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# Bola Ige's murder politically-motivated, govt killed him – Akande

By Dave Oludare Oso

**F**ormer pioneer National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Chief Bisi Akande, has reopened the controversy surrounding the unsolved murder of an ex-governor of Oyo State, Bola Ige, emphasising that Ige's murder was politically motivated.

Akande, a former Osun State governor, who spoke in an interview with Edmund Obilo in Ibadan, which was released at the weekend, said, "He was killed in anticipation of what he might become in the future. It was a state murder. The government killed him. The government can kill anybody."

The APC chieftain also maintained that former Oyo State governor, Rashidi Ladoja may have vital information regarding the assassination being the governor at the time.

Ige, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation between 2000 and 2001 was assassinated on December 23, 2001, at his Ibadan, Oyo State residence.

Chief Akande also lamented that some key figures who might have shed more light on the case, including a former Oyo State governor, Lam Adesina, had died.

The APC chieftain said, "There are many things that die with people. I know Lam Adesina went to court over the matter, and I also know his successor, (Rashidi) Ladoja withdrew the case. Ask Ladoja, he would know more about Bola Ige's death."

"I was the Chief Security Officer of Osun State at the time, not Oyo State. Lam Adesina was the Chief Security Officer of Oyo State and he went to court and the governor that took over from him, Ladoja, withdrew the case from court. He might be able to tell you more. I believe he has more information on Bola Ige's death,"

Akande also said there were a lot of things Lam Adesina told him but which he may not be able to disclose, noting, "Because there are many things you don't want to tell the public. I don't want to tell anybody."



Now Bola Ige is dead, and Lam Adesina too is dead, so who will be my witness? Nobody."

It would be recalled that former President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed Ige as Minister of Mines and Power, between 1999 and 2000 and when he was not able to make significant improvements to the service provided by the monopolistic National Electric Power Authority, Ige was redeployed as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation between 2000 and 2001.

Akande claimed that Bola Ige, being a chieftain of the opposition Alliance for Democracy, regretted joining the Obasanjo's Peoples Democratic Party's administration, describing it as a "kiss of death."

When asked whether it was a mistake for Ige to have joined Obasanjo's administration, Akande disagreed, stating that the decision was a collective one made by Afenifere and the Alliance for Democracy.

"I wouldn't say it's a mistake. We supported him in joining the government, I mean the Afenifere and the Alliance for Democracy.

"We met under the leadership of (Ayo) Fasanmi in AD. We met under the leadership of Abraham Adesanya in

Afenifere and we asked Bola Ige to join the government. Abraham Adesanya asked that we discussed the matter in the AD and we met under Fasanmi, the chairman of AD in the South-West and by acclamation, we asked Bola Ige to join the government.

"We supported him in joining the government. We met under the leadership of Ayo Fasanmi in AD and Abraham Adesanya in Afenifere, and we asked Bola Ige to join. It was a unanimous decision."

Akande said when Obasanjo came to power, he wanted to form a Government of National Unity, a government of every party available and, therefore, consulted Ige to join him.

"Obasanjo met Bola Ige and asked him to join his government. Ige asked Obasanjo to tell his party. Before Obasanjo would inform the party, Ige himself had told the party and we debated it and asked him to go and join.

"If anything so happens, we are all responsible. It was a joint decision. We held a meeting at Ijebu-Igbo, and we were unanimous, asking him to go. We held another meeting at AD and by acclamation, we asked him to go and join.

"So if asking Bola Ige to join Obasanjo was a mistake, it's a mistake of the Yoruba AD and Afenifere."



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10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
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9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
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10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
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9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
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8X3	70,390.00
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### PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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9X5	169,050.00
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8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
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7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
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4X2	26,333.50
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2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
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9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
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3X2	14,923.00
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#### CONTACT US

**Correspondent Address:**  
Real Group Plaza, No.1 Junaid Dosumu  
Street, CBD, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos  
**Call the Editor on: 07025014298, 09014323792**

**E-mail Address:**  
[info@newdailyprime.news](mailto:info@newdailyprime.news)  
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# Tinubu inducts RMAFC, FCC commissioners, Perm Secs

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

**P**resident Bola Tinubu has sworn in newly appointed members of the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), the Federal Character Commission (FCC), and the National Population Commission (NPC).

Before the commencement of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting on Monday, the president also swore in eight former directors in the Federal Civil Service as Permanent Secretaries.

21 members of the RMAFC, along with one new member each for the FCC and the NPC, took their oaths of office at the Council Chamber shortly before the FEC meeting started.

The newly appointed permanent secretaries from eight states passed a rigorous selection process, including a written and oral examination and an ICT competency test.

Dr. Onwusoro Ihemelandu, an optometrist from Abia State and a World Bank-certified procurement expert was among the new permanent secretaries.

Having joined the Federal Civil Service in 1997 as a Senior Optometrist with the Federal Ministry of Health, Ihemelandu later transitioned into the procurement cadre.

Before he was appointed Permanent Secretary, Ihemelandu was the Director of Procurement in several ministries, including Environment, Labour and Employment, and Interior.

He is a Fellow of the Nigerian Optometry Association, a Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Management member, and an Associate Fellow of the Nigerian Institution of Procurement



Engineers.

Also sworn in was Philip Ebiogeh Ndiomu, from Bayelsa State. He holds a Bachelor's in Animal Science from Rivers State University of Science and Technology and a Master's degree in the same field from the University of Ibadan.

Ndiomu joined the Federal Civil Service in 1992 as an Agricultural Officer with the Directorate for Foods, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).

As Director of Agriculture at the Ministry of Niger Delta Development, he spearheaded initiatives that trained and empowered over 5,500 women, youths, and vulnerable groups.

**Other Citations:**

Dr. Anuma Nlia, a medical doctor from Ebonyi State, is also a healthcare administrator.

Nila holds a Master's in Medical Microbiology and is a Medical College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Fellow at the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria.

At the Federal Ministry of Health, he was, at various times, the Director of the Teaching Hospitals Division and the Head of Regulatory and Professional Schools.

He served on the boards of numerous government agencies and contributed to Nigeria's tertiary healthcare sector through policy implementation, hospital upgrades, and administrative reforms.

Chinasa Nnam Ogbodo, an accountant from Enugu State, joined the Federal Civil Service in 1993.

He rose to become Director of Finance and Accounts in 2017. He held various roles in the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, the National Salaries, Incomes, and Wages Commission, and the Ministry of Transportation.

Before becoming Permanent Secretary, Ogbodo was Director of Special Duties in the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation.

Dr Kalba Danjuma Usman, a medical doctor from Gombe State, joined the Federal Civil Service in 2008 as an Assistant Director and became a Director in 2017.

# NELFUND has disbursed N104bn to 600,000 students – FG

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

President Ahmed Bola Tinubu has revealed that the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) has provided financial assistance to 600,000 students, amounting to N104 billion, as part of efforts to strengthen the country's education sector.

Tinubu made the announcement during the 42nd Founders' Day and 33rd Convocation Ceremony of the Federal University of Technology, Minna.

He stated that the financial support is part of his administration's commitment to making education more accessible and affordable for Nigerians.

"The NELFUND programme aims to provide financial support to students, bridging the gap between financial challenges and access to higher education," Tinubu said.

"With this significant investment, the government is empowering students to pursue their academic dreams, driving human capital development, and fostering a knowledge-driven society."

The president also highlighted that the government has allocated N940.5 billion to the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in the 2025 budget, underscoring his administration's focus on improving educational infrastructure and manpower.

Tinubu, represented by Hajiya Rakiya Gambo Iliyasu, Director of Universities at the Federal Ministry of

**nelfund**  
NIGERIAN EDUCATION LOAN FUND  
... increasing access to higher education



Education, reaffirmed his commitment to addressing the challenges facing the education sector.

He specifically mentioned ongoing efforts to ensure industrial harmony in universities and the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement with university staff unions to resolve salary issues.

These steps, he added, are key to achieving stability in Nigeria's higher education system.

"As we continue to prioritise education, Nigerian students can look forward to a brighter future, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to drive innovation, economic growth, and national development," Tinubu stated.

The event also saw the conferment of honorary degrees to prominent figures, including Niger State Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago, who received an honorary doctorate in Agriculture.

Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State was awarded a degree in Entrepreneurship, while Senator

Muhammad Sani Musa, representing Niger East senatorial district, was honoured with a degree in Technology.

Governor Bago, speaking shortly after receiving his honorary degree, reiterated his administration's commitment to making education accessible to all Nigerians. He also announced a donation of N100 million to the endowment fund established by Senator Musa, who had previously donated N200 million.

Prof. Faruk Adamu Kuta, Vice Chancellor of FUT Minna, praised the university's continued excellence in science, engineering, technology, and innovation.

He emphasised that the institution would not compromise on its standards as it continues to grow as a leading centre for technological education in Nigeria.

The event marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's educational development and showcased the government's ongoing efforts to ensure the growth and sustainability of the sector.



# Tinubu okays bill establishing environmental technology varsity in Ogoni

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has signed into law the bill establishing the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Ogoni, in Rivers State.

Tinubu's Special Adviser on Public Communications and Media, Daniel Bwala, announced this in a statement on his X page on Monday.

He stated that President Tinubu's Renewed Hope administration is committed to correcting past injustices and establishing institutions to prevent future segregated developments.

Bwala said: "I am pleased to inform Nigerians that MrPresident Bola Tinubu has assented to the bill



establishing the Federal University of Environmental Technology, Ogoni, in Rivers State.

"You will all recall that recently, in a similar fashion, Mr. President graciously approved the establishment of another federal university to be sited in the Southern Kaduna district of Kaduna State. Congratulations to the good people of Ogoniland. The president is fulfilling the mandate."

He further reiterated that the Tinubuled administration excludes any minority ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Bwala also mentioned that the President believes in the opening stanza of the national anthem, which states that though tribe and tongue may differ, we stand in brotherhood.

# Edun endorses indigenous innovation in Nigeria's electric vehicle sector

By Friday Omosola

Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, has praised NEV Electric, an indigenous electric vehicle company under Brilliant Model Technology, for its groundbreaking contribution to Nigeria's transportation sector.

During a firsthand experience with NEV Electric's buses yesterday, Edun commended the company's innovation in sustainable mass transit, which aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda for cleaner and more efficient transportation across the country.

He emphasised that the initiative holds significant potential to create jobs, enhance energy security, and improve urban mobility.



The minister highlighted that such innovations are essential in driving the country's economic growth while addressing environmental challenges.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to supporting local innovation, Edun stressed the

importance of private-sector collaboration in transforming Nigeria's transportation landscape.

He expressed confidence that this partnership would lead to long-term benefits for the nation, both economically and environmentally.

# FG advances fiscal excellence with revised cash management policy

By Friday Omosola

The Minister of State for Finance, Doris Uzoka-Anite, has reaffirmed the federal government's (FG) commitment to sound fiscal management and sustainable economic development through the introduction of the revised policy on Cash Management and Bottom-Up Cash Planning.

