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US excludes Nigeria, UK others from visa-free entry for 2025 Pg 6

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Trump backs Elon Musk, DOGE's work in first Cabinet meeting

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Stop acting like a child over ministerial snub, Onanuga tells El-Rufai Pg 9



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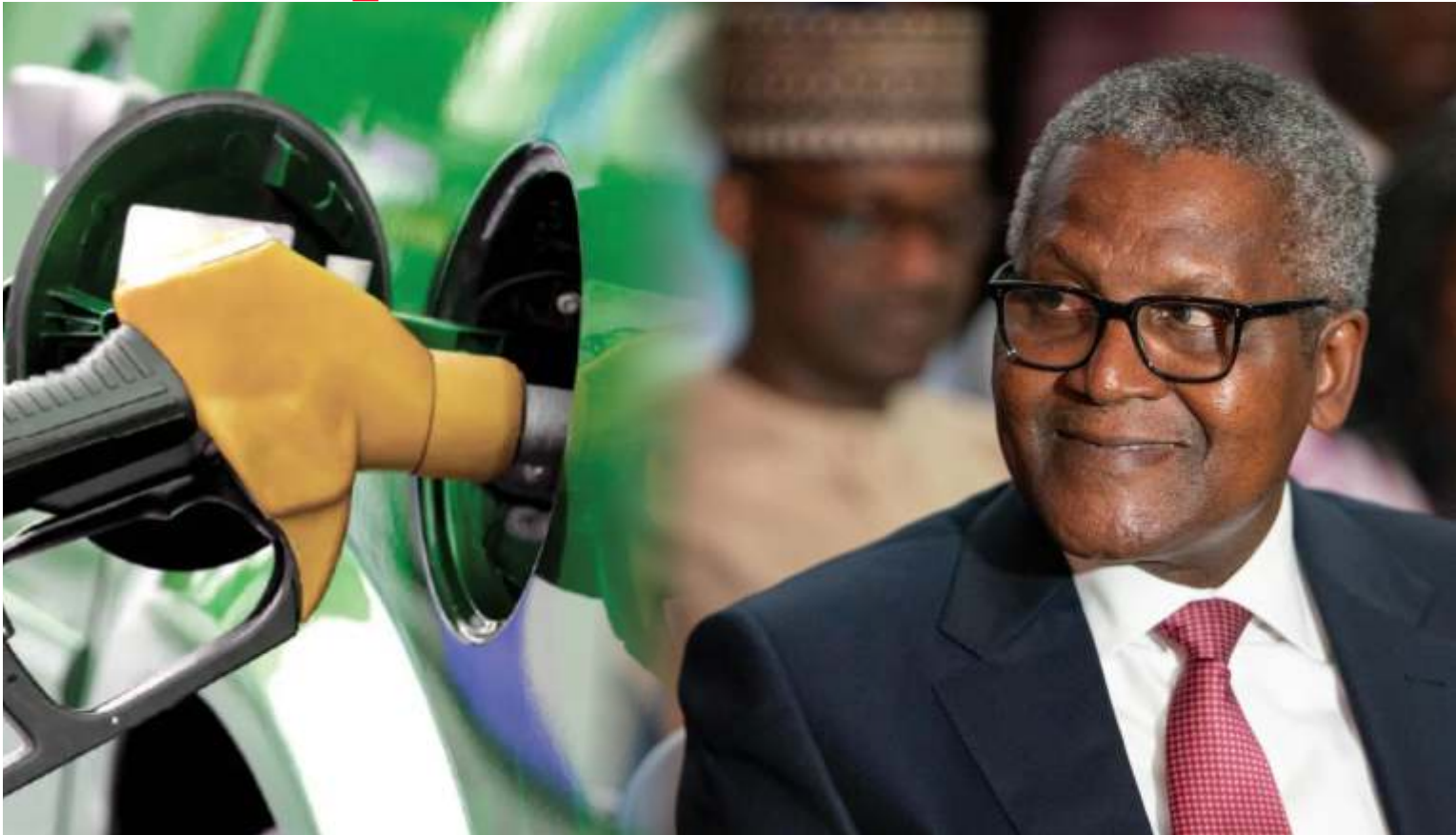
Trump announces \$5m 'Gold Card' visa for wealthy immigrants Pg 38



Mystery illness kills over 50 people in Congo Pg 14

Dangote Refinery cuts petrol price to N825 per litre

By Dave Oludare Oso



The Dangote Petroleum Refinery has announced a N65 reduction in the ex-depot price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), commonly known as petrol, lowering it from N890 to N825 per litre.

The new price takes effect from February 27, 2025.

According to the refinery, the price cut is aimed at providing relief to Nigerians ahead of the Ramadan season while also supporting President Bola Tinubu's economic recovery efforts by easing financial pressures on citizens.

This marks the second price

reduction in February 2025, following an earlier N60 decrease at the beginning of the month.

Similarly, in December 2024, the refinery slashed petrol prices by N70.50, reducing the cost from N970 to N899.50 per litre to provide relief during the yuletide season.

With the latest adjustment, Dangote petrol will now be available at the following prices across its partner retail outlets: MRS Holdings stations: Lagos – N860 per litre South-West – N870 per litre North – N880 per litre; South-South & South-East – N890 per litre AP (Ardova Petroleum) &

Heyden stations: Lagos – N865 per litre South-West – N875 per litre North – N885 per litre; South-South & South-East – N895 per litre

The Dangote Group reassured Nigerians of a steady supply of petroleum products, stating that the refinery has enough reserves to meet domestic demand while also exporting surplus fuel to boost Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings.

