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EDO: Tribunal affirms Okpebholo as gov, dismisses Ighodalo, PDP's petition

By Dave Oludare Oso



Finally, Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State can heave a sigh of relief and get down to brass tacks as the Edo State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal has affirmed him and the All Progressives Congress (APC), winners of the state's September 21, 2024 governorship poll.

The three-man panel of the tribunal upheld the election as being validly conducted, just as it dismissed the petition brought before it by Asue Ighodalo and the Peoples Democratic Party on Wednesday in Abuja.

Chairman of the tribunal, Justice Wilfred Kpochi delivered the landmark judgment on Wednesday evening.

Among others, the tribunal held that the petitioners failed to prove over-voting and also failed to call relevant witnesses

Besides, Justice Kpochi asserted that

Ighodalo and PDP did not speak to the documents they tendered, instead the documents were dumped on the tribunal.

To prove over-voting, the tribunal said that the two petitioners are required by law to tender the voter's register, BVAS and EC8A which they did not do according the requirements of the law.

Similarly, the tribunal Chairman held that no eyewitnesses were called to testify on alleged over-voting and such making the allegations unbelievable.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had last year declared Okpebholo and APC winners of the governorship election having polled a majority votes 291, 667 to defeat his closet rival, Ighodalo of PDP, who garnered 247, 655 votes.

Not satisfied with the declaration, PDP and Ighodalo had sued the INEC

praying for nullification of Okpebholo's victory on the grounds of irregularities and non-compliance with the electoral laws.

The petitioners anchored their claims on alleged over-voting and wrong computation of results during collation of results.

Claiming that they have successfully demonstrated electoral malpractices in 765 polling units out of 4,519 across the state, the two petitioners through their lawyer Mr. Ken Mozia, SAN, emphasised that the petition should be determined by the impact of irregularities, not just the percentage of affected polling units.

Mozia highlighted discrepancies at various collation levels, where figures on Form EC8A (polling unit results) were allegedly reduced at the ward and local government collation stages (EC8B).

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

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9X3	166,223.50
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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
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8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
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Tinubu sacks Kyari as NNPC chief, reshuffles leadership

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has overhauled the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, removing Group Chief Executive Officer Mele Kyari and Board Chairman Pius Akinyelure, along with all board members appointed in November 2023.

In a statement by Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Tinubu appointed Engineer Bayo Ojulari as the new Group CEO and Musa Kida as the non-executive chairman of the 11-member board.

The president also confirmed Adedapo Segun, who replaced Isa Ajiya as Chief Financial Officer last November, as a board member.

The reconstituted board includes six non-executive directors representing Nigeria's geopolitical zones.

Bello Rabiou represents the North West, Yusuf Usman represents the North East, and Babs Omotowa, a former managing director of Nigeria LNG, represents the North Central.

Austin Avuru was appointed as a non-executive director from the South-South, David Ige from the South West, and Henry Obih from the South East.

In addition, Lydia Jafiya, Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Finance, and Aminu Ahmed, representing the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, will serve on the board.

All appointments take effect immediately, starting 2nd April 2025.

Invoking Section 59(2) of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021, President Tinubu justified the restructuring as a necessary step to enhance operational efficiency, restore investor confidence, and boost local content in the oil and gas sector.

The new board has been tasked with conducting a strategic review of NNPC's portfolio, including joint venture assets, to align with value-maximisation objectives.



Since taking office, the Tinubu administration has pushed oil sector reforms aimed at attracting investment. In 2024, NNPC reported securing \$17 billion in new sectoral investments.

The administration now targets \$30 billion in investment by 2027 and \$60 billion by 2030.

It also aims to increase oil production to two million barrels per day by 2027 and three million barrels by 2030.

Similarly, the government plans to boost gas production to eight billion cubic feet daily by 2027 and ten billion cubic feet by 2030.

Furthermore, President Tinubu expects the new board to increase NNPC's share of crude oil refining output to 200,000 barrels per day by 2027 and 500,000 barrels by 2030.

Kida, the new board chairman, is from Borno State.

He holds a degree in civil engineering from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and a postgraduate diploma in petroleum engineering from the Institut Francaise du Petrol in Paris.

With over 35 years in the oil and gas sector, he began his career at Elf Petroleum Nigeria before joining Total

Exploration and Production, where he rose to the position of Deputy Managing Director of Deep Water Services in 2015.

In 2024, he was appointed an Independent Non-Executive Director at Pan Ocean-Newcross Group.

Apart from his corporate career, Kida is a former national basketball player and previously served as the President of the Nigerian Basketball Federation.

Ojulari, the new Group CEO, hails from Kwara State.

Until his appointment, he was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at Renaissance Africa Energy Company.

His company recently led the \$2.4 billion acquisition of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria. Ojulari, an alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University, began his career at Elf Aquitaine before joining Shell in 1991.

He later held senior roles across Europe and the Middle East, working as a petroleum process and production engineer, strategic planner, field developer, and asset manager.

In 2015, he became the Managing Director of Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company.

Peter Obi criticises Tinubu administration, calls for leadership reform

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

Peter Obi, the Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, has accused President Bola Tinubu's administration of economic mismanagement, asserting that the government has failed to implement effective policies.

Speaking in an interview on Arise News Prime Time on Tuesday, April 1, Obi pointed to several key issues, including the devaluation of the naira, rising national debt, and high-interest rates, which he believes have worsened Nigeria's economic woes.

Obi criticised President Tinubu's decision to float the naira without ensuring adequate productivity to back up the currency's value. He argued that such a move had only exacerbated Nigeria's economic challenges.

"You cannot devalue your currency without productivity," Obi stated, emphasising that he would have prioritised injecting money into productive sectors of the economy to ensure sustainable growth.

The former governor of Anambra State also expressed concern over Nigeria's growing debt, which he said had surged from N17 trillion to over N170 trillion in just two years under Tinubu's administration. He highlighted that the cost of debt servicing now exceeds the government's budget for crucial sectors like healthcare and education.

Obi cited the fact that 70% of primary



healthcare centres in the country were non-functional, along with the deterioration in primary schools, as signs of the government's failure to address basic needs.

On governance, Obi stressed that leadership under Tinubu had been ineffective, noting that positive changes could have been achieved within two years with the right leadership.

"If I were president, you would have seen progress in critical areas like education and healthcare," Obi asserted.

He also criticised the high-interest rates, which he said were making it difficult for businesses to thrive in the country.

read also: Peter Obi prevented me from defeating Sanwo-Olu – Jandor

Despite challenges within the Labour Party, Obi reaffirmed his commitment to the party, stating he was working with other political figures, including former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, to improve Nigeria's future.

He also expressed concerns over the government's treatment of opposition voices, claiming that Nigeria's political space was designed to suppress opposition, citing the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State as an example of the administration's authoritarian tendencies.

Looking ahead to 2027, Obi remained focused on forming alliances to address Nigeria's challenges, particularly in education and healthcare.

"I am not desperate to be president; I am desperate for Nigeria to work," he concluded.

BAYO OJULARI: 10 interesting facts about new NNPCCL supremo

By Dave Oludare Oso

Nigerians woke up on Wednesday to hear of a mildly shocking news that President Bola Tinubu has removed Malam Mele Kyari as Group Chief Executive Officer, CEO of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Ltd and appointed Mr Bayo Bashir Ojulari as his replacement.

The action is regarded as part of the long expected sweeping change at the oil company that also included the reconstitution of the Chief Pius Akinyelure led board.

The appointment of Ojulari will not be news to many as there have been speculations for some months now that he is the President's preferred candidate for the post.

A statement by Bayo Onanuga, a presidential spokesperson said the restructuring of the Board of NNPC Ltd was crucial for enhancing operational efficiency, and restoring investor confidence in the Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

Onanuga's statement added that "it would also boost local content, drive economic growth, and advance gas commercialisation and diversification.

"The President handed out an immediate action plan to the new board: to conduct a strategic portfolio review of NNPC-operated and Joint Venture Assets to ensure alignment with value maximisation objectives.

"President Tinubu also tasked the new board to elevate NNPC's share of crude oil refining output to 200,000 barrels by 2027 and reach 500,000 by 2030."

Expectedly, the question that will be on most, if not all Nigerians' mind is: Who



is Bayo Ojulari and why is the President confident that he can drive the new board to achieve these goals he set for for the NNPCCLtd in the oil industry?

NEW DAILY PRIME unearthed these 10 compelling facts about the new sheriff in NNPC kingdom.

Bayo Ojulari, the new NNPC Ltd. Group CEO, is a Nigerian of Kwara State extraction.

Until his new appointment, he was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Renaissance Africa Energy Company.

Renaissance Africa Energy Company under the leadership of Ojulari recently led a consortium of indigenous energy firms in the landmark acquisition of the entire equity holding in the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), worth 2.4 billion dollars.

Bayo Ojulari is an alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

He graduated with a degree in

Mechanical Engineering.

Bayo Ojulari worked for Elf Aquitaine as the first Nigerian process engineer to begin a stellar career in the oil sector.

From Elf, he joined Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd in 1991 as an associate production technologist.

Apart from working in Nigeria, Bayo Ojulari worked in Europe and the Middle East in different capacities as a petroleum process and production engineer, strategic planner, field developer, and asset manager.

Ojulari worked at Shell for over 24 years and In 2015, he became the managing director of Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO).

