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Court to decide today on Emezie's request for Judge's recusal Pg 8



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# Senate refers Senator Natasha to ethics committee over seating dispute

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Nigerian Senate has referred Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan to its Committee on Ethics, Privileges, and Public Petitions for a disciplinary review following a dispute over seating arrangements in the chamber.

The Senate decision, made after a voice vote on Tuesday, comes amid a row over Akpoti-Uduaghan's altercation with Senate leadership regarding her designated seat.

The committee, led by Senator Neda Imaseun, has been given two weeks to investigate the matter and submit its findings.

The motion to refer the issue to the committee was raised under Senate Orders 1(b) and 10, with lawmakers emphasising the need to uphold parliamentary decorum and the integrity of Senate proceedings.

Senate spokesperson Senator Yemi Adaramodu condemned what he called Akpoti-Uduaghan's "extreme intransigence" during the February 20 plenary session, noting that the incident had garnered significant media attention.

Adaramodu stated that the controversy had undermined the public perception of the 10th Senate and urged the leadership to enforce discipline.

"The Senate is not a platform for content creation but a place for lawmaking and oversight functions, Where there is sin, there must be a



penalty." Adaramodu said.

Supporting Adaramodu's position, Senate Leader Opeyemi Bamidele stressed the Senate's commitment to order and integrity, emphasising that the chamber was bound by its rules.

He dismissed suggestions that the dispute was a case of gender bias, pointing out that other senior senators had accepted similar seating changes without protest.

"We are bound by our rules. Integrity is non-negotiable, Under our watch, we will not allow this institution to be discredited beyond what we inherited." Bamidele affirmed.

In his ruling, Senate President Godswill Akpabio instructed the Ethics Committee to conduct a thorough review of the incident and report back to the chamber.

He also commented on Akpoti-Uduaghan's unfamiliarity with Senate procedures, suggesting it may have contributed to the confrontation.

"On her first day in the Senate, I was concerned if she had even read the rule book, There is nothing wrong with being vibrant, but everything wrong with disobeying procedure." Akpabio said.

The Senate President also reminded lawmakers of the importance of adhering to parliamentary rules, citing Order 66(2) and Section 55 of the Senate's regulations, which prohibit disruptive behaviour, including chewing gum or drinking water during proceedings.

The outcome of the Ethics Committee's review will determine whether any disciplinary actions will be taken against Akpoti-Uduaghan.

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# CBN's new condition stalls LG Autonomy

By **Damilola Olufemi**

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court on July 11, 2024 ordered the federal government to bypass the state governments and directly pay revenue allocations to local government councils, yet this directive is mostly observed in the breach by some governors.

In this report, Damilola Olufemi who sought the views of experts on the issue, unveils the many challenges encountered in implementing the order, stressing that there are lots of advantages in obeying the court's ruling.

The lawsuit which was instituted by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), sought to grant full autonomy and direct funding to all the 774 local government councils in Nigeria.

In its ruling, the apex court affirmed that states' retention of local government funds is unconstitutional and was outlawed.

The Supreme Court verdict is aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in the administration of public funds.

Also, the ruling is a significant victory for local government autonomy and a major setback for state governments that have historically controlled local government funds for a very long time.

The apex court's ruling emphasised the importance of direct funding for local governments, stressing "The demands for justice require a progressive interpretation of the law.

It is the position of this court that the federation can pay local government allocations directly to the LGs or through the states."



The court further stated that since payment through states has not worked, the justice of the matter demands that local government allocations from the federation account should henceforth be paid directly to them.

The implications of the ruling are far-reaching. By granting autonomy to local governments, the Supreme Court's decision aims to ensure that funds intended for local governance are utilised effectively. This move is expected to promote grassroots development and reduce the influence of state governments on local affairs.

In the same vein, local governments will now have the freedom to prioritize their needs and allocate resources accordingly, without interference from state governments.

However, despite assurances from the Federal Government that local governments would start receiving direct allocations by January 2025, the implementation of the apex court's verdict has been slow. There has been various hurdles put on way for the seamless implications of the court's ruling.

Meanwhile, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) recently introduced a new condition requiring all the 774 local government councils in the country to provide at least two years of audited financial reports before they can receive their allocations directly.

This requirement has raised concerns among local government officials, who argue that it may delay the implementation of the Supreme Court's ruling.

The delay in implementing the order has also raised concerns about the commitment of the Federal Government to ensure true local government autonomy.

Many stakeholders have expressed worries why the federal government has not taken concrete steps to ensure that local governments receive their allocations directly.

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The lack of transparency and accountability in the allocation of local government funds has historically been a major challenge in Nigeria.

The Supreme Court's ruling was seen as a major step towards addressing this challenge, but the delay in its implementation has raised doubts about the government's commitment to reforming the grassroots administration.

However, there are also concerns that the ruling could be resisted by state governments, which have historically controlled local government funds.

Some state governments may try to find ways to circumvent the ruling or delay its implementation. This could lead to protracted legal battles, which could undermine the effectiveness of the ruling.

### Experts' Opinions on the Verdict

Some legal experts and public commentators have weighed in on the implications of the apex court's ruling.

Mr Emmanuel Akinola, a Public Affairs analyst, described the ruling as step towards ensuring that the dividends of democracy get to the grassroots.

He added, "This ruling is a significant milestone in promoting grassroots development, good governance, and democratic decentralization in Nigeria."

The Kogi-based analyst further noted that the verdict will ensure that funds intended for local governance are

utilised effectively and will promote transparency and accountability in the administration of public funds.

A lawyer, Barr. Ibrahim Lawal, however, decries the non implementation of the apex court ruling, saying that such an action runs against the tenets of democracy and is like taking the law for granted.

"This ruling is a victory for local government autonomy and a major setback for state governments that have historically controlled local government funds.

According to him, "this will reduce the influence of state governments on local affairs and give local governments the freedom to prioritise their needs and allocate resources accordingly."

For Amaka Theophilus, the Supreme Court's ruling is a significant step towards promoting transparency and accountability in government.

Sharing her view while speaking with New Daily Prime, Amaka noted that the ruling reflects the court's commitment to upholding the principles of federalism and promoting good governance.

"However, the success of this ruling will depend on the ability of local governments to manage their finances effectively and provide essential services to their communities," she said

In the same vein, a legal scholar expert, Adeola Aluko, stated that the ruling is expected to have a significant impact

on the lives of ordinary Nigerians.

He further added that by ensuring that local governments receive their allocations directly, "the ruling is expected to promote grassroots development and improve the delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. However, there may be challenges in implementing this ruling, particularly from state governments that may resist the loss of control over local government funds."

Notwithstanding the stated challenges, the Supreme Court's ruling on local government autonomy is a significant milestone in Nigeria's democratic journey. It reflects the court's commitment to upholding the principles of federalism and promoting transparency and accountability in government.

As Nigeria continues on the path of decentralisation, the success of this ruling will depend on the ability of local governments to manage their finances effectively and provide essential services to their communities.

The apex court's ruling is also expected to have a significant impact on the lives of ordinary Nigerians. By ensuring that local governments receive their allocations directly, the ruling is expected to promote grassroots development and improve the delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This, in turn, is expected to improve the overall.

# Tinubu: We must harness digital innovation for job creation

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has reiterated his administration's commitment to prioritizing the digital economy as a key driver of youth empowerment and job creation in Nigeria.

The President made this pledge yesterday in Abuja while receiving a report from participants of the Senior Executive Course 46 of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru.

The report, titled "Digital Economy, Youth Empowerment and Sustainable Job Creation in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities," outlines key recommendations to strengthen Nigeria's digital ecosystem.

The 96 participants of the course put forward an eight-point recommendation to the federal government. They called for the fast-tracking of the Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill 2024 to strengthen Nigeria's digital infrastructure.

They also urged state governments to waive Right of Way fees, which would facilitate the deployment of telecoms infrastructure.

Additionally, they recommended that the President issue an Executive Order mandating all MDAs to migrate to the OneGov.ng portal, ensuring seamless digital governance.