The company further called on marketers to support this initiative, ensuring that Nigerians benefit fully from the price reduction.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

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10X5	237,500.00
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9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
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POLITICAL COLOUR

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9X3	107,757.50
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5X3	43,705.00
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4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
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EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
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(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
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PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
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FEATURES	200,000.00	15,000.00	215,000.00

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Tinubu: Governors can testify to increased allocations after fuel subsidy removal

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, the Director-General of the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), has raised the alarm over threats to her life and the safety of agency staff, calling on authorities to protect them as they navigate hazardous conditions in their duties.

The NAFDAC boss also advocated for the death penalty for those involved in the production and sale of fake and counterfeit drugs in Nigeria.

Prof. Adeyeye, while briefing State House correspondents at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, on Wednesday, disclosed that NAFDAC had recently seized illicit drugs worth over N1 trillion in an ongoing crackdown against substandard and fake pharmaceutical products.

The NAFDAC boss revealed that the agency's intensified enforcement efforts had resulted in the seizure of 87 truckloads of banned, expired, and substandard medical products. Among the confiscated items were USAID- and UNFPA-donated antiretroviral drugs, male and female condoms, and other compromised medical supplies.

She described the large-scale operation, which targeted Nigeria's three major open drug markets, as the biggest in NAFDAC's history. The operation was executed in:

Ariaria and Eziukwu Markets (Aba, Abia State)

Bridge Head Market (Onitsha, Anambra State)

Idumota Drug Market (Lagos State)



Prof. Adeyeye estimated that the value of the seized items was at least N1 trillion, but noted that further assessment could reveal a higher figure.

The NAFDAC DG recounted how staff members had faced kidnapping attempts and physical threats due to their work.

"I told you about the attempted murder about six months ago. One of our staff members in Kano had his child kidnapped because he was doing his job. Fortunately, the child escaped," she revealed.

"For me, I have two policemen living in my house 24/7 in Abuja and Lagos. I don't have a life. I can't go anywhere without police escorts. That's not my way of living, but I don't have a choice because we must save our country. Nonetheless, I also use common sense."

The threats facing Prof. Adeyeye mirror those encountered by Prof. Dora Akunyili, who led NAFDAC from 2001 to 2009 and became a target of drug cartels due to her

relentless fight against counterfeit drugs.

Akunyili's motivation stemmed from the death of her sister, who died after receiving fake insulin. Her campaigns led to the closure of open-air drug markets and the confiscation of fake drugs, drawing numerous threats and even an assassination attempt in 2003.

Like Akunyili, Prof. Adeyeye remains determined to eradicate the fake drug menace despite the dangers involved.

Prof. Adeyeye emphasized the need for stricter punishments, including the death penalty, for those endangering lives through fake drugs.

She urged the Nigerian government to implement stronger laws to curb the life-threatening trade of counterfeit pharmaceuticals.

NAFDAC continues to intensify its enforcement actions nationwide, with the goal of protecting public health and restoring confidence in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry.

Senate berates CBN for frustrating N30trn Ways and Means probe

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has come under fire for allegedly frustrating a Senate investigation into the N30 trillion facility provided to the last administration from 2015 to 2023.

The Senate Ad-hoc Committee investigating Ways and Means has condemned the apex bank for frustrating the probe.

Chairman of the ad-hoc committee, Senator Jibrin Isah Echoch, made the accusation after receiving an interim report from consultants commissioned to investigate the matter.

He said the committee was mandated to investigate how the Ways and Means facility was utilized by the past administration, particularly as it affects the government's cover for budget deficits.

Recall that on 20th February, 2024, the Nigerian Senate passed a resolution to investigate the use of the facility by former President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

Senator Isah attributed the food scarcity and security challenges bedeviling the country to unnecessary overdraft from the nation's coffers by the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Godwin Emefiele.

He said the committee's mandate was to unravel the utilization of funds, highlighting that "the details of the spending was deliberately shielded away from the National Assembly."

The lawmaker lamented the uncooperative stance of the Central Bank of Nigeria in providing the necessary documents for the consultants to carry out their job.

Jibrin said, "None of the documents was submitted to us. We will not allow you to attend the next meeting because you have been coming here for the same reason.

"The least likely person that will attend the next meeting should be a deputy



governor of CBN. What you are telling us is not the truth. We have not received the documents. I don't want to deceive the public here."

Jibrin further stated that the goal of his committee was to produce a report as quickly as possible, but expressed frustration that their efforts were being hindered by the actions of the CBN.

He said, "The information we have here is not different from what we have had all along.

"What we did was to hand over the documents to the consultants, and when the consultants made available to us this interim report, our intention was to hold onto the interim report on the final report.

"We have now been compelled to make available this interim report to the general public so that we let them know where the problem is.

"The problem is that the Central Bank of Nigeria has consistently denied us the documents that we need to complete this assignment. That is the truth. I was at the CBN sometimes, I met Bala the deputy governor and they promised but nothing came out of it.

"The clerk has been there several times. Nothing has come out of it.

"The consultants themselves even took it upon themselves to go with CBN directly, because we introduced them to CBN and nothing has come out of it.

"So let the Nigerian public know that this assignment has been hindered by the Central Bank of Nigeria. They will deny those documents. After this, you must avail us, or avail the consultants, all the documents that they require to complete this assignment.

"The reason for this meeting is to let everybody know why we have not been able to finish this assignment and it looks as if we have compromised. The answer is that we have not."

He clarified that despite the challenges, the committee is committed to uncovering how the money was spent.

Reacting, the Director of Banking Services, Hamisu Abdullahi, who represented the Governor of the Central Bank, Olayemi Cardoso, said the apex bank did provide all necessary documents to the consultants.