Ojulari established the BAT Advisory and Energy Company Nigeria Ltd in September 2021, a company providing consultancy services to firms in the oil and gas/energy sector.

Fake constituents used by Akpabio, Bello to process my recall – Natasha

By Dave Oludare Oso



Suspended Kogi Central senator, Mrs Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, has claimed that the duo of Senate President, Godswill Akpabio and immediate past governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello, manufactured fake constituents to initiate her recall process.

This is in a reaction to last week's recall process activated against the embattled legislator.

Despite state and police bans for any gathering or celebration, supporters from Kogi Central's five local government areas gathered early in Ihima, Okehi LGA, to welcome the embattled PDP lawmaker on Tuesday.

Natasha received a rousing welcome from supporters despite a government ban on rallies and processions.

However, the senator in a statement issued Wednesday, challenged Bello to tell the world where he

manufactured the names of those fake constituents calling for her recall.

She noted: "All available evidence and facts point directly to Bello as the mastermind behind the recall move."

Akpoti-Uduaghan cited Bello's past actions before and during the 2023 general election when he was accused of orchestrating multiple attacks against her.

The senator described the recall attempt as a continuation of Bello's political vendetta against her person.

She added: "I will advise the former governor to rather focus on clearing his name over allegations of fraudulent diversion of N89.2 billion, instead of attempting to destabilize the mandate given to me by the people of Kogi Central.

"The former governor's hands are already full with corruption allegations, yet he is still bent on frustrating the will of the people.

"His actions before and during the last general elections, where he sponsored numerous attacks against me, are well documented. This recall attempt is nothing but another ploy to undermine the people's will.

"It is now very clear to the whole world how popular I am in my constituency. The powers that be did try to suppress the will of the people but my people emphatically said no. No to injustice, no to exploitation of women, no to fake recall, no to Yahaya Bello and his allies.

"They (My people) came out en masse to resist government intimidation. We thank them for the massive show of love. We also thank our oppressors because their actions have now made them more unpopular while we gained more support.

"As more me, I will do more for my people. I will not betray them. I will continue to give my best and they should be rest-assured of our best representation all the time," the Senator said.

1,955 Nigerian nurses under probe for exam fraud in UK

By Dave Oludare Oso

Not less than 1,238 Nigerian nurses and midwives allegedly indicted in a widespread exam fraud at Yunnik Test Centre in Ibadan, Oyo State are facing probe by Nursing and Midwifery Council in the United Kingdom.

The NMC also said 717 Nigerian nurses and midwives are being probed for the exam fraud at the Ibadan centre.

The council, which disclosed this in a statement, noted that 1,955 Nigerian professionals were impacted by the concerns at Yunnik test centre because they took their tests there.

Earlier, the Home Office asked some Nigerian nurses and midwives being probed for an exam fraud that occurred in Nigeria to leave the UK.

According to Nursing Times, the nurses, who are still awaiting the outcomes of their appeals, have had their visas revoked by the UK.

In 2023, the UK's council launched a probe into the Yunnik Technologies Test Centre in Ibadan, Oyo State, and commenced investigation following an alert it received about unusual data coming from the centre's site.

Analysis of data from the test centre showed that the nurses were sitting their Computer-Based Test in record time.

The CBT is one of two aspects of a test of competence that some foreign nurses must complete as part of their NMC application, usually sat in their home countries.

Giving the breakdown, the council highlighted that four groups of professionals were affected by the concerns at the Yunnik test centre in Ibadan.

It stated, "Professionals on the register, who achieved their CBT in a time we believe is more likely than not to indicate



that they obtained their result fraudulently (48).

"Applicants wishing to join the register, who achieved their CBT in a time we believe is more likely than not to indicate that they obtained their result fraudulently (669).

"Professionals on the register, about whom we did not take forward allegations of fraud but whose CBT was invalidated (467).

"Applicants wishing to join the register, about whom there was insufficient evidence of fraud but whose CBT was invalidated (771)."

It said the pattern of test taking at Yunnik was in stark contrast to other sites in Nigeria and globally, and indicated widespread fraud whereby hundreds of people at one site were passing the test in times which are highly improbable.

It noted that its regulatory approach to addressing this meant that all affected individuals would be given the opportunity to obtain a new, valid CBT result, with our test provider, Pearson VUE, covering the candidate exam fee.

"Those registrants in group three would then be able to stay on the register with no further action needed. Those applicants in group four would be able to progress to a complete application and join the register if all requirements have been met (including English language

requirements, health and character requirements etc).

"Those in groups one and two had the opportunity to retake their CBT, however this would not guarantee remaining on, or joining, the register. Those registrants in group one were referred to an Independent Panel to consider the concerns under our 'fraudulent entry' process.

"Those applicants in group two are, upon obtaining a new CBT and demonstrating that they have met all other requirements, having their applications reviewed by an Assistant Registrar. This is because even with a new CBT, there remain concerns relating to our Guidance on health and character, given what happened at Yunnik," it added.

The council further clarified that the numbers of applicants quoted were the number of in-train applications, not the number of completed applications which had been submitted.

It said upon obtaining a new, valid CBT result, individuals would still need to complete and submit their application to us, before an AR could review it and take a decision.

**Continue reading
on next page**

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On where the council is, it emphasised that the Assistant Registrar has considered 202 complete applications for those with fraud concerns.

“183 have been refused on the basis that they do not meet the character requirements for registrations. Nine applications have been approved. We have concluded nine registration appeals for applicants seeking to appeal an Assistant Registrar’s decision. Three have been allowed and six have been dismissed.

“Since the hearings started in March 2024, 12 registrants have had a fraudulent entry hearing outcome. Of those, 10 have been removed from the register after fraud was found proved by an independent panel, and two people have been allowed to remain on the register after the panel found fraudulent entry was not proved,” it noted.

On support the council is offering to nurses awaiting a decision, it said it is a priority for the council to resolve cases as swiftly and safely as possible and it is working closely with all parties, including representatives, to schedule the remaining hearings in accordance with their requirements and availability.

“We have a dedicated team in place to progress cases. Where possible, we continue to schedule hearings sooner for individuals who tell us about extenuating circumstances.

“We understand that being involved in our regulatory processes can be distressing for people, and we are currently working to better understand this impact so that we can find more ways to support people.

“In terms of the things we have done or currently do for those involved in this particular concern: We have worked with employers to help them uphold their duty of care to people. As part of this, we provided comprehensive FAQs to ensure, as far as we can, a clear and consistent understanding of what’s happened and what it means for people,” it stated.

It further said the council worked with Nigerian Nurses Charitable Association UK to provide their members with as much information and clarity as we can about our regulatory work and what it means for them.

“We worked similarly with unions and representative bodies to provide clear and consistent information about our processes, as well as signposting to support and wellbeing resources.

“We extended our Careline to applicants to our register, as well as to those already on the register. The Careline offers independent emotional and practical support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for nurses and midwives involved in our regulatory processes.

“We increased our access to safeguarding professionals to advise colleagues when there may be safeguarding actions we need to take,” it concluded.

The mass exodus of Nigerian health workers, particularly nurses and midwives, has reached alarming levels in recent years, as many seek better opportunities abroad.

The former Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, Faruk Abubakar, said over 15,000 nurses and midwives left the country in 2023.

Abubakar further noted that 42,000 nurses left the country in the last three years, stating the number kept increasing every year.

In 2022, the former President of the National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives, Michael Nnachi, said over 57,000 nurses have left Nigeria for greener pastures abroad from 2017 to 2022.

Fayose backs Tinubu on removal of NNPC boss

By Adeniyi Yusuf

Former Governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose has lauded President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as he sacked Mele Kyari.

This followed the removal of the board of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) including its Group Chief Executive Officer, Mele Kyari and board chairman Pius Akinyelure.

The sack was announced by presidential spokesperson Bayo Onanuga in an early Wednesday morning statement posted on X.

“President Tinubu removed all other board members appointed with Akinyelure and Kyari in November 2023,” Mr Onanuga wrote.

Mr Kyari was first appointed NNPC chief by former President Muhammadu Buhari but was reappointed in 2023 by President Tinubu.

According to a statement on Wednesday, the president also appointed a new board



including a new GCEO.

“The new 11-man board has Engineer Bashir Bayo Ojulari as the Group CEO and Ahmadu Musa Kida as non-executive chairman,” Mr Onanuga wrote.

Reacting to the sacking in a post seen by The New Daily Prime on the X handle of the former governor, he applauded the president for removing Kyari.

Fayose noted that this move would bring progress to the sector.

He said, “Removal of the NNPC CEO, Mele Kyari, is a welcome development. It is the smartest move ever by President Tinubu.

“It is hoped that this will bring a better lease of life to the NNPC in particular and Nigerians in general.

“This same courage to wield the big stick should also be extended to other system with system so rotten as the NNPC.”

13 missing, 2 fisherwomen dead in Bayelsa boat mishap

By Helen Okechukwu

About thirteen persons are said to be missing after two boats collided, killing two fisherwomen in one of the waterways in Bayelsa State.

The spokesperson of the Bayelsa State Police Command, Musa Muhammad, confirmed the incident, stating that one of the boat drivers has been taken into custody for questioning.

New Daily Prime learned that the tragic incident occurred on Tuesday evening along the Anyama-Ijaw-Lobia-Foropa route in Southern Ijaw.