Uzoka-Anite made the statement during the Stakeholders Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Revised Policy on Cash Management and Bottom-Up Cash Planning Protocols, held in Abuja.

The Minister emphasised that the revised policy, introduced in 2024, marks a critical milestone in the government's efforts to streamline fiscal management and promote economic growth.

"This policy represents a pivotal step in ensuring that funds are allocated and utilized in line with approved plans," she said. "It has significantly advanced budget execution, enabling the timely implementation of projects, and enhancing transparency and accountability across government institutions."

The Minister highlighted the role of the policy in boosting fiscal discipline by requiring greater scrutiny and justification for fund requests.



This has reduced opportunities for financial mismanagement, ensuring public funds are safeguarded.

She also noted that the policy has fostered data consistency across key government institutions, which is vital for accurate economic indicators and greater transparency.

In addressing the ongoing challenges, Uzoka-Anite acknowledged concerns regarding the time-consuming nature of some processes and the need for certain Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to develop the requisite expertise for full implementation of the Bottom-Up Cash Planning approach.

The Minister reassured stakeholders that the government is engaging in open and constructive dialogue to identify areas for improvement and implement solutions.

"We are committed to ensuring that this policy achieves its full potential," she said.

"Together, we can build a more transparent, accountable, and efficient public financial management system that serves the best interests of all Nigerians."

Uzoka-Anite also stressed the importance of structural reforms, particularly in agriculture, to address food supply challenges and ease inflationary pressures in the country.

As the administration moves forward with the revised Cash Management Policy, the Minister emphasised that this reform represents a key element of the government's broader goal of fostering sustainable development.



# Reps seek increased funding for key agencies in 2025 budget

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The House of Representatives is calling for a substantial increase in the funding allocated to several critical government agencies in the 2025 budget, with proposals to surpass the initial allocations set out in the government's budget estimates.

Speaking on Monday, February 3, Deputy Spokesman of the House, Mr Philip Agbese, revealed that some of the most important agencies driving the nation's socio-economic development have been earmarked for additional funding in the upcoming fiscal year.

With the National Assembly expected to pass the N49.70 trillion 2025 budget proposal this week, Agbese told the press that improving the financial backing for key institutions is essential to ensuring the country's growth and security.

He reaffirmed the House's commitment to supporting the leadership of Speaker Tajudeen Abbas, adding that while the nation is facing significant hardships, there is hope for national prosperity in the near future.

"We are making a case for enhanced funding for the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), and the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in the 2025 budget proposal," Agbese explained.

"These are agencies that are crucial to the country's development, and we are pushing for better financial support to ensure they can fulfil their mandates."

Agbese emphasised the growing importance of the NIMC, which has become vital in the establishment of a national data bank.

He pointed out that, without adequate funding to train staff and procure the latest technology, the agency would be hampered in its efforts to support national security, including the ongoing fight against terrorism.



The lawmaker also made a strong case for reforming the NYSC scheme, which plays a critical role in providing manpower to both the public and private sectors.

He noted that, while details of the proposed funding increases were not yet available, the National Assembly was unhappy with the current state of the NYSC and was working towards a more substantial budget for the corps.

"We need the NYSC to be better funded to meet the needs of our corps members. They have made tremendous contributions to the nation during their service years, and it's time we better support them," Agbese said.

On the NDA, Agbese stressed the importance of enhancing funding to ensure that the institution is equipped to train security personnel capable of tackling evolving threats.

He pointed out that the growing sophistication of terrorist activities demands that Nigeria's defence institutions receive the resources they need to keep up.

The House is also addressing the issue of capital expenditure allocations, particularly in relation to the Ministry of Defence. Agbese highlighted concerns raised by the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, regarding the insufficient N50 billion proposed for the ministry in the 2025

budget.

"We recognise that the budget envelope system may not be sufficient to meet the capital expenditure needs of many of these agencies," Agbese remarked.

"The Minister of Defence raised this concern, and we are working to ensure these critical areas receive the funding they deserve."

In addition to defence, Agbese noted that the House has made representations for increased funding for foreign missions, which have been crucial in serving Nigerians abroad.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which received N66.88 billion for capital expenditure and N286.88 billion for recurrent expenditure in the 2025 budget, has requested a significant increase, with estimates pointing to a need for N1.5 trillion.

Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Oluwole Oke, explained that while the full amount may not be achievable in one year, the committee has advocated for an allocation of at least N500 billion.

Oke cited the challenges posed by the unstable exchange rate and the ministry's critical obligations, including subscriptions to international organisations and allowances for Foreign Service Officers.



# Atiku urges Tinubu to prioritise unity, democracy over divisive policies

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

Atiku Abubakar, the 2023 presidential candidate for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has called on President Bola Tinubu's administration to put Nigeria first and align its actions with its rhetoric, particularly in promoting national unity and strengthening the country's democracy.

In a statement issued by his media aide, Paul Ibe, Atiku expressed concerns about the growing divisions along ethnic, religious, and class lines since Tinubu took office.

He accused the current administration of pursuing a "snatch and grab" agenda with no concrete plans to build a stronger democratic system.

"Atiku is deeply concerned about the divisive actions of this administration," Ibe stated.

"Since Tinubu assumed office, Nigeria has witnessed unprecedented class, ethnic, and religious divisions. Instead of uniting the country, this government seems intent on deepening existing fractures."

The statement specifically criticised comments made by Sunday Dare, one of Tinubu's spokespersons, who posted on social media about President Trump's America First agenda and the challenges facing



political leaders striving for democratic progress in Nigeria.

Atiku's team viewed Dare's posts as an attack on those seeking to strengthen Nigeria's democracy and accused the administration of undermining credible elections and good governance.

Atiku's team also took issue with the Tinubu government's approach to international relations, particularly a post by Dare regarding the "Tariff War" and America's trade policies.

They condemned the remarks as irresponsible and contradictory, given Nigeria's need to foster positive relations with global partners.

The former Vice President called for the Tinubu administration to replace its "self-entitled" approach with a genuine commitment to putting

Nigeria first.

He also stressed the importance of healing the nation and addressing the growing concerns over social infrastructure inequality.

"Nigeria has gone through all kinds of class, ethnic, and religious divisions under this administration," Atiku said.

"This is the first government in Nigeria's history that categorises citizens into bands, with some Nigerians receiving better access to social infrastructure than others."

Atiku concluded by urging Tinubu's government to focus on uniting the country and avoiding careless remarks about other nations, while embracing a true spirit of patriotism and democracy.

# FEC allocates N4.8bn to ensure continuity of HIV/AIDS treatment

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) on Monday approved an allocation of N4.8 billion for the procurement of HIV treatment packs to support Nigerians living with HIV/AIDS.

The approval follows an emergency humanitarian waiver granted by the US government, reversing a previous funding pause on HIV treatment in developing countries, including Nigeria.

This pause had been ordered under an executive directive by former US President Donald Trump as part of a broader review of foreign aid.

Nigeria has been heavily reliant on international assistance, particularly from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to fund HIV initiatives.

The N4.8 billion allocation will facilitate the procurement of 150,000 treatment packs over the next four months, providing immediate relief and demonstrating Nigeria's commitment to building a more sustainable domestic financing model for health interventions.

At a FEC meeting, Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Ali Pate, emphasised the significance of the allocation in ensuring uninterrupted access to life-saving treatment for those living with HIV.

"This allocation is critical for



ensuring that those living with HIV continue to receive necessary treatments without interruption," Pate said.

The FEC also established a committee, comprising members from the ministries of Finance, Budget, Defence, Environment, and the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF), to develop a sustainability plan.

"This is about ensuring that no Nigerian loses access to treatment during this period of adjustment," Pate added.

Addressing the recent policy shift by the US, Pate noted Nigeria's appreciation for the contributions of the American government over the last two decades but reiterated the country's focus on transforming its health sector using national systems and domestic financing.

In addition to the HIV treatment allocation, Pate announced that the FEC had approved the HOPE

(Human Capital Opportunities for Prosperity and Equity) programme, a \$1 billion initiative aimed at enhancing governance and strengthening primary healthcare systems across Nigeria.

"This programme is very much in line with the direction of this administration—to focus on investing in the human capital of Nigerians. People are at the centre of the Renewed Hope Agenda.

The initiative, developed in collaboration with the International Development Association (IDA), allocates \$500 million for governance improvements and another \$500 million to enhance primary healthcare," Pate stated.

The governance component of the programme will incentivize states to recruit and train teachers and healthcare workers, while the healthcare portion will focus on expanding primary healthcare services, improving quality, and boosting resilience.



# I know nothing about Bola Ige's death, Akande lied – Ladoja

By Dave Oludare Oso

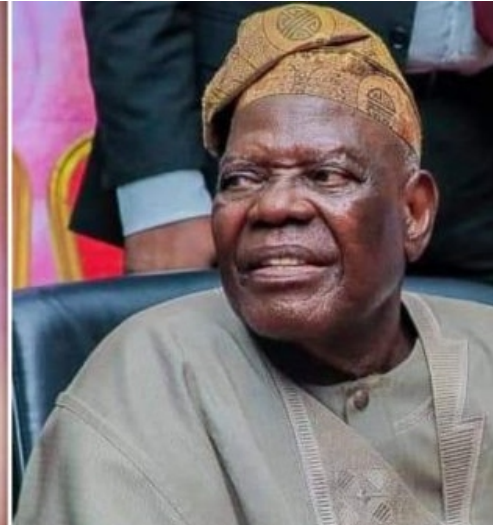
Senator Rasidi Ladoja, a former governor of Oyo State, has denied knowing anything about the death of the late Chief Bola Ige, a former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation.

Ladoja spoke in reaction to the comments made by former National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Bisi Akande, on the unresolved assassination of Ige, in which he (Akande) alleged that Ladoja may have vital information regarding the murder.

The APC chieftain, who spoke in an explosive interview with a broadcaster, Edmund Obilo in Ibadan, lamented that key figures who might have shed more light on the case, including a former Oyo State governor, Lam Adesina, had died.

Akande's statements read, "There are many things that die with people. I know Lam Adesina went to court over the matter, and I also know his successor, (Rashidi) Ladoja withdrew the case. Ask Ladoja, he would know more about Bola Ige's death.

"I was the Chief Security Officer of Osun State at the time, not Oyo State. Lam Adesina was the Chief Security Officer of Oyo State and he went to court and the governor that took over from him, Ladoja, withdrew the case from court. He might be able to tell you more. I believe he has more information on Bola Ige's death.



"Because there are many things you don't want to tell the public. I don't want to tell anybody. Now Bola Ige is dead and Lam Adesina too is dead, so who will be my witness? Nobody."

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed Ige as Minister of Mines and Power, between 1999 and 2000 and when he was not able to make significant improvements to the service provided by the monopolistic National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), Ige was redeployed as Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation between 2000 and 2001.

The former minister was assassinated on December 23, 2001, at his Ibadan, Oyo State residence.