They advocated for adopting the Quintuple-Helix Model, which would enhance the digital economy and drive sustainable job creation.

To support skill development, they emphasized the need for long-term funding for the 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) scheme, which aims to build a skilled digital workforce.

They also stressed the importance of accelerating Nigeria's transition from IPv4 to IPv6, a move critical for expanding internet capacity and security.

Furthermore, they proposed the



establishment of Digital Health Innovation Hubs across Nigeria to improve healthcare delivery through technology.

They recommended developing a preventive maintenance application for the automotive industry, which would enhance vehicle maintenance efficiency and road safety.

In response, President Tinubu directed the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy to collaborate with relevant government bodies to ensure the recommendations are properly implemented.

He emphasised the importance of innovation and digital skills development in securing economic prosperity for young Nigerians.

"At the core of our administration is youth empowerment. We cannot relent on that, and we need everyone's collaboration", Tinubu said.

He commended the NIPSS participants for their research and acknowledged the report's insights into government agency overlaps.

"As Nigeria's foremost policy think tank, you have highlighted the overlap of some government agencies, and we'll look at

that. You are an asset to our country, and I thank the participants for their dedication to their studies. We will continue to collaborate with you for the prosperity of our country," he added.

President Tinubu also highlighted the importance of data-driven national planning, revealing that he had earlier met with officials of the National Population Commission (NPC) to discuss the upcoming national census.

Speaking at the event, Ayo Omotayo, Director-General of NIPSS, underscored the need for Nigeria to leverage its youthful population in the digital space.

"We recognize that in an era where technology drives innovation, Nigeria must aggressively leverage its youthful population to build a thriving ecosystem. The opportunities are boundless, from Fintech to Agri-Tech, E-Commerce to Artificial Intelligence," Omotayo stated.

However, he noted key challenges hindering growth, including infrastructure deficits, inadequate digital skills, and regulatory bottlenecks.

He urged the government to implement targeted policies that foster a supportive environment for startups, improve access to financing, and expand broadband connectivity.

# Shettima: Supporting local enterprises key to sustainable economic growth

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has reaffirmed the President Bola Tinubu administration's commitment to fostering the growth of local enterprises, describing them as vital to Nigeria's economic sustainability.

Speaking yesterday during a visit to SecureID's Smartcard and Digital Solutions Facility in Lagos, the Vice President commended the company's remarkable journey from a local startup to a continental leader in digital manufacturing.

The visit marked SecureID's 20th anniversary, celebrating two decades of excellence in smartcard production and technology solutions.

Shettima praised SecureID for its contributions to Nigeria's industrial development, noting that the company now produces 200 million cards annually, including Nigerian international passports and voter identification cards.

"This enterprise embodies the promise of what our nation can achieve when our innovative minds are given the support to compete with the rest of the world," he said.

"SecureID has proven that with vision, dedication, and hard work, Nigerian businesses can stand tall on the global stage."

Emphasising the importance of enterprise development in driving economic growth, the Vice President reiterated President Tinubu's unwavering support for Nigerian businesses.

Kashim Shettima and others during a



visit to SecureID's Smartcard and Digital Solutions Facility in Lagos (PHOTO CREDIT: X)

"Time and again, His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has demonstrated beyond words that the health and survival of our enterprises are the true catalysts of a vibrant economy," Shettima stated.

"We can no longer afford to pay lip service to supporting businesses, regardless of their scale."

He highlighted government interventions aimed at boosting industrial expansion, including fiscal reforms and the Manufacturing Sector Fund, which encourages investment in key industries.

"SecureID is proof that Nigeria is not just a consumer nation but a creator of world-class solutions. This is the standard we must uphold to transform our economy, create opportunities, and raise the living standards of millions of Nigerians," Shettima added.

Reaffirming the government's dedication to creating an enabling

business environment, the Vice President assured that the administration would continue to implement policies that support industrial growth and technological advancement.

"We will continue to support enterprises by fostering an environment where innovation thrives and where every citizen has the opportunity to succeed," he said.

The highlight of the event was a tour of SecureID's production facility, led by the Vice President and accompanied by Lagos State Deputy Governor, Obafemi Hamzat, as well as other dignitaries.

Notable attendees included SecureID's Group Managing Director, Kofo Akinkugbe, and Chairman, Dotun Suleiman; Managing Director of the Bank of Industry, Olasupo Olusi; Managing Director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, Kayode Opeifa; President of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Otunba Francis Meshioye, and representatives of commercial banks, among others.

# Court to decide today on Emeziele's request for Judge's recusal

By Friday Omosola

A Special Offences Court in Ikeja, Lagos, has postponed ruling until today on whether Justice Rahman Oshodi will continue presiding over the trial of former Central Bank Governor, Godwin Emeziele.

The adjournment followed a request from Emeziele's lawyer, Olalekan Ojo, who urged the judge to recuse himself from the case, alleging bias.

His co-defendant, Henry Omoile, through his counsel Kazeem Gbadamosi, also made a similar plea.

Emezele is facing a 19-count charge related to corruption and gratification, brought by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Omoile, on the other hand, is accused of three counts of unlawful acceptance of gifts.

At Monday's hearing, the EFCC's lead prosecutor, Rotimi Oyedepo, concluded the testimony of Adetola John, a former personal assistant to Emeziele.

During questioning, Adetola reaffirmed his previous testimony from November 2024, where he stated that he had received \$400,000 in cash from former CBN ICT Director, John Ayoh, and handed it to Emeziele at his office.

As part of his testimony, Oyedepo presented a WhatsApp message from Eric Odoh, Emeziele's personal assistant in Abuja, which was retrieved from Adetola's phone during EFCC's investigation.

However, the defence team objected,



arguing that the document was not officially admitted as evidence and that the witness should not be questioned about it.

Justice Oshodi overruled the defence's objections, citing Section 224 of the Evidence Act, which permits leading questions for introductory or undisputed facts.

He allowed the witness to read from the document.

Dissatisfied with the ruling, defence lawyer Ojo argued that by admitting the document, the court had effectively prejudged the matter, making it difficult for the defence to cross-examine the witness fairly.

He insisted that the judge's actions suggested bias, leading him to request that Justice Oshodi step down from the case.

In response, EFCC counsel Oyedepo strongly opposed the recusal request.

The court will rule on the matter on Wednesday, February 26.

Oyedepo said, "In this proceeding,

your lordship had numerous times ruled against the prosecution, and if the defence is dissatisfied with the ruling of the court, they can appeal.

"I do not know what the defence is trying to prove by telling this court to recuse itself because in this case, there is no evidence of allegation of bias.

"This is a form of delay tactics and I urge your lordship to discountenance this application because a reasonable person in this court will realise that this application is meant to delay this trial.

"The court had earlier granted accelerated hearing in this case and I urge this honourable court to ask the defence to cross-examine the witness."

Justice Oshodi set February 25 as the date to deliver his ruling on the arguments presented.

During the session, Emeziele's lawyer informed the court about a fresh application requesting authorization for the former CBN governor to challenge the January 8, 2025, ruling, in which the court affirmed its jurisdiction over the case.

# Onanuga dismisses Osinbajo's claim of Babangida tormenting Tinubu

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

The Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, has dismissed claims made by former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo that former military President Ibrahim Babangida was among those who “tormented” Tinubu during the military era.

Osinbajo made the remarks last week while reviewing Babangida's autobiography, *A Journey in Service*, at its public presentation in Abuja.

During the event, Osinbajo recalled how Tinubu, then a senator, had resisted the military's dissolution of the Senate following the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election.

In a lighthearted comment, Osinbajo suggested that Tinubu, who was “tormented” by the military, including Babangida, was now present to celebrate one of his former adversaries.

However, speaking on Sunrise Daily, a Channels Television programme, Onanuga refuted Osinbajo's claim, insisting that Babangida was, in fact, a significant influence on Tinubu's political journey.

“I think the former Vice President got it wrong. Babangida was not really a tormentor of President Tinubu. Don't forget that in his own speech at the event, Tinubu acknowledged that



Babangida inspired him to go into politics,” Onanuga said.