The chairman of the committee insisted that preliminary reports show that there are major infractions, especially on the part of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

US excludes Nigeria, UK, others from visa-free entry for 2025

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The United States government has officially released its 2025 Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) list, with Nigeria and other African nations completely excluded amid President Donald Trump's mass deportation.

While 40 countries, including European, Asian, and select Middle Eastern nations secured visa-free entry into the US, no African nation made the cut as the country introduced policy updates on permit privilege eligibility and others.

Major US allies like the United Kingdom were also left out, although British citizens remain eligible under specific conditions.

According to the US Bureau of Consular Affairs website, the Visa Waiver Programme allows most citizens or nationals of participating countries to travel to the United States for tourism or business for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa.

The agency stated: "Travellers must have a valid Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approval prior to travel and meet all requirements explained below. If you prefer to have a visa in your passport, you may still apply for a visitor visa."

The visa waiver programme allows travellers from eligible countries to visit the United States without a visa for up to 90 days for tourism or business purposes.

Instead of going through a lengthy visa process, eligible individuals can apply for an electronic system for travel authorisation (ESTA) before departure.

The 2025 visa waiver programme includes 40 countries whose citizens can now travel to the United States without a visa.

This year, Romania has joined the list as a new entrant. However, Taiwan and the United Kingdom remain eligible under specific conditions.

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What the US visa waiver programme means

The visa waiver programme allows travellers from eligible countries to visit the United States without a visa for up to 90 days for tourism or business purposes.

Instead of going through a lengthy visa process, eligible individuals can apply for an electronic system for travel authorisation (ESTA) before departure.

What changed in the 2025 VWP

While most of the VWP list remains unchanged, adding Romania marks a significant update. The U.S. has also focused on enhancing security checks and prioritising countries with strong diplomatic ties and border security standards.

Nevertheless, Romania, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom are excluded from the U.S. visa and interview waiver programme for 2025.

Here is the full list of eligible countries:

Andorra
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Chile
Czech Republic
Croatia
Denmark
Estonia

Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Israel
Norway
Poland
Portugal
San Marino
Singapore
Slovakia
Japan
Slovenia
Latvia
South Korea
Liechtenstein
Spain
Lithuania
Sweden
Luxembourg
Switzerland
Malta
Netherlands
New Zealand
Qatar
Romania
Morocco

Jonathan: 'Ghost voters' fuel Nigeria's electoral credibility crisis

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has called for urgent electoral reforms in the country, emphasising that 'ghost voters' are undermining the integrity of the voting system.

Speaking at the YIAGA Africa Reflection Conference on Democratic Elections in West Africa in Abuja on Tuesday, February 25, Jonathan said Nigeria's electoral process would continue to face credibility challenges unless the country appointed leaders with integrity to oversee elections.

According to the former president, the involvement of 'ghost voters' — individuals who do not exist or are fraudulently registered — is one of the key reasons the nation struggles to produce accurate vote counts during elections.

He argued that for Nigeria to achieve credible elections, the officials managing the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must demonstrate a commitment to ethical leadership.

"We must have credible people. If the people in charge of INEC are under pressure to manipulate elections, they should be ready to resign. If you are appointed to oversee elections in Nigeria and you cannot resist such pressure, then you should leave rather than compromise democracy," Jonathan stated.

He warned that if the electoral system continued to be managed by individuals willing to bend under political pressure, the country would never see the meaningful reforms needed to ensure free and fair elections.

Jonathan went on to criticise the regionalisation of the electoral process, arguing that it plays a destructive role in shaping voting patterns and distorting the democratic process.

"When the electoral process is too regionalised, it undermines the objective of electing capable leaders. We need a system where people can vote based on the credibility of candidates, not on regional or religious affiliations," he said.

While acknowledging that the introduction of technology — such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Results Viewing Portal (IReV) — aimed to improve transparency, Jonathan noted that the 2023 elections were marred by logistical issues, technical glitches, and delays in voting.

He drew comparisons with other West African countries, such as Ghana, Liberia, and Senegal, where despite limited technological deployment, elections were conducted more smoothly, with higher voter turnout and peaceful



transitions of power.

The former president also highlighted recent challenges in Sierra Leone and Senegal, where allegations of voter intimidation, ethnic tensions, and controversial results had affected the credibility of the elections.

By contrast, Ghana's electoral commission, in collaboration with security agencies, ensured a peaceful and transparent election, despite the country's limited use of technology.

He praised Liberia for its peaceful transition of power, following a closely contested runoff, and observed that the example set by the nation should serve as a model for other countries in the region.

"In Liberia, the willingness of the incumbent to concede defeat demonstrates the strength of democracy," Jonathan said.

Jonathan warned that the deployment of technology in elections, while beneficial, cannot replace the human element of integrity in the process.

"Countries like Nigeria, where more technology has been introduced, still face legal battles and political tensions after the elections. This underscores the importance of human will in ensuring the success of any electoral system," he observed.

The former president called for stronger electoral institutions and a commitment to reforms across the West African sub-region.

"Democracy must be allowed to work for the people," he said, calling for a system

where voter registration is more efficient, elections are credible, and leaders are chosen based on merit.

In his keynote address, former INEC Chairman Prof. Attahiru Jega also reflected on the challenges facing democratic development in West Africa.

Jega highlighted the persistence of political interference in the appointment and removal of electoral officials, as well as efforts to obstruct legal reforms that could strengthen electoral oversight.

Jonathan's remarks echoed a broader regional sentiment, with leaders and citizens urged to strengthen governance and embrace democratic values such as tolerance, inclusion, and peaceful coexistence.