Meanwhile, a source disclosed that divers who were present at the scene conducted a rescue operation for the 13 missing passengers who had boarded the boat.

Further disclosing details, an eyewitness

narrated that the Meeting Marine speedboat, heading from Anyama-Ijaw to Lobia and Foropa communities, collided at the Akede community waterfront.

Addressing the accident, the Chairman of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria in Bayelsa State, Mr. Ogoniba Ipigansi, said the union and divers are conducting a rescue search for the missing passengers.

The chairman noted that the passengers on board the speedboat were wearing life jackets and expressed hope of hearing news of survivors.

APC rejects Obi's criticism, says Tinubu's economic success undeniable

By Friday Omosola

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has dismissed former Labour Party presidential candidate Peter Obi's criticism of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies.

The party stated that the administration's successes are evident and require no validation from the opposition.

Obi, during an interview on Arise Television's Prime Time on Tuesday, accused President Tinubu of failing in the implementation of economic reforms, claiming he would have performed better if he were in office.

However, the APC, through its National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, issued a strongly worded response rejecting Obi's assertions.

Morka described Obi's remarks as a display of 'frustration and political desperation', arguing that the economic policies of the Tinubu administration have led to significant progress across various sectors.

According to the APC spokesperson, Obi's continued claims of being a better alternative reflect an 'election failure-induced hangover' and a refusal to accept the reality that he is not the president.

The ruling party emphasised that opposition politics should be about constructive criticism rather than outright denial of progress.



It highlighted several economic achievements under Tinubu, including a forecasted 3.6 per cent economic growth for the current fiscal year, a steady increase in foreign reserves, operational local refineries, and the successful harmonization of multiple exchange rates, which has boosted foreign direct investment and remittances.

Other listed achievements include the clearance of a \$7 billion forex backlog, reduction of the debt servicing ratio from 98 per cent to approximately 64 per cent, increased oil production exceeding 1.8 million barrels per day—surpassing OPEC's quota of 1.5 million barrels per day for the first time in years—and a thriving stock exchange market ranked among the most profitable globally.

The statement also pointed out growth in the agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and creative sectors, contributing to a more diversified economy.

The APC further criticised Obi's tenure

as governor of Anambra State, accusing him of leaving behind a legacy of economic stagnation, infrastructural decay, and religious polarization.

The party asserted that Tinubu, both as former governor of Lagos State and now as president, has demonstrated 'bold and unwavering' leadership, transforming challenges into opportunities.

Citing a recent assessment by Chatham House, which adjudged Nigeria's economy as the most competitive it has been in 25 years, the APC argued that global institutions and economic experts recognize the country's economic recovery, even as Obi and other opposition figures continue to deny the administration's progress.

"President Tinubu remains undistracted and focused on securing good governance and improved economic conditions for all Nigerians," the statement added.

TikTok deletes 2.4m Nigerian videos over policy violations in 3 months

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

TikTok removed 2.4 million videos from Nigerian users in the fourth quarter of 2024 for violating its content policies.

The company, operated by ByteDance, listed Nigeria among the top 50 countries where policy-violating content originated during this period.

According to TikTok's latest Community Guidelines Enforcement Report, a total of 153 million videos were taken down globally in Q4 2024.

The report revealed that the United States recorded the highest number of removals, with 8.5 million videos deleted.

The company stated that the top 50 markets accounted for approximately 90% of all content removals during the quarter.

The violations spanned multiple categories, including integrity and authenticity, privacy and security, mental and behavioral health, safety, and civility.

Also, TikTok removed 211.5 million accounts during the period, comprising fake accounts and those suspected to be owned by users under the age of 13.



Fake accounts made up the largest share, with 185.3 million deletions, while 20.5 million accounts were flagged for being owned by underage users.

Another 5.6 million accounts were removed for unspecified reasons.

In a statement, TikTok emphasised its commitment to safeguarding the platform from fraudulent activity.

"We remain vigilant in our efforts to detect external threats and protect the platform from fake accounts and engagement.

"These threats persistently probe and attack our systems, leading to occasional fluctuations in reported metrics."

The company also noted that updates to its classification of fake likes and followers in Q4 contributed to some of the observed increases in removals.

It said, "In Q4 2024, we also updated the way we classify fake likes and followers removed over time, which contributed to some of the overall increases observed in these categories."

Police officer in Kaduna vows to take revenge on Southerners over Uromi killing

By Helen Okechukwu

Following the tragic attack that occurred in Uromi, Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State, a police officer in Kaduna State, Hadaina Hussain Dan-Taki, on Tuesday vowed to retaliate against southerners living in northern Nigeria.



The incident in Uromi, which took place on Thursday, reportedly claimed the lives of sixteen northerners who were said to be en route to celebrate Sallah when they were ambushed by a mob.

In a comment posted on Facebook, the police officer incited violence by suggesting that northerners would take drastic action against southerners residing in the North.

He wrote: "I swear to Almighty God, we must do something to you guys. Have you forgotten all your brothers living here? Mark my words—in a month, or even after a week—you will see the result."

Due to the threat, an X user, Uchechukwu Ogbonna, alerted Prince Adejobi, Abuja police spokesperson, as he wrote, "Take care of this, sir," while sharing screenshots of the post.

Recalled that after the mob searched the vehicle, guns were found and jungle justice was launched. Since then, the act has spiked widespread reactions as citizens call for the arrest of perpetrators.

The state governor, Monday Okpebholo, and President Bola Tinubu have condemned the attack.

Meanwhile, reports noted that about 14 persons linked to the attack have been transferred to Abuja for questioning.

Will Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan survive recall like Dino Melaye?

By **Damilola Olufemi**

Tensions are escalating in Kogi State as suspended Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan defies security restrictions to visit her constituency, triggering renewed political drama reminiscent of the recall saga once faced by former senator Dino Melaye.

Despite a state-imposed ban on rallies and large gatherings citing security concerns, Akpoti-Uduaghan flew into Kogi Central to celebrate Sallah with her constituents. The senator, currently serving a six-month suspension from the National Assembly, insists her visit was lawful and not politically motivated.

“This is my land. I am an Ebira woman and the daughter of the late Jimoh Abdul Akpoti,” she declared during the gathering. “I am not breaking any law. This is not a rally or campaign. It’s a celebration with my people.”

She added that the event was held on private property, not public roads, and emphasized that her arrival by helicopter was intended to avoid breaching movement restrictions.

The visit, however, has drawn criticism from political rivals and state authorities. Kogi Governor Usman Ododo and Senate President Godswill Akpabio have both accused Akpoti-Uduaghan of violating public safety directives. The senator, in turn, accused both men of orchestrating a plot to silence and eliminate her.

“I have evidence that a meeting was held to plan my assassination and sponsor my recall,” she alleged, naming former Governor Yahaya Bello and the current administration as being complicit.

Allegations, Denials, and Political Crossfire

In a swift response, the Kogi State Government described the senator’s claims as “malicious and unfounded,” accusing her of inciting unrest and showing “blatant disregard for the law.”



“Suspended Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has consistently demonstrated a pattern of lawlessness, using deceit and disruption as political tools,” the state government said in a statement. “Governor Ododo has no interest in her theatrics.”

Amid the controversy, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) confirmed it had received a petition to recall Akpoti-Uduaghan. However, the commission noted several procedural flaws, including missing contact details and invalid addresses from petitioners.

The petitioners, reportedly led by Charity Ijese, submitted six bags of documents claiming to represent more than half of the 474,554 registered voters across five LGAs: Adavi, Ajaokuta, Ogori/Magongo, Okehi, and Okene.

INEC initially faulted the submission but later acknowledged receiving updated contact information. The commission has formally notified both the Senate President and Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan of the petition.

Echoes of Dino Melaye’s Recall Battle

The unfolding drama draws parallels to the failed recall attempt against Senator Dino Melaye in 2018. Despite a large number of collected signatures, only 5.3% of registered voters turned out for verification—well below the required 51%.

Legal challenges and low voter turnout ultimately saved Melaye, raising questions about whether Akpoti-Uduaghan could benefit from similar public apathy or institutional shortcomings.

What the Law Requires for a Recall

Under Section 69 of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2022, recalling a senator is a rigorous, multi-step process. More than half of registered voters in the affected district must sign a petition, verified through a public INEC process. If the threshold is met, a referendum must then be held and passed by a majority vote.

With over 474,000 registered voters in Kogi Central, at least 237,000 must participate in a recall referendum for it to succeed—a daunting figure given past voter turnout levels in the region.

So far, petitioners have reportedly met only six of the ten constitutional steps required to recall the senator. Whether they can overcome the remaining legal and logistical hurdles remains to be seen.

As the battle intensifies, observers are watching closely to see whether Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan will mirror Dino Melaye’s survival or become the first senator in Nigerian history to be successfully recalled.

Kenyan kills mother of his 3 kids for ignoring his calls

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Police in Kenya have launched a massive manhunt for a young man identified as Samuel Njoroge after he cruelly killed mother of his three kids identified as Naomi Chebet.

Naomi was found murdered in her rented apartment under mysterious circumstances on Sunday morning, which left her relatives with no clue on who the murderer is.

However, Samuel Njoroge, was suspected to be the murderer after he posted a cryptic message on his Facebook wall.

Samuel was seemingly confessing to the act in the message.

The deceased, who shared three kids with Samuel separated from him but later got back with him in the first week of March and everyone thought they were in good and perfect terms.