Onanuga explained that Babangida's call for “new-breed” politicians in the late 1980s and early 1990s played a crucial role in attracting several technocrats and private sector professionals, including Tinubu, into politics.

According to Onanuga, it was this vision of bringing in fresh faces that led Tinubu to join the political scene.

“The military president had talked about bringing in fresh faces, and many professionals, including Tinubu, heeded that call. So, he went there (the book launch) to pay homage,” Onanuga added.

The presidential aide clarified that Tinubu's real challenges with the military began under General Sani Abacha, when he and some lawmakers attempted to reconvene the Senate in Lagos after it had been dissolved.

Onanuga pointed out that it was during Abacha's rule that Tinubu faced more direct opposition from the military regime.

Onanuga also took the opportunity to commend Babangida's recent admission that Chief MKO Abiola won the 1993 presidential election, a statement that was widely seen as a significant acknowledgment of the democratic legitimacy of Abiola's mandate.

However, Onanuga noted that while the admission was welcome, it came “too late” to undo the damage done during the years of military rule.

The exchange has sparked renewed discussions about the complex relationships within Nigeria's political landscape, particularly regarding the roles played by key figures like Babangida, Osinbajo, and Tinubu during the military era and their impact on the country's democratic evolution.

# El-Rufai criticized for accusing Tinubu of betrayal over ministerial snub

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai has come under heavy criticism following his Monday night interview, in which he claimed that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu personally rejected his ministerial nomination. This refuted earlier reports that his disqualification was due to security concerns raised by the National Assembly.

The New Daily Prime previously reported El-Rufai's assertion that Tinubu had initially promised him a ministerial role but later changed his mind. However, the revelation has sparked widespread condemnation from Tinubu loyalists, political figures, and Nigerians across social media.

Many pro-Tinubu voices have dismissed El-Rufai's comments, accusing him of bitterness after failing to secure a cabinet position. For instance, activist lawyer Deji Adeyanju ridiculed El-Rufai's remarks, saying:

"Nigerian politicians can only fool idiots, not me. All the noise and anger El-Rufai makes is because Tinubu denied him a ministerial position. They don't love Nigeria; it's about self and nothing else."

While the former Presidential Aide Reno Omokri went further, accusing El-Rufai of complicity in human rights violations during his tenure as governor:

"Many killings of innocent Kaduna residents happened under El-Rufai's watch. He was also implicated in the genocide of Southern Kaduna Christians after admitting on multiple occasions that he paid off killer herdsmen while in office."

Omokri also recalled the 2015 Zaria Shiite massacre, in which 438 Shiite men, women, and children were killed, saying El-Rufai's government played a direct



role in the atrocity.

He further alleged:

"El-Rufai was specifically cited for demolishing the homes of his political opponents in Kaduna and making reckless anti-Christian remarks."

Similarly, former Senator Shehu Sani echoed concerns over El-Rufai's trustworthiness, suggesting that Tinubu's decision to exclude him from his cabinet was deliberate:

"No Nigerian President in his right senses would ever closely embrace or trust a man who repeatedly celebrated and gloated about sending President Yar'Adua to his grave.

If you could do this to your brother, what about me?"

**El-Rufai's Controversial Legacy**  
Beyond the ministerial fallout, critics have revived longstanding allegations against El-Rufai, painting him as a divisive and authoritarian leader:

El-Rufai has been accused of favouring Muslims over Christians and marginalizing Southern Kaduna, a predominantly Christian region. He was

criticized for failing to address insecurity, particularly banditry and communal clashes.

When he was the FCT Minister, Under President Olusegun Obasanjo, El-Rufai led a massive demolition in Abuja, targeting illegal structures. Thousands of homes, businesses, and churches were destroyed, leading to allegations of high-handedness and displacement of the poor.

Recently, the Kaduna State House of Assembly recommended an investigation and possible prosecution of El-Rufai over an alleged ₦423 billion fraud. The Lawmakers claim El-Rufai's government mismanaged state funds, particularly in contracts and loans.

With El-Rufai falling out of favour with Tinubu's administration and facing mounting criticism, Nigerians are agitating whether he is planning a comeback or retreating into political obscurity.

Will El-Rufai fight back, or is this the beginning of his political downfall?

The coming months will reveal whether

# Senator Natasha sues Akpabio over defamation

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has filed a defamation lawsuit against the President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio, over alleged defamatory statements published by his aide on Facebook.

According to The PUNCH, Akpoti-Uduaghan's legal action follows a reshuffle in the Senate, which saw her seat reassigned after some opposition members switched to the majority wing.

Senator Natasha resisted the move, leading to a confrontation with Akpabio, the Senate President.

In the suit, filed at the Federal Capital Territory High Court on 25 February 2025, Akpoti-Uduaghan names Senator Akpabio, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the Senior Legislative Aide to the Senate President, Mfon Patrick, as the second and third defendants. The suit, marked CV/737/25, claims that a Facebook post, written by Patrick at Akpabio's prompting, contained defamatory statements against Akpoti-Uduaghan.

The post, titled "Is the Local Content Committee of the Senate Natasha's Birthright?", allegedly suggested that Akpoti-Uduaghan viewed her role as a lawmaker as trivial, focusing only on "pancaking her face and wearing transparent outfits to the chambers."

Akpoti-Uduaghan's lawyer, Victor Giwa, argues that the statement was not only defamatory but also disparaging, intending to lower Akpoti-Uduaghan's dignity in the eyes of her colleagues and the public.



In her legal action, Akpoti-Uduaghan has asked the court to declare the statements defamatory and to issue a perpetual injunction, preventing Akpabio, his aide, and their associates from making similar remarks in the future.

Senator Natasha is also seeking N100 billion in general damages and N300 million as litigation costs.

Akpoti-Uduaghan's move has brought attention to the ongoing tensions within the Senate, as the reshuffling and public remarks continue to fuel political disputes.

The outcome of this case could have far-reaching implications for political discourse and the limits of defamation in Nigerian politics.

Natasha: 'Court declared-senators problem of the senate – Akpabio

The Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, has suggested that senators who reclaim their electoral mandate via courts constitute a challenge to the senate.

The Senate President also ordered the management of the National Assembly to organize periodic orientation for senators who joined their colleagues midway.

Akpabio said: "The management of the National Assembly is hereby ordered to organize periodic orientation, particularly for senators who are mid streamers, who came mid stream and did not start when they are colleagues started.

"I remember that this particular senator, on the day she was sworn in, raised her hand to speak. I was scared, but I had to recognize her, because I was saying we just gave her the rule book."

# Onanuga: El-Rufai still bitter over ministerial snub

By Friday Omosola



**B**ayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Information and Strategy, has said that former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, is still nursing resentment after being left out of Tinubu's ministerial appointments.

El-Rufai was initially nominated for a ministerial role but was eventually dropped after the Senate failed to clear him.

Since then, he has become increasingly critical of Tinubu's government and the All Progressives Congress (APC).

In a recent interview, El-Rufai claimed that it was Tinubu, not the Senate, who decided against his appointment.

However, speaking on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Tuesday, Onanuga suggested that El-Rufai should move past the disappointment.

"I feel for former Governor Nasir El-Rufai. He is clearly unhappy about not being appointed as a minister, but at this point, he needs to let it go," Onanuga said.

He criticised El-Rufai's reaction, likening it to that of a child sulking over a lost privilege.

"You can't keep behaving like someone who had his candy taken away. What's done is done, and he should stop crying over spilt milk," he added.

While acknowledging El-Rufai's contributions to Tinubu's election

victory, Onanuga pointed out that the President has already recognized his efforts.

"It's understandable that he feels sidelined, but the President has publicly acknowledged his role. The fact that he wasn't given a ministerial position doesn't mean he should try to bring everything crashing down."

According to Onanuga, Tinubu holds no grudges against El-Rufai, but the former governor's continued criticism stems from personal disappointment.

He advised El-Rufai to move forward, noting that he has been in public service since 1999 and should now focus on other pursuits.

