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2027: Bill seeking to bar Tinubu, Atiku, Obi, others splits Nigerians

By Dave Oludare Oso

A bill seeking to stop persons above 60 years from vying for election to the offices of the Nigerian President and state governor currently on the floor of the House of Representatives, has been dividing Nigerians.

The bill, which was sponsored by Ikenga Ugochinyere, a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lawmaker representing Ideato North South Federal Constituency of Imo State passed second reading at the green chamber on Thursday.

The magnitude of the fallout if the bill scales through legislative scrutiny and is signed into law, is huge to the extent that political heavyweights and the majority of the 2027 presidential hopefuls, like the incumbent president, Bola Tinubu, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, and the 2023 presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Mr Peter Obi, will be missing as they will be ineligible to contest.

The simple reason is because they are all over 60 years.

The bill was titled "A Bill for an Act to alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to review the requirements that qualify a person to be elected as President and Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Governors and Deputy Governor of a state of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and for Related Matters."

It was about the most important among the 31 proposed legislations which scaled second reading during Thursday's plenary session.

The core strands of the bill provides that "A person shall be qualified for election to the office of the President if he has been educated up to at least university level and has earned a Bachelor's degree in his chosen field of study.

"Section 131 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting a paragraph which reads, "That he is not more than 60 years at the time of vying for the Office of President.

"Section 177(d) of the principal Act is amended by altering the educational requirement that qualifies persons to be elected as governor as follows:

"A person shall be qualified for election to the Office of the President if he has been educated up to at least university level and has earned a Bachelor's degree in his chosen field of study.

"That he is not more than 60 years old at the time of vying for the office of Governor."

While the bill was spontaneously accepted by Nigerian youths, who feel they have been marginalized for years, others rejected the move.

When on May 31, 2018, the then President,



Muhammadu Buhari signed the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill into law, to many, it signalled hope for the younger generation, who may be vying for any political office.

The law reduces the age qualification for the office of Nigerian President from 40 to 35; state governor from 35 to 30; senator from 35 to 30 Federal House of Representatives and State House of Assembly membership from 30 to 25.

However, the majority of the elective positions across the country are still occupied by older politicians, fueling the move to enact law that would retire them and pave the way for younger politicians.

For this age limit bill, some respondents, who spoke to this correspondent expressed divergent opinions on the matter.

A former Director-General of Voice of Nigeria (VON), Osita Okechukwu says rather that the age limit bill, Nigeria needs a clinical electoral reform system.

Okechukwu, one of the founding members of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) opined that "Age is a non-issue as per our national predicament. Rather the issue is the bandit mindset, whereby we all behave like bandits in all spheres of our life.

"Otherwise, how come we've cult members in junior secondary schools? Is it different from we the corrupt old men, whom they refer to as failed generations?"

"All we need is a clinical electoral reform system as expressly recommended in the Uwais Report of 2008."

The APC chieftain appealed to President Tinubu, state governors and members of the National and State Assemblies to "muster the political will to deepen our democracy and catapult Nigeria to giant status; by amending the constitutional nomination process of INEC and SIEC executives as recommended by Uwais Report inter alia.

"Advertise all positions, spelling out requisite Qualifications! Receive Applications/Nominations from the General Public; Shortlist 3 Persons for each position and send to the National Council of State to

select one from the Shortlist and forward to the Senate for Confirmation.

"My submission is that it is only the truly independent INEC and SIEC which will ensure the highest quality and the highest standard of our general elections", he added.

Likewise, Omoyele Sowore, a publisher and social activist also rejected the bill, stating that such discrimination won't stand in Nigerian law.

The 54-year-old presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC), in the last election, expressed pessimism about the progression of the bill, saying it may not see the light of day.

The SaharaReporters publisher said, "I am pretty sure the proposal won't see the light of the day, I just think these legislators are trying to divert attention away from the scandalous role and the bribery saga involving the rivers state emergency rule.

"Any form of discrimination can't stand in law, if it is based on age it is known as ageism. The fact that it is generally attractive doesn't make it acceptable."

However, differing in his own view, a former candidate of the Labour Party for the Gboko/Tarka Federal constituency in Benue State, Terzulum Ukpanya, said Nigeria may remain underdeveloped if the older politicians remain in power.

He said, "It is only when the Nigerian youths take back their country from these failed old politicians that things will be better.

"The only thing they know is how to acquire wealth for their unborn grandchildren. They have no vision for the country, they only plan for their pockets and that is why we keep seeing these unnecessary fights between them.

"It is so bad that when they get into power, they will want to plant their boys, who will be fraudulently remitting government money go them. This thing has been going on for ages and that is why we are where we are today."

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
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POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
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POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
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CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
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8X3	70,390.00
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1X1	2,795.50

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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1X1	3,292.00

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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HALF PAGE	124,236.00
QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
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10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
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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
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4X3	N/A
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10X5		295,625.00
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PICTURE & CAPTION

SIZE	RATE	7.5% VAT	TOTAL
PHOTO NEWS PAGE 2	50,000.00	3,750.00	53,750.00
PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
EVENT COVERAGE	100,000.00	7,500.00	107,500.00
FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

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Tinubu extends tenure of NIS CG

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has extended the tenure of Kemi Nanna Nandap as the Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) until December 31, 2026.

The announcement was made in a statement released by Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to Tinubu on Information & Strategy on Monday.

Nandap, who began her career with the NIS on October 9, 1989, was appointed Comptroller-General on March 1, 2024, with her initial tenure set to expire on August 31, 2025.

However, in recognition of her leadership and contributions to the agency, President Tinubu has extended her tenure by over a year.



He said under her leadership, the NIS has achieved significant progress in border management, modernization of immigration processes, and strengthening national security measures.

The President commended her efforts and urged her to continue advancing the agency's strategic priorities in line with

his administration's Renewed Hope Agenda.

President Tinubu also reiterated his government's commitment to supporting the NIS in safeguarding Nigeria's borders and promoting safe, legal, and orderly migration.

FG shuts Independence Bridge for essential repairs, to remain closed until May 2025

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Federal Government has announced the closure of the Independence Bridge (Marina bound) starting April 1, 2024, for essential maintenance and rehabilitation work. The closure is expected to last until the end of May 2025.

Mrs Olukorede Kesha, the Federal Controller of Works in Lagos, confirmed the development in a statement issued on Monday.

The closure will specifically affect traffic traveling from Ahmadu Bello Way and Adeola Odeku towards Marina, Eko Bridge, and Onikan by Zone 2.

Motorists are advised to plan their



routes accordingly and use alternative roads to avoid heavy traffic congestion during the maintenance period.

"We understand the inconvenience this may cause, and we apologise for the disruption. We ask for the public's understanding and cooperation as we work to ensure the safety and stability of the road infrastructure," Kesha said.

The government assured the public that efforts would be made to complete the repair works as efficiently as possible, and urged drivers to adhere to the traffic management plan in place.

Reps recover N21.4bn from four oil firms

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The House of Representatives has announced that it has recovered an additional \$14.2 million (N21.4 billion) from four oil and gas companies as part of its ongoing investigation into financial discrepancies in the sector being conducted by its Public Accounts Committee (PAC.)

The spokesperson for the House, Akin Rotimi, Jr, announced this in a statement on Sunday.

The Reps' spokesperson recalled that the Committee had earlier announced recovery of ₦28.7 billion (\$19.24 million) on March 16, 2025.

He said with the latest recovery, the total amount recovered so far by the Committee is now \$33.44 million (₦50.1 billion).

Giving breakdown of the latest recoveries, Rotimi said Platform Petroleum Ltd paid \$1.9 million (N2.9 billion) while Midwestern Oil and Gas Ltd doled out \$1.578 million (N2.3 billion).

He added that \$523,845 (N785.7 million) and \$10.3 million (N15.5 billion) were recovered from Universal Energy and Aradel Energy Ltd respectively.

Rotimi quoted the Chairman of the Committee, Bamidele Salam as crediting the successes recorded in the recovery of the funds to the unwavering support and leadership of the Speaker of the House, Abbas Tajudeen.

He noted that the Speaker's firm commitment to legislative oversight and accountability has ensured that committees operate effectively, free from undue interference, and with a clear



mandate to safeguard public resources.

“Under the leadership of Speaker Abbas, the House of Representatives has reinforced its commitment to fiscal transparency and good governance. The independence granted to committees like ours has enabled us to carry out our mandate diligently, ensuring that public funds are properly accounted for.

”This approach has been instrumental in our ability to recover these substantial sums, and we remain steadfast in our mission to strengthen financial accountability in Nigeria,” Rep. Salam stated.

In addition to the recovered funds, the Committee has issued a 20-day ultimatum for four companies to remit a total of \$23.2 million (N34.8 billion).

Failure to comply within the stipulated timeframe will result in the enforcement of appropriate sanctions, including the public naming of defaulters in national newspapers.

The companies and their required

payments are as follows:

- Total Energies: \$2 million within 7 days
- Seplat Energies (SPDC): \$6.036 million and N1.5 billion within 7 days
- Aradel Energy Ltd: \$12.1 million within 7 days
- Network Exploration: \$3.1 million within 7 days

Salam emphasised the Committee's commitment to enforcing compliance, warning that companies that fail to meet their financial obligations will face the full weight of legislative oversight.

The Committee also expressed concern over several companies that have disregarded invitations to appear before it. The following firms are now under heightened scrutiny and may face further actions if they continue to evade accountability:

- Frontier Oil and Gas
- Conoil Producing
- Walter Smith Petrochemical
- Bilton
- Energia Ltd
- Aiteo Petroleum Ltd
- Pillar Oil Ltdp.

Nigerian electricity sector slows in Q4 2024, production declines by 1.64%

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigerian electricity sector experienced a slowdown in the fourth quarter of 2024, with the electricity production index falling by 1.64% year-on-year, according to data from the Central Bank of Nigeria.

This marks a notable reversal from the 5.55% growth recorded in the third quarter (Q3 2024).

Despite the decline in production, electricity generation showed a slight improvement. The average estimated generation rose by 2.34%, increasing to 4,206.50 megawatts per hour (MW/h) in Q4 2024, up from 4,110.47 MW/h in Q3 2024.

Likewise, electricity consumption saw a modest rise, climbing by 2.63% to 4,105.66 MW/h, compared to 4,000.24 MW/h in the previous quarter.

However, the broader economic context paints a more positive picture. While the electricity sector faced challenges, Nigeria's economy showed strong growth



On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the electricity sector showed signs of recovery, with the index rising by 22.50% in Q4 2024, a stark contrast to the 49.46% decline seen in the previous quarter.