Reacting, however, while addressing journalists at his residence in Ibadan on Monday, Ladoja refuted the assertion, saying, "I don't have any hidden knowledge about the death of Chief Bola Ige. I had no problem with Bola Ige.

"Maybe Chief Bisi Akande wants to sell his book, I don't know. There is no correlation between my election and the death of Ige.

"He should come out and tell the public instead of maligning my image. But, all options are open. As the Otun Olubadan, I am no longer a politician.

"Chief Bola Ige was assassinated on December 23, 2001. I became governor on May 29, 2003, which was 18 months before my tenure began.

"I didn't withdraw the case. My government didn't withdraw any case.

"The case was even prosecuted by the Supreme Court. Chief Akande lied against me, and he is old. This is not his first time. People say he lies. Even Baba Adebajo said he lied in his book.

"We are all deeply saddened by Ige's death. We are all concerned about his murder; I was very close to Chief Bola Ige when he was alive."

# FIRS introduces new tax measures to curb evasion, improve revenue

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has introduced new withholding tax regulations aimed at improving tax collection, increasing compliance, and boosting government revenue to support economic growth.

In a statement released yesterday, Collins Omokaro, Special Adviser on Communication and Advocacy to the Executive Chairman of FIRS, highlighted that the updated system is designed to enhance efficiency, ensure transparency, and promote accountability among businesses and employers.

The new framework mandates the deduction of taxes at the point of payment for various transactions, including salaries, rent, professional fees, and dividends.

By placing the responsibility on businesses and employers to withhold and remit taxes, the FIRS seeks to create a more consistent revenue flow while reducing tax evasion.

Key provisions of the regulations include the integration of Tax Identification Numbers (TINs) into transactions and the enforcement of penalties for non-compliance.

The agency also noted that adjustments to tax rates for residents and non-residents aim to create a fairer tax system, benefiting local businesses while maintaining equity for foreign entities operating in



Nigeria.

The FIRS anticipates that the revised tax system will generate additional revenue to fund critical public services, drive economic development, and improve Nigerians' overall quality of life.

Despite the expected advantages, the agency acknowledged potential challenges in implementation.

Businesses may need to invest in new accounting software and staff training to ensure proper tax deductions and remittances.

Additionally, small businesses and vendors could face compliance difficulties due to limited awareness, while industries such as gaming and telecommunications will have to adjust to sector-specific tax requirements.

FIRS emphasised that the success of the new withholding tax system will depend on effective implementation and collaboration among all stakeholders.

The statement partly read: “The new regulation is a game-changer for Nigeria’s tax landscape. It will ensure that taxes are collected efficiently and transparently while fostering accountability among businesses and employers.

“By placing the responsibility on businesses, employers, and other payers to withhold taxes at the point of payment, the government hopes to ensure a steady revenue inflow and minimise tax evasion.

“This initiative is expected to create a more equitable tax system where individuals and businesses contribute their fair share to national development.

“However, government agencies must intensify awareness campaigns to help businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, navigate the changes smoothly. The introduction of this regulation comes with high expectations.”



# Legendary Chelsea striker, Drogba visits Gov Sanwo-Olu

By Dave Oludare Oso



**L**egendary Ivorian footballer, Didier Drogba has met with Lagos State governor, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu in Lagos.

The former Chelsea legend, who was one of the best strikers in the world over the last decade met with the governor at the Lagos State Government House, Marina on Monday, February 3, 2024.

Senior Special Assistant on New Media to Governor Sanwo-Olu, Jubril Gawat disclosed the development in a video he shared on X on Monday morning.

Gawat wrote in the video post, “@jidesanwoolu and African Football Legend, @ChelseaFC Legend, Didier Drogba @didierdrogba this morning at the

Lagos House, Marina, as Team Drogba and the Representatives of E1 Racing Team pays a Courtesy Visit to Mr Governor.”

He, however, didn’t provide any other details of the visit as of press time.

The former Ivorian captain was born on March 11, 1978, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and is widely regarded as one of the most iconic and celebrated footballers of his generation.

Renowned for his physical strength, clinical finishing, and leadership, Drogba enjoyed a stellar career as a striker, leaving an indelible mark on the sport.

English Premier League side, Chelsea Football Club was where he reached the peak of his career

and triumph, becoming a club legend and scoring crucial goals to help the club win many trophies, including the UEFA Champions League in 2012.

Drogba also had a remarkable international career, leading the Ivory Coast national team to their first-ever World Cup and winning the Africa Cup of Nations in 2015.

Beyond football, he is admired for his efforts to promote peace in his home country and his charitable work through the Didier Drogba Foundation, which supports health and education in Africa.

The talented striker is celebrated not just for his skill on the field but also for his leadership and impact off it.

# Kaduna Electric sacks 900 workers, union kicks

By Dave Oludare Oso

About 900 employees of the Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company (Kaduna Electric) has been laid off, with the company telling the affected workers that their "net benefits will be paid into their accounts later and pension will come "in due course."

In a letter to the staff on January 31, 2025, Kaduna Electric announced that the services of the staff members were no longer required.

The letter signed Deputy Managing Director of the KADECO, Abubakar Mohammed, directed the workers to hand over the company's property in their possession to the human resources department immediately.

It learnt that the sacking comes amid a Monthly Performance Review meeting chaired by Dr. Umar Abubakar Hashidu, Managing Director and CEO of Kaduna Electric and the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Alhaji Aminu Abubakar Suleiman.

Others in attendance include a board member and Chairman, HR Committee, Ibrahim Musa Umar.

Suleiman was a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) aspirant for Kogi East senatorial district but was disqualified by the party over various acts of misconduct.

According to the company, the workers' net benefit will be credited to their account while their pension will be paid to your retirement savings account with their Pension Fund Administrator (PFA) in due course.

The statement read, "We refer to your offer of employment and write to inform you that your services will no longer be required by the company, effective January 31, 2025.

"This decision was not made lightly and reflects our commitment to adapting our operations to meet current challenges. Please find below the summary of your



benefits and outstanding obligations.

"Details of Benefits/Obligations, 13th Month Pay (2024): Credit N49,448.11.

"9 Months Basic Salary: Credit N445,033.07.

"Total Net Benefit: N494,481.18."

Meanwhile, the outstanding Liability (Pension) is N1,225,164.63, while the total benefit is N1,719,645.83.

"Kindly note that the sum of N494,481.19 will be credited to your account accordingly. Your accrued pension will be paid to your retirement savings account with your PFA in due course.

"Upon receipt of this letter, you are expected to return all company property including work tools and your staff identification card to the Human Resources Department without delay.

"We appreciate your contributions to Kaduna Electric and wish you success in your future endeavors," the statement added.

Union kicks

Meanwhile, staff members of KADECO have embarked on an

indefinite strike over an alleged plan by the management to dismiss over 900 workers among other grievances.

The aggrieved workers who carried placards with various inscriptions on Monday, blocked the entrance of the corporate headquarters of Kaduna Electricity Distribution Company and prevented workers and even customers from going into the premises.

The aggrieved workers under the umbrella of the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE) accused the management of high-handedness and fragrant disregard for all industrial agreements.

The North West zonal organising secretary of NUEE, Barde listed some of their grievances including the failure of the management to provide exit benefits to employees that resigned or retired five years ago, and the plan to sack 900 staff, which he said must be resisted by the union.

Other issues raised by the striking workers include nonpayment of five-year outstanding pensions to retirees, non-implementation of the national minimum wage, lack of promotion for deserving employees, and inadequate provision of necessary work tools.



# ALLEGED FRAUD: Ex-NHIS boss, Yusuf remanded in Kuje prison

By Dave Oludare Oso

A former Executive Secretary of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Usman Yusuf, was on Monday remanded at the Kuje Correctional Centre by a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court in Abuja.

Justice Chinyere Nwecheonwu gave the order after Yusuf was arraigned and took his plea.

The ex-NHIS chief is accused of abusing his office to confer undue advantages on himself between 2016 and 2017. He is also alleged to have awarded contracts without adhering to the due procurement process.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arraigned Yusuf on five counts amended charge bordering on alleged fraud.

However, Yusuf pleaded not guilty to all five counts when the charges were read to him.

Yusuf's counsel, O.I. Habeeb, afterwards, requested that his client be remanded in the EFCC's custody pending the



hearing of the bail application. The trial judge, however, declined the request.

Justice Nwecheonwu ruled that once a defendant is arraigned, custody is transferred from the EFCC to the Nigerian Correctional Service.

She, therefore, ordered Yusuf's remand in Kuje Correctional Centre pending the hearing of his bail application.

She adjourned the case to February 12, 2025, for a hearing of the bail application.

The former NHIS boss was arrested by EFCC operatives at

his residence on January 29.

According to the court, the EFCC charged Yusuf with allegedly using his position at the time to confer undue advantage to himself by approving the purchase of a vehicle at the cost of N49,197,750, against the budgeted sum of N30,000,000.

The EFCC also accused Yusuf of retaining private interest in GK Kanki Foundation, and without due process, awarding a contract in the sum of N10.1 million in favour of the foundation, for the purported training of 90 persons — when the actual number of trainees was 45.

# 2027: Forget Atiku, only Jonathan can beat Tinubu, Primate Ayodele tells PDP

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

**H**ighly revered cleric and founder of INRI Evangelical Spiritual Church, Primate Elijah Ayodele has warned the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) against fielding former vice president Atiku Abubakar as its standard bearer in the 2027 presidential election.

The clergyman stated that the party should be prepared for a certain defeat if it gave its presidential ticket to the Turakin Adamawa.

Primate Ayodele noted in a statement signed by his media aide, that Atiku does not have the capacity to defeat President Bola Tinubu.

However, the cleric said the only way PDP could achieve victory, or inch near it in the coming polls, is if the party can drag former president Goodluck Jonathan into the race.

He also said Atiku is not the answer for PDP and that if he is allowed to contest again, PDP will be 'buried' finally because he (Atiku) 'doesn't have what it takes to remove Tinubu from office.'

The prophet stated that the best Atiku can do is support a good candidate and 'the best person for PDP at the moment is Goodluck Jonathan' if at all the party wants to smell victory in 2027.

He also advised that if Goodluck Jonathan can join forces with former senate president, Bukola Saraki, with the support of a coalition of opposition parties, there will be great chances at victory for the party.

The statement reads, "If PDP wants to near victory, they should persuade Goodluck Jonathan to contest under the party to wake them from their slumber. Atiku will not be an answer to PDP and if



he comes out to contest again, it will be the final burial of PDP. He doesn't have what it takes to remove Tinubu from office.

"I can only advise Atiku to support a good candidate and the best option for PDP now is Goodluck Jonathan. I said he shouldn't contest before but as it stands, he is the only one who can assist PDP from its final burial. If he can join forces with Saraki, together with a coalition of opposition parties, PDP has chances at victory."

However, according to Primate Ayodele, Jonathan is scared and in doubt of his capacity.