The corpse of Naomi was discovered by her brother, Harrison, with disturbing injuries that suggest a brutal attack.

According to a Harrison, a neighbour was on phone in the evening of Saturday, March 22, at around 9 pm, when he saw Naomi entering the house with Samuel.



But everything took a different turn at approximately an hour and a half later, at 10:30 PM, when he saw Samuel leaving the house wearing a mask.

Harrison, who works late nights, returned home between 12 am and 1 am and found Naomi lying on the couch, covered with a blanket. Assuming she was resting after a long day at work, he chose not to wake her.

However, Naomi remained in the same position for a long while which alarmed Harrison.

He uncovered the blanket and made the grim discovery. His sister was unresponsive and had been dead for hours.

Samuel then sent a chilling message: “Mm nilimuuwa coz ya upuzi, mbona anijibu” (his exact words; “I killed her because of nonsense, why isn’t she answering me?”). A message whose words were cold and merciless.

As if that was not enough, he took to his social media page and posted: “Wewe kufa uniodokee malaya wewe.” (“Die and leave me alone, you prostitute.”)

It was evident that he had ended Naomi’s life and felt no remorse.

Expectedly, the family of the deceased is seeking justice for their daughter while the hunt for the culprit is on.

Congo govt, M23 rebels hold direct peace talks April 9

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government and the M23 rebels backed by Rwanda have agreed to hold direct peace talks, sources from both parties confirmed.

The DRC government and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have agreed to direct peace talks, facilitated by Qatari mediation

The talks, scheduled for April 9, are a potential breakthrough in resolving Central Africa's enduring conflict

Key issues to be addressed include the withdrawal of M23 forces, reintegration of rebel fighters, and broader security concerns in eastern DRC

The peace meeting between the DRC government and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, scheduled for April 9, is anticipated to mark a crucial step in addressing one of Central Africa's most enduring conflicts.

Facilitated by Qatari mediation, the meeting marks a potential breakthrough in efforts to resolve one of Central Africa's most protracted conflicts.

According to Reuters, the meeting which has been scheduled to hold in Doha would be the two sides' first direct negotiations since M23 fighters captured eastern Congo's two largest cities.

The talks are expected to address key issues, including the withdrawal of M23 forces from occupied territories, the reintegration of rebel fighters, and broader security concerns in the eastern DRC.



This direct dialogue marks a shift from previous indirect negotiations and comes amid ongoing regional efforts, including the Nairobi and Luanda processes.

While past peace efforts have struggled due to persistent clashes and mutual distrust, this engagement could signal a renewed push for stability in the Great Lakes region.

Despite multiple initiatives, lasting peace remains elusive due to ongoing violence and deep-seated mistrust.

Previous attempts at negotiations have largely been indirect or mediated by regional organizations, but this direct dialogue signals a possible shift towards a lasting resolution.

The conflict between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels has drawn significant mediation efforts from regional and international actors.

Despite multiple initiatives, lasting peace remains elusive due to ongoing violence and deep-seated mistrust.

Qatar is the latest mediator, facilitating direct peace talks between

the DRC government and M23 rebels.

The East African Community (EAC) launched the Nairobi Process, which focuses on negotiating with various armed groups, including the M23 rebels, to bring stability to eastern DRC.

This initiative is part of a broader regional effort to reduce conflict and promote peace.

However, Angola's Luanda Process, which was led by President João Lourenço, ended as of March 2025.

Angola withdrew from its mediation role due to a combination of failed negotiations and external factors, including the M23 rebels' rejection of talks and the sudden diplomatic engagement between the DRC and Rwanda in Doha.

The United Nations (UN), through MONUSCO and the Security Council, has also played a peacekeeping and diplomatic role.

Nigeria's disability groups push for stronger commitments ahead of 2025 global summit

By Helen Okechukwu

As Nigeria prepares for the 2025 Global Disability Summit (GDS) in Berlin, disability rights advocates are pushing for stronger commitments that reflect the real challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

The Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) has emphasized the need for meaningful engagement, ensuring that government commitments align with lived experiences.

Unlike previous summits, where disability groups had little input, this year's process has been shaped by direct advocacy says The Punch Health Wise.

Aliyu Abdullahi, Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD's) President, described GDS 2025 as a milestone for Nigeria's disability community.

Abdullahi noted that OPDs have played a key role in drafting commitments, making them more inclusive and impactful.



The summit, co-hosted by Germany, Jordan, and the International Disability Alliance, will take place on April 2-3, 2025. The theme is “Amplifying the Leadership of Persons with Disabilities for an Inclusive and Sustainable Future.”

Theophilus Odaudu, Program Officer for West Africa at the Disability Rights Fund, stressed the importance of implementing commitments effectively. He urged stakeholders to prioritize policies that improve economic inclusion and accessibility.

The Albinism Association of

Nigeria (AAN) has also played a vital role, ensuring that commitments address the needs of marginalized groups. With support from the Disability Rights Fund, the “Voices from the Field” project has helped shape a more inclusive agenda.

Advocates are now calling for awareness campaigns, policy lobbying, and stronger collaborations between OPDs, government agencies, and international partners. “The focus must shift to engagement,” the statement included, stressing the need for sustained implementation and monitoring.

UKHSA calls for expert input to combat rising TB rates in England

By Helen Okechukwu

With tuberculosis (TB) cases in England rising sharply for a second consecutive year, the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has launched a call for evidence to shape its next five-year TB National Action Plan (2026–2031).

The move comes amid a worrying rise in TB cases, with provisional data for 2024 indicating a 13% increase in notifications compared to 2023—marking the second consecutive year of significant growth.

TB rates in England are diverging from the trajectory needed to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) elimination targets.

While the country remains classified as low-incidence, the latest figures suggest it is nearing the WHO-defined threshold of 10 cases per 100,000 people.

The UKHSA emphasizes the need for renewed action to prevent further setbacks and reduce health inequalities.

TB is a bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs but can spread to other parts of the body. Symptoms include a persistent cough lasting more than three weeks, night sweats, weight loss, and fever.

Despite being both preventable and curable, TB remains a global public health challenge and is the leading



cause of death from a single infectious agent, surpassing COVID-19.

The UK is not alone in facing an increase in TB cases. Many countries have reported similar trends following disruptions in healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UKHSA is now seeking expert input to develop strategies that will improve TB prevention, detection, and treatment.

Call for Evidence Open Until May 2025

The call for evidence, open from April 2 to May 2, 2025, invites contributions from academics, healthcare professionals, epidemiologists, policymakers, civil society representatives, and individuals with lived experience of TB.

Their insights will help shape targeted interventions for high-risk populations and ensure the new action plan is data-driven and effective.

Dr. Esther Robinson, Head of the TB Unit at UKHSA, highlighted the urgency of the initiative: “TB is curable and preventable, but the disease remains a serious public health issue in England. While England is still considered a low-incidence country for TB, the rise in cases over recent years means that we are now just below that threshold.

“(This call for evidence will help us develop an action plan that prioritizes the most effective interventions to reverse this trend, focusing particularly on the needs of those most affected.”

The new plan will build on progress made under the current Tuberculosis Action Plan for England, published in 2021, while addressing emerging challenges in TB control. The UKHSA encourages all those with expertise or experience in TB prevention, public health, and healthcare systems to contribute via GOV.UK.

Uzor Arukwe reacts as Segun Arinze calls him Nollywood's biggest star

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood actor Uzor Arukwe is overjoyed after veteran actor Segun Arinze called him the biggest actor in the country right now.

Arinze made the bold statement in a recent interview with QED, where he praised Arukwe's performance in the trending movie *Love in Every Word*.

During the interview, Arinze did not hold back his admiration. He specifically highlighted Arukwe's role as Odogwu, describing it as outstanding. "Love in Every Word—Uzor did so well in that film," he said. "He is the biggest deal right now. I'm so happy for him because he has worked his way up the ladder."

The veteran actor's endorsement has sent waves across Nollywood, drawing attention to Arukwe's talent and hard work. Many fans and industry insiders agree with Arinze, praising Arukwe for his ability to bring depth to his characters.

Uzor Arukwe reacts with gratitude

Arukwe did not hide his excitement after hearing Arinze's glowing remarks. He expressed his appreciation, calling the praise both humbling and inspiring.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), he shared a clip of the interview and wrote, "This is the most humbling video I've come across on the internet today. Hearing a veteran like Uncle Segun, whom I respect so much, sing my praise really put me in my feelings. Thank you so much, Uncle Segun, for your kind words. This video made my day."

His response quickly gained traction, with fans and colleagues flooding the comment section with congratulatory messages. Many praised his dedication to his craft and said Arinze's recognition was well deserved.

A rising star in Nollywood



Arukwe has been steadily climbing the ranks in Nollywood, earning a reputation for his versatility and powerful performances. He has appeared in several hit films and TV shows, captivating audiences with his ability to embody different roles effortlessly.

His portrayal of Odogwu in *Love in Every Word* has been particularly well received. Viewers have praised his intense and emotional performance, calling it one of his best so far. The film itself has also gained popularity, becoming one of the most talked-about productions in recent months.

Industry experts believe Arukwe's career is on an upward trajectory. With endorsements from veterans like Arinze and a growing fan base, he is poised to become one of Nollywood's most sought-after actors.

