly of Lagos Youths, Mr. Lasisi Robert, has cautioned Obasa against taking actions that could further divide the party. He reiterated that the former Speaker remains impeached and criticized his tenure, arguing that he did not effectively represent the interests of Lagos.

Sources revealed that Obasa has been in Abuja since January 18, 2025, seeking an audience with President Bola Tinubu to appeal his impeachment. However, his attempts to gain presidential support have so far yielded no results. Despite this setback, momentum has been building among his supporters in Agege, who have continued to demand his reinstatement. His party supporters have urged the police to intervene swiftly to prevent possible chaos within the legislative chamber and across the state.

Meanwhile, opposition parties have expressed willingness to accept Obasa if he decides to leave the APC. The Vice Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Lagos, Benedict Tai, confirmed that the PDP was open to welcoming the former Speaker but stressed that the party would impose

strict entry requirements. He stated that anyone joining the PDP must adhere to party policies and undergo a vetting process to prevent political opportunism.

Tai also acknowledged that the ongoing crisis in the APC was a strategic advantage for the PDP, which hopes to capitalize on the division to strengthen its position ahead of future elections. He expressed optimism that if the APC's internal disputes continued, the PDP would stand a better chance of reclaiming influence in Lagos politics.

Similarly, the Labour Party (LP) in Lagos has also indicated its readiness to accommodate Obasa, should he choose to switch parties before the 2027 governorship election. The LP Chairman, Pastor Dayo Ekong, confirmed that the party had no reservations about integrating the former Speaker as long as his interests aligned with the LP's values and long-term vision.

For now, it remains uncertain whether Obasa will heed calls from the opposition to defect or continue his fight within the APC. As tensions persist, all eyes remain on the unfolding political drama in Lagos.

# How ex-Accountant-General Nwabuoku diverted defence ministry funds – Witnesses

By Friday Omosola

The trial of former acting Accountant-General of the Federation, Chukwunyerere Nwabuoku began on on 31 January, before Justice James Omotosho of the Federal High Court in Abuja.

Prosecution counsel Ekele Iheanacho, representing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), presented two witnesses who detailed how Nwabuoku allegedly siphoned funds from the Ministry of Defence using multiple accounts.

Nwabuoku, a former Director of Finance and Accounts at the ministry, is facing a nine-count amended charge of money laundering totaling N868.4 million.

The first witness, Eucharika Ezeobi, a staff member at Zenith Bank, testified that she opened four company accounts—Temeeo Synergy Concept Limited, Turge Global Investment Limited, Laptev Bridge Limited, and Arafura Transnational Afro Limited—for contractors working with the Defence Ministry.



She told the court that large sums were withdrawn in cash from these accounts, allegedly for Nwabuoku's benefit. The court admitted the account opening documents as Exhibit PWB.

The second witness, Felix Nweke, who served as Deputy Director of Accounts and Expenditures under Nwabuoku, testified that the defendant personally instructed him to open the four accounts.

According to Nweke, funds were transferred from the Defence Ministry's security operations account into these company accounts. The money was later withdrawn in cash and handed

over to Nwabuoku.

During cross-examination, Nwabuoku's lawyer, Isidore Udenko, questioned whether the withdrawals were authorized solely by the defendant or if higher-ranking officials were involved.

In response, Nweke insisted that he had acted strictly on instructions from Nwabuoku, who was his superior at the ministry.

Justice Omotosho adjourned the trial to February 26 and March 5, for continuation.

# AbdulRazaq appoints monarch as Kwara's Amirul Hajj for 2025

By Friday Omosola

**K**wara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, has appointed the Olupo of Ajase-Ipo and Chancellor of the Kwara State University of Education, Oba Ismail Yahya Alebiosu, as the leader of the state's delegation for the 2025 Hajj.

In a series of key appointments, the governor also named Alhaji Lateef Oloyin as the new Principal Private Secretary (PPS).

Oloyin, a seasoned administrator, politician, and community leader, has a



strong background in economics, taxation, and organisational management.

He previously served as chairman of the Kwara State Social Investment

Programme and holds an MBA from the Federal University of Technology, Akure, as well as an HND in Banking and Finance from Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

Additionally, Governor AbdulRazaq reappointed Professor Sheu Raheem Adaramaja as chairman of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

Under Adaramaja's leadership, SUBEB has driven significant reforms and infrastructural development in basic education across the state since 2019.

# We'll not tolerate child trafficking business - Lagos Commissioner

By Helen Okechukwu

**T**he Lagos State Government has reiterated its zero-tolerance policy on child trafficking, warning that the buying and selling of children will not be condoned under any circumstances.

In a post shared on the government Facebook page today, it acknowledged that at a press briefing on Friday, Honourable Commissioner for Youth and Social Development, Mr. Mobolaji Abubakre Ogunlende, praised the Nigeria Police Force for successfully rescuing five children from a notorious trafficking syndicate.

The operation, led by CSP Ngozi Braide, was based on intelligence received on January 8, 2025.

The rescued children—Marvelous Obi aged 1, Promise Ifekwuna aged 3, Somtochukwu Onyemaechi aged 1,

Chibuzornma Onyemaechi aged 3, and Praise Chukwu Ibezim aged 6—were handed over to the Ministry of Youth



and Social Development for proper care and rehabilitation.

Ogunlende emphasized the importance of collaboration in combating child trafficking, stating that Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration remains committed to protecting the rights and well-being of children in Lagos.

DCP Ajao S. Adewale of Zone II Police Command commended the cooperation between law enforcement, local communities, and government agencies in tackling this crime.

Adewale revealed that the syndicate, led by Sunday Okputu, specialized in the illegal sale of newborns and young children, with accomplices responsible for facilitating transactions.

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Pharm (Mrs.) Toyin Oke-Osanyintolu, reassured the public that the rescued children would receive medical care and be placed in government-run facilities for rehabilitation.

She also encouraged legal adoption as a means of providing vulnerable children with safe and nurturing homes.