A Call for Reform and Resilience

Jonathan's comments come at a crucial time for Nigerian democracy, as the country continues to grapple with the aftermath of the controversial 2023 elections and seeks to rebuild trust in its electoral institutions.

Both Jonathan and Jega's reflections on the importance of ethical leadership within INEC highlight the ongoing challenges to Nigeria's democratic consolidation.

As Jonathan noted, "If our systems for electing leaders are not fine-tuned, then what is the point of democracy?"

It is clear that for democracy to truly thrive in Nigeria, as in much of West Africa, the integrity of electoral processes must be upheld, and citizens must demand fair elections that are free from manipulation.

Nigeria's foreign reserves hit 3-yr high, surpass \$40bn

By Dave Oludare Oso

In what turns out to be a piece of positive news, Nigeria's foreign reserves have surpassed the \$40 billion mark for the first time in three years, marking a significant milestone in economic recovery efforts.

The governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso, who disclosed during a meeting with the Assistant Governor for Monetary Affairs at the Saudi Arabian Central Bank (SAMA), Talal Al-Humond, on the sidelines of the inaugural Conference on Emerging Market Economies in Riyadh, attributed the rise to key reforms.

A statement by CBN said the reserves were at their highest in nearly three years.

The reforms include the adoption of an electronic matching system to enhance transparency in the foreign exchange market and the introduction of a foreign exchange code of ethics.

The code, which all Nigerian banks have signed onto, ensures strict adherence to market rules, fostering confidence among investors and market participants.

At the conference organised by the Saudi Ministry of Finance and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Regional Office, Cardoso advocated for stronger economic ties between Nigeria and the Middle East.

He noted that Nigeria could learn valuable lessons from Saudi Arabia's approach to infrastructural development, economic diversification, and tourism investment.

As part of efforts to boost Nigeria's economic position, the CBN governor reaffirmed his commitment to working closely with the Nigerian diaspora community in the Middle East.

He stressed that increased remittance flows from Nigerians abroad would play a crucial role in strengthening the country's financial sector.



Cardoso said, "The CBN will continue implementing policies that enhance macroeconomic stability, promote private sector growth, and create high-quality jobs."

During a panel discussion moderated by Jihad Azour, Director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the IMF, Cardoso addressed critical reforms in Nigeria's financial markets.

He highlighted that Nigeria had previously experienced a significant gap—sometimes as wide as 60 per cent—between the official and parallel market exchange rates.

However, he noted that due to consistent policy direction, improved market confidence, and greater transparency in forex trading, the exchange rate gap has now narrowed to approximately 4-5 per cent.

Cardoso acknowledged that Nigeria faced severe economic challenges, including capital flight, multiple exchange rate regimes, currency depreciation, high inflation, and a backlog of foreign exchange transactions.

These issues eroded investor confidence and created instability

in the financial markets.

Upon assuming office, Cardoso prioritised clearing the backlog of outstanding transactions and reinforcing Nigeria's commitment to economic stability.

To curb inflation and ensure macroeconomic discipline, the CBN adopted a tight monetary policy stance, raising interest rates by 850 basis points over the past year.

The bank also moved away from quasi-fiscal interventions, which had previously distorted the economy, and instead embraced a more orthodox monetary policy framework.

He said petrol subsidy, along with inefficiencies in the forex market, had cost the country approximately six per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually.

To strengthen Nigeria's financial system, the CBN mandated that banks increase their capital base to build resilience against future economic shocks.

Cardoso said the recapitalisation effort has yielded positive results, ensuring that the banking sector remains robust and capable of supporting the country's economic growth.

Stop acting like a child over ministerial snub, Onanuga tells El-Rufai

By Dave Oludare Oso

Special adviser on Information and Strategy to President Bola Tinubu, Bayo Onanuga, has admonished former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai to stop acting like a “crying child” and move on from the ministerial snub episode.

President Tinubu sent the list of ministerial nominees, including el-Rufai, to the senate for screening and confirmation in July 2023.

The senate withheld el-Rufai’s confirmation over petitions filed against him on security grounds.

The former FCT minister, speaking in an interview on Monday, said Nigerians should not believe the narrative that the national assembly rejected him as a ministerial nominee.

“The National Assembly had nothing to do with it, the president didn’t want me in his cabinet,” El-Rufai had said.

Reacting to his statement on Tuesday during an interview on Channels TV, Onanuga faulted El-Rufai for his “incessant complaints” about being excluded from Tinubu’s government.

The presidential spokesperson compared the ex-minister’s takes to that of a child “crying over spilt milk.”



“Well, as a person, I pity the former governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai. He feels hurt that he was not made a minister, but I think it has been a long time now,” Onanuga said.

“Ministers were appointed in August 2023, and I believe it’s time for him to move on. He cannot continue to behave like a child, as if someone stole his bread... crying over spilt milk, as we say.

“It is natural for him to feel hurt and bad about being excluded. However, as the president acknowledged in his recent tribute to him, El-Rufai actually played a significant role in helping to install President Tinubu.

“Still, if he is not part of the government, that does not mean he must bring down the roof. The president has nothing against him.

“I believe Nasir feels naturally hurt by his exclusion, which is why he is going everywhere campaigning against the president. This shows a man who resents being left out of the moving train and refuses to let go.

“As a brother and former governor, my advice to him is simple: he should forget about it if he was not made a minister.

“He has been in public service since 1999, and I think the hurt started when he was not appointed a minister. That explains why he has been making these statements.

“Even yesterday, in an interview with Arise TV, he claimed that it was the president who blocked his appointment.”