The power of recognition

Segun Arinze's praise highlights the importance of industry veterans supporting younger talents. In an industry known for intense competition, public recognition from respected figures can boost an actor's confidence and career.

Arukwe's case is a perfect example. While he has been consistently delivering excellent performances, Arinze's words have placed an even bigger spotlight on him. This type of recognition not only validates hard work but also inspires other rising stars to keep pushing forward.

What's next for Uzor Arukwe?

With the recent buzz around *Love in Every Word* and Arinze's glowing endorsement, all eyes are now on Uzor Arukwe. Fans are eager to see what he does next and how he will continue to grow in the industry.

Many believe this is just the beginning. With his talent, dedication, and now the backing of industry veterans, Arukwe is well on his way to cementing his place as one of Nollywood's top actors.

For now, he is basking in the moment and appreciating the recognition. And if his past performances are anything to go by, audiences can expect even bigger things from him in the future.

Zlatan is upcoming artist – Portable

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian singer Habeeb Okikiola, better known as Portable, has sparked controversy by calling his colleague Zlatan Ibile an “up-and-coming artist.”

In a recent interview on Echo Room, Portable questioned Zlatan’s popularity, especially among wealthy individuals. He argued that Zlatan’s music does not appeal to the upper class, which he believes limits his influence.

Car dealer dismisses Zlatan

According to Portable, a car dealer once advised him not to engage in any feud with Zlatan. The dealer reportedly dismissed Zlatan as insignificant, claiming he was only using Portable’s name to gain attention.

“There was a man I bought a car from. I wanted to upgrade my car for my birthday, so I went to one of my dealers. He told me I shouldn’t have responded to Zlatan. He said Zlatan was just trying to use my name for clout,” Portable said during the interview.

The singer went on to say that the dealer had never heard Zlatan’s music before. “He said he only just started hearing his name. He didn’t even know any of his songs,” Portable added.

Portable criticizes Zlatan’s music

Portable then criticized Zlatan’s music style, arguing that many wealthy people do not recognize his songs or lyrics. He questioned whether Zlatan’s music



could even be considered real music.

“A lot of rich people don’t know these artists’ lyrics. What are they even singing? Is that music? You can’t even do call and response. Are you joking?” he said.

Mixed reactions from fans

Portable’s remarks have since stirred reactions among fans and music lovers. While some agree with his opinion, others see it as an attempt to discredit Zlatan.

Zlatan Ibile, whose real name is Omoniyi Temidayo Raphael, rose to fame with his hit song “Zanku” and has since established himself in the Nigerian music industry. He is known for his energetic performances and signature dance style.

Zlatan yet to respond

Despite Portable’s claims, Zlatan remains a recognized name in Afrobeats and street pop. He has

collaborated with top artists in the industry, including Davido, Burna Boy, and Naira Marley.

As of now, Zlatan has not publicly responded to Portable’s comments. However, fans are eager to see if he will address the claims or simply ignore them.

Portable’s history of controversy

This is not the first time Portable has made bold statements about fellow artists. Known for his outspoken nature, he has previously clashed with other musicians and industry figures. His unpredictable personality keeps him in the headlines, and this latest statement only adds to his growing list of controversial moments.

The music industry drama continues. Whether Portable’s opinion holds any weight or not, one thing is certain: the Nigerian music industry is never short of drama.

Val Kilmer, star of 'Batman Forever' dies at 65

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Val Kilmer, who played Bruce Wayne in "Batman Forever," channeled Jim Morrison in Oliver Stone's "The Doors" and starred as a tubercular Doc Holliday in "Tombstone," died Tuesday in Los Angeles.

His daughter Mercedes told The New York Times the cause was pneumonia. He was 65. He had been battling throat cancer for several years.

Kilmer's reps did not immediately respond to Variety's request for comment.

The baby-faced blonde actor had a solid run as a leading man with a volatile reputation in the '80s and '90s, starring in "Top Gun," "Real Genius," "Willow," "Heat," and "The Saint." He returned briefly to screens in 2022's "Top Gun: Maverick" although he could no longer speak due to his cancer.

In 2021, a documentary on his life, "Val," was released. His son provided the actor's voice and the film utilized hundreds of hours of video he had recorded over the years, giving a revealing look at the sets he worked on and showing the actor to be an introspective thinker with an artist's soul.

Kilmer took over from Michael Keaton for Joel Schumacher's 1995 "Batman Forever," receiving mixed reviews for his take on the Dark Knight. He was replaced by George Clooney for 1997's "Batman & Robin," a notorious flop that nearly killed the franchise.

The New York Times said of "Batman Forever," "The prime costume is now worn by Val Kilmer, who makes a good Batman but not a better one than Michael



Keaton."

After reportedly turning down a role in Francis Ford Coppola's "The Outsiders," Kilmer broke out with a starring role in 1984 spy spoof "Top Secret!," in which he played a rock star and sang his own songs.

Following his turn as a brainy college student in the 1986 sci-fi comedy, "Real Genius," he became a major star, appearing opposite Tom Cruise in the worldwide hit "Top Gun." Kilmer met his future wife, actress Joanne Whalley, on the set of Ron Howard's fantasy film "Willow," and then appeared with her in "Kill Me Again" in 1989.

One of his most memorable roles was playing the charismatic and doomed Morrison in Oliver Stone's 1991 "The Doors." Kilmer memorized the lyrics to all of Morrison's songs before his audition, and he immersed himself in the role, wearing clothes similar to the singer's for close to a year. Roger Ebert wrote of his turn as Jim Morrison, "The performance is the best thing in the movie — and since nearly every scene centers on Morrison, that is not small praise."

After "Batman Forever," New Line persuaded him to come on board the troubled production of "The Island of Dr. Moreau," where Kilmer tangled with both the film's star, Marlon Brando, and

director John Frankenheimer. Frustrations on the production mounted when Brando refused to come to the set, and the documentary "Val" revealed a tense set where crew members grimly joked about Brando's stand-in, named Norm.

Frankenheimer, the second director to work on completing the film, reportedly said, "There are two things I will never ever do in my whole life. The first is that I will never climb Mt. Everest. The second is that I will never work with Val Kilmer ever again."

In the 1990s, Kilmer starred in Michael Apted's Western "Thunderheart" and "The Real McCoy" and had a small but memorable role as an Elvis-like mentor in Tony Scott's "True Romance." His role as a sardonic Doc Holliday in "Tombstone" (1993) was one of his most beloved performances, and in 1995, he appeared in "Heat" alongside Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.

He went on to star in "The Ghost and the Darkness" and the forgettable remake "The Saint," which he shot instead of returning as Batman in "Batman & Robin." Kilmer implied he didn't return as Batman because of scheduling issues, though Schumacher's description of him as "psychotic" could have also been a factor.

Portable, Speed Darlington set for April 18 celebrity boxing showdown

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

A fierce battle is brewing between two of Nigeria's most controversial musicians, Speed Darlington and Portable.

The entertainers are set to settle their long-running feud in a highly anticipated celebrity boxing match.

The fight will take place on April 18, 2025, at the Balmoral Convention Centre in Lagos. This event promises to be an exciting spectacle, drawing the attention of fans across the country.

How the feud began

The rivalry between Speed Darlington and Portable escalated in March 2025 after a disagreement over money. It all started when Darlington offered Portable ₦500,000 to perform at his upcoming show. However, Portable saw the amount as an insult.

"You are inviting me for a show, and you don't have money," Portable said. "You're using my name to promote your event. I charge ₦20 million per performance. Ask around. I didn't know you were poor. I don't want to be friends with poor people."

His comments sparked an angry reaction from Darlington, who expressed regret for inviting Portable in the first place.

"I regret it," he said. "Why the insults?"

But the dispute didn't end there. Instead, it took an unexpected turn. In response, Portable challenged Darlington to a physical fight. He confidently boasted that he would defeat the singer, just as he had done in his previous boxing match

against actor Charles Okocha.

Fans demand a fight

As the war of words intensified, social media users joined the conversation. Many fans encouraged the two musicians to settle their differences in a boxing ring. Seeing the rising public interest, event organizers stepped in to make the fight a reality.

Popular gaming platform Mygamerush took on the responsibility of hosting the bout. The company made an official announcement via Instagram, confirming the match.

"You asked, and now it is here! Two street kings battle for the ultimate street supremacy," Mygamerush wrote in a post.

Portable's boxing experience

This is not the first time Portable will be stepping into the boxing ring. In December 2023, he participated in a

similar celebrity match against Charles Okocha. The contest ended in Portable's favor, boosting his confidence as a fighter.

Now, he is ready to face Speed Darlington and prove once again that he is not just a musician but also a fierce competitor in the ring.

What to expect

The upcoming fight is generating widespread excitement. Fans are eager to see who will emerge victorious between the two entertainers. While Portable has experience, Speed Darlington's strength and determination cannot be underestimated.

With tensions high and both men eager to prove a point, April 18 promises to be a night of action-packed entertainment.

Who will claim the title of ultimate street champion? Nigerians are eagerly awaiting the announcement.



Elon, Trump lose political gamble in America's high-stakes court election

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Susan Crawford, a Democrat-backed candidate, has defeated conservative judge Brad Schimel in a historic and closely watched race for a seat on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, despite a \$21 million campaign boost from Tesla CEO Elon Musk and support from former President Donald Trump.

Crawford's win preserves the court's 4-3 liberal majority, a major victory for Democrats as the court prepares to decide critical cases on abortion rights, labor laws, and redistricting in the 2024 and 2028 elections.