He urged the party to give him the support he needed in order to agree to contest.

"If Jonathan is ready, he should be able to do all of these but he is scared. The fear of the unknown is troubling Jonathan. If the PDP can persuade him and give him all the backing he needs, he will be able to help the party survive."

Furthermore, Primate Ayodele explained that if Jonathan doesn't contest, and without a coalition of opposition parties, President Tinubu will still retain his seat as Nigeria's president.

Continuing, he described the person who can remove Tinubu as one who is desperate, financially stable, unrighteous, fearless, and rugged, to mention but a few.

He asserted that the 2027 election will not be for lazy people but for those who know what they want and are ready to pursue it till the very end.

"If this cannot happen, I don't see anyhow any party wants to defeat Tinubu, it will be totally impossible. The person that will defeat Tinubu must be financially stable, spiritually inclined, must be desperate, must not be righteous.

"The election will be for somebody who is ready for anything, fearless, rugged, entirely serious, someone who has past good records, ready to waste money, too, because all of these are what Tinubu has.

"The 2027 election isn't for righteous people, the person who wants to win must be ready to face anything and must be ready to listen to God's divine instructions at all times. It's not for lazy people but very determined people. You must also be ready to accept lies and truth together. Tinubu is too strong to be pushed aside."



# NiMet, Union suspend strike after reaching agreement

By Helen Okechukwu

The planned strike that was scheduled to take place on 4 February has been suspended after the leadership of the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) and joint agency-based unions reached an agreement.

The unions comprise the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE), Association of Nigeria Aviation Professionals (ANAP), Senior Staff Association of Statutory Corporations and Government Owned Companies (SSASCGOC), and Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE).

The union representatives made this announcement during a media briefing in Abuja on Monday following an agreement reached between national and branch officers of the unions and the management of NiMet.

However, the notice, which read until further notice, saw both sides restating the interests of NiMet workers were the focus of the discussions and negotiations.

Following negotiations that resulted in a signed agreement, both parties established timelines to address the concerns raised by the unions.

Meanwhile, the Director General and Chief Executive Officer of NiMet, Prof. Charles Anosike, reaffirmed the agency's commitment to prioritising



employee welfare while considering economic realities.

Anosike acknowledged the role played by the National Officers of NiMet agency-based unions and their branches in the discussions.

While recognising that all matters have not yet been fully resolved, Anosike expressed satisfaction that the unions have agreed to defer their planned strike.

This decision allows NiMet management to continue working towards obtaining necessary federal government approvals on the outstanding issues.

The President of the National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE), Comrade Benjamin Nnabue, who represented the unions in the negotiations, emphasised that strikes are always a last resort.

Nnabue stated that while some of the

concerns predate the current administration, government is a continuous process, and the unions remain committed to ensuring the welfare of NiMet employees.

Mr. Olusoga Adebayo, Director of Labour at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, who observed the discussions, commended the constructive approach taken by both sides.

He highlighted that through dialogue and mutual compromise, a peaceful resolution was reached.

As stated in the agreement signed by both the unions and NiMet management, all parties acknowledged that communication gaps had contributed to the delay in resolving the issues.

They committed to improving consultation and engagement mechanisms to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

# Police nab three alleged cultists, recover arms in Anambra

By Helen Okechukwu

**E**ffort to traffic arms and initiate some new members into a cult group known as Aye Confraternity, the security operative in the Anambra State Police Command has apprehended three suspected gang members.

At around 8 pm, the police operative attached to Anaku Divisional Headquarters during a stop-and-search operation along Anaku/Omor Junction on Sunday intercepted eight suspects riding on motorcycles.

As the search continued, they all took to their heels. Immediately, the police swung into action and went after eight of them. After a long chase, out of the eight suspects, three were apprehended.

The three male suspects are Okafor Chibike, Ekene Lucky Nwadiibu, and Godwin Osaz. They are all residents of Omor.

Items recovered and confiscated during the operation are one locally made double-barrel gun, one locally made revolver pistol, one dagger, three Android phones, one motorcycle, and four ATM cards.



Although the police spokesperson Tochukwu Ikenga noted that combined efforts are ongoing to arrest the other absconded members.

In similar operation, on 1 February at approximately around 7.43 pm, security operative attached to Awgbu Divisional headquarters intercepted three cultist suspects in a tricycle during security screening operations at Eke Awgbu junction.

The three suspects are Chidera Nwochia, aged 20 from Amiri Orlu, Imo State; Chizurumu Elvis, aged 23 from Mbano, Imo State; and Kosisochukwu Obiechina, aged 21 from Agukwu Nri, Anambra State, in a tricycle.

Items found on them include one

7.62mm live ammunition, one black axe, a gallon of substance suspected to be a hard drug, a local pot, white and red cloth with NBM and number 7 inscription on it, some pieces of red and white clothes, and candles.

Tochukwu stated, “During interrogation, the suspects confessed to being members of the Black Axe Confraternity and were en route to their initiation ground. The police also recovered the tricycle, which was conveying the suspects to the venue of their initiation.”

However, it is noted that all six suspects will be charged in court upon the conclusion of the investigations.



# JUSTICE AT LAST: Killers of Ogun couple, son face hangman's noose

By Dave Oludare Oso

The three New Year's Day killers of Mr. Kehinde Fatinoye, his wife, Bukola, and their only son, Oreoluwa were on Monday sentenced to death by hanging for the brutal murders.

Justice Basirat Adebowale of an Abeokuta High Court, Ogun State, found the trio guilty of nine counts, ruling that the prosecution had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt.

The convicts — Lekan Adekanbi, the family's former driver, along with Ahmed Odetola and Waheed Adeniyi—committed the crime on January 1, 2023.

They were first arraigned in February 2024 alongside six others, including Adekanbi's wife, Temitope Fadairo, and his mother, Adenike Adekanbi.

The defendants faced a 24-count charge, including conspiracy to commit armed robbery, murder, arson, and perverting the course of justice.

Despite pleading not guilty, Justice Adebowale found them guilty of nine counts, ruling that the prosecution had proven its case beyond reasonable doubt.



"The evidence is overwhelming," Adebowale stated. "For killing father, mother, and son, you do not deserve mercy. You shall be hanged by the neck until you die or executed by lethal injection. May God have mercy on your souls."

Other defendants received varying sentences. Temitope Fadairo was sentenced to two years in prison for aiding her husband's escape, while Adenike Adekanbi received a one-year sentence for providing false information to the police.

Azeez Usman, the welder who dismantled the stolen Hyundai vehicle, was sentenced to 14 years in prison.

Anuoluwapo Owolaja also received a two-year jail term, while two other suspects—Abass Odetola and Lukman Adewusi—were discharged.

During the trial, prosecuting counsel, Mrs. Adefisoye Temilola told the court that Adekanbi orchestrated the attack, conspiring with Odetola and Adeniyi to rob and kill the Fatinoye family.

Armed with a gun, hammer, and cutlass, the trio stole N1.102 million from Mr. Fatinoye and his Hyundai vehicle worth N12 million. They also took Mrs. Fatinoye's phones valued at N1 million.

The court heard how Adeniyi slit Mr. Fatinoye's throat while Adekanbi bludgeoned Mrs. Fatinoye with a sledgehammer before slitting her throat.

To cover their tracks, they set the house on fire and abducted Oreoluwa, tied his hands and legs before throwing him into the Ogun River, where he drowned.

The judgment brings closure to a case that sent shock waves through Ogun State, exposing the depths of betrayal and brutality that led to the Fatinoye family's tragic end.



# The Robot Doctor Will See You Now

By Pranav Rajpurkar and Eric J. Topol

The rapid rise in artificial intelligence has created intense discussions in many industries over what kind of role these tools can and should play — and health care has been no exception. The medical community largely anticipated that combining the abilities of doctors and A.I. would be the best of both worlds, leading to more accurate diagnoses and more efficient care.

That assumption might prove to be incorrect. A growing body of research suggests that A.I. is outperforming doctors, even when they use it as a tool.

A recent M.I.T.-Harvard study, of which one of us, Dr. Rajpurkar, is an author, examined how radiologists diagnose potential diseases from chest X-rays. The study found that when radiologists were shown A.I. predictions about the likelihood of disease, they often undervalued the A.I. input compared to their own judgment. The doctors stuck to their initial impressions even when the A.I. was correct, which led them to make less accurate diagnoses. Another trial yielded a similar result: When A.I. worked independently to diagnose patients, it achieved 92 percent accuracy, while physicians using A.I. assistance were only 76 percent accurate — barely better than the 74 percent they achieved without A.I.

This research is early and may evolve. But the findings more broadly indicate that right now, simply giving physicians A.I. tools and expecting automatic improvements doesn't work. Physicians aren't completely comfortable with A.I. and still doubt its utility, even if it could demonstrably improve patient care.

But A.I. will forge ahead, and the best



thing for medicine to do is to find a role for it that doctors can trust. The solution, we believe, is a deliberate division of labor. Instead of forcing both human doctors and A.I. to review every case side by side and trying to turn A.I. into a kind of shadow physician, a more effective approach is to let A.I. operate independently on suitable tasks so that physicians can focus their expertise where it matters most.

What might this division of labor look like? Research points to three distinct approaches. In the first model, physicians start by interviewing patients and conducting physical examinations to gather medical information. A Harvard-Stanford study that Dr. Rajpurkar helped write demonstrates why this sequence matters — when A.I. systems attempted to gather patient information through direct interviews, their diagnostic accuracy plummeted — in one case from 82 percent to 63 percent. The study revealed that A.I. still struggles with guiding natural conversations and knowing which follow-up questions will yield crucial diagnostic information. By having doctors gather this clinical data first, A.I. can then apply pattern recognition to analyze that information and suggest potential diagnoses.

In another approach, A.I. begins with

analyzing medical data and suggesting possible diagnoses and treatment plans. A.I. seems to have a natural penchant for such tasks: A 2024 study showed that OpenAI's latest models perform well at complex critical thinking tasks like generating diagnoses and managing health conditions when tested on case studies, medical literature and patient scenarios. The physician's role is to then apply his clinical judgment to turn A.I.'s suggestions into a treatment plan, adjusting the recommendations based on a patient's physical limitations, insurance coverage and health care resources.

The most radical model might be complete separation: having A.I. handle certain routine cases independently (like normal chest X-rays or low-risk mammograms), while doctors focus on more complex disorders or rare conditions with atypical features.

Early evidence suggests this approach can work well in specific contexts. A Danish study published last year found that an A.I. system could reliably identify about half of all normal chest X-rays, freeing up radiologists to devote more time to studying images that were deemed suspicious.



# NCDC DG assured Nigeria Ebola-free, heightened surveillance

By Helen Okechukwu

The Nigerian Government has taken proactive measures and increased surveillance to prevent the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the country following the confirmation of the virus outbreak in Uganda.

Director-General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), Dr. Jide Idris, on Sunday in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at Abuja, disclosed that the airport and other entry points are under surveillance.