This recovery suggests that the sector is slowly bouncing back from earlier difficulties.

Despite the overall economic growth, challenges in the electricity sector remain.

in Q4 2024, with 21 out of 22 sectors recording positive performance.

The expansion was driven by factors such as increased business confidence, higher consumer spending, and better outcomes in major sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, and telecommunications.

However, the slight increases in generation and consumption point to a potential stabilisation, even as the country works to address the underlying issues affecting power supply and distribution.

20-yr-old man kills Emir Sanusi's escort at Eid ground

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A 20-year-old man who allegedly stabbed the guard of Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II to death at the Eid ground has been arrested by the Nigeria Police Force, Kano State Command.

A police report stated that the young man attacked the officer while he was on duty, protecting the 16th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, during the Eid prayers on Sunday.

The report also said the culprit attacked another security officer, who is injured and is currently receiving treatment at Murtala



Muhammad Hospital in Kano city.

The police spokesperson in the state, SP Abdullahi Kiyawa, confirmed the arrest and stated that a palace official,

'Shamakin Kano' Wada Isyaku, had also been invited for questioning as part of the ongoing investigation.

The PPRO stated, "The police have commenced an investigation into the incident and have invited the Kano Emirate's Shamakin Kano, Alhaji Wada Isyaku for questioning."

New Daily Prime reported that on Friday, the police announced a ban on the traditional Sallah procession in the state as Emir Sanusi II and Aminu Ado Bayero continue to lay claim to the throne of Emir of Kano.

Court summons Tinubu, Akpabio, others over Rivers emergency rule

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Bola Tinubu and seven others have been summoned by a Federal High Court in Port Harcourt over the imposition of state of emergency in Rivers State.

Named as defendants in the suit are the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio; the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; the National Assembly; and the Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi.

The newly-appointed Rivers Sole Administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas, the Revenue and Fiscal Mobilization Commission, and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), are also joined in the suit.

According to the News Agency of Nigeria, the case, filed under Suit No: FHC/PH/CS/45/2025, was brought by the Incorporated Trustees of Peoples Life Improvement Foundation, Precious Elekima, and Inanna Wright Harry.

The plaintiffs are challenging the legality of the emergency declaration and seeking the court's interpretation of its constitutionality.



Among the key questions raised is whether President Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State on March 18, 2025, is "unconstitutional, null, and void."

The plaintiffs argue that the move constitutes "a breach of Article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement Act) and Section 305(3)(b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)."

They are also seeking a court order restraining the Rivers State Administrator from appointing caretaker committees for the 23 local government councils, forming a state executive council, awarding contracts, or making any financial

transactions from the state treasury.

Additionally, the plaintiffs are demanding the "restoration of democracy in Rivers State" by reinstating the suspended Executive and Legislative arms of government.

Furthermore, they are asking the court to issue a perpetual injunction restraining the President from further suspending democratically elected officials in the state.

The court has given the defendants 30 days to respond to the summons. It warned that failure to respond could result in the case proceeding in their absence.

The legal action was filed by Ebere R. Ugwuja, ESQ, on behalf of the plaintiffs.

Army launches manhunt for killers of northern hunters in Edo

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Nigerian military has vowed that the people that killed 16 Northern hunters in Edo State, last week would be fished out and prosecuted.

Condemning Sunday's barbaric act, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Musa, vowed that the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

This comes as the state government said, that Governor Monday Okpembolo had reached out to the victims' families, the Hausa community leaders in the state, and the northern governors over the incident.

Also, it was gathered on Sunday that about 14 suspects have been arrested by the police in connection with the tragic incident.

The hunters were killed by a mob in Uromi, Edo State, last Thursday while travelling to Kano from Rivers State to celebrate Eid with their families.

According to reports, the incident was said to have happened when the truck conveying them was stopped by a vigilante group, and the men who were found with dane guns were lynched by the interceptors who mistook them for kidnappers.

16 of the victims were set ablaze, while 10 were rescued by the police.

Those who died in the incident were buried on Saturday.

Nigerians all over the country, including various northern groups, state governments, and lawmakers have condemned the tragic incident with many seeking compensation for the victims' families.

The Director, Defence Information, Brig. Gen. Tukur Gusau, in a statement on Sunday said the CDS stated that the



tragic incident could have been prevented had the appropriate authorities been notified to verify the identities of the victims.

The statement read, "Gen Christopher Musa has condemned in strong terms the unfortunate killing of hunters while on transit in Edo State. The incident, which occurred on 28 March 2025, could have been avoided if the appropriate authorities were notified and involved in ascertaining the identity of the victims.

"Gen Musa condoled with the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and the families of those who lost their lives."

He also urged citizens to avoid taking the law into their own hands and instead rely on security agencies for conflict resolution.

Musa assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces of Nigeria will collaborate with the police and other security agencies to ensure justice is served.

The statement added, "The CDS also urged Nigerians not to take laws into their hands but always revert to constituted authority in matters that

affect security. The Nigeria Police, military, and other security agencies are well trained to handle such matters.

"The Chief of Defence Staff assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces of Nigeria will work closely with the police and other relevant security agencies to bring the perpetrators of the dastardly act to book."

He warned vigilante groups, hunters and others to register with relevant agencies to regulate the possession of firearms.

Musa also admonished local hunters and vigilante groups to register with the police, Department of State Services, AFN and any other agencies mandated by law to regulate the possession of firearms while calling on vigilante groups to always revert to police for appropriate action.

In his reaction Governor Okpembolo has suspended the Commander of the Edo State Security Corps, CP Friday Ibadin (retd.), over the March 27 killing of the 16 travellers.

**Continue reading
On next page**

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Confirming the suspension, the Secretary to the State Government, Musa Ikhilor, in a statement on Sunday said all illegal vigilante groups operating under whatever guise are also suspended.

The statement read, "It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that after a review of the preliminary report of the unfortunate incident of Thursday 27th March, 2025 at Uromi in Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State involving the gruesome killing of some travellers, the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has ordered the immediate suspension of all illegal vigilante groups operating under whatever guise in the state.

"Also suspended is the Commander of the Edo State Security Corps, CP Friday Ibadin (ret'd). It is to be reiterated that the local vigilante group involved in the gruesome killing of 27th March was operating illegally as it was never profiled or registered with Edo State Security Corps.

"Its actions do not reflect the core values, character and principles of the Okpebholo administration, or the objectives of the corps as

enshrined in the Edo State Security Corps Governance Law.

"Investigations into the killings are ongoing and 14 persons have been arrested so far, while there is an intense manhunt for others involved in the gruesome killing by a special team set up by the Inspector-General of Police."

The state government reiterated its belief in the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens to move freely or engage in lawful business in any part of the country.

"In the meantime, the government is in touch with families of the victims, community leaders and the Government of Kano State, where most of the deceased are reported to hail from.

"We urge all parties involved to remain calm as the State Government remains committed to ensuring that justice is done in a most efficient, transparent and proactive manner," the statement added.

Additionally, the state Commissioner for Information and Communication, Paul Ohonbamu, said the governor has reached out to the Hausa community to let them know that

he is not in support of the act.

He explained that Okpebholo has also charged the security operatives to ensure that such an occurrence does not take place again.

"I am sure the action the governor has taken will deter the aggrieved party from carrying out reprisal attacks because this is what usually happens.

"But such a reprisal is precipitated by delay in doing the right thing by bringing those involved to book. If they kill your person and you see those involved are being dealt with, it will reduce your desire to carry out reprisal attacks.

"But if they are allowed to walk freely, that will amount to calling the bluff of the aggrieved party. The police and other security agencies are also aware that occurrences like this breed reprisal attacks.

"On the side of the governor, he has instructed a thorough investigation because he sees the killing as barbaric and it is wrong for people to take laws into their own hands," he stated.

Rivers will rise above crisis, Fubara assures

By Friday Omosola

Suspended Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has expressed confidence that the ongoing political turmoil in the state will ultimately lead to greater unity and resilience among its people.

Fubara made this assertion while receiving a delegation of Muslim leaders from 20 Islamic organisations, including the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, at his private residence in Port Harcourt during an Eid-El-Fitr courtesy visit.

Addressing the gathering, Fubara emphasised the importance of faith and perseverance, urging his supporters to trust in divine guidance.

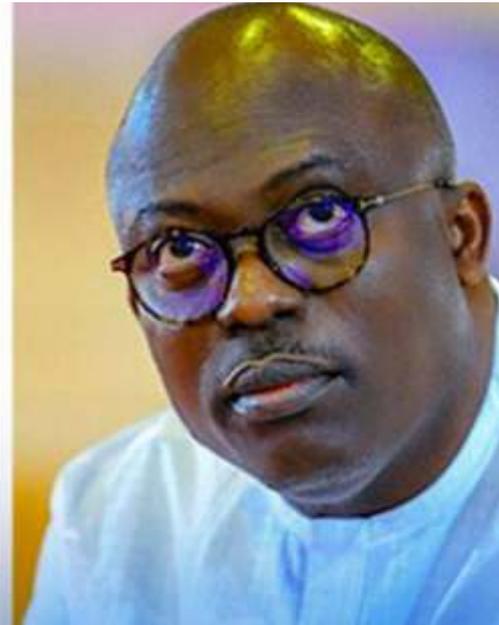
“This season reminds us of love, sacrifice, and unity. Your visit today demonstrates solidarity, and I deeply appreciate your prayers and support. As believers, we understand that challenges often pave the way for greater victories,” he said.

Acknowledging the distress many feel due to the political crisis, he reassured them that such trials are often beyond human understanding.

“No matter how turbulent the present seems, we must remain firm in our convictions. In the end, we will emerge stronger and more united,” he affirmed.

Fubara reiterated his administration’s dedication to fairness and justice, emphasising the need for a governance system that upholds the rights of all citizens.

“We stand for equity and truth. If



doing so comes at a cost, we are prepared to bear it. What matters most is that we remain on the right side of history,” he stated.

The governor also acknowledged the Muslim community’s patience and support, assuring them that their concerns would be addressed once stability is restored.

“I may not have been able to personally celebrate with you during this festive season, but I assure you that our bond will only grow stronger when we overcome these challenges,” he promised.

Urging restraint in the face of provocation, Fubara cautioned against individuals seeking to incite unrest for selfish political gains.

“There are those who thrive on chaos, aiming to destabilize our state and disrupt livelihoods. We will not give them that opportunity. Rivers State will continue to uphold peace, respect the rule of law, and serve as a model for governance in Nigeria,” he concluded.

Speaking on behalf of the visiting delegation, Alhaji Nasir Awhelebe Uhor expressed unwavering support for Governor Fubara, commending his inclusive leadership style.