# NSA boss dismisses 2031 presidential bid claims, focused on national security

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**N**ational Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, has categorically denied reports that he is planning a presidential bid for 2031, reiterating that his attention remains fully on supporting the success of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

In a statement released on his X platform, Ribadu responded to recent allegations made by former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, who claimed the NSA was plotting a political scheme against him, allegedly motivated by ambitions to run for president in 2031.

El-Rufai had accused Ribadu of collaborating with Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to tarnish his reputation.

Speaking in an interview on Arise TV, El-Rufai described Ribadu as the mastermind of a project aimed at undermining him.

However, Ribadu wasted no time in rebutting these accusations, stressing that his sole focus is on his national duties.

"My attention has been drawn to the interview granted by Mallam Nasir El-Rufai on Monday evening. If my silence wouldn't be misconstrued as consent, I would have ignored him. I am too preoccupied with my current assignment to engage in a media fight with Nasir El-Rufai or anyone else," Ribadu stated.

Ribadu, who is known for his quiet, determined approach, further explained



that despite multiple provocations, he had refrained from speaking negatively about El-Rufai out of respect for their past relationship and families.

"Despite the incessant baiting and attacks, I have never spoken ill of Nasir on record anywhere. This is out of respect for our past association and our respective families. I will not start today. I, however, urge the public to disregard El-Rufai's statements against me," he said.

Addressing the specific claim that he is gearing up to contest the presidency in 2031, Ribadu made it clear: "For the avoidance of doubt, I want to put it on record that I have never discussed running for president in 2031 with anybody. All my focus and energy are geared completely towards the advancement of Nigeria and the success of President Tinubu's administration."

The NSA also called on El-Rufai to allow him to focus on his national responsibilities, stating, "I therefore ask Nasir El-Rufai to allow me to face my

onerous national assignment, just as I do not bother myself with his own affairs."

El-Rufai's allegations have added fuel to an already tense political atmosphere, with the former governor claiming that Ribadu was the architect of a concerted effort to "destroy" him.

"This project of destroying Nasir El-Rufai is Nuhu Ribadu's conception. He is the architect and builder of that project. He is the one working with Uba Sani to implement it. So far, it has been frustrating for them," El-Rufai stated during his TV interview.

Despite the mounting political drama, Ribadu remains steadfast in his commitment to his national duties, calling on Nigerians to disregard any political distractions.

As the country navigates its complex political landscape, the NSA's unwavering focus on national security and governance continues to be his top priority.

# APC confirms Tinubu's attendance at national caucus meeting

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has reassured party members that President Bola Tinubu will be in attendance to chair today's National Caucus meeting at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

This confirmation was made by the APC's National Secretary, Senator Ajibola Basiru, in an exclusive interview.

Basiru stated, "By the grace of God, the President will be there. He has already confirmed his attendance," dispelling any doubts surrounding the meeting.

The National Secretary also sought to quell fears about the potential cancellation of the National Caucus and National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings, which are scheduled for today and tomorrow, respectively.

"No, nobody is postponing anything. The National Caucus and the NEC meetings will still be held Tuesday and Wednesday as scheduled," he assured.

Concerns had arisen after the two vital sessions, initially planned for September 2023, were abruptly called off.

Although the APC did not provide an official reason for the indefinite suspension, the party's National Publicity Secretary, Felix Morka, later assured that a new date would be set.



Five months after the original meetings were cancelled, questions lingered about when the rescheduled sessions would occur.

However, in a leaked memo, Basiru confirmed that the National Caucus would convene today, February 25, 2025, at 6 p.m. at the Presidential Villa banquet hall.

The NEC meeting will follow the next day, February 26, 2025, at the APC national secretariat in Abuja.

The memo read: "Distinguished colleagues, kindly circulate the following to all party stakeholders in the states that the National Caucus of the party is scheduled to hold on Tuesday, 25 February 2025, at the Banquet of the Presidential Villa by 6 pm. The National Executive Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday,

26 February 2025, at the National Secretariat of the Party. Best regards."

Both meetings are expected to be chaired by President Bola Tinubu, with key figures such as Vice President Kashim Shettima, former President Muhammadu Buhari, and the APC National Chairman, Dr Abdullahi Ganduje, in attendance. Other notable figures include Senate President Dr Godswill Akpabio, current and former APC governors, past and present Speakers of the House of Representatives, state party chairmen, and members of the National Working Committee (NWC).

Notably, the NEC and Caucus meetings will be Ganduje's first since he assumed the position of national chairman of the APC.

# 2027: El-Rufai lacks power to influence Northern against Tinubu, says Arewa youth president

By Adeniyi Yusuf

The National President of the Arewa Youth Consultative Council, Zaid Ayuba, has said the former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai does not have the capacity to influence the northern youths' decision against President Bola Tinubu.

This followed El-Rufai's interview, condemning the president's economic reforms.

He narrated, "I support some of (Tinubu) policies; most of the economic policies are the right orthodox policies, but the sequencing is wrong, and the quality of the people implementing the reforms leaves much to be desired. And I think that some of the reforms are just wrong.

"You don't address food inflation by destroying domestic agriculture. Food prices may be going down, but farmers are being impoverished because they are being made to compete with subsidised agricultural products from Europe and other countries.

"So, I have issues with many of them, and I'm in touch with many senior officials of the administration, and I give them my opinion privately."

While speaking, he pointed out that the President cancelled him as a ministerial nominee and not the National Assembly, as initially stated.

He said, "Since I left office and the President begged me publicly to come and serve in his government, I had my plans and told President Tinubu from day one when he asked me to support him, I said would, but I don't want anything because politics in Nigeria is always about what do I get for giving you support.

"I'm not in politics for that reason. I'm not in politics to get anything. I have a



surname, and I'm a self-made man. I've made money before coming into public office.

"I don't need anything. After eight years in Kaduna, I was nearly burnt out. I was struggling for eight years, and I wanted to take a break, and I had my private plans."

Reacting in an exclusive interview with The New Daily Prime, Zaid noted that El-Rufai did not have the backing of northern youths.

He added that there was no section of the north that would succumb to his calling.

Zaid stated, "I am not saying that the north will support President Bola Tinubu come 2027 or not. I am saying that as far as I am concerned, El-Rufai does not have the capacity to influence the decision of the northern youths.

"Everyone knows that he is saying what he is saying because he missed out on the political appointments.

"Although, there are a lot of unfavourable policies under this

government that have plunged the life of ordinary people. They have affected the people negatively despite that he said he is doing it for the good of the nation."

The national president stressed that El-Rufai was trying to take advantage of these sufferings because the masses were not happy.

He noted, "For instance, the removal of fuel subsidy, refusal to open the border for continuous inter-border trade and others.

"By 2027, it will be seen that he does not have a capacity to do anything. The president must try to do something that is directly affecting the socio-economic life of the people, this will make people support him. Northern Nigeria has govern for eight years by President Muhammadu Buhari.

"We have political integrity in the north. We believe that the south deserves to rule for eight years. But these policies by the federal government we are not happy with it. He should refine these policies and let them yield goodness for the people."

# Police bias in Osun LG poll preparation – Analyst

By Friday Omosola

A political analyst, Abdulateef Ahmed, has said the actions of security operatives, particularly the police, during the recently concluded local government election in Osun State.

The New Daily Prime gathered that tensions ran high in the state in the lead-up to the election, as the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun, and the Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, called for its suspension.

Despite this, the police deployed a tactical squad to local government secretariats as the election progressed.

During the exercise, the Chairman of the Osun State Independent Electoral Commission (OSSIEC), Hashim Abioye, raised alarm over the arrest of commission officials by the police.

Following the election, Governor Ademola Adeleke swore in the newly elected chairmen from the 30 local government areas—all members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)—and instructed them to stay away from the secretariats.

Reacting to the police actions before, during, and after the election, Mr Ahmed, in an exclusive interview with this newspaper, stated that the police conduct suggested political bias or intimidation.

He further asserted that such actions eroded public trust in the electoral system.

He said: “First, it is most unfortunate that senseless politically-motivated killings happened a few days after the Southwest governors showed exemplary leadership promising to tackle insecurity in the region.