# Omo-Agege promises to end Delta APC rift, urges teamwork for 2027 victory

By Friday Omosola

Former Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, has assured party members that the ongoing leadership crisis within the state chapter will soon be resolved.

The 2023 governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State, spoke at stakeholders' meetings held in Obiaruku and Kwale, covering Ukwuani and Ndokwa West Local Government Areas.

Omo-Agege urged party leaders and members to move past the setbacks of the last election and focus on strengthening the party for the 2027 polls.

“We cannot dwell on past mistakes. Instead, we must work harder to ensure victory in 2027,” he stated.

Acknowledging the dedication of APC supporters in the 2023 elections, he emphasised that the party's loss was not due to a lack of backing but rather other factors that must be addressed going forward.

Calling for unity among party leaders in the Ndokwa region, Omo-Agege stressed the importance of teamwork in winning future elections.

“An election's end marks the beginning of another. We must set aside our differences and focus on what unites us. No party divided against itself can expect victory,” he urged.

He highlighted the need for discipline, strategic planning, and a collective



vision to reposition the APC as the dominant force in Delta politics.

Among his key achievements, Omo-Agege cited the establishment of the Federal University of Health Sciences in Kwale, which he described as a significant step toward providing quality education and boosting the state's economy.

“Overcoming the PDP's influence requires unity, commitment, and focused strategy. We cannot afford complacency; we must intensify our efforts to secure victory for APC in 2027,” he stated.

Omo-Agege called on party members to rise above personal grievances and work collectively to defeat the PDP, assuring them that steps were being taken to bring all stakeholders together.

“I am fully committed to APC and ready to work with all leaders, members, and supporters to ensure we stand united against the PDP in the next election,” he added.

Reaffirming his support for President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, Omo-Agege stressed the importance of winning Delta State for APC in the 2027 presidential election.

“The Renewed Hope Agenda has already yielded positive results—higher revenue for states and local governments, improved economic growth, reduced imports, increased exports, and better earnings for farmers.

“To sustain this progress, we must ensure President Tinubu's re-election in 2027,” he added.

# Ondo election petition tribunal begins sitting

By Friday Omosola

The inaugural sitting of the Ondo State Governorship Election Petitions Tribunal commenced in Akure, the state capital, yesterday.

Speaking after attending the inaugural session, Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa described the election as historic.

The New Daily Prime reported that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared Aiyedatiwa of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner, defeating Agboola Ajayi of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and other candidates.

Dissatisfied with the election outcome, Agboola and others approached the court to reclaim their alleged stolen mandate.

The governor emphasised that his victory across all 18 local government areas was a true reflection of the people's will.

He reiterated his confidence in the credibility of the November 16, 2024, governorship election, stating that the people of Ondo State had overwhelmingly voted for the right candidate.

"The election was free, fair, and credible. The people of Ondo State



made history by ensuring that, for the first time, a candidate won in all 18 local government areas. That alone speaks volumes about the trust and confidence they have in my leadership,"

The tribunal, presided over by Justice Nelson Ugubu, was set to hear petitions filed by three opposition parties—the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the African Democratic Congress (ADC), and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)—challenging Governor Aiyedatiwa's victory.

The PDP, which emerged as the main petitioner, lined up 43 witnesses to substantiate its claims of alleged electoral malpractices.

Governor Aiyedatiwa expressed his interest in following the tribunal proceedings, noting that it presented an opportunity to observe the

judiciary at work.

"And, you know, learning is continuous. Even though I'm the governor, I still also want to hear what is going on in the judiciary arm of government, particularly in this election petition. Having the legal professionals and the very competent justices on this panel, it's an exercise for me. I just want to witness it and be part of it. There's nothing to worry about," he stated.

Legal representatives from both the petitioners and respondents engaged in preliminary submissions, laying the groundwork for the hearing of the petitions in the coming weeks.

The tribunal adjourned to February 10th for further proceedings.

# Lagos reaffirms commitment to youth development

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development (MYSD) has reaffirmed its commitment to strategic collaboration with various sectors to create an enabling environment for young people to maximize their potential.

Commissioner for MYSD, Mobolaji Ogunlende, made this declaration at a three-day retreat organised for the Ministry's Technical Working Group (TWG) at the Providence Hotel, Ikeja.

Speaking at the event, Ogunlende emphasised the critical role of youth in Lagos, noting that over 70% of the state's population is under the age of 35.

He acknowledged that while young people represent a significant and dynamic force, systemic barriers often hinder their growth and potential.

"It is our collective responsibility to collaborate across sectors to dismantle these barriers and create an environment where every young person in Lagos can thrive, contribute, and lead meaningful lives," he stated.



He further stressed that the retreat marked a shift from planning to implementation, aligning with the Lagos State Youth Policy to drive sustainable development.

The Permanent Secretary of MYSD, Pharm. Toyin Oke-Osanyintolu, described the establishment of the TWG as a major step in tackling challenges faced by young people.

She explained that the group is tasked with developing a roadmap to ensure youth inclusion in Lagos' economic and social growth.

"This retreat is a pivotal moment for us to secure the commitment of TWG members, formalize a strategic framework, and define actionable steps for the next three years," she said.

She highlighted the need for multi-sector collaboration to make youth development initiatives impactful and sustainable.

Over the three-day retreat, TWG members, drawn from government agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs, and private sector stakeholders, engaged in discussions on key issues, including sustainable economic opportunities for youth, promoting healthy lifestyles, fostering inclusivity, and addressing climate change.

The state government reiterated its commitment to empowering young people and ensuring they have the necessary support and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the state's development.



# Man who lost two sons to inferno in Rivers begs for wife's life

By Helen Okechukwu

The 2-year-old boy, Chris, who survived the fire outbreak after his six-month-old brother was burnt to death at their apartment, has been pronounced dead by his father, Mr. Saviour Moses.