He noted that unlike the previous administration, which declared Rivers a solely Christian state, Fubara has fostered a more inclusive environment that acknowledges and respects all faiths.

Encouraging the governor to remain steadfast, Uhor reminded him that patience is a core tenet of Islam and that endurance in difficult times often leads to divine rewards.

He also called on President Bola Tinubu to reconsider the emergency measures imposed on Rivers State and fully reinstate Fubara’s authority, emphasising that despite the political crisis, the governor has continued to serve effectively.

During the meeting, prayers were offered for Governor Fubara, his family, and the state, seeking peace and stability for Rivers and Nigeria at large.

NAUS praises Prince Idowu Ilara for supporting academic excellence at EKSU

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

The National Association of University Students (NAUS) has hailed Prince Idowu Ilara FSM, the CEO of 3Way Communication (3WC), for his outstanding contributions to educational advancement and youth empowerment in Nigeria.

During the 29th Convocation Ceremony of Ekiti State University (EKSU), Prince Idowu Ilara, an accomplished alumnus and influential business leader, showcased his commitment to fostering academic excellence by offering Mr. Emmanuel Falowo—the Best Graduating Student from the Faculty of Engineering—a prestigious job placement at 3Way Communication.

This gesture not only honours academic excellence but underscores the critical role industry leaders play in shaping the future careers of young graduates.

Under Prince Ilara's visionary leadership, 3Way Communication has become a key player in enhancing digital access across higher education institutions in Nigeria.

By providing state-of-the-art solutions such as high-speed internet, VOIP services, and video



conferencing technology, the company has empowered universities like EKSU and Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), among others.

These innovations have significantly strengthened the role of technology in fostering academic development and connectivity within Nigerian educational institutions.

In a statement, Comrade Ologe John Oluwatobiloba (Bosco), National Director of Campus Intervention for NAUS, expressed deep appreciation for Prince Ilara and 3Way Communication's role in driving academic growth and student empowerment.

“We commend Prince Idowu Ilara FSM and his organisation for their

unwavering commitment to supporting education and providing opportunities for Nigerian students. Their dedication to corporate social responsibility and excellence sets a remarkable example for both students and professionals across the nation,” said Comrade Oluwatobiloba.

NAUS remains committed to recognising and celebrating individuals and organisations that make meaningful contributions to education, and Prince Ilara's continued efforts in advancing academic standards and youth development are truly commendable.

Once again, NAUS celebrates Prince Idowu Ilara FSM for his exceptional dedication to shaping a brighter future for Nigerian students.

'Worse than dictatorship' - Momodu slams Tinubu over Rivers emergency rule

By Friday Omosola

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwart, Dele Momodu, has condemned President Bola Tinubu's decision to impose a state of emergency in Rivers State.

The 64-year-old called it an attack on democratic principles.

The president's move, which has drawn widespread criticism, saw the suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy Ngozi Odu, and the entire Rivers State House of Assembly for six months amid ongoing political turmoil in the state.

Speaking on Channels Television's The Morning Brief on Monday, the Osun-born politician joined a growing number of voices opposing Tinubu's decision.

"I think it is very unfortunate. I know President Tinubu very, very, very well. Though I've not been in the same party [with him] and all that, we were together in exile, and he fought gallantly for this democracy.

"So a lot of us, co-comrades at that time, are actually very



embarrassed that we have a pro-democracy leader in government, and yet what we are witnessing is worse than dictatorship," said the alumnus of Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU).

Expressing his dismay, the journalist-turned-politician urged the president to uphold democratic values.

"I'm pleading with President Bola Tinubu, 'Please don't kill democracy in Nigeria.' Everybody who loves him will tell him this. I don't; I've not asked him for anything or anything, but we love him for his contributions to the motivation in the back, which is what is going down the drain," Momodu said.

The CEO and publisher of Ovation International, a celebrity magazine further accused the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) of using intimidation tactics against the opposition, cautioning Tinubu to remain vigilant.

"I'm saying it now openly to millions of Nigerians that people are deceiving President Tinubu, and he should not allow people to deceive you," he stated.

"He should just do his job. The only thing that can guarantee a second time is to do your job well. You do not need to intimidate anybody."

Osun gov warns traditional rulers of dethronement over continued clashes

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Osun State Government has issued a strong warning to traditional rulers in the communities of Ifon, Ilobu, and Erin-Osun, threatening dethronement if communal clashes continue to erupt within their domains.

Governor Ademola Adeleke delivered the cautionary message on Monday, following reports of renewed tensions in these historically conflict-prone areas.

In a statement signed by his spokesperson, Olawale Rasheed, the governor condemned any attempts to exploit the recent relaxation of the curfew to incite further violence.

He emphasised that the state government would take decisive action against any traditional ruler or community leader involved in fomenting unrest.

“I have received reports of plans to stir up more conflict around Ifon, Ilobu, and Erin-Osun, even during the Sallah celebrations, The security agencies have been placed on high alert, and surveillance has been intensified to ensure no further attacks take place,” said Governor Adeleke.

The governor also underscored the ongoing investigation into key figures suspected of instigating the unrest, and reiterated that peace



agreements signed by community leaders must be respected.

He warned that any breach of these accords would carry serious consequences.

“The security agencies are fast-tracking the investigation of the chieftains and other prominent actors involved in the crisis, Let me remind the leaders of these towns that the peace agreements they signed are not to be taken lightly. There will be accountability before the law,” Adeleke stated.

While acknowledging the hardship caused by the conflict, Governor Adeleke clarified that the relaxation of the curfew was done on humanitarian grounds, to alleviate the suffering of innocent citizens caught in the crossfire.

However, he warned that any further unrest would prompt the

full reinstatement of a 24-hour curfew.

“The adjustment of the curfew was done with compassion in mind, knowing that many innocent lives have been disrupted by the actions of a few troublemakers, If there is any attempt to exploit this relaxation for violence, we will not hesitate to restore the full curfew,” he explained.

Adeleke’s warning extended directly to the traditional rulers, stating that any monarch whose jurisdiction sees fresh outbreaks of violence would face removal from office.

“I will not hesitate to remove any traditional ruler whose community is engulfed in fresh violence, Royal fathers must take responsibility for maintaining peace. I am prepared to wield the big stick—enough is enough,” the governor declared.

Rivers CoS alleges N5bn bribe offer to oust Fubara

By Friday Omosola

Edison Ehie, the Chief of Staff to suspended Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara, has claimed that he was offered a staggering N5 billion to support the governor's impeachment.

Speaking during an interview on Sunday Politics on Channels Television, Ehie stated that he possesses proof of the alleged bribery attempt, which he has stored on his phone.

"In early October 2023, I was approached with a N5 billion offer to facilitate the impeachment of my principal. The evidence is right here on my phone," he said.

"Not only do I have it documented, but I have also printed and shared copies to ensure my safety should anything happen to me."

At the time of the alleged incident, Ehie was serving as the Majority Leader of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

Additionally, he dismissed accusations that he was involved in the October 30, 2023, attack on the Rivers State Assembly complex, allegedly on the governor's orders.

The claim was initially made by George Nwaeke, a former Head of



Service in Rivers State, during a press briefing last Friday.

Nwaeke alleged that he witnessed Ehie receiving a bag of money at the Government House for the operation, though he admitted he was unaware of the exact amount contained in it.

Ehie has denied the allegation, labelling it a politically motivated falsehood.

"I had no involvement in the burning of the Rivers State House of Assembly. Like everyone else, I woke up on October 30, 2023, to news of the incident," he said.

The embattled Chief of Staff also revealed that he has directed his legal team to take legal action against Nwaeke for criminal libel.

"I have instructed my lawyers to file

a case against Mr. George Nwaeke. He will have to provide evidence to back his allegations," Ehie stated.

Furthermore, he disclosed that Nwaeke had approached him for financial assistance on the same day he resigned from his position as Head of Service.

The ongoing political crisis in Rivers State intensified after a rift between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who now serves as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency in the state on March 18, leading to the suspension of both Fubara and his deputy.

Subsequently, on March 26, the newly appointed sole administrator, Ibok-Ete Ibas, dismissed all political officeholders in Rivers State.

Kenyan wife kills Okada rider husband for bringing less money home

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A housewife in Kenya has killed her commercial motorcyclist husband over money issues.

The commercial motorcycle rider, also known as Bodaboda operator, was brutally stabbed to death by his wife.

According to reports, the young man met his death in their home in Rongai after he returned with less money than usual.

An eyewitness report said trouble started when the deceased returned home from the day's

work, and the wife discovered that he made significantly less than he normally does due to heavy rainfall that fell for hours on the sad day.

Consequently, the development led to a serious confrontation from his wife who reminded him about the household items that were finished and demanded that he provide the money. When he was unable to do so, an argument erupted between them.

In a fit of maddening rage, she rushed to the kitchen to grab a knife. Sensing the imminent

danger, the Bodaboda operator attempted to flee but slipped and fell on the floor. The wife then stabbed him in the chest, ending his life instantly.

Unfortunately, by the time neighbours arrived to save him, it was too late as he was already dead after losing so much blood.

It was gathered that though the killer-wife immediately fled the scene, she was later hunted down and arrested by the police.

One of the police deputies who spoke to journalists said she will be charged to court on Monday.

Rivers Assembly Fire: Ehie denies involvement, to sue Nwaeke

By Friday Omosola



Edison Ehie, Chief of Staff to the suspended Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has denied any involvement in the fire that engulfed the state's House of Assembly complex on October 29, 2023.

The accusation was made by former Rivers State Head of Service, George Nwaeke, who alleged that both Fubara and Ehie orchestrated the attack.

Speaking on Channels Television Sunday Politics, Ehie refuted the claims, stating, "It is very important to clarify that I was not, I had no hand and was not part of the burning down of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

"Like everyone else, I woke up in the early hours of the 30th of October 2023 to hear of the burning down of the Rivers State House of Assembly."*

Taking legal steps to counter the accusations, Ehie revealed that his legal team has been instructed to file a lawsuit for criminal libel against Nwaeke.

"I will not join issues completely with Mr

George Nwaeke because I have already instructed my lawyers to file an issue of criminal libel against George Nwaeke and I hope he is very prepared to substantiate his claims and his allegations," he said.

Ehie also redirected attention toward the Speaker of the Assembly, Martins Amaewhule, suggesting that security records should be reviewed.

He claimed the fire broke out shortly after Amaewhule's convoy was granted access to the Assembly complex.

Dismissing Nwaeke's credibility, Ehie alleged that the former Head of Service was being used as a pawn by political opponents in exchange for financial gain.