“Democracy thrives on free, fair, and transparent elections, but it also requires respect for institutions and adherence to legal procedures. The events in Osun raise concerns about the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.”

He stated that true democracy requires not only the ability to conduct elections but also post-election stability, ensuring that electoral institutions operate effectively without undue interference.

According to him, the actions of security operatives in the recently concluded election indicate that the country is still struggling with democratic maturity, as political competition often escalates into security and institutional conflicts.

Mr Ahmed asserted that the Osun LG election highlights the deep-seated political divide between parties in Nigeria.

READ ALSO: AGF calls for cancellation of Osun LG election amid political crisis

“While it is commendable that the election was conducted successfully, the

pre-election violence and post-election security clampdown highlight recurring democratic challenges. Governor Adeleke’s gratitude to President Tinubu and the electoral body may indicate an attempt at political reconciliation.

“But the sealing of the electoral commission’s office raises questions about the independence of institutions. For Nigeria’s democracy to grow, there must be clear, impartial application of the law, respect for democratic institutions, and an end to the use of security forces as political tools”, said Mr Ahmed.

He emphasised that sealing off the electoral commission’s office and arresting officials after the election raise serious concerns about the rule of law and the integrity of the electoral process.

“If the election was indeed smooth, as suggested, then such actions contravene the spirit of democracy. It shows some underlying political interference, attempts to challenge the legitimacy of the process, or preemptive measures to prevent alleged irregularities.

# Workers shut down Lagos Assembly over arrest of colleagues by DSS operatives

By Alade Adisa

Workers at the Lagos State House of Assembly have shut down the legislative complex in protest against the Department of State Services (DSS) over the continued detention of their colleagues who were arrested last week at the Assembly Complex in Ikeja, Lagos.



Operatives of the DSS had stormed the House last week at the invitation of the Assembly's leadership to help maintain law and order as lawmakers prepared to sit. The security intervention followed the political turmoil that erupted after the removal of former Speaker Mudashiru Obasa last month and his replacement by Deputy Speaker Mojisola Meranda.

However, this leadership change has sparked deep political unrest, affecting not only the Assembly but also the Lagos

State chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Workers Protest Over Arrested Colleagues

On Tuesday, Assembly workers gathered at the complex to express frustration over their unsuccessful attempts to secure the release of their detained colleagues.

Meanwhile, lawmakers remain uncertain about when legislative activities will resume, as they had adjourned indefinitely, pending efforts by APC leaders both within and outside Lagos State to resolve the crisis.

Possible Leadership Change in the Assembly

There are indications that Speaker Mojisola Meranda may step down, paving the way for a lawmaker from the Lagos West Senatorial District to assume the speakership position in an attempt to stabilize the Assembly.

The political turmoil continues to escalate, leaving the fate of the Assembly in limbo as party leaders scramble to restore order.

# Police nab 35-year-old lady for debit card swapping in Rivers

By Helen Okechukwu

A 35-year-old lady, Blessing Oleru, who resides on OMPADEC Road, Igwuruta Town, Rivers State, has been apprehended by the state police operative for allegedly swapping debit cards.

The police spokesperson, Grace Iringe-Koko, in a document shared on Tuesday to journalists, stated that the state command achieved this following a coordinated intelligence operation.

Iringe-Koko recalled that the victim, who pleaded to be anonymous, reported to have received debit alerts of the sum of ₦523,600.00 after encountering Oleru at a Bank Garrison axis in Port Harcourt, who had swapped his debit card after



pretending to offer assistance.

Meanwhile, unknowingly to the victim, his debit card had been swapped by the debit card swapping syndicate.

According to the police spokesperson, Iringe-Koko said before the incident, the victim attempted to withdraw money

from an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), but the machine malfunctioned.

“The victim attempted to withdraw cash from an Automated Teller Machine (ATM), but the machine malfunctioned. Oleru, who was standing nearby pretending to carry out a transaction, offered assistance but instead swapped the victim's debit card,” Iringe-Koko noted.

Immediately after the victim received alerts, he laid complaints to the Olu-Obasanjo Police Station on 26 November 2024.

On 5 February 2025, the 35-year-old lady was arrested.

# Over 6,000 teachers to receive training on AI pedagogy

By Helen Okechukwu

To improve the Nigeria education sector, the Federal Government says that over 6,000 teachers are to be trained in an Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Pedagogy training programme after its launch.

The development aims to aid innovative, technologically driven education and enhance teaching methods across the Nigerian secondary schools.

The initiative was organised by the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) with the sponsorship of Google Research and supported by both Data Science Nigeria and Olabisi Onabanjo University Ogun State.

During the launching ceremony held in Abuja on Tuesday, the event witnessed the revelation of the Minimum Standards for Senior Secondary Education in Nigeria.

This framework ensures consistency, accountability, and measurable improvements across schools.

The Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, noted that the training exercises cut across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) senior secondary teachers of the country.

Alausa emphasised that it was a collective commitment to equip the teachers with the necessary skills to prepare our students for the rapidly evolving digital age.

Representing the Minister of Education, the Ministry's Director of Basic and Secondary Education, Hajia



Binta Abdulkadir, explained this initiative aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda in reforming the educational sectors with advanced skills.

This initiative aims to enhance digital literacy and modernise the education system.

The Minister of Education emphasised AI's role in shaping the future, stating, "AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a present-day reality, transforming industries, economies, and societies."

He urged educators to embrace AI-driven teaching to enhance learning, personalise education, and develop students' critical thinking skills.

A special training program will equip selected teachers with AI-based teaching strategies. The minister encouraged participants to embrace the training, emphasising their role in shaping a tech-savvy generation.

NSSEC boss, Dr. Iyela Ajayi, noted disparities in curriculum, teaching quality, infrastructure, and learner outcomes. "These inconsistencies have contributed to uneven access to quality education, limiting the potential of many learners," he said.

The new standards set benchmarks for learning content, teacher qualifications, facilities, assessments, and governance.

However, the five-week training programme, structured into five modules, aims to enhance teaching methodologies.

Mohammed Salihu, Head of Teacher Development and International Partnership, stated that 130 teachers will be selected from each state and 11 from federal unity colleges.

These educators will lead AI-driven learning, preparing students for a technology-driven world.

# Experts list ways to tackle Nigeria's security challenges

By Damilola Olufemi

It is a verified truth that, in recent times, Nigeria has continued to witness rising cases of kidnapping, banditry insurgency, terrorism, among others.

Sad enough, oftentimes, these criminal acts come with attendant negative backlash for most of their victims — ransom payment, displacements, torture and death.

These worrisome situation have left many querying the effectiveness of the nation's security architecture.

For instance, the latest victim of kidnapping is Eniola Ojajuni, the National President of the Afenifere Youth Council. He was abducted by suspected gunmen in Abuja on February 17, 2025.

His abductors are demanding a ransom of N100 million for his freedom from captivity.

In several posts and videos, Ojanuni, a former Ondo State governorship candidate, has been soliciting for financial assistance from all spirited individuals, to enable him regain his freedom.

The Afenifere chieftain's abduction comes on the heels of a similar incident in Ifon, Ondo State, where several people were taken captive by suspected gunmen.

In the same vein, a recent discovery of explosives in Osun State, which was reverted by the Department of State Services (DSS), has also raised concerns about the spread of terrorism across the country, with 10 suspected Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) members arrested in Ilesa.

The crack down operation took place at an old bungalow near St. Mary



Catholic Church, Ifofin, and Ogbon Idio in the Ilesa-East Local Government Area of the State.

The DSS stated that the suspects were caught undergoing training for the manufacturing and detonation of explosives.

A Federal High Court in Abuja had earlier granted the DSS permission to detain the suspected terrorists for 60 days pending the conclusion of the investigation.

Justice Emeka Nwite, in a ruling on the ex-parte motion, moved by DSS lawyer, Y.I. Umar, held that the application was meritorious and accordingly granted.

“An order is hereby made enabling the State Security Service (aka DSS)/applicant to detain the respondents for sixty (60) days pending the conclusion of the investigation,” the judge ruled.

The case has therefore, been adjourned until March 3, 2025.