Idris revealed that there is no case recorded in the country, urging citizens to restrict inessential travels to the affected regions as recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

While speaking during the interview, he said, "There are no cases of Ebola in Nigeria. However, we are working closely with relevant ministries, departments, and partners to strengthen our emergency response, update our contingency plan, and optimise diagnostic capacity for Ebola testing.

The Uganda Ministry of Health confirmed the visibility of the Sudan species virus in Wakiso, Mukono, and Mbale City in Mbale District on January 30.

It was noted that about one case with one death along with 44 contacts has been recorded, and the health authorities are fighting tirelessly to curtail the spread.

Read Also: Uganda to receive \$1 million from WHO to tackle Ebola outbreak

Although the NCDC boss, working with the collaboration of key stakeholders,



noted that preventive measures have been taken, and he urged members of the public to remain vigilant.

He advised the public to practice preventive care, which include proper hand washing, avoid the consumption of bushmeats, and avoid contact with individuals showing symptoms of fever and seek medical attention immediately.

Health workers were also advised to maintain a high index of suspicion, use protective care, and report suspected cases.

Meanwhile, beyond this virus, NCDC DG said Nigeria is battling with the reoccurrence of Lassa fever, meningitis, diphtheria, Mpox, measles, and anthrax, and acknowledged surveillance will be tightened across the nation.

Recalled that the outbreak was witnessed in Africa between 2014 and 2016 while in Nigeria, a Liberian-American, Patrick

Sawyer, imported the virus into the country which lead to death of Dr. Ameyo Adadevoh, a brave doctor that alert the nation of the deadly virus.

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a severe, rare disease caused by an infection with orthoebolavirus and primarily found in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a significant mortality rate.

It can be transmitted through close contact with an infected person (body fluids such as vomit, saliva, sweat, faeces, and contaminated objects).

An infected person shows symptoms between 2-21 days after exposure and includes fever, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and unexplained bleeding or bruising. It can cause bleeding, organ failure, and death if there is no medical attention.

# I'm tired of temporary connections

## – Timini Egbuson

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**T**imini Egbuson, a renowned actor and filmmaker, has opened up about his longing for meaningful, long-lasting relationships.

In a candid interview with TVC, he expressed frustration with the rise of brief, shallow romantic connections and attributed this trend to the pervasive influence of social media.

According to Egbuson, many individuals abandon their relationships prematurely due to unrealistic expectations and misinformation spread online.

Social media and unrealistic expectations

Egbuson explained that social media often paints a distorted picture of romance, leading people to believe that every relationship should be perfect.

When reality doesn't align with these idealized portrayals, people are quick to walk away, even if the relationship has potential.

The actor highlighted the dangers of comparing one's love life to the curated content seen on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

He believes that these platforms, though often entertaining, can contribute to dissatisfaction and the breakdown of real relationships.

The frustration of temporary connections

"I'm personally tired of temporary connections," Egbuson admitted. "You meet someone, get to know them, and just when you start building something real, they leave. It gets



tiring."

He acknowledged the challenge of navigating romantic life in a world where social media plays such a large role in shaping perceptions of love and relationships.

In a society where everyone is constantly exposed to curated images of 'perfect' partnerships, it's easy for people to feel that their own relationships fall short.

The impact of misinformation on relationships

Egbuson also shared his view on how social media's constant flow of misinformation can be damaging. "People are quick to leave relationships now because of the messages they see online," he said.

"In our woke generation, there's a lot of content about what a 'perfect' relationship should look like. So, if someone sees a TikTok post with a headline like 'Seven Signs He's Not Your Man,' and it resonates with even a small part of their reality, they might end things with their partner."

This, according to Egbuson, is one of

the main reasons why relationships today seem to lack staying power.

The importance of authentic connections

He stressed the importance of focusing on real connections and taking the time to nurture those bonds, despite the distractions and pressures of the digital world.

Building a meaningful relationship, he believes, requires patience, effort, and understanding. Egbuson is tired of witnessing so many people rush into and out of relationships, without giving them a chance to truly grow.

The struggles of loneliness and maintaining boundaries

While acknowledging the loneliness that can come with waiting for something genuine, Egbuson emphasized that he refuses to settle for superficial connections.

"Sometimes, it does get lonely," he confessed. "You have everything, and you've understood the power of your own energy. You're not just going to let anyone into your space."

His words reflect a strong desire to preserve the quality of his personal relationships, even if it means enduring moments of solitude.

Egbuson's call for a return to authentic love

Ultimately, Timini Egbuson is advocating for a return to authenticity in romantic relationships. He believes that social media should not define how we experience love.



# Asake reveals why he covered his body in tattoos

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian music sensation Asake reveals his decision to cover his body in tattoos, explaining that the ink reflects his current state of mind and emotions.

In a recent interview at the Grammy Awards night, the Afrobeats star revealed that his tattoos are not meant to impress anyone but serve as a personal expression of who he is at the moment.

**Personal expression over validation**  
“For me, it’s all about how I feel right now,” Asake shared. “I want to feel comfortable in my own skin. It’s about doing what feels right for me—not for anyone else.”

**Tattoos as a reflection of growth**  
His tattoos, which have made a strong impression on fans and the public alike, aren’t just body art to Asake.

They are a way for him to express his emotions and personal journey. The star made it clear that these tattoos aren’t for validation or approval from others. Instead, they are a reflection of his growth, his struggles, and his joy.

**A fluid approach to image**  
Interestingly, Asake also hinted that his appearance may evolve once again in the future. “I might wake up tomorrow and decide that I don’t want any tattoos on my face anymore,” he said.

His statement left fans intrigued, as it suggests that his style and physical transformation are deeply tied to his emotional state and how he views the world at any given time.

**Staying grounded through reinvention**  
For Asake, this fluid approach to his image is part of what keeps him grounded and true to himself. The



artist is no stranger to reinvention. He is known for his ever-changing fashion sense and the way he expresses his artistic journey through his evolving persona. Fans are constantly captivated by the way he blends his music, style, and visual identity in ways that feel authentic.

**The “Military era” phase**  
Adding another layer to his evolution, Asake recently declared that he is currently in his “Military era.”

While he didn’t go into specifics, fans are already speculating about what this could mean. The term “Military era” hints at a period of discipline, focus, and dedication.

It could signal a shift in his approach to both his music and public life, with a possible emphasis on honing his craft and maintaining a disciplined mindset.

**The connection between music and style**  
The connection between his music career and personal style is undeniable. Asake’s journey is not just about producing hit songs—it’s also about living authentically.

His bold fashion choices and

willingness to be open about his transformation are what make him stand out in the highly competitive world of Afrobeats.

**Asake’s authenticity resonates with fans**

Asake’s tattoos, his evolving appearance, and his new “Military era” are part of a larger narrative. They paint a picture of an artist who is unafraid to change, adapt, and express himself in whatever way feels right at the time.

This level of authenticity has earned him a loyal fanbase that appreciates his willingness to be vulnerable and honest about his journey.

**Taking risks and breaking boundaries**  
His rise to fame has been fueled by his willingness to take risks, not only with his music but also with his image.

His ability to fuse his identity with his artistic output has turned him into one of Afrobeats’ most captivating stars. As Asake continues to push boundaries and break expectations, fans eagerly await what comes next from this ever-evolving artist.

# Funke Akindele shares how colleagues helped her

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Funke Akindele shared the challenges she faced early in her career, including borrowing clothes from colleague Sikiratu Sindodo to look polished on movie sets.

Reflecting on the journey to success

In a candid discussion, Funke reflected on her difficult journey before achieving success in the Nigerian film industry.

Currently, on vacation with actress Eniola Badmus and content creator Kamo in Ghana, Funke shared how these early struggles shaped her career and gave her the motivation to uplift others who may be facing similar challenges.

Acknowledging the support from industry friends

In a heartfelt video posted on her Snapchat, the actress acknowledged the significant roles her colleagues, Sikiratu Sindodo and Iyabo Ojo, played in her rise to fame.

Funke's words served as both a testament to her humble beginnings and a message of encouragement for aspiring actors who may feel overlooked or discouraged.

Overlooked by industry bigwigs

During a conversation with her best friend, Eniola Badmus, Funke opened up about the tough times she endured when she was not getting enough roles. She recalled the difficulties of being overlooked by industry bigwigs, saying, "They didn't give us any roles. One of those men, I just keep looking at him, but I won't



mention his name."

Borrowing clothes to appear classy on set

In addition to facing professional hurdles, she also had to deal with personal challenges, including not having enough clothing to wear on set.

At the time, she would borrow clothes from fellow actress Sikiratu Sindodo to ensure she looked stylish and presentable.

Funke explained how Sindodo would help her pick out outfits for movie sets, saying, "I remember back then when I used to borrow dresses from Tayo Sindodo. Sindodo would help me choose nice ones from her tops if I was going to a movie set."

Sindodo fights for Funke's career

But the kindness from her colleagues didn't end there. She recalled a moment when she was carrying a bag after being passed over for a role, and it was Sindodo who came to her defence.

"There was a day when Sindodo saw me carrying a bag after I wasn't given a role, and she went to meet Uncle Abbey to fight for me," Funke said, clearly grateful for the support.

Iyabo Ojo's kindness and support

Another key figure in Funke's rise was Iyabo Ojo, a fellow actress who became a close friend and ally.

Funke shared how Iyabo showed her kindness when they were struggling to make their mark in the industry.

"Iyabo Ojo was lucky and very nice to us. Iyabo would say, 'Don't worry,' and she would drive us around in her small red car. We found solace in one another. That's how we became friends. Iyabo used to stand up and fight for me," Funke recalled.

Using challenges to inspire others

In her story, Funke emphasizes how her early struggles, and the support she received from her colleagues, shaped her determination to succeed.

Today, she uses her platform to inspire others, reminding them that even the most successful actors faced challenges on their path to stardom.

A message of persistence and support

Akindele's journey is a powerful reminder that success is not always immediate. It takes persistence, determination, and the support of those who believe in you.

Her story is not just about triumph, but about the importance of lifting others up along the way.



# Yemi Alade honoured with 67th Grammy nominee medal

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian Afrobeats star Yemi Alade has proudly unveiled her Grammy nominee medal on social media, celebrating this prestigious honour with fans worldwide.

The singer was honoured at the Special Merit Awards Ceremony and Nominees Reception in Los Angeles, California, ahead of the highly anticipated 67th Grammy Awards.

Brimming with excitement, Alade shared her emotions with fans, calling the experience surreal. She expressed gratitude for the recognition and described the moment as a dream come true.

“Somebody pinch me,” she wrote. “I have received my Grammy Nominee Medal at the Special Merit Awards Ceremony and Nominees Reception for the 67th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, California.”

An outpouring of support from fans The announcement quickly sparked a wave of celebration. Fans, fellow artists, and industry figures flooded her social media with congratulatory messages. Many praised her for making Nigeria proud on the global stage.

Alade’s Grammy recognition marks a significant milestone in her career.