"Growing up in Chippewa Falls, I never imagined I'd be facing the richest man in the world for justice in Wisconsin — and we won," Crawford said in her victory speech. "Wisconsin stood up and said loud and clear: justice does not have a price. Our courts are not for sale."

Wisconsin's Supreme Court plays a pivotal role in interpreting state laws and deciding high-profile cases. With Wisconsin a key battleground state, the court's ideological makeup could influence future presidential elections and congressional redistricting.

Had Schimel won, conservatives would have flipped control of the court, potentially altering rulings on contentious issues like reproductive freedom, union rights, and election laws.

The Musk-Trump Alliance and Its Failure

The election shattered spending records, with over \$80 million spent on the race — \$21 million of it from Musk and his allies, making it the most expensive judicial election in U.S. history.

Musk, who called the race a fight for "the future of Western civilization," funded aggressive get-out-the-vote efforts that included \$100 incentives for signing Republican petitions and reported \$1 million checks offered to voters in Wisconsin.



Trump, though not officially on the ballot, was widely seen as the ideological force behind Schimel's candidacy. The defeat dealt a symbolic blow to Trump's ongoing efforts to reshape America's judiciary ahead of the 2024 election.

"There's a huge problem with activists that are actually politicians in judges' robes," Musk told Fox News before the election.

Historic Turnout, Strong Democratic Momentum

Officials in Milwaukee reported a historic voter turnout, with seven polling stations temporarily running out of ballots due to the surge. Analysts say the surge was driven by backlash against attempts to politicize the judiciary and restrict voting rights.

In a post-election poll conducted by Marquette University Law School, 61% of respondents said the influence of money in judicial races was "very concerning," with 54% saying Musk's donation negatively affected their view of Schimel's candidacy.

In a separate race in Florida's 6th congressional district, Republican Randy Fine defeated Democratic newcomer Josh Weil, but by a margin of just 14 points — a sharp drop from the 30-point lead enjoyed by GOP predecessor Mike Waltz in 2020.

Weil, a public school teacher, raised over \$12 million in grassroots donations, signaling increasing Democratic energy in deep-red districts.

The Trump administration has intensified its criticism of the judiciary, with Vice President J.D. Vance recently arguing that judges should not be able to block presidential policies — remarks that legal scholars warn could endanger judicial independence.

"If a judge tried to command the attorney general, that's illegal," Vance said. "Judges shouldn't control executive power."

A recent Reuters report found an increase in threats against judges across the country, with 11 judges confirming heightened security risks.

Crawford's win maintains a liberal firewall in Wisconsin's judiciary and sends a national signal about the limits of billionaire influence, the resilience of grassroots democracy, and voter skepticism of politicized courts.

With the 2024 election cycle approaching, this race may prove a bellwether for American political dynamics: a clash of wealth, ideology, and civic action.

Trump announces sweeping 10-49% tariffs on all US trade partners

By Dave Oludare Oso

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, announced sweeping tariffs on some of its largest trading partners, and threatened to unleash a global trade war on what he has dubbed “liberation day.”

“This is one of the most important days, in my opinion, in American history,” Trump said, speaking on the White House lawn. For decades America had been “looted, pillaged and raped” by its trading partners, he said.

“In many cases, the friend is worse than the foe.”

Trump said he intends to impose “reciprocal tariffs” on foreign imports, charging US trading partners the same duties imposed by the country of origin on the same goods.

Unpending decades of US trade policy

Among other examples, Trump criticized European bans on imported chicken, Canada’s tariffs on dairy, and Japan’s levies on rice.

Trump said the US would charge half of the fees he feels trading partners unfairly impose on the US because the US people are “very kind”.

The president displayed a chart that said China charged the US 67% in “unfair” fees, and said the US would now levy a 34% fee. The EU charges 39% on imports, according to the White House, and will now be levied at 20%. Trump said the UK would be charged 10% more – equal to the Trump administration’s calculations of the UK’s fees on US imports.



The tariffs come on top of a lineup of levies that Trump has already implemented: an additional 20% tariff on all Chinese imports and a 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports. There is also a 10% tariff on energy imports from Canada.

Trump also announced in March a 25% tariff on all imported vehicles and, eventually, imported auto parts, which will start going into effect on Thursday.

“Reciprocal: that means they do it us and we do it to them. Very simple, can’t get any more simple than that,” he said. “This indeed will be the golden age of America,” he said.

Over the past few months, Trump has rattled global stock markets, alarmed corporate executives and economists, and triggered heated rows with the US’s largest trading partners by announcing and delaying plans to impose tariffs on foreign imports several times since taking office.

Trump has made clear the goals he wants to accomplish through his tariffs: bring

manufacturing back to the US; respond to unfair trade policies from other countries; increase tax revenue; and incentivize crackdowns on migration and drug trafficking.

But the implementation of his tariffs has so far have been haphazard, with multiple rollbacks and delays, and vague promises that have yet to come to fruition. The threats have soured US relations with its largest trading partners.

Canada’s prime minister, Mark Carney, has called them “unjustified” and pledged to retaliate. The European Union has said it has a “strong plan” to retaliate.

Senate Democrats are also expected to bring a resolution that would block any tariffs on Canadian products. Democratic senator Tim Kaine, who is leading the resolution, told reporters he has the support of four Republican senators: Mitch McConnell, Lisa Murkowski, Rand Paul and Susan Collins.

If four Republicans vote with Democrats, the resolution will pass, though it will still have to go through the Republican-controlled House.

Britain imposes new travel permit on Europeans

By Fatimah Idera

European visitors to Britain will have to purchase an electronic permit in advance for trips from Wednesday, as the UK government follows other countries in seeking to strengthen immigration security by screening people before they cross its borders.

The Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme requires all visitors who do not need a visa to enter Britain to purchase pre-travel authorisation online at a cost of 10 pounds (12 euros), rising to 16 pounds from April 9. Irish citizens are excluded.

This regime was initially rolled out to non-European nationals last year, including visitors from the United States, Canada and Australia.

“Expanding ETA worldwide cements our commitment to enhance security through technology and innovation,” migration minister Seema Malhotra said last month.

Britain’s Home Office, or interior ministry, said applying for an ETA should be simple through the UK ETA app, with the vast majority of applicants receiving a decision automatically in minutes.



Applicants provide a photo and biographic details and answer questions on suitability and criminality. Once an applicant has successfully applied, their ETA is digitally linked to their passport.

An ETA allows multiple visits to the UK of up to six months over a two-year period.

Airlines, ferry and train companies will be responsible for verifying the ETA status of travellers before they board. Budget airline said on Tuesday it did not expect the new permit requirement to dent demand for Europe to UK travel.

The United Kingdom received 22.5 million visitors from the European Union in 2023, up from 19.0 million in 2022, according to official data.

The EU’s much delayed post-

Brexit border security checks for UK nationals entering the bloc are slated to be introduced in October. Britain left the EU in 2020.

The EU’s Entry/Exit System (EES) will remove the requirement to manually stamp passports at the EU’s external borders and instead create digital records that link a travel document to a person’s identity using biometrics.

EES will be a precursor to an enhanced system, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which will also require non-Schengen area citizens to pay a fee before they travel.

Britons currently pay about 17 pounds for a similar permit to enter the U.S.

Elon Musk under fire as Tesla sales plunge to 13-year low

By Fatimah Idera

Tesla reported a 13% drop in vehicle sales in the first three months of the year, making it the electric vehicle maker's worst quarter since 2022. It's another sign that Elon Musk's once high-flying electric car company is struggling to attract buyers.

The drop is likely due to a combination of factors, including Tesla's ageing lineup, growing competition from rivals, and backlash over Elon Musk's alignment with right-wing politics. It also serves as a warning that the company's first-quarter earnings report, due later this month, could disappoint investors.

The manufacturing giant reported that it delivered 336,681 cars globally in the first three months of the year — a 13% decline compared to the same period last year.

Analysts polled by FactSet expected much higher deliveries of 408,000. The figure was down from sales of 387,000 in the same period a year ago. The decline came despite deep discounts, zero financing and other incentives.

It is Tesla's biggest year-on-year fall since the second quarter of 2012, when electric cars were in their infancy and the company only sold a handful of vehicles a month.

Tesla shares fell by more than 5pc in pre-market trading in New York, with the figures worse than many analysts had forecast, even after repeated downgrades in recent weeks.

The company said it had lost "several weeks of production" owing to the release of its bestselling Model Y vehicle.

However, Tesla and Mr Musk have been the target of widespread protests in America and Europe over his support for Donald Trump and his role at the department of government efficiency



(Doge).

The company's cars and facilities have also been hit by a wave of arson attacks. Tesla's most recent release, the futuristic Cybertruck, has failed to find widespread adoption as the brand seems to be under pressure.

Tesla shares have slumped by around a third since the start of the year, as sales have fallen in some of the company's key markets.

A particularly steep downturn in Continental Europe has been tied to Mr Musk's support for Germany's far-Right AfD party.

The company is also struggling with increasing competition from Chinese EV makers, as well as slower-than-expected adoption of electric cars.

This is the second consecutive year that Tesla has recorded a fall in first-quarter deliveries, which now sit at their lowest since 2022. Last year, the company reported its first-ever annual fall in sales.