Recalled that on 14 January New Daily Prime reported that the fire, which started by 7 am, engulfed two of the seven units of the self-contained apartment at Rumuworlu Street, Eneka, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State on January 13.

The 2-year-old Chris and his mother were rushed to University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH) for medical care. For Chris, who was the only surviving child, it was revealed that his survival chance was 50/50.

Mr. Moses, whose apartment was burnt down, told TNN in an interview on Saturday that the kidney of his late son, Chris, was deeply affected by the inferno, and that led to his death.



“My son did not survive,” he lamented.

“We took him out from UPTH, we took him to another hospital, and we brought him back to UPTH again, but they rejected him.

Additionally, his wife has been battling with severe burns on her right hand, acknowledging her health condition was deteriorating, and on Thursday she was motionless for an hour after slumping.

Mr. Moses lamented that he does not want to lose his wife as he pleads for meaningful Nigerians to save his wife, who is in critical condition, despite being treated at three hospitals.

“My wife is at the place where

she is receiving treatment. She is in pain. We are homeless.

“Although my wife is receiving treatment, she is not responding to treatment, We have to take her to another hospital for better medical attention.

“About three days ago, she fainted and became motionless for about an hour before she woke up. I have to take her to another hospital. She is being treated by three people.

“My children are dead, two of them; I don’t want to lose my wife; I am appealing,” the traumatised husband said.

“We need money; we need help. Please help me; I need your help.”

# Cholera outbreak: Health worker urges citizens to take precautionary measures

By Helen Okechukwu



**E**unice Edonkumoh, the Chief Matron of Kpakiamma Primary Healthcare Centre, Delta State, has urged citizens to take proactive measures to prevent the outbreak of cholera in the state.

She made this call on Friday during the distribution of free drugs to all the primary health centres across the Bomadi Local Government Area, courtesy of the council boss, Rawlings Andaye.

Expressing gratitude to the LG chairman, she explained the importance of preventive measures.

“Cholera is a communicable disease mostly caused by contaminated water and food, and there are some recorded cases in various

communities such as Esanma, Ogrigbene, Akugbene, Kpakiamma and other communities in the council area,” Edonkumoh said.

While advising the people of Bomadi LGA, Edonkumoh highlighted ways to prevent the outbreak, which include practicing proper hygiene, consuming boiled water and hot food, washing hands before and after eating, and visiting the restrooms, among others.

Read Also: Nine die of cholera outbreak in Rivers Community

With the aim to tackle the occurrence of the outbreak in LGA, the Supervisory Councillor for Health, Adaka Amameniyé, on behalf of the council boss, said the distributed drugs remain free during

administration.

Amameniyé stated that the LGA has declared free medical for patients who shows the symptoms of the disease.

Amameniyé stated, “Our amiable council chairman had deemed it necessary to take both preventive and precautionary measures by providing the drugs for the primary healthcare facilities across the council area, even before any recorded case here.

“My advice to our people is that they should run to the nearest primary healthcare facilities in their various communities in case of any emergency regarding the disease.”



# Top contenders for Grammy Awards [List]

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Here's a list of the nominees in major categories for the 67th Annual Grammy Awards, set to take place this Sunday in Los Angeles.

Beyonce leads all nominees with 11 on the strength of her groundbreaking country album "Cowboy Carter":

## Album of the year

"New Blue Sun" – Andre 3000

"Cowboy Carter" – Beyonce

"Short n' Sweet" – Sabrina Carpenter

"Brat" – Charli XCX

"Djesse Vol. 4" – Jacob Collier

"Hit Me Hard and Soft" – Billie Eilish

"The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess" – Chappell Roan

"The Tortured Poets Department" – Taylor Swift

## Record of the Year, recognizing overall performance on a song

"Now and Then" – The Beatles

"Texas Hold 'Em" – Beyonce

"Espresso" – Sabrina Carpenter

"360" – Charli XCX

"Birds of a Feather" – Billie Eilish

"Not Like Us" – Kendrick Lamar

"Good Luck, Babe!" – Chappell Roan



"Fortnight" – Taylor Swift, featuring Post Malone

## Song of the year, recognizing songwriting

"A Bar Song (Tipsy)" – Sean Cook, Jerrel Jones, Joe Kent, Shaboozey, Nevin Sastry & Mark Williams, songwriters (Shaboozey)

"Birds of a Feather" – Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)

"Die with a Smile" – Dernst 'D'Mile' Emile II, James Fauntleroy, Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars & Andrew Watt, songwriters (Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars)

"Fortnight" – Jack Antonoff, Post Malone & Taylor Swift, songwriters (Taylor Swift Featuring Post Malone)

"Good Luck, Babe!" – Chappell Roan, Daniel Nigro & Justin Tranter, songwriters (Chappell Roan)

"Not Like Us" – Kendrick Lamar, songwriter (Kendrick Lamar)

"Please Please Please" – Amy Allen, Jack Antonoff & Sabrina Carpenter, songwriters (Sabrina Carpenter)

"Texas Hold 'Em" – Brian Bates, Beyonce, Elizabeth Lowell Boland, Megan Bulow, Nate Ferraro & Raphael Saadiq, songwriters (Beyonce)