He further pointed to messages sent by Nwaeke requesting monetary assistance after his resignation, calling him "not a contented man" and suggesting that his statements were influenced by personal struggles rather than facts.

Additionally, Ehie downplayed Nwaeke's political relevance, disputing

any claims of a close relationship between him and Governor Fubara.

He challenged Nwaeke to provide evidence of private meetings with the governor without security clearance.

"George Nwaeke has never, he is not even in the protocol list of those who can have uninterrupted access to the governor," Ehie stated.

He further emphasised that all movements within the Government House are documented, making it impossible for Nwaeke to have had unauthorized meetings with the governor.

"The records are in the Government House. The security clearance of the Government House, which I superintend or supervise, is with the DSS. I challenge George Nwaeke to mention from the 29th of October 2023, like he claimed, to the other day when he visited Government House, either at odd hours without prior clearance from the DSS, to say that he discussed with the governor. Let him show the record. There is none."

Okpebholo meets Yusuf, pledges justice for slain Kano travellers

By Friday Omosola

Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, paid a condolence visit to his Kano State counterpart, Abba Yusuf, on Monday following the tragic killing of 16 Kano-bound travellers in Uromi, Edo State.

Arriving at the Kano Government House around noon, Okpebholo was warmly received by Yusuf and other top government officials.

During the visit, he expressed deep sorrow over the incident, which saw members of a local vigilante group mistakenly attack the travellers, believing them to be criminals.

The victims, identified as hunters travelling from Port Harcourt to Kano for Eid-el-Fitr celebrations, were ambushed in Esan North-East Local Government Area, sparking outrage across the country.

Speaking at the meeting, Okpebholo condemned the killings, describing them as a heartbreaking tragedy.

He reassured the families of the deceased and the people of Kano that justice would be swiftly served.



He further disclosed that 14 suspects had been arrested and transferred to Abuja for interrogation.

Governor Yusuf, in his response, insisted that those responsible must be publicly identified and brought to justice.

He emphasised Kano's long-standing reputation as a peaceful state that welcomes people from all backgrounds.

Thanking Okpebholo for his prompt visit, Yusuf called for the immediate prosecution of the perpetrators to prevent future occurrences.

Both leaders also visited Toronkawa village in Bunkure

Local Government Area, where they reiterated the need for unity and peaceful coexistence among Nigerians.

Meanwhile, the attack has drawn widespread condemnation, with President Bola Tinubu directing security agencies to swiftly investigate and ensure the culprits face the full weight of the law.

“The President was deeply shocked by this senseless act of violence and has ordered security operatives to take immediate action in apprehending those responsible,” presidential spokesperson Bayo Onanuga said on Friday.

Sahel junta bloc slaps 0.5% import duty on ECOWAS nations

By Dave Oludare Oso

This marks the end of free trade across West Africa and highlights a growing rift between Sahel states and influential democracies in ECOWAS

*Diplomatic resolution crucial to avoiding further economic fragmentation in West Africa

This import duty on ECOWAS states will take immediate effect and aims to finance the activities of the Sahel states, although specific details have not been provided.

The introduction of this levy marks the end of free trade across West Africa, which has been a cornerstone of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for decades.

This move highlights the growing rift between the three Sahel states – Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger Republic and influential democracies like Nigeria and Ghana to the south.

It's worth noting that these three countries have been working towards forming a separate economic union, the Alliance of Sahel States, after announcing their departure from ECOWAS last year.

The levy, which takes effect immediately, applies to all imports from ECOWAS nations, except for humanitarian aid.

Among the world's poorest countries, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger continue to combat militant groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS.

This decision follows a period of strained relations after ECOWAS imposed sanctions on Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in response to military coups in these countries.

Impact of new levy on West African trade

The 0.5% import levy by the Sahel junta bloc is a response to political and economic tensions with ECOWAS.



A diplomatic resolution between ECOWAS and the Sahel states will be crucial to avoiding further economic fragmentation in West Africa.

The withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger from ECOWAS, along with their imposition of import tariffs, is expected to disrupt trade flows and raise economic challenges.

These Sahel states rely heavily on ECOWAS nations for essential imports, including petroleum, construction materials, and food.

Trade restrictions could lead to: Increased construction costs due to cement shortages, higher food prices due to supply disruptions and higher logistic costs, making imports more expensive

The economic implications could be severe, leading to higher consumer prices, supply chain disruptions, and strained regional economic stability.

While it may provide short-term revenue for the junta-led governments, it risks long-term economic consequences, including higher prices, disrupted trade flows, and weakened regional integration.

A diplomatic resolution between

ECOWAS and the Sahel states will be crucial to avoiding further economic fragmentation in West Africa.

The new tariff is seen as a retaliatory measure and could further disrupt regional trade, affecting economies already grappling with instability and inflation.

The Sahel states – Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger – have taken several steps to distance themselves from ECOWAS after their withdrawal in January 2024, citing grievances such as economic sanctions and foreign influence.

They've introduced a new biometric passport, exclusive to their Alliance of Sahel States (AES), to facilitate movement and reduce dependence on ECOWAS.

They've expelled Western military forces, strengthened ties with Russia, and created the AES to enhance military coordination and economic self-sufficiency.

Analysts warn that this move may deepen the economic divide between the Sahel states and ECOWAS, potentially complicating future diplomatic negotiations.

WHO warns of rising dementia cases in refugee camps, calls for immediate action

By Helen Okechukwu

The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised concerns over an increasing number of dementia cases among refugees and migrants, urging swift policy interventions to eliminate healthcare barriers.

Its latest report shared on 31 March, *Dementia in Refugees and Migrants*, underscores the need for inclusive health strategies, improved diagnosis, and better support structures.

Dementia, is a term for several diseases that affect memory, thinking, and the ability to perform daily activities says WHO.

About 57 million individuals globally suffers from dementia, with nearly 10 million new cases diagnosed yearly.

Marked as the seventh leading cause of death, it significantly impacts older adults, causing severe disability.

With no proven cure, it is said that early diagnosis, physical activity, and certain medications can help manage symptoms. However, marginalized groups, including refugees and migrants, often struggle to access necessary care.

Refugees and migrants with dementia encounter additional challenges such as restricted access to culturally appropriate healthcare, disrupted support systems, and the psychological toll of displacement.



A lack of specialized training among healthcare providers further contributes to underdiagnosis and insufficient treatment.

With forced displacement rising due to conflict, economic struggles, and climate change, the number of elderly refugees is increasing, yet dementia remains largely unaddressed in health policies.

Dr. Santino Severoni, Director of WHO's Department of Health and Migration, emphasized: "Refugees and migrants have the same right to health as everyone else, yet too often face systemic barriers to care. Urgent action is needed to ensure timely diagnosis, effective treatment, and appropriate support."

Similarly, Dr. Dévora Kestel, Director of WHO's Department of Mental Health, Brain Health, and Substance Use, stated: "health systems and emergency responses to be equipped to address the unique barriers these populations face in accessing timely

and appropriate dementia care."

WHO calls on governments to incorporate dementia care into public health and migration policies.

Key recommendations include integrating refugees and migrants into national dementia strategies, launching awareness initiatives, developing culturally responsive dementia prevention programs, and improving access to diagnosis and treatment.

Further steps involve training healthcare professionals, providing support for caregivers, enhancing data collection efforts, and prioritizing research on dementia within displaced populations.

This report, created by WHO's Health and Migration Department in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, Brain Health, and Substance Use, is part of the Global Evidence Review on Health and Migration (GEHM) series.

Popular sleep aids linked to increased dementia risk, expert warns

By Helen Okechukwu

A top United States (US) health expert has issued warning that common tablets taken by millions of people in United Kingdom may increase dementia risk, particularly sleeping drugs.

Dr. Amy Shah, an immunity and diet specialist trained at Harvard, Cornell, and Columbia universities, has raised concerns over the use of medications containing diphenhydramine.

She made this call while urging her followers to stay away from such drugs recently.

These include widely available UK brands such as Nytol One-a-Night, Boots Sleepaze, and Panadol Night, as well as US brands like Tylenol PM, Unisom, and Benadryl.

Dr. Shah's warning comes amid mounting research linking long-term use of anticholinergic medications — such as diphenhydramine—to cognitive decline.

Anticholinergics work by blocking acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter critical for learning and memory.

One alarming study, published in 2015, tracked 3,500 older adults and found that those who took anticholinergic medications for three years or more had a 54% higher risk of developing dementia.

Dr. Shah's viral social media post, viewed more than three million times, strongly advised against the regular use of diphenhydramine-containing



products. She stated: “ ‘I know it's over-the-counter, I know you've had it since you were kid, but we know lot more now. You should not be using these medications regularly.’”

In the US, diphenhydramine is commonly found in Benadryl products, but it is not as frequently used in UK allergy medications.

Dr. Shah recommended alternatives such as Zirtec, Allegra (sold as Allevia in the UK), Clarityn, and Zyzal, which do not penetrate the blood-brain barrier as much as older antihistamines.

With dementia cases projected to rise from 900,000 to 1.7 million in the UK over the next two decades, researchers stress the need for alternative treatments, particularly for older patients prescribed medications for bladder control.

Despite these concerns, not all anticholinergic medications showed a dementia risk.

The study, published in the British Medical Journal, found that drugs such as darifenacin, fesoterodine fumarate, flavoxate hydrochloride, propiverine hydrochloride, and trospium chloride were not linked to increased dementia risk.

A non-anticholinergic alternative for overactive bladder, mirabegron, showed some potential risk, but researchers noted that more data is needed.

The manufacturers of Nytol, Panadol Night, Benylin, and Boots were approached for comment regarding these findings according to Daily Mail.

As awareness grows, experts urge both medical professionals and consumers to reconsider the frequent use of anticholinergic sleep aids and explore safer alternatives for sleep and allergy management.

2Baba's new lover Natasha Osawaru replaces surname on social media

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Nigerian singer 2Baba's new lover, Natasha Osawaru, has replaced her own surname from Osawaru to Idibia.

2Baba born Innocent Ujah Idibia recently announced the divorce of his ex-wife, Annie Idibia.

Checks on her Instagram page on Sunday, March 30, show that her name on the social media platform now appears as 'Honourable Natasha IDIBIA.'

The couple had sparked dating rumours in the aftermath of 2Baba's fall out with Annie Idibia.

Weeks after 2Baba confirmed the divorce in controversial fashion on social media, he was seen in a video proposing to Natasha, going down on bended knee before the Edo



State lawmaker.



Instagram post.

Natasha could be seen in the video, excitedly saying yes with a visibly excited 2Baba rising to share a warm hug with his lover. He proceeded to spray money on her as they danced before he brought out a ring to put on her finger while friends and well-wishers cheered on.