Expectedly, these major incidents in Ondo and Osun States have sparked widespread fears and concerns over the nation's worsening security

situation.

One of the major issues raised by many who spoke to New Daily Prime, is that of security votes allocated to governors.

Security votes are funds given to governors to ensure the protection of lives and property in their states.

However, in recent times, there has been widespread allegation of lack of transparency and accountability in the use of the security votes by most states' executives.

According to a security expert, Omobola Kolapo, the non-effective deployment of security votes by some governors largely accounts for the rising insecurity in the country.

He added, “Security votes given to governors are not being used effectively. There is no transparency and no accountability, and this has led to the heightened insecurity across the country.”

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on next page**

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He added, "Security votes given to governors are not being used effectively. There is no transparency and no accountability, and this has led to the heightened insecurity across the country."

The establishment of Southwest Security Network, codenamed "Amotekun," a regional security outfit established to provide security for locals in southwest states, was seen as a step in the right direction.

However, many stakeholders claim that the outfit is fast losing its value due to lack of funding, poor training, and inadequate equipment.

"Amotekun was established to complement the efforts of the federal government in tackling insecurity, but it has been hampered by lack of proper funding and training," said Dr. Adeola Aluko, a Public Affairs analyst.

While speaking with New Daily Prime, Aluko added, "There is a need for a coordinated approach to tackling insecurity. The federal and state governments need to work together to share intelligence and resources."

He criticised the federal government for its slow response to security threats across the country.

"The government's slow response to security threats has emboldened kidnappers and other criminals. The government at all levels needs to be

more proactive in responding to security threats," he said.

Aluko further stressed that a national security commission will help to coordinate the efforts of security agencies and ensure that they are working together effectively to tackle insecurity.

He also echoed the need for increased investment in security infrastructure, including surveillance equipment and communication systems.

"Investing in security infrastructure will help to improve the capacity of security agencies to respond to security threats and prevent kidnappings," he added.

While reacting to the bomb discovery incident in Osun State, Kolapo said, "The discovery of a bomb in Osun State is a wake-up call for the government to take decisive action against terrorism too.

He called on the government to be proactive in tackling insecurity rather than being reactive.

Furthermore, the lack of synergy between the federal and state governments has been identified as a major challenge in tackling insecurity.

In addition, the role of traditional rulers and community leaders in preventing kidnappings and other forms of insecurity has been emphasised.

According to Kolapo, "traditional

rulers and community leaders have a crucial role to play in checking the menace kidnappings. They need to work closely with security agencies to provide intelligence and support." Moreover, the lack of effective communication between security agencies and the public has been identified as a major challenge in tackling insecurity.

"There is a need for effective communication between security agencies and the public. This will help to build trust and ensure that the public is aware of the efforts being made to tackle insecurity."

Others major stakeholders in the security sector, have also called for the establishment of a national security commission to oversee the country's security apparatus.

The heightened insecurity in Nigeria, including the recent abduction of Eniola Ojajuni, amplifies the need for urgent action to address the country's security woes.

The government needs to be more transparent and accountable in the use of security votes, and Amotekun needs to be strengthened to tackle insecurity effectively.

The need for a coordinated approach to tackling insecurity, involving the federal government, state governments, traditional rulers, and community leaders, will also play an important role in curbing these monsters.

# Court clears Naira Marley, others in Mohbad's death case

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



**A** Lagos court cleared Naira Marley, Sam Larry, and Primeboy of involvement in Mohbad's death, citing legal advice from the Directorate of Public Prosecution.

Delivering the ruling on Tuesday, Magistrate Ejoro Kubenje cited legal advice from the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP), which found no evidence linking the trio to Mohbad's death. The court also absolved Mohbad's former manager, Opere Babatunde, of any criminal liability.

However, the DPP directed that two individuals—auxiliary nurse Feyisayo Ogedengbe and the late singer's friend, Ayobami Sadiq—should face trial for reckless and negligent acts. Their prosecution will proceed under Section 251 (e) of the Lagos State Criminal Law, 2015, at the Magistrate Court.

Background on Mohbad's controversial death

Mohbad passed away on September 12, 2023, under mysterious circumstances, sparking widespread public outrage. Fans and sympathizers suspected foul play and demanded a thorough investigation.

Before his death, Mohbad, a former signee of Naira Marley's Marlian Records, had repeatedly spoken about threats to his life. Viral videos and social media testimonies surfaced, alleging harassment and intimidation by several individuals, including Naira Marley and Sam Larry.

His sudden death led to protests across Nigeria, with many calling for justice. In response, the Lagos State Police Command arrested Naira Marley, Sam Larry, Primeboy, and others as part of its investigation. Authorities also conducted an autopsy to determine the cause of death.

Court ruling sparks debate

The ruling that cleared Naira Marley, Sam

Larry, and Primeboy has sparked fresh debate. Some believe justice has prevailed, while others question whether all those involved have been held accountable. The decision to prosecute only the nurse and Mohbad's friend has fueled speculation that key figures may have escaped justice.

Public reaction remains divided. While supporters of the accused celebrate their exoneration, Mohbad's fans continue to demand more answers. Many believe the case still lacks full closure, as the exact cause of death remains unclear.

As the trial of the auxiliary nurse and Mohbad's friend approaches, legal experts and observers will closely watch the proceedings. The outcome could shape public perception of justice in Nigeria's legal system.

For now, the controversy surrounding Mohbad's tragic death remains far from over.

# Nedu issues VDM defamation notice, seeks N500m compensation

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**M**edia personality Nedu Wazobia takes legal action against social media influencer VeryDarkMan (VDM) over alleged defamatory statements on his platforms.

On Tuesday, February 24, 2025, Nedu formally served a pre-action notice, warning VDM about alleged defamatory statements made on his social media platforms.

Defamatory allegations and video content

In the legal notice, Nedu's lawyers, representing both him and Tokindrumz Picture and Media Ltd., accused VDM of spreading false and damaging claims.

They pointed to a 12-minute video posted by VDM on YouTube and Instagram on Wednesday, February 19, 2025. According to the legal team, the video was filled with "defamatory, false, and disparaging attacks" against Nedu and his media company.

One of the key allegations in the video, titled How Nedu Diverted NGO Scholarship Meant for Nigerians, accused Nedu of financial misconduct.

However, Nedu's lawyers dismissed the claims as "incessant lies." They also highlighted VDM's attempt to evade legal consequences by spelling "fraud" as "fr@vd" in the video.

Investigation clears Nedu of wrongdoing  
The lawyers further stated that the controversy surrounding the Metropolitan School of Business and Management UK (MSBM) had already been reviewed by the appropriate



authorities.

After thorough investigations, these authorities found no substantial evidence to pursue legal action.

Despite this, VDM allegedly continued posting additional videos, repeating and reinforcing the same "false and defamatory attacks" against Nedu and his brand.

Accusations involving Nigerian celebrities

In one of the videos, VDM reportedly claimed that Nedu collaborated with Nigerian musicians Timaya and Kcee Limpopo to orchestrate fraudulent activities. Nedu's legal team strongly denied this accusation.

Clarification on charity and business involvement

Addressing the charity work linked to the allegations, the lawyers clarified that the Nedu Foundation was established to help students secure admission into MSBM.

They emphasized that Nedu had no direct involvement in handling funds and was unaware of any alleged financial mismanagement.

Additionally, they stated that Nedu was never paid for his role in promoting the charity or organizing related events.

The legal representatives also corrected a common misconception about Tokindrumz Picture and Media Ltd. They clarified that while Nedu is associated with the brand, he is not its owner but rather a talent under the company's management.

Legal demands and possible lawsuit

In response to the alleged defamation, Nedu's legal team has issued three key demands:

Immediate Retraction – VDM must remove all videos containing defamatory claims about Nedu from all his platforms within 24 hours of receiving the notice.

Public Apology – He must issue a public apology across all his social media channels.

Financial Compensation – Nedu is demanding ₦500 million in damages for the harm caused to his reputation.