Known for her energetic performances and hit songs, she has consistently pushed Afrobeats to the world. Over the years, she has collaborated with international artists and performed on major platforms, earning a strong reputation in the music industry.

The significance of the Grammy nominee medal

The Grammy Nominee Medal is a prestigious honor given to artists who receive a nomination. It acknowledges their contributions to music and celebrates their impact. While winning the award remains the ultimate goal, receiving the nominee medal is an achievement in itself.

Alade’s nomination is a testament to her hard work and dedication. It also highlights the growing influence of Afrobeats on the global music scene.

With artists like Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Tems already making Grammy history, Alade’s recognition adds to the genre’s growing success.

A bright future for afrobeats and Yemi Alade

Her fans believe this is just the beginning. Many are hopeful she will take home the award and continue breaking barriers in the industry. Regardless of the outcome, her nomination alone is a victory for Afrobeats and African music as a whole.

As the Grammy Awards approach, excitement continues to build. Supporters eagerly await the results, hoping to see Yemi Alade secure her place among Grammy winners. Whether she wins or not, one thing is certain—her impact on the music industry is undeniable.

# Tems makes history as first Nigerian woman to win two Grammys, following Sade Adu's legacy

By Michael Damilola

Long before Afrobeats became a global phenomenon, Sade Adu had already placed Nigeria on the Grammy map. Born Helen Folasade Adu in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, in 1959, she moved to England at age four, where she pursued a career in fashion and modelling before transitioning to music.

In 1983, she formed the band 'Sade' and quickly gained recognition. The following year, she and her team released 'Diamond Life', an album that became one of the best-selling debuts by a British female artist, solidifying her place in music history.

Sade's Grammy breakthrough came in 1986, when she won Best New Artist, making her the first Nigerian-born artist to win a Grammy. Her signature smooth, soulful voice and a sound that fused jazz, R&B, and soft rock made her a global icon.

Her musical philosophy has always been centered on authenticity. In her own words:

"I only make records when I feel I have something to say. I'm not interested in releasing music just for the sake of selling something."

Her timeless hits, including "Smooth Operator" and "No Ordinary Love", are masterpieces of storytelling, blending deep lyrical poetry with hauntingly beautiful melodies.

Her impact extended far beyond music; in 2002, she was honored as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her contributions to music.

Sade Adu's Grammy journey continued with further wins:



1994: Best R&B Performance (No Ordinary Love)

2002: Best Pop Vocal Album (Lovers Rock)

2011: Best R&B Performance (Soldier of Love)

Her legacy remains unmatched, and nearly four decades after her first Grammy win, her influence still echoes through today's generation of Nigerian artists.

Tems: The Voice of a New Generation

Three decades after Sade Adu's Grammy breakthrough, Tems (Temilade Openiyi) emerged as the next Nigerian female artist to shake up the global music scene.

At the 2025 Grammy Awards, Tems clinched Best African Music Performance, defeating some of Nigeria's biggest names, including Wizkid, Burna Boy, Asake, and Yemi Alade.

Her Grammy victory in 2025 marked a milestone:

✓ First Nigerian female artist to win two Grammys

✓ Second African female artist to win Best African Music Performance

This was not her first Grammy success. In 2023, she won Best Melodic Rap Performance for her feature on 'Wait For U', a collaboration with Future and Drake that captivated audiences worldwide.

Tems' musical journey began with her debut extended play (EP), 'For Broken Ears' (2020), followed by 'If Orange Was a Place' (2021). Her deep, husky voice, combined with an effortless blend of Afrobeats, R&B, and alternative sounds, set her apart in the music industry.

In an interview with DJBooth, Tems emphasized the therapeutic nature of her music, stating, "Music is my therapy. It was my first way of expressing myself." This sentiment aligns with the essence of the quote, highlighting her focus on creating art that deeply connects with listeners

Beyond her Grammy wins, she was also nominated for Best Global Music Performance for her feature on Wizkid's smash hit 'Essence', which also featured Justin Bieber.



# Tinubu, Obi, Omokri celebrate Tems' Grammy win

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian Afrobeats star Tems made history again, winning her second Grammy in the Best African Music Performance category.

This victory has ignited celebrations across Nigeria, with political leaders and fans alike praising her achievement.

A nation celebrates

Tems' win has drawn admiration from across the country. Prominent political figures, including President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Peter Obi, and Reno Omokri, have expressed their joy and appreciation for her global success.

Peter Obi, the Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, hailed the continuous rise of Nigerian youths in entertainment and other industries. "I am always thrilled by the great strides Nigerian youths are making in various fields, particularly in entertainment," Obi stated. He reaffirmed his commitment to creating an enabling environment for young talents to thrive. "A New Nigeria is POSSible," he added, playing on his well-known political slogan.

Former presidential aide Reno Omokri also joined in the celebrations. He praised Tems for her hard work and dedication, calling her an inspiration for many young Nigerians. "Congratulations, Tems, and thank you for bringing the Best African Music Performance Grammy back home," Omokri wrote. He urged others to take inspiration from her remarkable journey.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu also extended his heartfelt congratulations. He commended Tems and other



Nigerian artists nominated for the Grammys. "I am proud of her accomplishments and those of every Nigerian origin who received Grammy nominations. Their achievements continue to inspire us all," Tinubu stated.

Nigeria's growing influence in global music

Tems' latest victory is more than just a personal achievement. It highlights Nigeria's growing dominance in the global music industry. Over the years, Nigerian artists have consistently broken barriers, bringing Afrobeats to an international audience.

From Burna Boy to Wizkid, Davido, and Rema, Nigerian musicians are shaping the global music landscape. Tems, known for her distinct voice and deep lyricism, has further cemented her place among music's elite. Her success not only showcases her individual brilliance but also reinforces Nigeria's status as a powerhouse of musical talent.

A role model for young artists

Tems' journey to success is inspiring. She started with a dream and worked

tirelessly to achieve it. Her music, a blend of Afrobeats and R&B, resonates with millions worldwide. With every award, she encourages young artists in Nigeria and across Africa to chase their dreams relentlessly.

Her Grammy win is a testament to her talent, perseverance, and the power of Nigerian music. It also highlights the opportunities available for those willing to put in the work. Many young Nigerian artists now look up to her, drawing motivation from her success story.

The future of Nigerian music

Tems' achievement is a reminder of how far Nigerian music has come—and how much further it can go. With more artists gaining international recognition, the future looks bright. Global platforms continue to embrace Afrobeats, opening doors for even more Nigerian stars to shine.

As celebrations continue, one thing is certain—Tems has made Nigeria proud once again. Her success is not just her own; it belongs to every Nigerian who dreams of making an impact on the world stage.

# I tie every woman I like down spiritually – Portable

By Dave Oludare Oso

Forever swimming in seas of controversy, street rapper, Portable, originally named Habeeb Okikiola has once again found himself at the centre of public debates with his recent remarks about how he maintains control over his relationships using spiritual means.

Confessing in a viral video, Portable shocked a multitude of netizens by revealing his approach to women, by saying that if he is interested in any woman, he “ties her down spiritually” and only releases her when he no longer wants to be with her.

The Zazu-Zeh crooner also criticized women who refuse to take their partner’s last name despite being financially supported.

He wrote, “If I see a woman I like, I will tie her down spiritually. Whenever I don’t like her again, I will release her.

“You don’t need to wait for a man to marry you before you change your name to his. I am the one feeding you throughout the year and you refused to drop your father’s name. Where were you when I was nothing?”

Addressing why he chose to take only his wife to London while leaving out his other baby mamas, Portable defended his decision by praising her loyalty.

The singer added that even if he married the daughter of a billionaire, she would have to drop her father’s name.

“My wife stood by me through thick and thin. She is the one in charge of my property. Let me take her to London, she will be the first to go. She is always



in her lane and she is my future.

“Even if I marry the daughter of the richest man, she must drop her father’s name. I am a star. When I was poor, no lady loved me. Let me respect the one that loved me then,” he added.

Recall that NEW DAILY PRIME reported that his last dance in the market square was when he and his now-former lover, Queen Dami, the ex-wife of the late Alaafin of Oyo engaged in a series of online spats some months ago.

The couple’s relationship ended in December 2024 after a disagreement during a live TikTok session.

What started as rumours of reconciliation turned into a messy public spectacle filled with accusations, fainting spells and social media rants.

Portable and Dami’s relationship had gone south in a messy breakup in 2024 after he accused her of infidelity.

However, following a reconciliation rumours, Dami lambasted those who had been advising her to leave her

relationship on her social media yet going behind to badmouth her, adding the caption, “99 advisers, 0 helpers’.

This led to more drama as one of her friends accused her of being a cheap woman, sleeping around and never willing to work for her money. Dami’s friend also claimed that many people donated money to the ex-Oyo queen after her fight with Portable last year.

Amidst the raging drama, Portable shared a screenshot of the recording of his private chat with Queen Dami where he asked her questions about what her friend said. In another video, he claimed that Dami fainted after he questioned her about her “body count” during their breakup.

He claimed that she wanted to reconcile with him, but collapsed after he asked if she had been with other men during their time apart.

In a video that made the rounds on social media, Dami could be seen in the back seat of a car unresponsive as her friends tried to get help.

However, in another live video on Instagram, Dami could be seen with another controversial social media personality, Mandy Kiss, detailing all that had transpired behind the scenes between her and Portable, adding that Portable lied about their alleged reconciliation.

She claimed that Portable called to beg her, pleading with her to pray for him because things stopped working well for him since she left his life.



# Davido celebrates Tems, Chris Brown on Grammy wins

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**igerian music icon Davido has congratulated fellow artists Tems and Chris Brown on their victories at the 67th Annual Grammy Awards.

Tems secured the award for Best African Music Performance, a category that featured some of Africa's biggest stars, including Davido, Asake, Wizkid, Burna Boy, and Yemi Alade. Her win solidified her growing influence in the global music industry.

Taking to social media, Davido praised Tems, calling her the "Queen" and expressing his immense pride in her accomplishment. His message reflected admiration for the Nigerian singer, who continues to break barriers on the international stage.

Chris Brown wins best R&B album  
Meanwhile, Chris Brown took home the Best R&B Album award for his project 11:11 (Deluxe). The American superstar's victory marked another milestone in his long and successful career.

Davido, who collaborated with Chris Brown on the hit song Sensational, did not hold back in celebrating his colleague's success. He publicly congratulated the R&B singer, reinforcing their strong musical bond.

His message read: "Congratulations to my one and only! @chrisbrown! And to the Queen @temsbaby, we are proud of you!"

Davido's sportsmanship and industry support  
Davido's tribute highlighted his deep



respect for both artists. As a nominee himself, he showed grace and sportsmanship, choosing to celebrate his peers instead of dwelling on the outcome.

Fans praised Davido's response, calling it a true display of unity and love in the music industry. Many also acknowledged the impact of African artists on the global stage, with Tems' win further proving that Afrobeat and African sounds continue to gain recognition worldwide.