The latest development with Natasha replacing her surname with Idibia comes days after Annie, 2Baba's estranged wife, dropped 'Ídibia' and reintroduced herself as 'Macaulay' in an

She wrote, "To my family, to my friends who came through for me, the support system I have now, all my amazing family here and all over the world. God bless you for the outpouring of love. I appreciate every single of you and I do not take any of it for granted. May the universe continue to be in your favour. God bless you all. Lots of love. Annie Uwana Macaulay"

In addition to this, Annie deleted all photos from her Instagram page of almost eight million followers.

Davido makes history becomes first living African to cover RollingStone Africa magazine

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Nigerian superstar, David Adeleke known by his stage name as Davido has made history after becoming the first male living artist to cover the RollingStone Africa magazine.

This feat is part of the ongoing roll out for the singer's upcoming fifth album titled 'Five' which is set for release on April 18, 2024.

At his listening party for the album, Davido revealed that the project will feature 13 guest appearances with Victony, Musa Keys, and Victoria Monet set to be on the album.

Other initially confirmed guest features on the album include YG Marley who appeared on the single 'Awuke'.

Chike and OdumoduBlvck will also be on the album after joining Davido on 'Funds'.

'Sive' is also expected to feature a collaboration with Adekunle Gold and Omah Lay, who, in an interview, revealed that the song is a perfect partnership.

While appearing in a Twitch live stream with Nigerian alternative music star and Content creator Cruel Santino, Davido previewed two songs in his upcoming album 'Sive'.

The hitmaker previewed one song produced by long-term associate Shizzi, who contributed to some of Davido's biggest hits, including his career-defining smash hit 'Dami Duro'.

On the stream, Davido shared why he chose to call his upcoming album 'Five'. He also revealed that veteran



producer Selebobo produced one of the songs.

The album, initially scheduled for release on March 15, 2025, has been moved back to April 18.

2025 has already gotten off to a busy start for Davido who secured his fifth Grammy nomination at the 67th Grammys where he got the nod for the Best African Song Performance for his part on Chris Brown's 'Sensational'.



BBNaija's Tacha calls out Nigerians in the UK for ignoring her

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Reality TV star and influencer, Tacha, has expressed her disappointment over the way Nigerians in the UK treated her during a recent outing.

In a video shared online, the former Big Brother Naija housemate revealed that despite running into several Nigerians, many of them chose not to acknowledge her presence. Instead, they pulled out their phones to record her rather than saying hello.

You guys won't believe the

number of Nigerians I saw today, which is great, but the crazy part is that they would see you and not say hi to you. So it's like you see me and you're not saying hi.

She recounted how the locals acknowledged her presence and said hello, as opposed to her fellow Nigerians who snubbed her.

I can't count how many white people who saw me and gave me compliments said I looked beautiful. Including a high school kid and an old man. I can't even start to list the people who said I

looked good but the crazy thing is the Nigerians. They saw me and what came into their heads to do was to pick their phones up to record me.

She went on to warn people against picking up their phones to record her if they're not going to say hello.

Let me sound this warning clearly: if you see me on the road and don't say hi to me I don't need it, I won't say hi either. But when you see me on the road, don't bring your phone out to record me."

King Charles returns to public duties after brief hospital stay

By Fatimah Idera

Britain's King Charles is returning to public duties this week after he was briefly taken to hospital last Thursday when he experienced side effects from his cancer treatment.

The 76-year-old monarch has been undergoing treatment since he was diagnosed with an unspecified form of cancer in February last year following tests after a corrective procedure for an enlarged prostate.

The monarch will be carrying out a mix of public engagements, state duties and private meetings over the coming days. However, he suffered what sources described as a minor bump in the road which meant he was taken to hospital for a short period of observation on Thursday, with the result he was forced to cancel some planned events at the end of the week.



However, he suffered what sources described as a minor bump in the road which meant he was taken to hospital for a short period of observation on Thursday, with the result he was forced to cancel some planned events at the end of the week.

Following a restful weekend at his Highgrove home in west England, the

king was on Monday heading to Windsor Castle where he would prepare for a usual working week, including investitures and other public appearances.

Meanwhile, a couple of appointments have been rescheduled ahead of his state visit to Italy which takes place next week.

UK mobile companies fight \$4.3 bln lawsuit for allegedly overcharging customers

By Fatimah Idera

Britain's top mobile network provider including Vodafone (VOD.L) and BT's EE (BT.L) on Monday urged a London tribunal to throw out a mass lawsuit valued at over 3.2 billion pounds (\$4.3 billion) for allegedly overcharging customers.

The case which is also brought against Telefonica's O2 (TEF.MC) and Hutchison's (0001.HK) Three UK, whose \$19 billion merger with Vodafone was approved last year – is being brought on behalf of over 28 million British consumers.

The networks are alleged to have charged customers who remained with the network after their minimum contract expired a loyal penalty, by continuing to



charge for mobile devices which had already been paid for in full.

British consumer champion Justin Gutmann is bringing the claims and his lawyers asked the Competition Appeal Tribunal to certify the case to proceed, an

early step in the proceedings.

But the networks' lawyers said in court filings that the lawsuit is fundamentally flawed as it alleges anti-competitive behaviour "in an industry renowned for its competitiveness".

They also argue that large parts of the case, which seeks to recover losses dating back to 2007, were brought too late and should be thrown out.

The case is the latest lawsuit brought under Britain's burgeoning class action-style regime, which recently reached its 10th anniversary and has seen several multi-billion-pound cases certified but with limited success for consumers so far.

Trump's economic plans fail to revive IPOs

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Initial public offering (IPO) market was expected to see a resurgence during Donald Trump's second term, fuelled by his promises of deregulation and tax cuts, which were anticipated to encourage tech companies to go public.

However, early signs suggest that the market is not responding as hoped. This weakness was demonstrated by the underwhelming debut of CoreWeave, a leading GPU supplier for AI workloads.

The company's IPO was downsized, and its stock showed little movement on its first day of trading. This reflects broader market scepticism about the current economic environment.

IPO market stalls amid Trump's trade wars

Despite a surge in private capital, the IPO market has remained tepid. Coreweave's weak



performance highlights concerns about high levels of debt, concentrated revenue from a few large customers, and the broader macroeconomic challenges, including Trump's trade tariffs and deep government spending cuts.

These factors have increased costs for businesses, while rising unemployment and inflation dampen consumer sentiment.

As a result, investors remain cautious, particularly in the tech sector, which has already seen a sharp decline in 2025.

Although there is still significant

private investment flowing into startups, especially in AI, many high-profile companies seem less inclined to pursue public listings when they can secure funding from venture capital or large tech firms like Microsoft and Nvidia.

This reluctance, combined with ongoing market volatility, suggests that the IPO market may not bounce back quickly, despite the optimism many expected after Trump's policies were enacted.

Until broader economic conditions stabilise, it appears that the IPO market will continue to struggle to regain its momentum.

DOGE role hurting Tesla, Elon Musk admits

By Dave Oludare Oso

Tesla CEO, Elon Musk acknowledged that his role in the Trump Administration with the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, is weighing on the electric vehicle maker's stock, calling his advisory role "a very expensive job."

Musk's role at DOGE has sparked protests from voters who are opposed to DOGE's activities, including gaining access to sensitive data for millions of Americans and shuttering entire agencies as the billionaire seeks to slash government spending.

On Saturday, crowds amassed outside Tesla dealerships throughout the U.S. and in some cities in Europe to protest his government activities.

About one-third of Musk's estimated \$330 billion fortune consists of the stock he holds in the electric vehicle company that he continues to run while also working alongside Trump.

After Trump was elected in November, Tesla rose to a record high on Dec. 17 of \$479 per share, but the stock has since tumbled 48%.

"This is a very expensive job, is what I'm saying," Musk said of his DOGE activities during a Sunday evening town hall in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he gave away \$1 million each to two voters.

In early Monday trading, Tesla slipped \$15.27, or 5.8%, to \$248.28.



"What [the protesters are] trying to do is put massive pressure on me, and Tesla I guess, to you know, I don't know, stop doing this," Musk said.

"My Tesla stock and the stock of everyone who holds Tesla has gone, went roughly in half. I mean it's a big deal."

He added, "Long term I think Tesla stock's going to do fine, so maybe it's a buying opportunity."

On Saturday, protesters flocked to Tesla locations in New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Minnesota and the automaker's home state of Texas, with pictures posted on social media accounts showing they held signs such as "Honk if you hate Elon" and "Fight the billionaire brologarchy."

Aside from the protests, Tesla is also facing pressure on the sales front, with some former owners saying they have ditched their vehicles over Musk's political activities.

Sales of new Teslas in Europe plunged by 45% in January, while recent data also shows that Tesla trade-ins reached a record high this month.

In March, the highest share ever of Teslas from model year 2017 or newer were traded in toward new or used purchases at dealerships, according to Edmunds, a U.S. car shopping website. Notably, the trade-ins were not put toward purchases of new Teslas.

Tesla will disclose its first-quarter deliveries on April 2, with Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives forecasting that the company shipped 7% fewer vehicles compared with a year earlier.

"The anti-Musk and brand issues are clearly at play and a major factor in this weak 1Q delivery number," Ives wrote in a March 26 research note. "Musk needs to better balance being CEO of Tesla and running DOGE with investors and employees yearning for Musk's leadership at this juncture."

We will retaliate if Trump bombs Iran - Ayatollah

By Dave Oludare Oso

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Monday the U.S. would receive a strong blow if it acts on President Donald Trump's threat to bomb Tehran unless it reaches a new nuclear deal with Washington.

Trump reiterated his threat on Sunday that Iran would be bombed if it does not accept his offer for talks outlined in a letter sent to Iran's leadership in early March, giving Tehran a two-month window to make a decision.

"The enmity from the U.S. and Israel has always been there. They threaten to attack us, which we don't think is very probable, but if they commit any mischief they will surely receive a strong reciprocal blow," Khamenei said.

"And if they are thinking of causing sedition inside the country as in past years, the Iranian people themselves will deal with them," he added.

Iranian authorities blame the West for recent unrest including 2022-2023 protests over the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a young woman detained for allegedly flouting hijab rules, and nationwide protests in 2019 over fuel price rises.



Last week, Iran responded to the U.S. letter, with President Masoud Pezeshkian explaining on Sunday that Tehran would not enter direct negotiations with Washington but was willing to continue talks indirectly as per an injunction from Khamenei.

"An open threat of 'bombing' by a head of state against Iran is a shocking affront to the very essence of international peace and security," Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei posted on X on Monday.

"Violence breeds violence, peace begets peace. The U.S. can choose the course and concede to consequences."