# 'I gave God ultimatum to either kill me or fulfil his promise in my life' - Actress Dayo Amusa

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actress Dayo Amusa shares her emotional journey to motherhood, revealing the heartbreak, medical struggles, and deep faith that shaped her path.

In a candid interview with fellow actress Debbie Shokoya, Amusa revealed how she once broke down in tears in front of her domestic staff, crying out to God for a child. She described the moment as one of absolute desperation, where she gave God an ultimatum—either grant her a child or take her life.

## The struggles of infertility

The actress, known for her powerful performances on screen, recounted the pain she endured while battling infertility. She went through numerous medical tests and multiple surgeries, hoping for a miracle. Despite her best efforts, nothing seemed to work.

"I remember singing at the top of my voice," she said, her voice filled with emotion. "I cried so deeply, not caring that my maid and domestic workers were there. I told God, 'It's either You take my life at this moment or You fulfill Your promise to me.' If there was any good left in my life, I felt this was the time for it to happen."

Her plea to God came from a place of exhaustion. She had done everything medically possible to conceive. Frustrated and



heartbroken, she told God that if motherhood was not in her destiny, He should take her instead.

## Heartbreak and betrayal

Amusa's battle with infertility took a toll on her personal life as well. She previously revealed that her ex-husband left her due to her inability to conceive. The heartbreak deepened when he moved on with another woman and had a child with her.

The painful experience left her questioning everything. Yet, she held onto hope, refusing to give up on her dream of becoming a mother.

## A miracle arrives

Then, in November 2024, the long-awaited miracle happened. Amusa welcomed a baby boy, whom she named Oluwafirewamiri. His name, which means "God has done me well," reflects the deep gratitude she feels after years of struggle.

## A message of hope

The actress has since embraced motherhood with joy, often sharing moments of her journey with fans. She now uses her story to inspire other women facing similar battles with infertility.

Her experience serves as a reminder that perseverance, faith, and hope can lead to life's greatest blessings—even when the journey seems impossible.

# Olayode Juliana slams 'Is Your Husband Single?' comments

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actress Olayode Juliana has condemned the growing trend of social media users making inappropriate remarks about married individuals.

She expressed frustration over the growing habit of people jokingly—or seriously—asking if a married woman's husband is single.

On February 24, 2025, Juliana took to Instagram to address the issue. She called out those who leave disrespectful comments under posts featuring married couples. She questioned why anyone would ask if a husband was single on his wife's page.

Juliana questions the lack of boundaries "Tell me why people would go on a married woman's page and ask if her husband is single," she wrote. "Are we serious, or is this a joke? Why would anyone see a video of a husband and wife together and then comment, 'Is your husband married?' Are you people okay?"

The actress, best known for her role in *Jenifa's Diary*, made it clear that she found the trend shocking. She emphasized that while making such comments under a single person's post could be seen as flirting, doing so under a married person's post was outright disrespectful.

"This is not funny at all," she continued. "If I see this comment on a single person's page, I might think you're just trying to shoot your shot. But under a married couple's post? It's not funny, and it needs to stop. Would you want someone to do that with your husband when you're married?"

**A call for women to do better**

Juliana further criticized those who engage in this behaviour, warning that it



reflects poorly on them. In her post caption, she made it clear that she found the trend not only foolish but also morally wrong.

"I don't know if the people writing these comments think it's funny," she wrote. "But it's totally stupid! You already know the answer to your question. Y'all better stop this trend because it makes no sense! Also, if it's not witchcraft, why would you have your eyes on someone who is married with kids? It's diabolic!"

She then called on women, in particular, to do better. She urged them to respect the boundaries of marriage and leave other people's husbands alone.

"Dear women, we need to do better because this doesn't make sense!" she concluded. "Leave people's husbands ALONE!"

Public reaction and growing concern Juliana's post quickly gained attention, with many of her followers agreeing with her stance. Some shared their experiences of witnessing or receiving similar comments, while others applauded her for speaking out.

In recent years, social media trends have

blurred the lines between humour and disrespect. While some users engage in online banter without ill intent, others use it as an excuse to cross ethical boundaries. This particular trend, where married individuals become targets of flirtatious or suggestive comments, has sparked heated debates.

A dangerous normalization of disrespect Critics argue that such behaviour normalizes disrespect toward marriages and encourages infidelity. They believe that making jokes about pursuing married people could desensitize society to the seriousness of marriage vows. On the other hand, some claim that these comments are harmless and should not be taken too seriously.

However, Juliana's message sends a strong warning to those who think this behaviour is acceptable. By using her platform to highlight the issue, she hopes to discourage such actions and remind people to uphold respect in relationships.

A wider call for respect in relationships The actress is not alone in this stance. Many public figures and relationship experts have also spoken out against this trend, emphasizing the importance of respecting marriage.

# Trump moves to scrap New York's congestion charge, sparks legal battle

By New Daily Prime

The Trump administration has taken decisive action to eliminate New York City's controversial congestion charge, a policy that has been widely criticized by drivers.

In a letter to New York Governor Kathy Hochul, U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy announced that the Federal Highway Administration had revoked federal approval for the tolling program. Duffy stated that the administration would work with the New York State Department of Transportation to implement an "orderly termination" of the tolls. However, no date has been provided for when the reversal will take effect.

The congestion pricing plan, which requires motorists to pay a \$9 daily fee to enter lower Manhattan below 60th Street, had finally gone into effect on January 5, 2025, following years of debate and delays.

President Donald Trump, who had pledged to dismantle the program during his campaign, celebrated the move, likening himself to royalty.

Read Also: Trump open to deals with Russia, says Ukraine war could end within weeks

"CONGESTION PRICING IS DEAD. Manhattan, and all of New York, is SAVED. LONG LIVE THE KING!" — Donald Trump, via Truth Social

New York Governor Fights Back

Governor Kathy Hochul swiftly responded to Trump's statement, dismissing his declaration of victory and asserting her administration's intent to fight the decision in court.

"We are a nation of laws, not ruled by a king. The MTA has initiated legal proceedings in the Southern District of New York to preserve this critical program. We'll see you in court." —



Governor Kathy Hochul

Congestion Pricing's Impact & The Growing Divide

Governor Hochul defended the congestion pricing plan, arguing that it had significantly reduced traffic congestion in Manhattan.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) reported that weekday traffic inside the congestion zone during the first week of February was down by 9% compared to the previous year. Hochul further claimed that support for the policy was increasing daily, despite its critics.

However, Sean Duffy called the congestion pricing program "backwards and unfair," saying it disproportionately affects working-class Americans and small business owners.

share the president's concerns about the impact on working-class Americans who now have an additional financial burden to account for in their daily lives." — Sean Duffy, U.S. Transportation Secretary

The battle over congestion pricing has also drawn in New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, a Democrat, who has long opposed the program and launched

several legal challenges against it.

Murphy and other opponents argue that congestion pricing unfairly penalizes commuters from New Jersey and outer borough residents, many of whom have limited public transportation options.

While congestion pricing was designed to reduce traffic, cut emissions, and generate revenue for public transit, its implementation has remained politically divisive.

Last summer, Governor Hochul temporarily paused the plan, fearing that it could negatively impact local Democratic candidates in upcoming elections.

With Trump's administration pulling federal approval and Hochul taking the case to court, New York's congestion pricing policy is now at the center of a high-stakes legal and political battle.

Will Trump successfully dismantle the program, or will Hochul and the MTA prevail in their legal fight to keep it in place?

Stay tuned as New Daily Prime continues to bring you the latest updates on this developing story

# One-third of Musk's DOGE staff resign in protest

By Oluwatosin Ologun

More than 20 civil service employees resigned on Tuesday from billionaire Trump adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), saying they were refusing to use their technical expertise to “dismantle critical public services”.

“We swore to serve the American people and uphold our oath to the Constitution across presidential administrations,” the 21 staffers wrote in a joint resignation letter. “However, it has become clear that we can no longer honour those commitments.”

The employees also said many of those enlisted by Musk to help him slash the size of the federal government under President Donald Trump's administration did not have the necessary skills or experience for the task ahead of them.