A historic night for African music

The 67th Annual Grammy Awards was a night of triumph for African music. With more African artists receiving nominations and awards, the industry is witnessing an era of unprecedented global success.

Tems' victory adds to her growing list of achievements. The Nigerian singer-songwriter has previously won a Grammy for her contribution to Future's hit song Wait For U, making her a two-time Grammy winner.

For Chris Brown, this Grammy win is

another feather in his cap. His latest album 11:11 (Deluxe) has been well-received, cementing his status as one of R&B's most influential artists.

Davido's continued impact on global music

Davido himself had a remarkable year leading up to the Grammys. His album Timeless received widespread acclaim, earning him multiple Grammy nominations. Though he didn't take home an award this time, his impact on the industry remains undeniable.

The Afrobeat superstar continues to push boundaries, bringing African music to a global audience. His gracious reaction to the Grammy results shows his unwavering support for fellow artists, reinforcing the spirit of unity in the music industry.

What's next for these music stars?

As the celebrations continue, fans are already looking forward to what's next for these talented musicians. With the rise of Afrobeat and African music on the world stage, one thing is clear—this is just the beginning.

# Beyoncé wins the Album of the Year at the 2025 Grammys

By Eyitayo Jemimah Ajayi

**B**eyoncé Knowles-Carter has cemented her legendary status, not only as the most decorated and nominated artist in Grammy history, but now as a history-making, genre-bending force.

At the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, she added three more awards to her already overflowing trophy case, including the coveted Album of the Year, a prize that had eluded her grasp until now.

Her acceptance speech for this top honor was brief but powerful, singularly dedicating the award to “Miss Martell,” and expressing her hope that “we keep pushing forward and opening doors.”

This heartfelt dedication shone a spotlight on Linda Martell, an 83-year-old trailblazing singer. Martell, a pioneer for women of color in country music, made history in 1969 as the first Black female artist to perform solo at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

Known for her songs “Color Him Father” and “Bad Case of the Blues,” Martell paved the way for future generations. Beyoncé honored this legacy by collaborating with Martell on her groundbreaking country album, “Cowboy Carter,” featuring her on the tracks “Spaghetti” and “The Linda Martell Show.”



Beyoncé’s Grammy night began triumphantly with a win for Best Country Duo/Group Performance for “II Most Wanted,” her collaboration with Miley Cyrus. This victory marked a significant milestone, making Beyoncé the first Black woman to win a Grammy in a country music category since the Pointer Sisters achieved a similar feat in 1975.

The accolades continued as Beyoncé accepted the award for Best Country Album for “Cowboy Carter,” presented by Taylor Swift, who herself won the same award in 2010.

This win was particularly poignant, as Beyoncé had been nominated for Album of the Year four times previously, yet had never secured the prize. With “Cowboy Carter,” her bold foray into country music, she finally broke through, achieving a historic win.

Visibly moved, Beyoncé expressed her surprise, stating, “Wow, I really was not expecting this. I want to thank God that I am able to still do what I love after so many years. Oh my God.”

Heading into the ceremony, Beyoncé led the nominations with an impressive 11 nods, including the highly anticipated Album of the Year for “Cowboy Carter,” her critically acclaimed eighth studio album.

This year marked a new chapter for Beyoncé, as she was nominated for the first time in the Country & American Roots field.

In a testament to the album’s widespread impact, seven different songs from “Cowboy Carter” received nominations across four distinct genres, showcasing her unparalleled versatility and her influence on the music landscape.



# Elon Musk shuts down USAID, sacks 600 staffers

By Dave Oludare Oso

Tech billionaire, Elon Musk, with the backing of President Donald Trump, on Monday shut down the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) tasked with humanitarian relief overseas after the two men adjudged the organization to be 'beyond repair.'

Musk, the head of Trump's government efficiency initiative, Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) reviewed the government agency with Trump's go-ahead and decided to shut down USAID and its Washington, D.C. offices.

Mail Online reports that staff were shocked when they woke up Monday morning to emails instructing them to stay out of the agency's D.C. headquarters.

USAID staffers said they tracked 600 employees who reported being locked out of the agency's computer systems overnight.

Those still in the system received messages to their work emails saying 'at the direction of Agency leadership' the headquarters building 'will be closed to Agency personnel on Monday, Feb. 3.'

'It became apparent that it's not an apple with a worm in it,' Musk said of the six-decade U.S.

international aid and development agency. 'What we have is just a ball of worms. You've got to basically get rid of the whole thing. It's beyond repair.'

'We're shutting it down,' he said in the audio-only appearance on X.

The Tesla and SpaceX boss noted in the announcement on his social media site that he spoke with Trump about the



agency and they 'agreed we should shut it down.'

As of 2016, USAID reported that it had 10,235 employees on its payroll.

The website for USAID was also shut down as of Monday morning.

The official government website for USAID and any former links for the site's webpages now shows a browser error message: 'This site can't be reached.'

The message comes after

NEW DAILY PRIME reported earlier that Musk has called USAID a "criminal organization" and said that it is "time for it to die."

In a post on X, Musk wrote, "USAID is a criminal organization. Time for it to die."

He made the statement in response to a post which mentioned that the Trump administration placed two top security chiefs at USAID on leave after they refused to turn over classified material in restricted areas to Musk's Department of

Government Efficiency (DOGE) inspection teams, a U.S. official revealed on Sunday.

Musk's statement comes amid mounting reports that President Trump wants to abolish USAID, an independent federal agency, and fold it into the US State Department, CNN reported.

Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy at the White House, Stephen Miller, has accused USAID's workforce of being overwhelmingly Democrats.

In a chain of events leading up to the shut-down, two senior USAID officials on Sunday tried to restrain DOGE officials from accessing systems at the agency, even after the DOGE officials threatened to call law enforcement, CNN reported, citing multiple sources familiar with the matter.

CNN reported that personnel from DOGA tried to physically access the USAID headquarters in Washington, D but were stopped adding that the DOGE officials then threatened to call US Marshals to gain access.

# Dollar surges as Donald Trump's tariffs shake markets

By Agency Reporter

**U**S stock futures drop and oil prices rally as president says measures could cause 'pain'

## Donald Trump's Tariffs

The Mexican peso has whipsawed in recent weeks on speculation about how quickly and how extensive Trump's tariffs would be © Luis Cortés/AFP via Getty Images

Donald Trump's tariffs shook markets on Monday, with the dollar surging and global equity markets sliding as investors rush to assess how the levies will affect the US and its biggest trading partners.

The US dollar surged as much as 1.4 per cent against a basket of currencies before trimming its gains to 1.3 per cent. The Canadian dollar hit its lowest level since 2003, Mexico's currency tumbled by almost 3 per cent and the euro slid 1.3 per cent.

Asian stocks dropped while US stock futures also fell sharply, with contracts tracking the benchmark S&P 500 losing 1.9 per cent and those tracking the Nasdaq 100 sliding 2.5 per cent.

The Stoxx Europe 600 and the UK's benchmark FTSE 100 were both down 1.3 per cent in early trading.

The moves came after Trump on Saturday imposed 25 per cent tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada, a 10 per cent levy on Canadian energy, and tariffs of 10 per cent on imports from China. He also threatened tariffs against the EU.

Trump admitted in a post on Truth Social, his social network, that there would "maybe" be "some pain" from his tariffs. "But . . . it will all be worth



the price that must be paid," he wrote on Sunday.

Global investment banks warned that the tariffs would hit the US economy alongside the rest of the world. Analysts at UBS and Morgan Stanley forecast that if the tariffs were sustained they could halve US real GDP growth this year — reducing it by more than 1 percentage point.

The US two-year Treasury yield rose by 0.07 percentage points to 4.27 per cent, while the 10-year yield was up 0.01 percentage point to 4.55 per cent.

"There was some optimism in the market that [tariff threats] were just for negotiation, but the market may have underestimated the determination of the Trump administration," said Jason Lui, head of Asia-Pacific equity and derivative strategy at BNP Paribas.

Economists have warned that the tariffs are likely to accelerate inflation in the US. "The clearest implication is a stronger dollar," said Eric Winograd, chief economist at AllianceBernstein. "A long dollar position is the cleanest, clearest expression of the trade war that is now being launched."

"A strong dollar is a disaster for emerging markets," said Trinh Nguyen, economist for emerging Asia at Natixis, who said developing economies would be hit by "less appetite for risk assets" and larger dollar-denominated debt burdens.

Japan's export-heavy Nikkei 225 closed down 2.7 per cent while the Topix fell 2.5 per cent. South Korea's Kospi benchmark shed 2.5 per cent and the won dropped 1.1 per cent against the dollar to Won1,469.7.

After falling in early trading, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index pared its losses to close flat. Mainland China's stock market is closed until Wednesday.

China's offshore renminbi, which trades freely, slid as much as 0.7 per cent to Rmb7.37 a dollar on Monday morning before paring back its losses to 7.34.

Oil prices also climbed in early Asian trade, with international benchmark Brent crude up 0.6 per cent at \$76.13 a barrel.



# Trump vows to stop US assistance to South Africa over land law

By Felicia Schwartz and Monica Mark

**R**and falls after president singles out Brics nation over expropriation of properties

South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa, right, signed a land law into effect this month, saying the legislation would expropriate property in the 'public interest' © Philimon Bulawayo/Reuters

Donald Trump has vowed to halt all future US assistance to South Africa over its land expropriation policies, triggering a fall in the rand.

The US president claimed recent measures enabled the government to confiscate property unfairly and accused South African authorities of treating "certain classes of people VERY BADLY".

He added: "I will be cutting off all future funding to South Africa until a full investigation of this situation has been completed!"

Trump's comments, made on Truth Social, sparked a 1.6 per cent fall in the South African currency against the US dollar.

He later told reporters that South Africa's leadership was engaged in "some terrible things, horrible things" and suggested, without providing evidence or details, that the situation was worse than land confiscation alone.

President Cyril Ramaphosa last month signed an expropriation bill into law that allows land to be seized without compensation only in circumstances where the government believes it is "just and equitable and in the public interest".

The legislation replaces one dating from the apartheid era, during which thousands of non-white families were forcibly removed from their land for the benefit of a white minority.



Three decades into multiracial democracy, about a quarter of farmland is owned by Black South Africans, who represent 80 per cent of the population. The government aims to transfer a third of land to Black people by 2030. The "land question" remains highly explosive.

It has also been a testing issue for the country's 10-party coalition. The pro-business Democratic Alliance, a traditional rival of Ramaphosa's African National Congress, has said it "strongly opposes" the new law and said it may challenge it in the courts.

The US set aside nearly \$440mn in assistance to South Africa in 2023, the last year for which data was available. The Trump administration has paused all foreign assistance for 90 days and has cast the future of the main US international aid agency in doubt as its website has gone dark and dozens of employees have been placed on leave.

Elon Musk, a close Trump ally and head of the Department of Government Efficiency, is originally from South Africa.