In his first 2017-21 term, Trump

withdrew the U.S. from a 2015 deal between Iran and world powers that placed strict limits on Tehran's disputed nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. Trump also reimposed sweeping U.S. sanctions.

Since then, Iran has far surpassed that deal's limits on uranium enrichment.

Western powers accuse Iran of having a clandestine agenda to develop nuclear weapons capability by enriching uranium to a high level of fissile purity, above what they say is justifiable for a civilian atomic energy program. Tehran says its nuclear programme is wholly for civilian energy purposes.

Three of four US soldiers missing in Lithuania found dead

By Dave Oludare Oso

Three of the four US soldiers missing in Lithuania since last week have been found dead, the US army said after rescuers recovered their armoured vehicle from a peat bog.

The fourth soldier is still missing.

The Lithuanian authorities received a report on Tuesday that the soldiers went missing on an expansive training ground in the eastern city of Pabradė, near the border with Belarus.

The soldiers were on a tactical training exercise when they and their vehicle were reported missing, the US army said.

“We stand in grief with the families and loved ones of these extraordinary ‘dogface soldiers’ during this unimaginable time,” said Maj Gen Christopher Norrie, 3rd infantry division commander.

“But the search isn’t finished until everyone is home. Words cannot express our gratitude to those still working around the clock during these extensive search and recovery efforts and your unwavering commitment not to rest until all are found.”

The bodies of the three soldiers were recovered after a massive six-day effort by US, Polish and Lithuanian armed forces and authorities to dig the M88 Hercules armoured recovery vehicle out of a peat bog.

Search and rescue teams worked with heavy equipment and excavators to



remove silt from the water before eventually towing the vehicle out early on Monday.

“Three US army soldiers assigned to 1st Armored brigade combat team, 3rd infantry division were found deceased in Lithuania today, 31 March,” US Army Europe and Africa’s public affairs office said in a statement. The soldiers’ identities were being “withheld pending notification of next of kin”, it added.

Hundreds of local and foreign troops and other rescue workers, including engineers and divers, were involved in the rescue operation to recover the armoured vehicle.

Lithuanian armed forces provided military helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, unmanned aerial systems and search-and-rescue personnel. They brought in additional excavators, sluice and slurry pumps, other heavy construction equipment, technical experts and several hundred tonnes of gravel and earth to help the recovery.

US navy divers were able to manoeuvre through thick layers of mud, clay and sediment “with zero visibility” to reach the 63-tonne vehicle on Sunday evening and find two points to attach steel cables, according to the command.

The command said that during the effort to pull the vehicle out, it began to lose traction, so additional heavy bulldozers were brought in and attached to provide additional grip. The vehicle was pulled free after about two hours.

The US navy dive team is searching the area using radar for the missing fourth soldier.

Maj Gen Curtis Taylor, commander of Task Force Iron and the 1st Armored division, thanked the “heroic efforts” of those involved in the search and recovery. The US army and Lithuanian authorities are investigating what caused the incident.

Lithuania, a Nato and EU member, hosts more than 1,000 US troops stationed on a rotational basis.

400,000 without power as Midwest battered by severe weather

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



More than 400,000 customers across the Midwest were without power in the early hours of Monday after severe weather battered the region.

More than 292,000 customers were without power in Michigan. Another 56,000 were disconnected in Wisconsin, 53,000 in Indiana, 15,000 in Kentucky and 13,000 in Ohio.

The National Weather Service said it recorded more than 200 wind damage reports. Large hailstones were widespread, with more than 150 damage reports. Hailstones of

up to 3 inches in diameter — larger than baseballs — were reported in parts of Arkansas.

In this photo provided by Jesika Fox, an ice storm knocked down trees and power lines on Sunday, March 30, 2025, in Alpena, Michigan. Jesika Fox/AP

Valparaiso, Indiana, one person was killed when “severe crosswinds” blew a tractor and a trailer onto their sides, according to local authorities.

The National Weather Service said a second person was killed north of Millersburg, Indiana, when wind

from a thunderstorm blew over an Amish buggy.

At least three tornadoes were reported across three states — Michigan, Missouri and Tennessee — on Sunday. So far, the only tornado damage was reported in McEwen, Tennessee, where a roof was ripped off.

The severe weather threat continues Monday, with both tornado and severe thunderstorm watches in effect across multiple states in the South. Some storms could bring hailstones the size of tennis balls and damaging winds of up to 60 mph.

Marine Le Pen found guilty in high-stakes embezzlement trial

By Dave Oludare Oso

Paris judges decided on Monday that Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Rally, was guilty of misappropriation of public funds.

This was a crucial moment for Le Pen that could determine her political future.

Eight National Rally MEPs and their twelve assistants have also been found guilty.

Le Pen and 24 other National Rally members have been accused of embezzling money intended for European Parliament aides to pay staff who worked for the party over a four-year period.

Their full sentences will be read out individually by the court in the next few hours.

Le Pen, sitting in the front row of the courtroom in a blue suit, was visibly shaking her head in disapproval as the verdict was being read.

The court estimated that the European Parliament's total loss was €2.9 million, with Le Pen personally embezzling around €474,000.

"There was no personal enrichment ... but there was the enrichment of a party," the judge said, claiming it goes against party financing rules.



"Let's be clear: no one is on trial for doing politics, that's not the issue. The issue was whether or not the contracts had been executed," the judge added.

After the trial concluded in November, the state prosecutor demanded guilty verdicts for Le Pen and her co-defendants, who have denied any wrongdoing.

The prosecutor also demanded that Le Pen be fined €300,000, serve up to 10 years in prison, and, crucially, be barred from running for public office with immediate effect for five years if found guilty.

The three judges were not obliged to follow the prosecutor's recommendations.

If they do, however, a guilty verdict for Le Pen could effectively bar her from running in the 2027 presidential race in what she described as "political death".

Le Pen played down fears that the judges would go so far as to bar her from office immediately on Sunday, telling La Tribune Dimanche newspaper: "Personally I'm not nervous. But I can see why people think I might be."

"The judges have the power of life or death over the movement. But I don't think they will go so far as to do it."

She has denied accusations she was at the head of "a system" meant to siphon off EU parliament money to benefit her party, arguing instead it was acceptable to adapt the work of parliamentary aides to the needs of her party's lawmakers.

While testifying, Le Pen told the court: "I absolutely don't feel I have committed the slightest irregularity, the slightest illegal move."

Red Cross fumes over killing of medics by Israeli forces in Gaza

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has said it is “outraged” that eight Palestinian medics were killed along with six Civil Defence first responders and a UN staff member by Israeli forces in southern Gaza earlier this month.

Five ambulances and a fire truck dispatched to help injured people, as well as a UN vehicle, were struck in the al-Hashashin area on 23 March as Israeli forces advanced on the city of Rafah, according to a UN official.

Fifteen bodies were recovered on Sunday from what he called the “devastating scene.”

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) said a ninth medic remained missing and accused Israeli forces of targeting staff carrying out humanitarian duties.

The Israeli military said its troops opened fire on several vehicles which were “advancing suspiciously” without headlights or emergency signals. It said a Hamas operative and “eight other terrorists” were among those killed.

The IFRC said in a statement on Sunday that the eight bodies of PRCS medics were retrieved “after seven days of silence and having access denied to the area of Rafah where they were last seen.”

The organisation identified those killed as ambulance officers Mostafa Khufaga, Saleh Muamer and Ezzedine Shaath, and first responder volunteers Mohammad Bahloul, Mohammed al-Heila, Ashraf Abu Labda, Raed al-Sharif and Rifatt Radwan.

It added that ambulance officer Assad al-Nassasra was “still missing.”

“I am heartbroken. These dedicated ambulance workers were responding to wounded people. They were humanitarians,” IFRC Secretary General Jagan Chapagain said.

“They wore emblems that should have protected them; their ambulances were clearly marked.

“Even in the most complex conflict zones, there are rules. These rules of International Humanitarian Law could not be clearer – civilians must be protected; humanitarians must be protected. Health services must be protected.”



Thus, IDF troops opened fire at the suspected vehicles.”

“Following an initial assessment, it was determined that the forces had eliminated a Hamas military operative, Mohammad Amin Ibrahim Shubaki, along with eight other terrorists from Hamas and the PIJ [Palestinian Islamic Jihad],” it added.

“Following the strike, the IDF co-ordinated with international organisations to facilitate the evacuation of the bodies.”

A previous IDF statement about the incident said an initial inquiry had determined that

“some of the suspicious vehicles that were moving towards the troops were ambulances and fire trucks.”

It also condemned what it called the “repeated use of civilian infrastructure by terrorist organisations.”

The IDF has not commented on the whereabouts of the missing PRCS medic.

Senior Hamas official Basem Naim condemned the attack.

“The targeted killing of rescue workers – who are protected under international humanitarian law – constitutes a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime,” he said.

Israel resumed its military offensive in Gaza on 18 March after the first phase of a ceasefire that began in January came to an end, and negotiations on a second phase of the deal stalled.

More than 900 people have since been killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza, the Hamas-run health ministry has said.

The war was triggered when Hamas attacked southern Israel on 7 October 2023, killing about 1,200 people and taking 251 back to Gaza as captives.

Israel responded with a massive military offensive, which has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, Gaza’s Hamas-run health ministry says.

The head of the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Gaza, Jonathan Whittall, said in a post on X that its staff had supported the PRCS and Civil Defence in recovering the bodies from “a mass grave... that was marked with the emergency light from one of their crushed ambulances.”

He added that OCHA staff were only able to reach the site after six days, when they found the partially buried vehicles and managed to recover the body of a Civil Defence worker beneath the fire truck, he added.

“Today, on the first day of Eid, we returned and recovered the buried bodies of 8 PRCS, 6 Civil Defence and 1 UN staff. They were killed in their uniforms. Driving their clearly marked vehicles. Wearing their gloves. On their way to save lives. This should never have happened.”

The PRCS said it was devastated by the “massacre of our team.”

“[Israel’s] targeting of Red Crescent medics, despite the protected status of their mission and the Red Crescent emblem can only be considered a war crime punishable under international humanitarian law,” a statement added.

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said in a statement that during an operation in southern Gaza on 23 March “several vehicles were identified advancing suspiciously toward IDF troops without headlights, or emergency signals, their movement was not co-ordinated in advance.

Tariff-hit firms may need business turnaround financing, Japan's bank lobby chair says

By **Fatimah Idera**

Japanese banks may need to offer business turnaround support to companies hit by tariffs imposed by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, the head of the country's banking lobby said.

Many large Japanese firms, including major exporters and manufacturers, are grappling with U.S. duties on imports of steel and aluminium and a 25% tariff on imported cars and light trucks starting this week.