The mass resignation of engineers, data scientists, designers and product managers is a temporary setback for Musk and the Republican president's tech-driven purge of the federal workforce. It comes amid a flurry of court challenges that have sought to stall, stop or unwind their efforts to fire or coerce thousands of government workers out of jobs.

In a statement, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was dismissive of the mass resignation.

“Anyone who thinks protests, lawsuits, and lawfare will deter President Trump must have been sleeping under a rock for the past several years,” Leavitt said. “President Trump will not be deterred from delivering on the promises he made to make our federal government more efficient and more accountable to the hardworking American taxpayers.”



Musk posted on his social media site X that the story was “fake news” and suggested that the staffers were “Dem political holdovers” who “would have been fired had they not resigned.”

The staffers who resigned had worked for the United States Digital Service, but said their duties were being integrated into Doge.

Their former office, the USDS, was established under President Obama after the botched rollout of Healthcare.gov, the web portal that millions of Americans use to sign up for insurance plans through the Democrat's signature health care law.

## Software for firing

The USDS was established in 2014 during Barack Obama's administration and has historically operated as a non-partisan technology unit tasked with improving government digital services.

The mass resignation came days after

Musk engineered a mass email to the federal government's two million workers, ordering them to justify their work in an email or risk being fired.

Government departments on Monday largely told staff to either ignore the DOGE-inspired email or downplayed the risks of not answering it.

According to Wired magazine, engineers at DOGE are working on new software that could assist mass firings of federal workers across the government.

So far, thousands of mainly probationary workers — employees who are recently hired, promoted, or otherwise changed roles — have been terminated since Trump's inauguration.

The new software would streamline the dismissal process, known as a reduction in force, for firing federal workers with stronger civil service protections.

# US, Ukraine agree to minerals deal, Ukrainian official

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Ukraine has agreed to turn over the revenue from some of its mineral resources to the United States, an American and a Ukrainian official said on Tuesday, in a deal that follows an intense pressure campaign from President Trump that included insults and threats.

"We have indeed agreed it with a number of good amendments and see it as a positive outcome," the official said, without providing any further details.

Media reports say Washington has dropped initial demands for a right to \$500bn (£395bn) in potential revenue from utilising the natural resources but has not given firm security guarantees to war-torn Ukraine - a key Ukrainian demand.

US President Donald Trump said he was expecting his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in Washington to sign the deal this week, after the two leaders exchanged strong words about each other.

Without confirming that an agreement had been reached, Trump said on Tuesday that in return for the deal Ukraine would get "the right to fight on".

"They're very brave," he told reporters, but "without the United States and its money and its military equipment, this war would have been over in a very short period of time".

Asked whether supplies of US equipment and ammunition to Ukraine would continue, he said: "Maybe until we have a deal with Russia... We need to have a deal, otherwise it's going to continue."

There would be a need for "some form of peacekeeping" in Ukraine following any peace deal, Trump added, but that would



need to be "acceptable to everyone".

Just last week, Trump described Zelensky as a "dictator", and appeared to blame Ukraine - not Russia - for starting the war, after the Ukrainian leader rejected US demands for \$500bn in mineral wealth and suggested that the American president was living in a "disinformation space" created by Russia.

Trump has been pushing for access to Ukraine's minerals in return for previous military and other aid to the country since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion three years ago.

Zelensky argued nowhere near that much American aid had been provided, adding: "I can't sell our state."

On Tuesday, Trump said the US had given Ukraine between \$300bn and \$350bn.

"We want to get that money back," he said. "We're helping the country through a very very big problem... but the American taxpayer now is going to get their money back plus."

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Olha Stefanishyna told the Financial Times - which first reported the minerals deal on Tuesday - that the deal was "only part of the picture".

"We have heard multiple times from the US administration that it's part of a bigger picture," said Stefanishyna, who has led the negotiations.

According to Ukrainian sources, the US has had to back away from some of its more onerous demands from the war-torn nation and many of the details of this agreement will require further negotiation.

The precedent, however, is set. US aid in the Trump era comes with strings attached. Aid for aid's sake - whether given for humanitarian or strategic reasons - is a thing of the past.

That represents a fundamental reordering of American foreign policy for more than 75 years, from the days of the Marshall Plan to post-Cold War idealism and George W Bush's "Freedom Agenda" push to promote global democracy.

# Arteta says Arsenal still fighting for title

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**M**ikel Arteta said he would give up in the Premier League title race "over my dead body" even though he admitted Arsenal face a historically tough challenge to catch Liverpool.

The Gunners, who travel to face high-flying Nottingham Forest on Wednesday, are 11 points behind the runaway leaders after losing to West Ham at the weekend, a day before their rivals won at Manchester City.

The result was a bitter disappointment for Arteta, whose injury-hit team have finished as runners-up to City in each of the past two seasons.

But the bullish Arsenal boss told his pre-match press conference on Tuesday that he would give up the title challenge "over my dead body".

The Spaniard said he would "go home" if he no longer believed the Gunners could catch Arne Slot's Liverpool.

"Mathematically it's possible. You are there, you have to play every game," he said.

But Arteta admitted the enormous scale of the task as Arsenal chase



their first Premier League title since 2004.

"If you're going to win this Premier League with the circumstances that we have, you're probably going to have to do something nobody else has done in the history of the Premier League," he said.

He added: "In the end, you are going to have to set an amount of numbers to win in this league, and we're going to have to hit that number if we are going to have any chance of doing that.

"But we are certainly going to continue to try."

Arsenal, who have a game in hand over Liverpool, have been derailed by a series of injuries, particularly in forward areas.

Kai Havertz and Gabriel Jesus are out for the season while Bukayo Saka is due to return next month having been sidelined since December and Gabriel Martinelli is also currently unavailable.

Captain Martin Odegaard missed 12 games with an ankle injury earlier in the campaign.

Arteta said he was proud of his team's resilience and ambition, saying the 1-0 home defeat to West Ham had been a "very hard one to take".

But he added: "The reality is there are so many games to play, and you have to get back to it.

"You have to have the levels and the consistency and the hunger to go again, and that's what we are going to do on Wednesday."

# Liverpool glory would boost Salah's Ballon d'Or chances - Slot

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**A**rne Slot says Mohamed Salah will have a “far better chance” of winning the Ballon d’Or if runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool win silverware this season.

The Egyptian superstar, 32, is the favourite to win the award, regarded as the top individual prize in football, after a sensational campaign so far.

Salah, who is yet to sign a new deal to keep him at Anfield beyond the end of this season, has scored 30 goals and provided 21 assists in all competitions during the current campaign.

But Liverpool manager Slot said Tuesday that despite those stellar numbers, the club need to win major trophies to help their forward win his first Ballon d’Or.

“It’s a good thing that Mo is in the discussion because it means he does well and it means we are doing well,” the Dutchman said on Tuesday.

“But for him to stay in that discussion, he should bring in the same performances as he’s done for seven or eight months now.

“And I think, in general, someone that wins the Ballon d’Or needs to win something as well, so it’s a great challenge that is in front of us, but also in front of him.”



Liverpool, who host Newcastle on Wednesday, are 11 points clear of second-placed Arsenal at the top of the Premier League with 11 games to go but Slot said he does not fear complacency.

“We all know these players are so long in this competition, even much longer than me, so they know how difficult every single game is, and if you have to play 11, it’s still a long way to go,” he said.

Liverpool are also in the final of the League Cup, where they will face Newcastle again, and will meet Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Slot was asked at his pre-match press conference whether Salah’s current form could be compared with that of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi at their peak but he shied away from direct comparisons.

“He (Salah) has had some outstanding seasons here at Liverpool, and we hope he can continue this for a longer period of time, but to do that he first has to extend his contract of course,” he said.

The Liverpool boss was also asked whether Salah’s red-hot form would make it easier or more difficult for the club to agree a new deal.

“You can look at it in both ways,” he said. “You can say the better he does, the more expensive he might become, and if he does really worse, we would have second thoughts if we wanted to extend his contract.

“So I think for everyone it’s the best that he brings in the performances he does now. Maybe only for the one that has to pay him it’s not the best, but for everyone else it’s the best.”