## Best new artist

Benson Boone

Sabrina Carpenter

Doechii

Khruangbin

Raye

Chappell Roan

Shaboozey

Teddy Swims

Continue reading  
on next page



## Cont from page 14

### Best pop solo performance

“Bodyguard” – Beyonce

“Espresso” – Sabrina Carpenter

“Apple” – Charli XCX

“Birds of a Feather” – Billie Eilish

“Good Luck, Babe!” – Chappell Roan

### Best pop vocal album

“Short n’ Sweet” – Sabrina Carpenter

“Hit Me Hard and Soft” – Billie Eilish

“Eternal Sunshine” – Ariana Grande

“The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess” – Chappell Roan

“The Tortured Poets Department” – Taylor Swift

### Best music video

“Tailor Swif” – A\$AP Rocky

“360” – Charli XCX

“Houdini” – Eminem

“Not Like Us” – Kendrick Lamar

“Fortnight” – Taylor Swift featuring Post Malone

### Best rap album

“Might Delete Later” – J. Cole

“The Auditorium, Vol. 1” – Common and Pete Rock

“Alligator Bites Never Heal” – Doechii

“The Death of Slim Shady (Coup de Grace)” – Eminem

“We Don’t Trust You” – Future and Metro Boomin

### Best rock album

“Happiness Bastards” – The Black Crowes

“Romance” – Fontaines DC

“Saviors” – Green Day

“Tangk” – Idles

“Dark Matter” – Pearl Jam

“Hackney Diamonds” – The Rolling Stones

“No Name” – Jack White

### Best country album

“Cowboy Carter” – Beyonce

“F-1 Trillion” – Post Malone

“Deeper Well” – Kacey Musgraves

“Higher” – Chris Stapleton

“Whirlwind” – Lainey Wilson

Best country solo performance

“16 Carriages” – Beyonce

“I Am Not Okay” – Jelly Roll

“The Architect” – Kacey Musgraves

“A Bar Song (Topsy)” – Shaboozey

“It Takes a Woman” – Chris Stapleton

### Best global music album

“Alkebulan II” – Matt B featuring Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

“Paisajes” – Ciro Hurtado

“Heis” – Rema

“Historias de un Flamenco” – Antonio Rey

“Born in the Wild” – Tems

### Artists with most nominations

Beyonce (11)

Charli XCX (8)

Post Malone (8)

Billie Eilish (7)

Kendrick Lamar (7)

Sabrina Carpenter (6)

Chappell Roan (6)

Taylor Swift (6)

# I impregnated a lady in University — Bobrisky

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian crossdresser Bobrisky recently shared a personal story about how he impregnated a woman during his university days.

Speaking during an Instagram Live session, he recounted an unexpected romantic encounter with a female student named Lamide at the University of Lagos (UNILAG).

According to Bobrisky, Lamide initiated the experience, which ultimately led to his first and only intimate moment with a woman. He claimed that the relationship was short-lived but resulted in a shocking revelation—Lamide was pregnant.

## A Valentine's day surprise

Bobrisky said he was taken aback when Lamide disclosed her pregnancy. The news came on Valentine's Day when she gifted him singlets, underwear, and study materials. Amid the exchange, she dropped the bombshell: "Bob, I am pregnant."

Confused and scared, Bobrisky questioned how it happened, expressing disbelief. "Pregnant? How? Aunt, I am just a young boy. I just entered 200 level. Please, don't destroy my life," he recalled saying.

Fearing the responsibilities of fatherhood at such a young age, he pleaded with Lamide to reconsider. However, she insisted on keeping the baby, leading to tension between them.

## Conflict and confrontation

As the disagreement escalated, Lamide took matters into her own hands. She reported Bobrisky to a group of male students, who later confronted him.



"One day, as I was heading back to my hostel, about seven guys surrounded me. They dragged me into a small room and told me to kneel," Bobrisky revealed.

The men accused him of disrespecting Lamide and refusing to take responsibility. He recalled feeling intimidated and humiliated as they demanded an explanation.

"She was there, fuming. She said she had warned me that she would deal with me. I tried to calm her down, but she wouldn't listen," He said.

## A Night to remember

Recounting the night it all happened, Bobrisky admitted he was inexperienced and nervous. He and Lamide had been alone together, unsure of how to proceed.

"That night, we were waiting to see who would make the first move. I turned my back to the wall, while she

faced me. I was shy and had no idea where to start. Eventually, she started touching me, and we did it. That was my first and only time with a woman," he explained.

He suggested that Lamide might have been attracted to his feminine nature. Though she was aware of his effeminate traits, she still pursued the encounter.

## A turning point

The pregnancy revelation and the conflict that followed marked a significant moment in Bobrisky's life. He has since transitioned fully into his identity as a crossdresser and public figure.

His story sparked mixed reactions online, with some questioning its authenticity while others found it amusing. Regardless, Bobrisky's revelation sheds light on an unexpected chapter from his past—one that shaped his journey and identity today.

# I don't fully own cinema earnings

## — Funke Akindele By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**F**unke Akindele is playfully asking fans to help her reach a major milestone in box office earnings for her latest film, *Everybody Loves Jenifa*.

Akindele, known for her engaging sense of humor, is asking her followers to contribute to the movie's success by pushing its earnings over the N2 billion mark.

A lighthearted plea for support

The actress recently took to social media to share her thoughts, adding a lighthearted tone to her message.

She explained that while the film has already grossed N1.8 billion, she doesn't pocket all the earnings. In fact, cinemas, tax authorities, and distributors all take their share of the revenue.

Akindele humorously pointed out that although the earnings are impressive, they don't all go directly to her. "I beg no be only me get the 1.8 billion o!!! Cinema go collect, tax go collect, distributor go collect," she said in her post, shedding light on how the box office earnings are divided. The actress made it clear that she doesn't keep all of the money, as various stakeholders are involved in the process.

Reaching for N2 billion

Despite the distribution of funds, Akindele remains optimistic about reaching a higher benchmark.

She playfully suggested that if the film hits N2 billion, she might be willing to "settle" for what's left.

Her casual tone and sense of humor shone through as she encouraged her fans to keep supporting the movie. She said, "Maybe when I get to 2Bnaira, I fit



settle. So pls go see #eljthemovie in cinemas and take us to 2billion naira. Thank you."

Rallying fans for action

The actress's message was a clear call to action for her fans. She's not just hoping for the support of her followers but is rallying them to take action by going to the cinema and purchasing tickets.

The hashtag #eljthemovie has been used widely on social media platforms, as fans and followers share their excitement for the film and help spread the word.

The film's success story

Since its release, *Everybody Loves Jenifa* has become a hit, with viewers praising the film's relatable storylines and Akindele's strong performance as the lead character.