El-Rufai had also hinted at ditching the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Lagos Assembly crisis: Will Meranda step down for Lagos West?

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

The zoning arrangement for the Lagos State House of Assembly speakership has further fuelled the ongoing crisis, with recent indications suggesting that the position has been zoned to Lagos West.

Political leaders from the region have been pushing for a fair balance of power, arguing that with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu hailing from Lagos Central, it is only justifiable for the next Speaker to emerge from Lagos West or Lagos East to maintain regional equity. Consequently, pressure is mounting within the All-Progressives Congress (APC) and Abuja for Speaker Mojisola Meranda to step down.

A reliable source told New Daily Prime: "If the Speaker agrees to resign, it must be done during a plenary session when the House reconvenes."

As of February 26, 2025, the Lagos State House of Assembly remains adjourned indefinitely due to unresolved internal conflicts and security interventions. The last session saw 36 lawmakers passing a vote of confidence in Speaker Mojisola Meranda, highlighting the deep divide within the Assembly.

Why Lagos West?

Lagos West is the largest senatorial district in Lagos State in terms of landmass and population, covering key economic and political hubs such as Alimosho, Agege, Ikeja, Ojo, Badagry, Ifako-Ijaiye, and Mushin. Stakeholders argue that since former Speaker Mudashiru Obasa was from Lagos West, the new Speaker should also emerge from the district to ensure stability and continuity.

Former Speaker Mudashiru Obasa remains adamant in challenging his removal through legal means. However, sources within the APC told New Daily



Prime that contrary to speculations, Obasa is unlikely to be reinstated as Speaker.

Meanwhile, eight lawmakers from Lagos West have been shortlisted as potential candidates to assume the Speakership role. They include:

- Setonji David – Badagry Constituency 2
- Temitope Adewale – Ifako-Ijaiye 1 Constituency
- Kehinde Joseph – Alimosho 1
- Adedamola Kasunmu – Ikeja 2
- Lukman Olumoh – Ajeromi-Ifelodun 1
- Wale Rauf Sulaimon – Mushin Constituency 2
- Nureni Akinsanya – Mushin Constituency 1
- Surajudeen Tijani – Ojo 2

Amidst rising political tensions, key APC figures have intervened to broker peace and prevent further escalation. A source disclosed that senior party leaders, including former APC National Chairman Bisi Akande, former Ogun State Governor Aremo Olusegun Osoba,

and NNPC Board Chairman Pius Akinyelure, have stepped in to mediate.

Additionally, federal delegates from Abuja have reportedly held multiple meetings with Assembly members and other stakeholders in a bid to restore stability.

"They are doing everything within their power to ensure peace returns to the Assembly," the source added.

As the crisis drags on, political analysts believe that the APC leadership at the state and federal levels will ultimately determine the next Speaker. With the Assembly still adjourned indefinitely, Speaker Mojisola Meranda's future remains uncertain.

While there is intensified pressure for her resignation, the final decision on whether Lagos West or another region produces the next Speaker will significantly shape the political landscape of Lagos State ahead of the 2027 elections.

US consulate launches emerging technicians conference in Lagos

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The US Consulate General in Lagos has teamed up with the Field of Skills and Dreams VTE Academy to launch the Emerging Technicians Conference, a new initiative aimed at equipping young Nigerian technicians with the essential skills to excel in their trades and build sustainable businesses.

In a statement released on Wednesday, February 26, JoEllen Gorg, Acting US Consul General, made the announcement during a goodwill address at the American Corner in Lagos. She highlighted the long-standing commitment of the United States to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses across Nigeria.

Gorg emphasised that promoting economic resilience through technical training is critical for job creation, expanding opportunities for young people, and driving innovation.

She also pointed out that this initiative would contribute to mutually beneficial trade and investment, strengthening the economic ties between the two countries.

“Technicians and artisans are vital to a thriving economy. By providing entrepreneurship training, resources, and networking opportunities, we are championing high-quality craftsmanship and empowering the next generation of technicians to thrive in an ever-changing job market,” Gorg stated.

Omowale Ogunrinde, Executive Director of the Field of Skills and Dreams VTE Academy, also spoke at the event, underscoring the importance of adapting workforce training to keep pace with rapid technological advancements.

Ogunrinde explained that investing in Nigeria’s youth, especially in key technical fields, is crucial for accelerating both innovation and economic growth.

“This initiative invests in one of Nigeria’s



most valuable resources — its youth. By nurturing local talent, we can significantly boost innovation and drive the nation’s economic progress,” Ogunrinde said.

One participant, Khadijat Ajagbe, an HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) technician, described her experience as invaluable.

“The Emerging Technicians Conference has equipped me with essential business and technical skills, from fostering industry connections to understanding how innovation drives business growth. Learning from experienced professionals has been truly impactful,” Ajagbe remarked.

The programme has selected 120 emerging technicians from diverse technical fields, including plumbing, electrical work, automobile mechanics, HVAC, solar system design and installation, data science, and web development.

Over six months, these participants will receive mentorship designed to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and prepare them for future business opportunities.

The conference offered participants insights into the evolving landscape of in-

demand technical fields and the importance of continuous skills development.

It also highlighted the role of innovation in career success, with a focus on business management, branding, marketing, customer service, and accounting processes. These skills are essential for scaling businesses and improving access to future financing opportunities.

Among the industry experts who participated in the conference were U.S. Consulate General Facilities Manager Cynthia Gwaro, Dr Christiana Okenla, Head of Customer Relations at Equinix West Africa, and Zansi Adebawale, Key Accounts Manager for Anglophone West Africa at Daikin.

These professionals shared valuable knowledge and connected the participants with resources to help them grow their businesses.