"We think tariffs could lead to a deterioration in corporate earnings," the new chair of the Japan Banks Association, Junichi Hanzawa, told Reuters in an interview.

"We will have to ascertain whether this weighs on employment and salaries and then become a burden for companies' and households' repayments," Hanzawa added.

Almost 90% of Japanese companies see the Trump administration as bad for business, with the majority of these pointing to trade policy – including tariffs – as the most detrimental factor, a Reuters poll showed in February.



On top of their usual financing, bank customers may also need turnaround support, Hanzawa added.

Hanzawa also said that Japan's banks and companies remained committed to decarbonisation efforts despite the withdrawal of several major banks from the Net Zero Banking Alliance decarbonisation framework.

Following the departure of Wall Street banks from the framework, Japanese signatories including Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group (8316.T) and Norinchukin Bank (NORB.UL) pulled out in the past month.

"We don't see recent moves as connected to a change in Japanese banks' fundamental principles about responding to climate change," Hanzawa said.

Hanzawa is also chief executive of MUFG's banking arm, MUFG Bank.

"It was a very good framework for sending out information, but with the withdrawal of major U.S. and Canadian banks it has lost influence," Hanzawa said of MUFG's withdrawal.

MUFG has no intention of altering its existing commitments and strategy on carbon neutrality, Hanzawa said.

Explosion at Spanish mine kills five, two missing

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



At least five people have died and two are missing after an explosion at a mine in northern Spain, officials say.

The blast happened at the Cerredo mine in Degaña, Asturias, some 450km (278 miles) north-west of Madrid around 09:30 (07:30 GMT).

Local emergency services said they had been called about a “problem with a machine” at the mine.

At least four others were injured and a

search is under way for the missing workers. Ambulances, fire and rescue services have been sent to the scene.

The mining rescue brigade has also deployed its canine unit.

The injured were taken to local

hospitals for treatment.

President of Asturias Adrián Barbón ordered two days of mourning in the region.

The region’s civil protection plan, designed to control emergencies, was activated at its lowest level.

This indicates a localised situation that may be controlled by available resources.

Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez sent his condolences to the families of the victims.

“I wish a speedy recovery to those injured,” he wrote on X.



Trump's tariff threat shakes up global oil trade

By Dave Oludare Oso

US President Donald Trump said he is “pissed off” with Russian President Vladimir Putin. He threatened to impose “secondary tariffs” on Russian oil if a truce with Ukraine is not done.

In a telephone conversation with NBC, Trump said that if Moscow obstructs his attempts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, he will slap secondary tariffs of 25 percent to 50 percent on all Russian oil within a month.

Since Russia is among the top three oil producers in the world, penalising Moscow's supplies might significantly impact the oil market, leading to a surge in global inflationary pressures.

The latest news comes after the US imposed 25 per cent secondary tariffs on countries buying oil from sanctioned Venezuela. Separately, Trump also hinted at “Secondary tariffs” on Iranian oil that are not yet defined.

With the uncertainty around trade tariffs in the background, the latest threat to Russia adds a new layer of complexity to the global oil trade. The risk of higher crude prices is high, especially for major oil importers like India and China. For India, this comes at a crucial time.

Should the US press ahead, India, which has become a key buyer of discounted Russian barrels, would face extreme pressure. Separately,



in January 2024, India accounted for nearly half of Venezuela's crude exports, making it the largest buyer that month.

Secondary oil tariffs: Impact on India

India's energy ties have been improving with those nations, with the country eyeing long-term oil contracts. However, new secondary sanctions could disrupt supplies, increase costs, and force refiners to rethink their sourcing strategy.

The “Secondary tariffs” are a new weapon in Trump's arsenal. Direct sanctions prohibit US entities from trading with Venezuela. Secondary tariffs penalise other countries for doing business with sanctioned nations.

It's an indirect way to tighten economic pressure globally, without completely cutting off

trade. For global markets, this escalating tariff war means uncertainty. Businesses and governments are watching this development closely.

Trade barriers threaten to disrupt supply chains, raise costs, and impact economic growth. India depends on imports for over 85 per cent of its oil needs and has been looking to diversify its crude imports.

With Venezuela's, Iran's and Russia's oil now under US scrutiny, Indian refiners need to rework sourcing strategies. This could push them to increase their dependence on West Asian suppliers.

The question is: Will India risk US trade tensions to secure discounted Russian, Iranian and Venezuelan crude, or will it shift focus to other suppliers?

Bank of England plans to raise deposit guarantee

By Fatimah Idera

The Bank of England has proposed raising the protection limit for savers in case a bank fails to 110,000 pounds (\$142,300), it said on Monday.

The scheme provides financial protection to depositors in case banks, building societies, and credit unions become insolvent.

The deposit protection limit is the maximum amount of money that is typically protected for savers should their bank fail and under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) has been capped at 85,000 pounds since 2017.

The BoE began examining an overhaul of the guarantee scheme in 2023, after the rapid collapse of the UK arm of Silicon Valley Bank raised questions about how to ensure faster access to cash when a lender collapses and about whether deposit protection was sufficient. BoE Governor Andrew Bailey said at the time that raising the limit was not the solution.

A hike in the UK's guarantee would put deposit protection above that of the EU but below the United States. EU deposit protection is harmonised at 100,000 euros across member states, while in the U.S. it is at least \$250,000 per depositor.

“Confidence in our financial system is an essential foundation for



economic growth. We want to support confidence in our banks, building societies and credit unions by raising the amount that people can keep in their account,” said Sam Woods, Deputy Governor for Prudential Regulation and CEO of the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), which is part of the BoE

An increase would take into account inflation since then, the PRA said in a statement, adding that any change, if implemented, would apply from December.

As part of a wide-ranging consultation, the PRA is also proposing the introduction of new rules to enable funds from the FSCS to be used to recapitalise failing firms.

The limit for certain temporary high balance claims, such as when buying or selling a house results in depositors' balances being temporarily very high, should

increase to 1.4 million pounds from the current one million pounds, it said.

Raising the deposit protection limit is a sensible decision to support consumer confidence in the financial service industry,” Rocio Concha, Director of Policy and Advocacy at consumer group Which? said in the BoE statement.

The revisions to deposit protection policies follow the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in the US two years ago, which left depositors worrying about their financial security.

The Bank also confirmed it would introduce rules that allow the FSCS to intervene when smaller lenders fail.

The UK Treasury will decide on whether to enact the PRA's proposals.

South Africa grants Eskom coal plants limited emissions exemptions

By Fatimah Idera

South African coal-fired power stations have received limited exemptions from air quality laws and harmful emissions reduction regulations, the environment minister said on Monday, but he stressed that the measures did not constitute a “blanket reprieve”.

The government is struggling to strike a balance between calls to reduce its carbon footprint and stop harmful emissions and the need to provide electricity to Africa’s most advanced economy, which has stagnated due to power cuts.

Power utility Eskom, whose fleet of old coal-fired power plants generates most of South Africa’s electricity, had applied to exempt eight of its plants from minimum emission standards prescribed in air quality regulations.

In granting the exemptions, the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) said it would require Eskom to step up monitoring, appoint environmental health specialists and provide mobile health clinics, among other measures.

“These exemptions are not a blanket reprieve but are tailored to each facility with stringent conditions,” environment minister Dion George told a press conference.

Six of the plants – Lethabo, Kendal, Tutuka, Majuba, Matimba and



Medupi – will have exemptions capped at five years, expiring on April 1, 2030, while the Duvha and Matla power stations will be exempted until their planned decommissioning dates in 2034.

Eskom said it was reviewing Monday’s decision and was committed to reducing negative societal impacts on health and the environment.

The utility, one of the continent’s worst polluters, has been running its plants hard in an attempt to end a decade of economically devastating power cuts and clear a maintenance backlog amid regular breakdowns.

It has previously said that retrofitting its plants, many of them 30 to 40-years-old, with new technology to reduce harmful emissions is too costly.

Early this month a 10-year study found that people living near coal-fired power stations, mostly concentrated in Mpumalanga province’s coal belt, had a mortality rate 6% higher than their peers elsewhere in South Africa.

The report from the South African Medical Research Council and Britain’s Department for International Development found higher rates of birth defects and cardiovascular and lung disease in communities near plants. It recommended phasing out the coal-fired plants.

“We want enough electricity to grow our economy, and we want clean, breathable air,” George said. “It is completely unacceptable when our children have problems with their lungs, and babies are born with cleft palates.”

Top MAGA lawmakers begin turning on Trump over 'bad' tariffs

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Donald Trump is facing pushback from some MAGA allies as he prepares to impose new tariffs on goods from other countries in what he's calling 'Liberation Day' on April 2.

U.S. stocks fell dramatically when markets opened on Monday as the selloff continues around the globe as investors brace for the president's latest action in the escalating trade war.

Republican lawmakers have been expressing concerns ahead of the deadline on Wednesday.

That's when the president is expected to impose reciprocal dollar-for-dollar tariffs on countries that levy duties on U.S. goods.

Kentucky Senator Rand Paul has been leading the vocal GOP opposition to Trump's tariff plans.

'I think tariffs are bad for any country, and I think they'd be bad for America, and economically, I think it'll hurt us,' Paul said during an interview with radio host John Catsimatidis on WABC 770 AM's 'The Cats Roundtable.'

'International trade since World War II has made us phenomenally rich. President Trump paints it another way,' Paul explained on Sunday.

'He says, "We've been taken advantage of,"' Paul argued. 'But I really strongly disagree because trade has made us so rich and really has made the world a better place. The more we trade, I think the less we fight.'

Paul noted that the automobile manufacturers and the bourbon industry in his state oppose the tariffs.

Other Republican lawmakers were less willing to criticize the president directly ahead of his announcement but expressed concerns over how long tariffs would last and thus the impact on their states.

Montana Congressman Ryan Zinke went on CNN on Monday and said tariffs do represent an change in U.S. policy.

'Montana gets hit more than anyone else,'



he said, noting that the state is a close trading partner with Canada as 86 percent of its trade is with the neighboring country to the north.

The congressman did not slam the president's plans the way Paul has but he said he is hoping the tariffs are 'short-term' while making the U.S. less dependent.

'I would prefer short-term tariffs and then longer term gains for America,' Zinke said.

The Montana lawmaker said what Trump brings 'is uncertainty.' He suggested if the result is 'an additional burden, longer term, I think there's going to be pushback' and that if it extends into the summer he believes it will be problematic.

While Trump has threatened tariffs, plunging the markets into turmoil, it's not clear what exactly the tariffs will include or if there will be any exemptions.