Other powerful Trump advisers had formative experiences in apartheid South Africa, including David Sacks, who has been appointed his cryptocurrency tsar.

Peter Thiel, the billionaire PayPal cofounder and another Trump acolyte, spent part of his childhood in apartheid-ruled Namibia and South Africa, where his father worked for the white minority government. Thiel has been accused of supporting apartheid, which violently subjugated a Black majority to uphold white economic and political power, a claim he has denied.

Ramaphosa last month told reporters in Davos that he was "not worried" about relations and that he and Trump had spoken after the US president was elected. South Africa holds the presidency of the G20 this year.

In his first term, Trump said his government would investigate claims of widespread killings of white farmers. The South African government has dismissed these allegations as unsubstantiated.

Trump has previously targeted the Brics nations, of which South Africa is a member, threatening them with 100 per cent tariffs should they move away from the US dollar as a reserve currency.

# US eliminates Islamic State terrorists in Somalia airstrikes

By Dave Oludare Oso

The US military has conducted coordinated airstrikes against the Islamic State terrorists in Somalia, the first attacks in the African nation during President Donald Trump's second term.

"This morning I ordered precise military airstrikes on a high-ranking IS attack planner and other terrorists he recruited and led in Somalia," President Donald Trump wrote on social media. "These killers we found hiding in caves threatened the United States and our allies."

Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth said Saturday that the strikes by US Africa Command were directed by Trump and coordinated with Somalia's government.

An initial assessment by the Pentagon indicated that "multiple" terrorists were killed as the Pentagon said it assessed no civilians were harmed in the strikes.

Trump, in a post on social media, said a senior IS planner and recruits were targeted in the operation.

"The strikes destroyed the caves they live in and killed many terrorists without, in any way, harming civilians. Our military has targeted this ISIS attack



planner for years, but Biden and his cronies wouldn't act quickly enough to get the job done. I did," Trump said.

"The message to ISIS and all others who would attack Americans is that 'we will find you and we will kill you.'"

Trump did not identify the planner he mentioned or say whether that person was killed in the strike.

White House officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Local media carried reports of airstrikes in Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland region in the northeast.

US military officials have warned that IS' extremist cells

have received increasing direction from the group's leadership that relocated to northern Somalia. That has included how to kidnap Westerners for ransom, how to learn better military tactics, how to hide from drones and how to build their own small quadcopters.

A US military airstrike in Somalia last May targeted IS militants and killed three, according to US Africa Command.

The number of IS militants in the country is estimated to be in the hundreds, mostly scattered in the Cal Miskaat mountains in Puntland's Bari region, according to the International Crisis Group.



# Man United's Marcus Rashford joins Aston Villa on loan

By Dave Oludare Oso

**M**arcus Rashford has joined Aston Villa on loan from Manchester United until the end of the season.

Sky Sports News understands Villa will cover at least 75 per cent of Rashford's wages and this could go up to 90 per cent depending on his and the team's performance.

"I would like to thank Manchester United and Aston Villa for making this loan deal happen," Rashford said.

"I was lucky to have a few clubs approach me but Aston Villa was an easy decision – I really admire the way that Aston Villa have been playing this season, and the manager's ambitions.

"I just want to play football and am excited to get started. I wish everyone at Manchester United all the best for the rest of the season."

In response to Rashford's Instagram post, former team-mate and friend, Jadon Sancho said: "He's back!"

### Rashford's turbulent January

Rashford last played for his boyhood club in the Europa League trip to Viktoria Plzen.

The England international revealed in December he was "ready for a new challenge", but few clubs offered an obvious landing spot thanks in no small part to his wages.

Man Utd boss, Ruben Amorim said Marcus Rashford's Aston Villa move will hopefully improve the player.

Rashford was left out of United's 21-man squad for their Europa League win at FCSB despite the forward training with his team-mates on the eve of the match.

Amorim suggested after their win over Fulham he would rather have 63-year-old goalkeeping coach in his squad than Rashford.



There have been reports that Amorim and Rashford were no longer on speaking terms.

Amorim left the door open for Rashford to fight his way back into first-team contention, saying United are "a better team with Rashford" but he "has to change" before he could force his way back into the first-team reckoning.

Will Rashford be guaranteed a first-team role at Villa?

Rashford has played his best football on the left so this move arrives at an interesting time for Villa given Jacob Ramsey looks to be recapturing his finest form.

The 23-year-old scored against West Ham and provided two assists against Celtic. If he maintains this run, there are no guarantees that Rashford will have the starting role he desires at Villa.

Versatility is held in high regard by Emery so playing with Watkins up front or out on the right, given Leon Bailey's struggles, are also possibilities.

The other problem is which Rashford Villa will get. Emery has a track record of getting the best out of players so if he could get him close to the player we saw in 2022/23, who scored 17 goals in the Premier League, it's a gamble worth taking for Villa.

Villa and Emery are just what Rashford

needs – Neville

Former Manchester United legend, Gary Neville has this to say on the loan move: "He had to get out of the club. He's been battered in the last few weeks by his manager.

"That's the only person who matters in football, your coach, and I think some of the statements from Ruben Amorim towards Marcus Rashford have been brutal, emphatically saying that he doesn't want him. I don't see how there's any way back after the comments that he's made.

"There are a number of things that are in his favour at Villa. He's going to a far better team at this moment, he's going to a coach who's world class, which is a real opportunity for him.

"It puts pressure on Marcus to perform for Unai Emery because if you don't play for him, then you're sort of saying Ruben Amorim might be the problem, Erik ten Hag might be the problem. Unai Emery can't be a problem for Rashford. He has to play well for him.

"The other thing is the style of play. How Villa play I think could suit Rashford as well. Maybe the spotlight won't be quite on him as it was at Manchester United but certainly there'll still be a lot of attention. Villa are in lots of competitions, they've still got a lot to play for and it's a real opportunity for Marcus.

# Haaland's father blasts Arsenal after Man City demolition

By Dave Oludare Oso

Erling Haaland's father, Alf-Inge forced back Arsenal trolls in the wake of multiple swipes aimed at his son on February 2

\*Arsenal players had their payback against Haaland after they beat Manchester City 5-1 on Sunday evening

\*Myles Lewis-Skelly and Gabriel Magalhaes were spotted mocking the Norwegian forward with their celebrations

Erling Haaland's father became the first person to come out and call out Arsenal in the wake of their 5-1 demolition of Manchester City.

Arsenal ran rampant against the Premier League champions in front of their home fans in what is arguably, one of the results of the season so far.

The Gunners were slick from the word go, benefiting from another lapse in the Manchester City defence to open the scoring after just two minutes.

Arsenal vs Manchester City match report

Not even a period of sustained pressure from Pep Guardiola's side, that saw Erling Haaland equalise, fazed them. They went on and scored four more goals – including a first from Myles Lewis-Skelly and a stunner from Ethan Nwaneri – to complete the perfect night for Mikel Arteta.

Arsenal players troll Haaland

Apart from the result, much of the game was focused on Haaland and what he said, or did, back when the two teams met in September. The Norwegian was at the centre of attention with Gabriel Magalhaes particularly giving him close attention.

Arsenal had the perfect revenge for the Manchester City phenom which included Gabriel shouting at his face,



Lewis-Skelly doing his celebration and the stadium DJ playing Kendrick Lamar's song 'Humble' at full time.

What did Haaland's father say after Arsenal game?

Haaland's father, Alf-Inge Haaland, was unimpressed at the mockery. He took to his X account after the game and quote reposted Arsenal's post of Lewis-Skelly's celebration saying, "This team that wins everything. Ehhhhh, not."

Fans react to Haaland's father post

Fans reacted to his image with some reminding him it was his son who started it.

"You should've taught your son some manners and respect. No one is taking anything away from him. But the comments he gave to an 18-year-old making a name for himself were unnecessary and disrespectful. Now, he has to own it," said Eduardo Hagn.

@Retro meanwhile defended Haaland Senior's comments,

"Cook them losers. This happens every season, they get a big scalp against a top

side which makes them believe they can win something. 3 months later it ends with nothing and they're in tears again. The same cycle repeats itself every season."

@Javad said,

"Honestly man your son Haaland was super rude and unnecessary against a young boy just who became man. Lewis-Skelly was only 18, and your son instead of doing good for him as a fellow player, he made him feel small. So yeah the boy scored a dope goal today and totally pushed."

The two teams could still meet this season as they are still in the Champions League.

Arsenal play Kendrick Lamar's song

Several media outlets reported that Arsenal played Kendrick Lamar's 'Humble' song at full-time after beating Manchester City.

The song was in response to Haaland's jibe at Arteta when they met in September last year.

The two teams could still meet this season as they are still in the Champions League.



# EPL: Chelsea defeat Graham Potter's West Ham, move to 4th spot

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Chelsea returned to the top four in the Premier League after coming from behind to beat West Ham on former manager Graham Potter's return to Stamford Bridge.

After fellow top-four contenders Manchester City and Newcastle lost at the weekend, the Blues were made to work hard for the three points by the visitors who led through Jarrod Bowen at the break.

But substitute Pedro Neto equalised for Enzo Maresca's side in the second half before Cole Palmer's cross looped over Hammers goalkeeper Alphonse Areola, which took a big deflection off Aaron Wan-Bissaka to gift the win to the home side.

Bowen, who was out of action since fracturing his foot in a defeat by Liverpool on 29 December, pounced on a misplaced backpass from centre-back Levi Colwill before finishing past Filip Jorgensen to pull Potter's side ahead in the closing stages of the first half.

Maresca brought on Neto and Marc Guiu early in the second half to turn things around, and it was the former who helped his side find a way back.

Marc Cucurella did well to keep Neto's deep cross in play for Enzo Fernandez to strike at goal, and the Argentine's shot was blocked by Vladimir Coufal, only for the Portugal winger to restore parity on the rebound.



Chelsea were much improved after finding the equaliser and an unfortunate intervention from Wan-Bissaka secured the victory for the hosts 10 minutes later.

The result helps Chelsea climb to fourth with 43 points - two more than Manchester City and Newcastle - while Potter's side remain 15th with 27 points.

Maresca hails Blues' 'important statement'

Chelsea and Maresca came into this London derby in desperate need of a win, having slipped from second place to sixth in the space of six weeks with just six points from their past seven games.

But with Manchester City crumbling to a 5-1 defeat at Arsenal and Newcastle losing 2-1 at home to Fulham, the Blues made the opportunity count and underlined

their top-four credentials with a solid second-half fightback.

"We are there and hopefully we can be there until the end. Playing this kind of game in February, where we are still there is an important statement," Maresca said.

"It was a good weekend for us in terms of [other] results and we knew today was even better."

The Italian handed goalkeeping duties to Filip Jorgensen in place of Robert Sanchez, who was at fault for Erling Haaland's goal at Etihad Stadium last week.

"In this moment, Robert needs rest and Filip was very good," the Chelsea boss said, explaining the reasoning behind his selection.

But it was Colwill's individual error that led to them conceding this time.