Looking ahead, the participants will continue working with the Field of Skills and Dreams VTE Academy to apply the skills they have gained, scale their businesses, and contribute to Nigeria’s long-term economic growth and development.

Four female students of Tarka University kidnapped in Makurdi

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Four female undergraduates at the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, formally known as Uni Agric, Makurdi have been kidnapped by unknown assailants.

The reports indicated that the young women were abducted by unknown gunmen on the university premises on Wednesday.

The victims' names were given as: Emmanuella Msenuter, Orakaa Susan, Iember Apebo, and M. Folashade.



According to sources, the Chairman of Makurdi Local Government, Hon. Keffi has visited the school with a strong security presence to emphasise with the school management and

ensure the safety of other students while search and rescue operations are underway.

Efforts to speak with the Dean of Students Affairs at the university was not successful as his phone was permanently engaged.

Meanwhile, the police spokesman of the Benue State Command said he is on his way to access situations personally at the university campus before he can comment.

Buhari, Amaechi, El-Rufai shun APC NEC meeting

By Dave Oludare Oso

Top chieftains and leaders of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) are currently at the National Secretariat of the party for its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

However, former President Muhammadu Buhari; former governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai; and former governor of Rivers State and ex-Minister of Transport, Rotimi Amaechi conspicuously absent from the NEC meeting were conspicuously absent from the NEC meeting.

Hours before the meeting, all roads leading to the venue on Blantyre Street were cordoned off by a combined team of armed security men, including soldiers from the Guards Brigade.

Also, vehicular and human movements on Blantyre Street were also restricted just as journalists were kept outside despite the release of an accredited list of reporters on Wednesday morning by the party spokesman, Felix Morka.



Some early arrivals at the venue include all National Working Committee (NWC) members; Forum of State Chairmen; former governor of Zamfara State, Abdulaziz Yari; Minister of Budget and National Planning, Atiku Bagudu; and Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu.

Governors of Edo, Benue, Ondo, Ekiti, Kaduna, Jigawa, Nasarawa, Yobe, Niger, Lagos, Kogi, Ogun, Imo, deputy

governor of Ebonyi and former governors of Kogi, Kebbi, Niger, Zamfara, and Plateau were in attendance.

The leader of the party, President Bola Tinubu, Vice President Kashim Shettima, Senate President Goodwill Akpabio, and Speaker Tajudeen Abbas arrived at the venue at noon. The meeting was presided over by APC National Chairman Abdullahi Ganduje.

The NEC meeting, the first since Tinubu's assumption of office in May 2023, comes a day after the national caucus meeting of the party at the Presidential Villa also in Abuja.

Some APC chieftains, including El-Rufai and an ex-National Vice Chairman of the party, Salihu Lukman had complained about the lack of internal democracy in the ruling.

In recent times, former president Buhari has kept aloof from, and has not made any comment about activities involving the ruling party.

Why Buhari missed APC NEC meeting – Garba Shehu

By Dave Oludare Oso



The spokesperson for former President Muhammadu Buhari, Garba Shehu has explained the reason the erstwhile leader was absent from the All Progressives Congress (APC) National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held in Abuja on Wednesday.

The meeting, which was presided over by President Bola Tinubu, had in attendance top APC figures, including Vice President Kashim Shettima, APC National Chairman Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje,

governors, members of the National Working Committee (NWC), and other key stakeholders.

However, notable figures such as Buhari, former Kaduna State governor, Nasir El-Rufai, and former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi were absent.

Speaking to BBC Hausa, Garba Shehu stated that Buhari's absence was due to a late invitation.

“President Muhammadu Buhari is not a caucus member of the party.

He was supposed to attend the NEC meeting, but unfortunately, the invitation was sent to him on Monday and only reached him on Tuesday. Because of this, he could not leave Daura for Abuja, even if he owned a private jet,” Shehu explained.

He further emphasized that despite Buhari's physical absence, his support for the party remained unwavering.

“Buhari is a founding member of the APC. He was nominated by the party for president twice. He is a

Mystery illness kills over 50 people in Congo

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



An unknown illness has killed over 50 people in the northwest of the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to doctors in the central African nation and the World Health Organization.

The interval between the onset of symptoms and death has been just 48 hours in the majority of cases, and “that’s what’s really worrying,” Serge Ngalebato, medical director of Bikoro Hospital, a regional monitoring center, told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The latest disease outbreak in Congo began on January 21, and 419 cases had been recorded as of Monday, including 53 deaths.

According to the WHO’s Africa office, the first outbreak in the town of Boloko began after three children ate a bat and died within 48 hours following hemorrhagic fever symptoms.

There have long been concerns about diseases jumping from animals to humans in places where wild animals are popularly eaten. The number of such outbreaks in Africa has surged by more than 60% in the last decade, the WHO said in 2022.

After the second outbreak of the current mystery disease began in the town of Bomate on Feb. 9, samples from 13 cases have been sent to the National Institute for Biomedical Research in Congo’s capital, Kinshasa, for testing, the

WHO said.

All samples have been negative for Ebola or other common hemorrhagic fever diseases like Marburg. Some tested positive for malaria.

Last year, another mystery flu-like illness that killed more than 143 people in another part of Congo was determined to be likely malaria.

Congo has suffered from many disease outbreaks in recent years, including typhoid, malaria and anemia. The country has also recently grappled with an mpox outbreak, according to the WHO, with more than 47,000 suspected cases and over 1,000 suspected deaths from the disease.

My life is in danger - NAFDAC boss

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, the Director-General of the National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), has raised the alarm over threats to her life and the safety of agency staff, calling on authorities to protect them as they navigate hazardous conditions in their duties.