The movie follows the popular character Jenifa, whose comedic journey tackles themes of self-discovery, growth, and friendship.

Akindele's unique blend of comedy and drama has earned the film a loyal following, making it one of the most successful movies in Nigerian cinemas at the moment.

The power of fan engagement

The push to hit N2 billion comes as part of Akindele's ongoing efforts to grow the reach of her films.

With her playful, yet heartfelt message, she is not only appealing for financial success but also encouraging her audience to continue their support.

As Akindele stated, the milestone would represent a significant achievement for the film industry in Nigeria, especially for a production led by a woman.

Conclusion: The role of fans in Nigerian cinema's success

In conclusion, Funke Akindele's lighthearted plea is a reminder of the importance of fan support in the success of a film.

As *Everybody Loves Jenifa* continues to gain traction, the actress's call for a final push to N2 billion demonstrates the power of social media and fan engagement in today's entertainment industry.

With the support of her followers, it seems the sky's the limit for Akindele and the future of Nigerian cinema.



# Those who lack music knowledge run the industry – Adekunle Gold

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**A**frobeats singer Adekunle Gold raised concerns about the music industry, highlighting challenges such as unfair treatment and low royalties for artists.

He believes unqualified individuals now control key discussions, shaping narratives that hurt creativity and talent.

Gold criticized industry leaders who, according to him, lack passion and a deep understanding of music. He accused them of prioritizing mediocrity over genuine artistry.

The singer expressed frustration over how these figures dominate conversations, sidelining real talent while allowing subpar content to thrive.

## Industry under wrong leadership

Adekunle Gold took to social media to air his grievances. He argued that many of those controlling the industry neither create music nor respect the craft. Yet, they influence critical decisions that affect artists, producers, and true contributors.

“People who have no business leading music conversations are now controlling and destroying the industry,” Gold said. He stressed that talented individuals are being overshadowed by those who neither create nor appreciate music.

Talent overlooked, mediocrity rewarded Gold warned that when the wrong people dictate industry trends, the wrong messages spread. This shift, he argued, leads to an environment where real talent is ignored while low-quality music gains prominence.

“When the wrong people lead the



conversation, they push the wrong narratives,” he stated. “That’s why real talent is overlooked, and mediocrity thrives. Congratulations to everyone involved.”

His comments highlight growing concerns among artists about the commercialization of music at the expense of creativity. Many in the industry share his frustration, believing that marketing strategies often overshadow raw talent.

## Artists struggle in a changing industry

Adekunle Gold’s statements reflect a broader struggle among artists trying to navigate an evolving industry.

Streaming services and social media have transformed how music is consumed. In this new landscape, trends shift rapidly, sometimes favoring viral moments over long-term artistic excellence.

While digital platforms have given many artists exposure, they have also created an environment where gimmicks often outperform genuine skill.

Gold’s remarks suggest that decision-makers prioritize short-term success over the long-term growth of the industry.

## Call for change

Gold’s message serves as a call for industry professionals to refocus on quality and authenticity. He urges those in power to recognize and support true talent rather than chase trends. His outburst resonates with many musicians who feel the industry is moving in the wrong direction.

As the Afrobeats genre continues to grow globally, ensuring that it maintains its authenticity remains a challenge.

Adekunle Gold’s words highlight an ongoing debate about whether the music industry values artistry or mere popularity.

His statements have sparked discussions among fans and fellow artists. Many agree that a shift in leadership and values is necessary to sustain creativity in music.

Whether Gold’s call for change will lead to industry reforms remains to be seen.

# I've lost count of movies I produced

## – Ibrahim Yekini By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**R**enowned filmmaker and actor Ibrahim Yekini has admitted that he has lost track of the number of movies he has produced over the years.

The sheer volume of films under his belt is so overwhelming that he hesitates to put an exact figure on them.

### Early career mistakes in filmmaking

Yekini, popularly known for his work in Nollywood, confessed that his approach to filmmaking and marketing was not well-structured in the early stages of his career. He lacked formal agreements with marketers, which, in hindsight, affected his control over his own projects.

Reflecting on his past mistakes, he shared, “Back then, my priority was not making money. I just wanted people to see what I could do. Because of that, I overlooked important business aspects.”

### Lack of ownership over his films

One of his biggest regrets is not having ownership rights over his earlier works. He revealed that he never signed master or contract agreements with film marketers, which meant he had little say over the distribution and longevity of his movies.

“I don’t own the master rights to any of the films I produced in the past. The reason is simple—I didn’t have the courage to tell marketers that we should



sign a contract stating the film would return to me after six months,” Yekini explained.

Fear played a significant role in his decision-making at the time. He worried that insisting on legal agreements might cause marketers to reject his films, even though he had financed them himself. This reluctance led to a situation where he lost control over his own creative work.

### How a disagreement led him to directing

Despite these early struggles, Yekini has evolved in his career. He later took charge of his filmmaking process, even stepping into the role of a director. He recounted how a misunderstanding with his former director, Don Richard, forced him to take on directing himself.

“Don Richard used to direct my films in the past. But at one point, we had a disagreement. I had shot a movie, and the marketers demanded a sequel. I

couldn’t reach him, so I had no choice but to direct the second part myself,” Yekini said.

That decision marked a turning point in his career. Stepping into the director’s chair gave him more creative control and allowed him to shape his vision without relying on others.

### Lessons learned and future plans

Today, Yekini is more strategic in his approach to filmmaking. He now understands the importance of legal agreements and business planning. His journey, filled with mistakes and lessons, has made him a more experienced and calculated filmmaker.

His story serves as a lesson for young filmmakers—talent alone is not enough. Understanding the business side of filmmaking is just as crucial for long-term success.

# Run if you're in a toxic relationship

## – Chiwetalu Agu By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**V**eteran Nollywood actor Chiwetalu Agu strongly warns singles and married individuals to prioritize their well-being in relationships for a healthier life.