Mr Trump has sought to defend Tesla against a backlash, promoting the company with Mr Musk on the White House lawn.

The figures contrast sharply with Mr Musk's own bullish forecasts. Last October, he told investors that Tesla would grow sales by between 20pc and

30pc in 2025.

Wednesday's figures mean the company continues to lag BYD, the Chinese carmaker, which sold 416,388 electric cars in the first quarter.

In March, Tesla suffered a 41pc sales drop in France, 55pc in Sweden and the Netherlands, and 12.5pc in Norway, where almost all car sales are electric.

In February, sales dropped 76pc in Germany, although they rose in the UK as buyers sought to avoid new taxes on EVs that came into force this week.

Tesla sales fell 11.5pc in China in March, according to the China Passenger Car Association.

The company did enjoy a boost to its energy business, which installs the company's Powerwall and Megapack batteries. Tesla said it installed 10.4 gigawatt hours of energy storage, up from 4.1 GWh a year earlier.

Mr Musk has said that Tesla will face a hit from Mr Trump's incoming tariffs, although analysts believe the company may benefit in comparison to rival manufacturers.

Heathrow Airport boss under fire as UK lawmakers probe disruption

By Fatimah Idera



The boss of Heathrow came under fire for last month's 18-hour shutdown after an airline representative revealed he had raised concerns about the airport's resilience days earlier, as lawmakers scrutinised the nationally embarrassing incident.

Recall that a blaze at a substation near to the airport caused the closure on March 21, raising questions about the resilience of national infrastructure. The incident left about 300,000 people stranded and cost airlines millions of pounds.

Seeking to learn lessons, lawmakers on Wednesday quizzed the chief executive of Heathrow and senior representatives from National Grid, power provider

SSE and an airline representative.

The boss of the Heathrow Airline Operators, Nigel Wicking Committee which represents 90 airlines using the hub, said he had voiced concern on March 15.

"I'd actually warned Heathrow of concerns that we had with regard to the substations, and my concern was resilience," Wicking said.

He raised further concerns two days before the fire after the lights of one of Heathrow's runways went out for a short period following theft of cable.

Safety was the main concern for Heathrow, Thomas Woldbye, the airport's CEO said. The fire meant the airport had to power down

systems, then rewire the airport to connect to another power supply, before powering back up, and that took hours.

Wicking said the airport could and should have started flights sooner.

"I'm not hearing that there was a lack of power to come into Heathrow," he said. "I was hearing that it took time to move that power to where it needed to be within Heathrow. And 10 hours for me, were too long."

The airport's contracts with power suppliers had resilience built in, Woldbye said. Building full resilience at the airport would come at a very high cost, he said, estimated at 1 billion pounds

Musk could quit DOGE after tenure ends - Trump

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

President Donald Trump has indicated to top advisers that Elon Musk could be taking a step back from his current role in the administration, sources familiar with the matter told ABC News.

Musk is employed by the government as a “special government employee” — meaning his appointment is not to exceed 130 days. His term would be up around the end of May, but it was widely rumored that the White House could take steps to keep him on or extend his employment status in some way.

Musk’s decision-making has divided Trump’s top aides and at times has sparked rifts among those closest to the president.

Some of Musk’s defenders in the White House caution reporting that Musk is being pushed out is overblown, sources said.

Trump remains pleased with what Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency team have done with their cost-cutting across the government, despite the backlash publicly and in the



courts, according to sources.

There were reports that Trump had told top advisers that Musk would likely be taking a step back from his role in the coming weeks.

Trump said publicly on Monday that Musk will likely have to go back and run Tesla at some point. The president was asked specifically about the 130-day special government employee time limit.

“Well, I think he’s ... amazing. But I also think he’s got a big company to run. And so, at some point he’s going to be going back. He wants to.” Trump said.

ABC News previously reported

that some White House officials who had grown frustrated with Musk had resigned themselves that the billionaire is unlikely to be reined in anytime soon and had instead focused on managing the situation as best they can until his special government contract comes to an end in May.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt refuted the Politico report in a post on X Wednesday.

“Elon Musk and President Trump have both publicly stated that Elon will depart from public service as a special government employee when his incredible work at DOGE is complete,” Leavitt said.

Humanitarian crisis deepens in Gaza as Israel broadens ground operations

By Fatimah Idera

Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip has intensified, with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announcing a broader offensive aimed at seizing more territory and neutralizing militant threats. The announcement followed reports from local hospitals that over 40 people had been killed in overnight airstrikes, with nearly a dozen of the victims identified as children.

In a statement released Wednesday, Gallant declared that Israeli forces are expanding their ground campaign to "cleanse" militant elements and take control of large areas within Gaza. These newly seized territories, according to the defense minister, would eventually be incorporated into Israel's expanded security zones. Although he did not specify the exact locations, the minister confirmed that the strategy involves mass evacuations of civilians from combat zones. This escalation comes on the heels of Israel's recent order for the full evacuation of Rafah, the southern city that has become a refuge for hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians.

For years, Israel has maintained a buffer zone along the Gaza security fence, a measure it claims is necessary for national security. That buffer has grown considerably since the war began in October 2023. While Israeli officials frame the expansion as a protective move, Palestinians and international rights groups view it as an aggressive land grab that further diminishes the already narrow coastal enclave, home to approximately two million people.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reiterated that Israel intends to maintain indefinite security control over the Gaza Strip until Hamas is dismantled. The Israeli government continues to urge Gaza's population to reject Hamas and demand the return of hostages. Currently, the militant group is believed to be holding 59 captives, with only 24 reportedly still alive. The rest have either been released or confirmed dead through ceasefire deals or intelligence reports.



Since the collapse of the ceasefire last month, Israel's area of operation has significantly widened. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that more than 60 percent of the Gaza Strip is now designated as "no-go" zones, rendering large swathes of the territory inaccessible to civilians and humanitarian workers alike. These restricted areas include a new military corridor that separates northern Gaza from the south, as well as expanded buffer zones and designated evacuation sectors.

The ongoing blockade imposed by Israel has further exacerbated the crisis. Humanitarian aid remains scarce, and the few organizations still operating in Gaza are struggling to deliver assistance amid the deteriorating security situation. Food, fuel, and medical supplies are all in critically short supply.

The growing urgency of the hostage situation has alarmed families and advocacy groups. The Hostage Families Forum, which represents most of the captives' relatives, said it was "horrified" by Gallant's announcement and urged the government to exhaust every diplomatic channel to secure the hostages' release.

The group warned that the captives are enduring increasingly dire conditions, including being chained, physically abused, and denied medical care. In a statement, the forum pleaded for immediate action to bring home both the living and the deceased, emphasizing that every additional day in captivity puts lives at further risk.

Meanwhile, the human toll in Gaza continues to rise. Israeli airstrikes in the southern city of Khan Younis overnight reportedly killed 17 people. A separate strike in northern Gaza claimed 15 more lives, according to local hospitals. Among the dead were women and children, including a pregnant woman. At the Jabaliya refugee camp, an Israeli strike on a building used by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) killed 15 people, most of them children and women. The building, originally an UNRWA clinic, had been converted into a shelter housing more than 700 displaced individuals. Despite warnings from UN staff about the vulnerability of the location, many families remained, having nowhere else to go.

Greek tourist Islands devastated by flooding

By **Fatimah Idera**



Floods have struck the Greek tourist islands of Mykonos and Paros, turning roads into rivers and sweeping away cars.

A state of emergency has been declared on both islands, with authorities telling residents to stay at home just as businesses were gearing up for the tourist season.

Authorities on the islands of Paros and Mykonos in the Aegean Sea swung into action to clear overturned cars and debris after hail storms and torrential downpours on Tuesday.

The severe storms that hit the Aegean also affected Crete and Rhodes, both popular holiday destinations for British holidaymakers.

The storm that hit Paros, during which 70mm of rain fell in two hours, was described as the most intense in 20 years.

In the port of Naoussa, about 40 cars were swept away, according to the mayor of the island, Costas Bizas.

Drone footage showed streets flooded with muddy brown water and vehicles pushed off roads by the force of the flooding.

Mykonos was hit by strong winds and hailstones. On Crete, at least seven people had to be rescued from cars that became trapped in floodwaters.

The heaviest rainfall was reported near Chania, a port city on the north coast famed for its Venetian architecture and colourful harbour.

Rhodes, in the eastern Aegean, was affected by gale force winds which knocked over trees, broke windows and ripped air conditioning units off roofs.

The bad weather affected ferry services

between the islands, caused landslides and led to the closure of many schools.

The storms started to sweep the region on Monday and were expected to last into Wednesday, particularly in Crete and the Dodecanese islands, including Rhodes, Samos and Chios.

The intense storms come just a few weeks after thousands of earthquakes shook Santorini and the nearby Cycladic islands of Amorgos, Anafi and Ios.

At the height of the earthquake swarm, about 10,000 inhabitants, or half the population, of Santorini evacuated the island.

However, Emergency government assistance has been requested by those islands to address road and infrastructure damage

Saudi Pro League confident in Salah signing this summer

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

As the summer transfer window approaches, the Saudi Pro League is growing increasingly confident about securing a deal for Liverpool's Mohamed Salah. The 32-year-old Egyptian forward, whose contract with the Reds expires this summer, has long been a target for Saudi clubs, and reports suggest he is open to making the move.