The NAFDAC boss also advocated for the death penalty for those involved in the production and sale of fake and counterfeit drugs in Nigeria.

Prof. Adeyeye, while briefing State House correspondents at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, on Wednesday, disclosed that NAFDAC had recently seized illicit drugs worth over N1 trillion in an ongoing crackdown against substandard and fake pharmaceutical products.

The NAFDAC boss revealed that the agency's intensified enforcement efforts had resulted in the seizure of 87 truckloads of banned, expired, and substandard medical products. Among the confiscated items were USAID- and UNFPA-donated antiretroviral drugs, male and female condoms, and other compromised medical supplies.

She described the large-scale operation, which targeted Nigeria's three major open drug markets, as the biggest in NAFDAC's history. The operation was executed in:

Ariaria and Eziukwu Markets (Aba, Abia State)

Bridge Head Market (Onitsha, Anambra State)

Idumota Drug Market (Lagos State)



Prof. Adeyeye estimated that the value of the seized items was at least N1 trillion, but noted that further assessment could reveal a higher figure.

The NAFDAC DG recounted how staff members had faced kidnapping attempts and physical threats due to their work.

"I told you about the attempted murder about six months ago. One of our staff members in Kano had his child kidnapped because he was doing his job. Fortunately, the child escaped," she revealed.

"For me, I have two policemen living in my house 24/7 in Abuja and Lagos. I don't have a life. I can't go anywhere without police escorts. That's not my way of living, but I don't have a choice because we must save our country. Nonetheless, I also use common sense."

The threats facing Prof. Adeyeye mirror those encountered by Prof. Dora Akunyili, who led NAFDAC from 2001 to 2009 and became a target of drug cartels due to her relentless fight against counterfeit

drugs.

Akunyili's motivation stemmed from the death of her sister, who died after receiving fake insulin. Her campaigns led to the closure of open-air drug markets and the confiscation of fake drugs, drawing numerous threats and even an assassination attempt in 2003.

Like Akunyili, Prof. Adeyeye remains determined to eradicate the fake drug menace despite the dangers involved.

Prof. Adeyeye emphasized the need for stricter punishments, including the death penalty, for those endangering lives through fake drugs.

She urged the Nigerian government to implement stronger laws to curb the life-threatening trade of counterfeit pharmaceuticals.

NAFDAC continues to intensify its enforcement actions nationwide, with the goal of protecting public health and restoring confidence in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry.

EFCC arraigns former P-Square manager, Jude Okoye over N1.3bn fraud

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Former manager and elder brother of Paul and Peter Okoye of the defunct music group, P-Square, has been arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on charges of laundering ₦1.38 billion, \$ 1 million and £34,537.59.

Jude was arraigned alongside his company, Northside Music Ltd, before Justice Alexander Owoeye of the Federal High Court, Lagos, on a seven-count charge.

One of the counts read: “That you, Jude Okoye Chigozie and Northside Music Ltd sometime in 2022, in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did directly acquire a landed property known as No 5, Tony Eromosele Street Parkview Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos worth ₦850,000,000.00 (Eight hundred and fifty million naira) only, which money you knew or reasonably ought to have known forms part of proceeds of unlawful act and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 18 (2) (d) and punishable under Section 18 (3) of the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.”

Another count read: “That you, Jude Okoye Chigozie and Northside Music Ltd sometime in 2022, in Lagos, within the jurisdiction of this



Honourable Court, did indirectly using bureau de change convert the sum of \$1,019,762.87 (One million nineteen thousand, seven hundred and six-two dollars eighty-seven cents), domiciled in Access Bank Plc operated by Northside Music Lid to the naira equivalent and remitted into various bank accounts with the intention of concealing that the said fund form part of the proceeds of an unlawful act and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 18 (2)(a) and punishable under Section 18 (3) of the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.”

He pleaded “not guilty” to the charges.

In view of his plea, the prosecution counsel, Larry Peters Aso, applied for a date for hearing as well as for the remand of the defendant in the correctional facility pending trial.

The defendant’s counsel, Inibehe Effiong, informed the court of a pending bail application. He asked for a short date for the hearing. Effiong also asked that the defendant be remanded in the EFCC’s custody pending the hearing of the application.

Aso objected to the request for the defendant to be remanded in the EFCC custody. He argued that the EFCC custody was already congested with suspects awaiting arraignment. He urged the court to remand the defendant to the correctional facility since he had taken his plea.

Justice Owoeye adjourned the matter till February 28 for bail hearing and April 14 for trial.

He also ordered that the defendant be remanded in the Ikoyi correctional facility.

Lagos strengthens cooperative societies with corporate governance reforms

By Friday Omosola

The Lagos State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening cooperative societies by ensuring that management trustees adopt strong corporate governance practices.

Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade, and Investment, Folashade Ambrose, made this known during a town hall meeting with cooperative trustees in the Ikeja Division on Thursday.

The meeting, held at the Lagos State Cooperative Federation (LASCOFED) Multipurpose Hall, is part of a series of engagements scheduled across the state's five administrative divisions.

Ambrose emphasised that Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration views cooperative societies as key stakeholders in the state's economic transformation, aligning with the fourth pillar of the T.H.E.M.E.S Plus Development Agenda—Making Lagos a 21st-Century Economy.

"The cooperative movement plays a crucial role in driving poverty alleviation, job creation, economic growth, and community empowerment," she stated.

"With strong and well-structured cooperatives, we can stimulate investments, harness local talents, and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy from the grassroots up."

The Commissioner highlighted challenges affecting cooperative societies, including governance and leadership concerns, financial transparency, loan accessibility, and unstructured investments.