In a recent video, Agu shared heartfelt advice on love, marriage, and the dangers of ignoring red flags.

**Caution for singles: Avoid desperation**

Agu advised single people to be cautious when seeking a life partner. He warned against rushing into marriage out of desperation, saying this often leads to poor decisions. According to him, many individuals ignore obvious warning signs because they are eager to settle down.

He also urged singles not to choose a spouse based solely on physical appearance or societal pressure. "He is handsome, I want to marry him. See you, see death," he warned. Agu stressed that a person's character is more important than their looks.

In addition, he encouraged people to conduct thorough background checks on potential spouses. He explained that knowing a partner's past can help prevent future heartbreak and regrets.

**Advice for married couples: Prioritize happiness**



Speaking to those already married, Agu emphasized that happiness and safety should always come first. He urged people in unhappy or toxic marriages to seek help or consider leaving.

"Marriage is not a do-or-die affair," he declared. "If you have an abusive partner, run for your life. If you are in a toxic relationship, run for your life."

He criticized the idea of staying in a harmful marriage for the sake of children. Using a real-life example, he said, "A woman once said, 'I will stay because of my children.' She was killed. Now, who will take care of the kids? The man who killed her? Or her relatives who have their own families to care for?"

**Warning against ignoring red flags**

Agu stressed the dangers of ignoring warning signs in relationships. He explained that staying in an abusive marriage can have deadly consequences. He made it clear that divorce is a better option than enduring violence.

"Divorce is better than 'rest in peace,'" he warned. He urged people to take their safety seriously and leave abusive relationships before it is too late.

The seasoned actor concluded by encouraging people to make wise decisions when choosing a partner. He reminded everyone that marriage should bring joy, not suffering. His message was clear: love should never come at the cost of one's life.



# Mike Bamiloye pays tribute to late “Baba Gbenro”

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Gospel filmmaker Mike Bamiloye pens emotional tribute to late Dr. Korede Are, famed as “Baba Gbenro” in the acclaimed ABATTOIR movie series.

Dr. Are passed away on November 14, 2024, and was laid to rest on January 31, 2025. His death left a deep void in the Christian drama community, where he was known for his powerful performances and unwavering dedication to ministry.

In his heartfelt message, Bamiloye reflected on the late drama minister’s life and service to God. He described Dr. Are as a man who poured his heart and soul into his calling.

He was not just an actor but a minister who used drama as a tool for evangelism. His passion for spreading the gospel was evident in every role he played, especially in ABATTOIR, where he portrayed Baba Gbenro.

A role that became a ministry

According to Bamiloye, Dr. Are’s portrayal of Baba Gbenro was more than just acting—it was a divine assignment. Through this role, he conveyed powerful messages of faith, love, and intercession that touched countless lives worldwide.

Dr. Are did not simply memorize lines and perform. He fully immersed himself in the role, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide his every action.

On set, the process felt normal—directors called shots, cameras rolled, and makeup artists adjusted his appearance—but something extraordinary happened after filming.

Bamiloye explained how the movie



transformed once it was edited and released. “The moment we were done and the movie was edited in the studio, the Holy Spirit always took it over, rebranded it, and sent it out to the world,” he wrote.

The filmmaker attributed the widespread impact of ABATTOIR to the anointing upon Dr. Are’s performance.

His portrayal of Baba Gbenro was not just entertainment; it became a source of inspiration and spiritual awakening. Through his role, audiences saw a reflection of Jesus Christ’s love, patience, and intercessory nature.

A global impact

Dr. Are’s performance resonated deeply with viewers across the world. Wherever the ABATTOIR team traveled—Europe, the U.S., or Africa—people recognized Baba Gbenro and inquired about him. His role did more than entertain; it challenged people to reflect on their faith and values.

“People began to check their lives, questioning whether they were truly

Christians,” Bamiloye said. “Intercessors compared their patience and resilience to that of Baba Gbenro.”

His character became a model of love, hospitality, and faithfulness. Many viewers were moved to become better Christians after watching him in the series. His ability to bring depth and sincerity to the role made Baba Gbenro a household name.

Even after his passing, Dr. Are’s influence remained strong. When the ABATTOIR team visited Cameroon shortly after his death, they received numerous condolences from people who had been touched by his work. This was further proof that his ministry had far-reaching effects beyond what anyone could have imagined.

A life well spent

Bamiloye concluded his tribute by celebrating Dr. Are’s unwavering dedication to God’s work. He affirmed that the late drama minister completed his divine assignment with excellence and left a lasting impact on the world.

# Trump imposes tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China - White House

## ...Canada Told Levies Coming Tuesday

By Oluwatosin Ologun

United States President Donald Trump is imposing steep tariffs on major trading partners Canada, Mexico and China, with a lower rate on Canadian energy imports, the White House said.

Canadian and Mexico exports to the United States will face a 25% tariff rate, although energy resources from Canada will have a lower 10% levy.

Goods from China, which already face various rates of duties, will see an additional 10% tariff, the White House said.

The US earlier told Canada to expect the broad duties on its exports starting Tuesday, a Canadian government source told journalists.

Mr Trump is invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act in imposing the tariffs, with the White House having said “the extraordinary threat posed by illegal aliens and drugs, including deadly fentanyl, constitutes a national emergency”.

The announcement threatens upheaval across supply chains from energy to automobiles and food.

Mr Trump has repeatedly expressed his love for tariffs, and has signaled that the action could be the first volley in further trade conflicts to come.

This week, the US president pledged to impose duties on the European Union.

He has also promised tariffs on semiconductors, steel, aluminum, as well as oil and gas – without specifying which countries would be targeted.



Mr Trump returned to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for the weekend with no public events on his official schedule. He headed to the golf course earlier this morning.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is expected to hold a press conference around 11pm Irish time, two Canadian government sources told AFP.