Salah's departure would mark the end of an era for Liverpool, where he has been instrumental in their success, including Premier League and Champions League triumphs. Saudi clubs are prepared to offer a lucrative deal to lure him away from Anfield, but Liverpool's stance on his exit remains uncertain.

Meanwhile, Manchester United have intensified their pursuit of Ipswich Town's 22-year-old striker Liam Delap. The English forward, who has impressed with his performances this season, is valued at £40 million, and United see him as a key addition to their attacking options.

Newcastle United continue to keep a close eye on Burnley's young goalkeeper James Trafford. The 22-year-old shot-stopper is highly regarded, and Newcastle may make a move in the summer transfer window as they look to strengthen their squad.

Elsewhere, Brighton have placed hefty £100 million price tags on two of their rising stars, Brazilian forward Joao Pedro, 23, and Cameroonian midfielder Carlos Baleba, 21. The



move is aimed at fending off interest from top clubs like Liverpool, Chelsea, and Newcastle.

In another potential high-profile exit from the Premier League, Bernardo Silva is reportedly seeking a move away from Manchester City. The 30-year-old Portuguese midfielder is eager for a new challenge and could be heading for a fresh adventure outside England.

Arsenal, Newcastle, Chelsea, and Manchester United are all keen on Juventus striker Dusan Vlahovic, who is expected to leave the Italian giants this summer. The Serbian forward, 25, has been linked with several Premier League clubs and could spark a bidding war in the coming months.

Additionally, Newcastle are plotting a surprise move for Liverpool's young midfielder Harvey Elliott,

while Chelsea are eyeing a £33.4 million deal for Villarreal's 22-year-old striker Thierno Barry.

Arsenal, Newcastle, and Nottingham Forest are also in the race to sign Roma defender Evan Ndicka, with the Ivory Coast international valued at £33.4 million.

In managerial news, Crystal Palace boss Oliver Glasner is being considered for the RB Leipzig job, while Palace could also make a move for Eintracht Frankfurt's Hugo Ekitike if Jean-Philippe Mateta departs this summer.

With the summer transfer window fast approaching, clubs across Europe are preparing for a busy period of negotiations and signings. Fans can expect plenty of movement as top stars consider their next steps in an ever-changing football landscape.

Man City beat Leicester 2-0 to move up to fourth

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Manchester City continued their push for a Champions League spot with a 2-0 win over struggling Leicester City at the Etihad Stadium. Goals from Jack Grealish and Omar Marmoush sealed the victory as Pep Guardiola's side climbed to fourth in the Premier League standings.

Grealish, making his first league start since December, wasted no time making an impact, scoring just two minutes into the match after a cutback from Savinho. It was his first Premier League goal in nearly 16 months and marked a crucial return to form.

Omar Marmoush doubled City's lead in the 29th minute, capitalizing on a mistake by Leicester goalkeeper Mads Hermansen. The Egyptian forward, who stepped in for the

injured Erling Haaland, has now scored five goals in the Premier League since joining in January.

The match was overshadowed by a protest from Manchester City fans against rising season ticket prices, with many supporters deliberately entering the stadium late. Despite the subdued atmosphere, City maintained control throughout the game, rarely allowing Leicester a chance to respond.

Leicester, now facing the grim reality of relegation, have lost 14 of their last 15 league matches and remain 12 points adrift from safety. The Foxes' struggles were evident, as they failed to register a shot on target in the second half, with their best chance coming early in the game when Bilal El Khannouss' curling effort drifted

wide.

Pep Guardiola, watching from the stands due to a touchline ban, will be pleased with his team's performance, especially from Grealish, who played in an advanced midfield role. Meanwhile, Leicester manager Ruud van Nistelrooy's decision to replace Jamie Vardy at halftime for defensive midfielder Oliver Skipp was met with criticism from fans.

With only eight games remaining, Leicester's chances of survival look bleak, while Manchester City's quest for Champions League football remains firmly on track. The Foxes could see their fate sealed before the end of April if their dismal form continues.

Liverpool defeat Everton 1-0, near Premier League title

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Liverpool secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Merseyside rivals Everton at Anfield, with Diogo Jota's 57th-minute strike proving to be the difference. The win edges Liverpool closer to a record-equalling 20th top-flight title, leaving them 12 points clear at the top of the Premier League with just eight games remaining.

The match was a tense affair, with Everton frustrating Liverpool's attacking efforts in the first half. However, the breakthrough came early in the second half, when Jota showcased his brilliance. After receiving a clever backheel from Luis Diaz, the Portuguese forward jinked past Everton defenders and calmly slotted the ball past goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

Before Jota's decisive moment, Everton had their chances. A controversial challenge from James Tarkowski on Alexis Mac Allister sparked debate, as

Tarkowski only received a yellow card despite catching Mac Allister on the knee. Moments later, Dominik Szoboszlai's free-kick narrowly missed the target, and Mohamed Salah's header was saved by Pickford.

Everton's best opportunity came from Beto, who muscled past Virgil van Dijk but was denied by the post when one-on-one with Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher. The visitors also had a goal ruled out for offside in the first half.

Liverpool pressed for a second goal in the closing stages, with Ryan Gravenberch testing Pickford with a powerful shot. However, Jota's goal was enough to secure the three points for the Reds, who continue to impress under manager Arne Slot.

With Manchester City faltering and Arsenal unable to mount a serious

challenge, Liverpool's path to the Premier League title is now clearer than ever. The team's remarkable consistency this season, combined with their solid defense and potent attack, has placed them in a commanding position.

Everton, on the other hand, saw their nine-game unbeaten run come to an end. Manager David Moyes will be disappointed with the result, especially after the missed opportunities and the controversial decisions. Despite the defeat, Everton remains in the fight for survival, but the loss at Anfield has deepened their relegation concerns.

As the season heads into its final stages, Liverpool's title hopes are within reach, with the earliest opportunity to clinch the trophy coming on April 20th against Leicester City, provided results go in their favor.

Aston Villa beat Brighton 3-0 to boost top-four hopes

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Aston Villa strengthened their push for a top-four finish with a commanding 3-0 win over Brighton & Hove Albion at the Amex Stadium. Goals from Marcus Rashford, Marco Asensio, and Donnyell Malen secured all three points for Unai Emery's side, who leapfrogged Brighton in the Premier League standings.

After a goalless first half, Villa took control early in the second period. Rashford, on loan from Manchester United, opened the scoring in the 51st minute with a composed finish following a rapid counter-attack. The England forward, who recently broke a four-month goal drought in the FA Cup, continued his resurgence under Emery's guidance.

Brighton thought they had responded immediately when Simon Adingra scrambled home a close-range effort, but the goal was ruled out for a handball by Kaoru Mitoma in the build-up.

Villa extended their lead in the 78th minute when Asensio, on loan from Paris Saint-Germain, capitalized on unselfish play from Morgan Rogers to blast the ball past Brighton goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen.

The visitors put the game beyond doubt deep into stoppage time, as substitute Malen fired home his first goal for the club, securing a vital victory.

The result dealt a blow to Brighton's European ambitions, coming just days

after their FA Cup quarter-final exit against Nottingham Forest. Fatigue from that contest appeared to take its toll, with Roberto De Zerbi's side struggling to find their usual rhythm.

Meanwhile, Aston Villa continue their strong campaign under Emery, staying firmly in contention for a Champions League spot. With an FA Cup semi-final against Crystal Palace and a Champions League quarter-final against PSG on the horizon, Villa's season remains alive on multiple fronts.

As Brighton aim to recover from this setback, Villa will look to build on this momentum in their remaining league fixtures, hoping to secure a coveted top-four finish.

Newcastle edge Brentford to keep Champions League hope alive

By **Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi**



Newcastle United secured a crucial 2-1 victory over Brentford at St. James' Park, strengthening their push for a top-four Premier League finish. Goals from Alexander Isak and Sandro Tonali ensured the Magpies emerged victorious in their first match since lifting the Carabao Cup.

The game began with a celebratory mood, as Newcastle fans welcomed their cup-winning side back home. However, the contest proved to be a tough test for Eddie Howe's men, as Brentford, unbeaten in their last five away matches in 2025, provided stiff opposition.

Isak Strikes Again

Swedish striker Alexander Isak continued his fine form, netting his 20th Premier League goal of the

season just before half-time. A well-timed cross from Jacob Murphy found Isak, who capitalized on a defensive slip from Bryan Mbeumo to give Newcastle the lead.

Brentford responded in the second half when Yoane Wissa won a penalty after a foul by Newcastle goalkeeper Nick Pope. Mbeumo made no mistake from the spot in the 66th minute, briefly silencing the home crowd.

Tonali's Moment of Magic

With Brentford gaining momentum, Newcastle needed a moment of brilliance—and it came from Sandro Tonali. The Italian midfielder's attempted cross turned into an unexpected goal in the 74th minute, catching Brentford keeper Mark Flekken off guard.

Tonali later admitted the goal was "70% cross and 30% shot," but it proved decisive as Newcastle held on despite late pressure from the visitors.

Champions League Chase Continues
With this victory, Newcastle remain firmly in the race for a Champions League spot. Their resilience, combined with Isak's prolific form, makes them strong contenders for a top-four finish.

For Brentford, the loss ends their impressive away run, but Thomas Frank's side will take confidence from a spirited performance.

As Newcastle look ahead to their remaining fixtures, Eddie Howe's men will hope to carry their cup-winning momentum into securing European football next season.