The president said the reciprocal tariffs will hit all countries, not just the top ten to fifteen trading partners, when he spoke with reporters on Air Force One on Sunday.

'There are many countries,' he said, indicating it would be a far sweeping announcement beyond what some officials have suggested.

Trump administration officials insist the tariffs will help Americans.

But in a letter to the Trump administration ahead of the deadline, the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) warned tariffs would drive up the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables and urged an exemption.

Goldman Sachs economists estimated higher tariffs are likely to boost consumer prices ahead of the announcement and increased its year-over-year inflation forecast to 3.5 percent.

New polling this week from CBS News showed Americans believe the Trump administration is not putting enough focus on lowering prices.

64 percent said there was not enough focus on it while another 55 percent said the administration was putting too much focus on tariffs.

There has also been a reversal in how Americans believe Trump policies will impact them financially.

In January 42 percent believed his policies would make them better off financially. Now just 23 percent view his policies will make them better off while 42 percent believe his policies will make them worse off financially.

US extradites 41-yr-old 'Nigerian fraudster,' 13 others from 10 countries

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Further demonstrating its zero tolerance for crime and criminals, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has announced that it has secured the extradition of 14 fugitives from 10 countries, including a 41-year-old 'Nigerian fraudster,' alleged murderers, drug traffickers, cyber criminals, and an MS-13 gang leader.

The bulletin stated that the fugitives, wanted for crimes across multiple US states, were extradited in March following extensive coordination between the DOJ and law enforcement agencies worldwide.

"The dedicated, persistent work of the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs with foreign partners resulted in the extradition of fugitives wanted in the United States for violent crimes," said Matthew R. Galeotti, head of the DOJ's Criminal Division.

Galeotti added, "The Justice Department will aggressively pursue and bring to justice transnational criminals and hold them accountable for the death and violence they have committed here and abroad."

Among those extradited was 41-year-old Ehis Lawrence Akhimie, a Nigerian national accused of operating an inheritance fraud scheme targeting elderly US citizens.

He was extradited from the United Kingdom to face charges in the Southern District of Florida.

Other high-profile extraditions include 28-year-old Eswin Mejia, a Honduras national who was extradited to Nebraska for vehicular homicide in the 2016 killing of 21-year-old Sarah Root.

Also, 48-year-old Rigoberto Ramon



Miranda-Orozco, a Guatemala national who is the alleged leader of an alien smuggling operation, extradited to Texas for his role in the 2022 San Antonio mass casualty incident that left 53 migrants dead.

Others are a 55-year-old Guatemalan national, Moises Humberto Rivera Luna, an alleged MS-13 gang leader, who has been extradited to Washington, D.C., on racketeering charges.

Meanwhile, 36-year-old Carlos Espino Farfan, a Spanish national, was extradited to Utah for the alleged rape and sodomy of a child.

Also, two former Colombian Navy officers, 54-year-old Jair Alberto Alvarez Valenzuela and 32-year-old Luis Carlos Diaz Martinez, were extradited to Florida for allegedly aiding drug traffickers.

Additionally, 61-year-old Mexican national Louie Hernandez was extradited to Washington State on murder charges related to the fatal shooting of his estranged partner in February 2024.

In separate cases, 37-year-old Mexican national Juan Ramirez was extradited to California for a 2013 fatal stabbing, while 20-year-old Irish national Solomon Sincler Gheorghe was extradited from France to North Carolina for allegedly causing a fatal crash while impaired.

Furthermore, 51-year-old Rostislav Panev, a Russian-Israeli citizen and alleged developer for the LockBit ransomware group, was extradited to New Jersey.

Other extraditions include 24-year-old Dominican Republic citizen Marco Tulio Fernandez-Rodriguez, who was sent to New York for his alleged role in a fatal armed robbery, and 39-year-old Bikramjit Ahluwalia, a British-UAE dual citizen extradited from Spain to North Carolina for allegedly running a large-scale tech support fraud scheme.

Additionally, 60-year-old Danhong "Jean" Chen, a former immigration attorney from San Jose, California, was extradited from the Kyrgyz Republic for visa fraud linked to the EB-5 visa programme.

Saka fit again and “ready to go,” says Arteta

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has confirmed that winger Bukayo Saka is fit to return after three months on the sidelines with a hamstring injury.

The England international underwent surgery after picking up the injury during Arsenal’s Premier League victory over Crystal Palace on December 21. Now fully recovered, Saka is in contention to feature in Tuesday’s league clash against Fulham at the Emirates Stadium.

“Bukayo Saka is ready to go,” Arteta said. “All the careful things are already done. Now it’s about putting him on the grass at the right moment, but he’s pushing because he really wants to. We have respected the timeline and done everything.”

Saka has been instrumental for Arsenal this season, scoring nine goals and providing 10 assists in 24 appearances across all competitions. His return will be a significant boost for the Gunners, who sit second in the Premier League, 12 points behind leaders Liverpool with nine games left.



Injury Concerns for Calafiori

While Saka’s return is a major positive, Arsenal have suffered a setback with defender Riccardo Calafiori, who sustained a knee injury while on international duty for Italy against Germany on March 20.

“It could have been much worse,” Arteta said. “Hopefully, it’s just a matter of weeks, but we have to see how the injury evolves.”

Arsenal Welcome New Sporting Director

Arsenal’s newly appointed sporting director, Andrea Berta, was present at Monday’s press conference after being named as Edu’s successor.

Arteta praised Berta’s decision to join Arsenal despite interest from other clubs, saying the Italian was “positive” about the project.

With Saka back in action and a crucial run-in ahead, Arsenal will be hoping to close the gap on Liverpool as the season nears its climax.

Bryne FK’s man of the match rewarded with... eggs!

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Footballers are often rewarded for stellar performances, but Norwegian club Bryne FK has taken a unique approach—gifting their man of the match with eggs.

Goalkeeper Jan de Boer received four trays of eggs after an outstanding performance in Bryne’s season-opening 1-0 defeat to Bodo/Glimt. The Dutch shot-stopper made several crucial saves, including a second-half penalty stop, keeping his side in the game.

The club’s unusual prize is a nod to Bryne’s deep agricultural roots. Based



near Stavanger, the team embraces its farming heritage, with fans proudly chanting, “We are farmers and we are proud of it.” Even the VIP section includes pitchside tractor seating.

But players shouldn’t get too attached to the eggs—Bryne FK has announced that their next man of the match, on April 6 against Kristiansund, will receive cartons of local milk instead.

Cunha clarifies commitment, aims to elevate Wolves

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Brazilian striker Matheus Cunha has reaffirmed his commitment to Wolverhampton Wanderers, stating that his recent comments about taking the “next step” in his career were misinterpreted.

The former Atletico Madrid forward, who has a £62.5 million release clause in his contract, insisted that his ambition is to take Wolves to “another level” rather than seeking an immediate move away.

Speaking in a social media video on Monday, Cunha addressed the speculation surrounding his interview with The Observer, in which he expressed a desire to compete for titles.

“It’s impossible for a player to be honest in an interview knowing that everything can be taken in any way,” he said. “I don’t think a lot of people read the interview properly or interpreted it correctly. My point was to talk about Wolves and show how happy I am here. Of course, as ambitious players, we want to achieve more and take this club to another level.”

Pereira Confirms Cunha’s



Commitment

Wolves, currently 17th in the Premier League and nine points clear of the relegation zone, are battling to secure their top-flight status. Head coach Vítor Pereira played down any concerns over Cunha’s future, emphasizing the forward’s dedication to the team.

“He is committed. This is the present. The future, I don’t know,” Pereira said. “He knows his potential. He is a top player. It’s normal to have ambitions, but the most important thing is to be committed and help the team achieve our targets.”

Cunha has been instrumental for Wolves this season, scoring 15 goals. However, he is currently serving a four-game suspension following his red card against Bournemouth in the FA Cup. He

will miss Tuesday’s match against West Ham and Saturday’s clash with Ipswich before being eligible to return against Tottenham on April 13.

Despite his temporary absence, Wolves remain focused on their survival bid, with Pereira emphasizing the importance of unity within the squad.

“The focus is on the next game. Matheus is part of the team, not for this match, but our priority remains the team as a whole,” Pereira added.

As Wolves look to secure their Premier League status, Cunha’s performances and commitment will be crucial in helping the club move forward.

Isco suggests crowdfunding to extend Antony's Betis loan

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Real Betis midfielder Isco has humorously suggested that the club should crowdfund to extend Brazilian winger Antony's loan from Manchester United.

Antony, who joined Betis in January for the remainder of the season, has made a significant impact, scoring four goals and providing four assists in 12 appearances. Despite his strong performances, Betis are covering a substantial portion of his wages, with reports indicating they pay at least 84% of his £100,000-per-week salary.

"We have to crowdfund so he can stay at least another year," Isco joked in an interview with DAZN. "We've noticed a change since he arrived; he brings us a lot. I'm happy to have Antony here.



He's surprised us all with his humility and desire to help."

Since Antony's arrival, Betis have been in fine form, losing just two of their 12 matches, including a six-match winning streak in La Liga. Their recent

2-1 derby victory over Sevilla helped them maintain sixth place, which would secure European football next season, with the top four qualifying for the Champions League.

Antony's move to Betis followed a tough period at Manchester United. The £81m signing from Ajax in 2022 struggled for consistency, scoring just once in the Premier League since April 2023 and only featuring in 13 of United's 33 games this season.

Betis' record signing remains the £22m they spent on Brazilian winger Denilson in 1998. If Antony's loan is extended, it could be another monumental step for the club.

LAFC & Club America may Face play-off for Club World Cup spot

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Major League Soccer side LAFC and Mexican giants Club America could play a one-off match to determine the final spot in the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup.

The vacancy arose after Club Leon was removed from the tournament for violating FIFA's multi-club ownership rules due to their ties with fellow qualifiers Pachuca.

FIFA confirmed it is considering the play-off, with the winner replacing Club Leon in Group D, alongside Chelsea, Flamengo, and Esperance Sportive de Tunisie.

"FIFA can confirm it is



considering one play-off match between LAFC and Club America for the right to participate in the FIFA Club World Cup 2025," a statement read.

LAFC, featuring former Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud and ex-

France captain Hugo Lloris, finished as runners-up to Club Leon in the 2023 Concacaf Champions League. Meanwhile, Club America is the highest-ranked team that did not qualify.

However, the situation remains unresolved, as Club Leon has taken its case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), with a hearing set for April 23. Costa Rican club Alajuelense, which initially filed the complaint against Leon, also has an appeal pending.

The expanded 32-team Club World Cup will be hosted in the United States, running from June 15 to July 13.