Read also: Russia slams Trump For ‘Iron Dome’ missile defense shield plan

### Growth concerns

Imposing sweeping tariffs on three key US trading partners carries risks for Mr Trump, who swept to victory in November’s election partly due to public dissatisfaction over the economy.

Higher import costs would likely “dampen consumer spending and business investment,” said EY chief economist Gregory Daco.

He expects inflation would rise by 0.7 percentage points in the first quarter this

year with the tariffs, before gradually easing.

“Rising trade policy uncertainty will heighten financial market volatility and strain the private sector, despite the administration’s pro-business rhetoric,” Mr Daco said.

The US president’s supporters have downplayed fears that tariffs would fuel inflation, with some suggesting his planned tax cuts and deregulation measures could boost growth instead.

Democratic politicians criticised Mr Trump’s plans, with Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer having said yesterday:

“I am concerned these new tariffs will further drive up costs for American consumers.”

Canada and Mexico are major suppliers of US agricultural products, with imports totaling tens of billions of dollars from each country per year.



# US Democrats pick new leader to take on Trump for 'working people'

By Oluwatosin Ologun

United States Democrats picked Ken Martin as their new leader Saturday, who now takes on the task of rebuilding a party still reeling from last year's crushing presidential defeat — and figuring out how best to oppose Republican Donald Trump.

"The Democratic Party is the party of working people, and it's time to roll up our sleeves and outcompete everywhere, in every election, and at every level of government," he said in a statement.

The 51-year-old progressive activist, a relative unknown outside of the party, stressed the need to reconnect Democrats with blue collar voters, and to take the electoral fight to all 50 states — even bastions of conservative politics.

"Today's elections mark a new chapter in DNC leadership, and Donald Trump and his billionaire allies are put on notice — we will hold them accountable for ripping off working families, and we will beat them at the ballot box," Martin said.

Party grandees are meeting in a large hotel near Washington, where members of the Democratic National Committee, the party's governing body, are carrying out a postmortem of their November loss.

They have elevated Martin, formerly the chair of the party's Minnesota branch, to devise their national battle plan.

"This is not a game of chess where everyone is moving their pieces back and forth in a respectful, timed manner. This is guerilla warfare in political form," said Katherine Jeanes, deputy digital director of the North Carolina Democratic Party, ahead of the vote.

Maryland Governor Wes Moore, a rising Democratic star, warned ahead of the vote that the party must "not to go into hiding until the next general election."



The moment calls for boldness, added Shasti Conrad, chair of the party's Washington state branch, warning that many Americans have lost the faith.

"They don't trust us to be able to make things better. They don't trust that when we are given power, that we know how to use it," Conrad said.

And the fight starts now, she added — there can be no waiting until the next presidential election, set for 2028.

'Hemorrhaging' young male voters

Democratic candidate and former vice president Kamala Harris defeated Trump in Martin's Minnesota — but lost the majority of traditionally conservative states in the center of the country.

Facing a Republican majority in Congress and a second term for Trump, who has roared back into the White House with all the provocative rhetoric of his first administration, Democrats say they must pick their battles.

"We have to be able to decipher crazy rhetoric versus policy violence," said Conrad, and not be like a "dog chasing the car."

All the more so in a sharply polarized political landscape.

"This Republican Party doesn't care. It doesn't care about the norms, doesn't care about institutions," Conrad said.

While many are "exhausted" after the last election campaign, Jeanes said the party must learn to respond to the frantic pace of shock moves from the Trump administration.

Much of Democratic success going forward will be in how the party presents itself to an American public weary of politics.

That includes going into new spheres, often far from the traditional media — which will mean being "in places that have sometimes been uncomfortable" for Democrats, according to Conrad.

Last year, Jeanes said, Democrats "didn't realize until it was too late that we were in an echo chamber of our own making."

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party was "hemorrhaging" young male voters who were being "fed part and parcel through the alt-right pipeline" to the Republican Party, according to Jeanes.

After his victory in November, Trump credited a series of interviews on largely right-wing podcasts, including the popular "Joe Rogan Experience," for aiding his return to the White House.



# At least 56 killed as fighting grips Sudan's capital

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Artillery shelling and air strikes killed at least 56 people across greater Khartoum on Saturday, according to a medical source and Sudanese activists.

Sudan's regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been locked in a battle for power since April 2023 that has intensified this month with the army fighting to take back control of the capital.

RSF shelling killed 54 and injured 158 people at a busy market in army-controlled Omdurman, part of greater Khartoum, on Saturday, overwhelming the city's Al-Nao Hospital, according to a medical source and the health ministry.

"The shells hit in the middle of the vegetable market, that's why the victims and the wounded are so many," one survivor told AFP.

The RSF denied carrying out the attack.

Across the Nile in Khartoum proper, two civilians were killed and dozens wounded in an air strike on an RSF-controlled area, said the local Emergency Response Room, one of hundreds of volunteer groups coordinating emergency care across Sudan.

Although the RSF has used drones in attacks including on Saturday, the fighter jets of the regular armed forces maintain a monopoly on air strikes.

Both the RSF and the army have been repeatedly accused of targeting civilians and indiscriminately shelling residential areas.

Metres away from hospital

In addition to killing tens of thousands of people, the war has uprooted more than 12 million and decimated Sudan's fragile infrastructure, forcing most health facilities out of service.



A volunteer at Al-Nao Hospital told AFP it faced dire shortages of "shrouds, blood donors and stretchers to transport the wounded".

The hospital is one of the last medical facilities operating in Omdurman and has been repeatedly attacked.

According to the Sudanese doctors' union, one shell fell "just metres away from Al-Nao hospital" on Saturday.

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The union said most of the victims were women and children, and called on nurses and doctors in the area to head to the hospital to relieve a "severe shortage of medical staff".

The fighting in the capital comes weeks after the army launched an offensive across central Sudan, reclaiming Al-Jazira state capital Wad Madani before setting its sights on Khartoum.

The RSF has since remained in control of the road between Wad Madani and Khartoum, but on Saturday an army-allied militia claimed control of the towns of Tamboul, Rufaa, Al-Hasaheisa, and Al-Hilaliya, some 125 kilometres (77 miles) southeast of the capital.

The group, the Sudan Shield Forces, is led by Abu Aqla Kaykal, who defected from the RSF last year and has been accused of

atrocities against civilians both during his tenure with the RSF and now on the army's side.

Sudan remains effectively split, with the RSF in control of nearly all of the vast western region of Darfur and swathes of the south, and the army controlling the country's east and north.

After months of stalemate in greater Khartoum, the army has broken RSF sieges on several bases in the capital this month, including its headquarters, pushing the paramilitary increasingly into the city's outskirts.

Witnesses said Saturday's bombardment of Omdurman came from the city's western outskirts, where the RSF remains in control.

A resident of a southern neighbourhood reported rocket and artillery fire on the city's streets.

Counter-offensive

(FILES) In this image grab taken from handout video footage released by the Sudanese paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 23, 2023, fighters ride in the back of a technical vehicle (pickup truck mounted with a turret) in the East Nile district of greater Khartoum. (Photo by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) / AFP)

Saturday's bombardment came a day after RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo vowed to retake the capital from the army.

"We expelled them (from Khartoum) before, and we will expel them again," he told troops in a rare video address.

Greater Khartoum has been a key battleground in nearly 22 months of fighting between the army and the RSF, and has been reduced to a shell of its former self.

# Mo Salah brace against Bournemouth sends Liverpool nine points clear

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Egyptian forward, Mohamed Salah scored both goals in their hard-fought 2-0 victory on Saturday at AFC Bournemouth as Liverpool moved nine points clear at the top of the Premier League.

Salah converted a penalty after Lewis Cook tripped Cody Gakpo in the first half, then bent a wonderful finish into the far corner to make the points safe with 15 minutes to play.

Bournemouth entered Saturday's match unbeaten in 11 Premier League outings while Liverpool had gone 18 without losing, and the Cherries made the leaders work for their win.

David Brooks had a strike disallowed for a marginal offside decision and Justin Kluivert shot wide of an open goal in the second half, as the hosts lost for the first time since November.

Liverpool added to their advantage over Arsenal – who face Manchester City on Sunday – and Nottingham Forest, while Bournemouth stay seventh with 40 points.

Reacting after the win, Liverpool manager, Arne Slot said, "Exactly the game we expected. They're so intense and they keep running every second. I said before the game when we were 3-0 up at Anfield at half-time they kept on running. We had to play on top of our abilities and we needed a bit of luck to win this game. They were constantly trying to do things. I didn't think we controlled the game."



But the result for Liverpool was slightly overshadowed by Trent Alexander-Arnold being forced off with a muscle injury during the second half and he is now a major doubt for the Carabao Cup semi-final second leg against Tottenham on Thursday, live on Sky Sports.

Arne Slot said: "He asked me if he could come off and then he went down. He felt something, I can't tell you exactly what it is because it is only now an hour after it happened but it is never a good sign if the player is asking for a substitution.

"I would be surprised if he plays on Thursday but let's hope he is back as soon as possible."

Rested Reds led by Salah

With Liverpool having sealed qualification for the last 16 of the UEFA Champions League with a game to spare, Arne Slot used Wednesday's trip to PSV as an opportunity to shuffle his pack, leaving Salah, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Virgil van Dijk and several

other big names at home.

Resting those key players proved a wise decision as Liverpool were forced to contend with Bournemouth's all-action, vertical approach.

They were a tad fortunate to see Bournemouth pass up several golden opportunities, with the woodwork also coming to the Reds' aid on two occasions.

But winning without playing well is often said to be a mark of champions, and with Salah in fine form, Liverpool always have a chance. Salah's double took him to 25 goals for the season in all competitions, with 21 of those coming in the Premier League.

He has now surpassed the 20-goal mark in five different Premier League campaigns, with only Alan Shearer (seven), Sergio Aguero and Harry Kane (both six) doing so on more occasions.



# Man Utd's Rashford close to Aston Villa loan – Reports

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Unsettled Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford is close to joining Aston Villa on loan, according to reports on Saturday.

Villa have moved for Rashford after selling Colombia striker Jhon Duran to Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr on Friday.

The 27-year-old had been linked with AC Milan and Barcelona, while his representatives are also believed to have held talks with Tottenham and West Ham during the January transfer window.

A temporary switch to Villa would allow Rashford to rehabilitate his tarnished reputation after his astonishing fall from grace in the last two years.

Villa could benefit from a revitalised Rashford with a point to prove as they look to challenge for a top four finish in the Premier League, while also competing in the Champions League last 16.

Villa boss Unai Emery is sure to be asked about the interest in Rashford when his side face Wolves in Saturday's late Premier League fixture.

Rashford has been looking to leave Old Trafford since admitting he was ready for a "new challenge" after being dropped by United boss Ruben Amorim for the Manchester derby in



December.

The England star has missed all 12 of United's game since then, with Amorim appearing to lose patience with Rashford recently when he said he would rather name the club's 63-year-old goalkeeping coach in the squad.

Amorim said this week that Rashford would have to change his ways completely to end his exile.

But it now seems Rashford will get his wish to quit United before Monday's transfer deadline.

Meanwhile, United have signed England Under-19 international Ayden Heaven from Arsenal in a deal worth over £1 million in compensation to the Gunners.

The 18-year-old centre-back has signed a contract until 2029, with the

option of a further year.

He was in the last six months of his scholarship terms at Arsenal and rejected the chance to sign a professional contract with the north Londoners.

Heaven made his Arsenal debut in the League Cup against Preston earlier this season and United said he will be "immediately" linking up with Amorim's squad.

"I am incredibly proud to join Manchester United," Heaven said.

"I'm grateful to everyone who helped make this dream a reality.

"There is so much that I want to achieve in the game. I'll be giving everything to continue my development and become the best player that I can be."