Lagos

She noted that the government is working on redefining regulations, improving monitoring, and enforcing policies to strengthen the cooperative sector.



"Our goal is to position cooperatives to benefit from the A2F MSME Fund, facilitated through the LASG-BOI-Sterling Bank collaboration.

"This initiative will provide single-digit interest loans to cooperative-based MSMEs, supporting business expansion, infrastructure improvements, and market access while fostering industrial clusters and economic zones," she added.

Ambrose called on trustees to adopt global best practices in governance, integrate cooperatives into larger economic value chains, and ensure transparency in loan disbursements.

She stressed that these measures would enhance public confidence in cooperative societies as reliable financial institutions.

Permanent Secretary of MCCTI, Olugbemiga Aina, urged cooperative members to take an active interest in the management of their societies rather than focusing solely on loan access and dividend collection.

"Members must ensure their trustees adhere strictly to cooperative by-laws. Trustees, in turn, should resist pressures to approve loans for unqualified members," he advised.

Head of Investigation at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Sa'ad Abdulalam, warned against cooperative societies engaging in unauthorized financial operations.

He cautioned that some organizations, falsely registered as cooperatives, illegally venture into money and capital market activities.

"Cooperatives are legally empowered to source funds and serve their members. They must not raise funds from the public without proper registration or invest members' contributions in Ponzi schemes or unrealistic investment ventures," he warned.

Special Fraud Unit representative, SP Eyitayo Johnson, underscored the importance of financial literacy, routine audits, technology adoption, and professional consultancy in preventing fraud.

He also encouraged whistle-blowing to expose fraudulent activities within cooperative societies.

Similarly, Abisola Oladipupo, Assistant General Manager of LASACO Assurance, stressed the need for cooperatives to insure member loans to protect against financial losses.

7 Chinese convicted for trapping 91 Malawians in S' Africa

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

The Johannesburg high court has convicted seven Chinese nationals and their company on numerous charges related to crimes, including human trafficking that were committed at Village Deep in Johannesburg several years ago.

“The accused faced 158 charges, including offences such as human trafficking, labour law violations and breaches of occupational health and safety regulations,” said National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) spokesperson Phindi Mjonondwane.

The accused are Shu-Uei Tsao, 42, Biao Ma, Hui Chen, 50, Quin Li, 56, Zhou Jiaqing, 46, Junying Dai, 58, Zhilian Zhang, 51, and their company Beautiful City (Pty) Ltd.

“The police received a tip-off about an illegal factory employing foreign nationals, prompting them to conduct a raid.” The factory produced cotton-fibre sheets.

After the raid, police led an investigation which revealed that between 2017 and 2019, the accused operated Beautiful City and employed 91 undocumented Malawians, including 16 minors aged between 14 and 16.

“Upon their arrival, the victims were confined to the premises under



inhumane conditions, with armed guards controlling their movements. The victims were forced to work 11-hour shifts, seven days a week, without proper training or safety equipment,” Mjonondwane said.

She said senior state advocate Valencia Dube presented further evidence, calling several Beautiful City employees, mostly Malawian nationals and one South African truck driver, who testified about being deceived into working at the factory with promises of a better life.

Many had previously worked at Chinese-owned factories and were recruited under false pretences.

The victims described harsh conditions, including being transported in windowless trucks to the factory, which they were not allowed to leave. They worked long

hours with no breaks, were forced to work on holidays and were prohibited from bringing in food.

Personal communication was banned and they were made to operate defective machines without protective gear, leading to accidents. One worker lost a finger and was denied medical care. The factory had a high wall, razor fence and armed security, reflecting the exploitive environment, with workers often threatened with firearms and subjected to extreme control.

Judge David Mhango ruled the accused were liable for the offences.

“The NPA welcomes the conviction, as it demonstrates the dedication of law enforcement in addressing organised crime and human trafficking cases,” Mjonondwane said.

Okpebholo has done what we couldn't – Obaseki's deputy, Shaibu

By Friday Omosola



Former Edo State Deputy Governor, Philip Shaibu, has acknowledged that Governor Monday Okpebholo has accomplished a significant milestone within his first 100 days in office—something his own administration failed to achieve.

Speaking on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily on Wednesday, Shaibu noted that Okpebholo successfully secured Federal Government (FG) support for the state, a move he and former Governor Godwin Obaseki did not pursue during their tenure.

“One commendable step Governor Okpebholo has taken, which we didn't, is reaching out to the Federal

Government for assistance,” Shaibu stated.

“This support will ease the financial burden on the state and allow more resources to be directed toward development projects.”

He explained that while the Obaseki-led administration had good intentions, political interests eventually interfered with its plans.

Reflecting on his experience in government, Shaibu emphasised the need to support and pray for leaders, as their success or failure directly impacts the state.

“Every administration, including ours, started with the right

intentions, but along the way, political factors came into play. That's why I consistently urge people to support Okpebholo and also pray for him, so he doesn't fall into the same challenges,” he added.

Shaibu and Obaseki, once political allies, became adversaries in the lead-up to the September 21, 2024, governorship election.

Shaibu eventually rejoined the All Progressives Congress (APC), while Okpebholo, the party's candidate, won the election as declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

NLNG CEO: Only 2 gas trains operational

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Managing Director and CEO of Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Limited, Dr. Philip Mshelbila, has disclosed that only two of the company's six gas trains are operational, primarily due to persistent attacks on its pipelines by vandals.

These disruptions have led to significant losses for the company and hindered its ability to meet global demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Speaking at the Nigeria International Energy Summit in Abuja on Wednesday, Dr. Mshelbila explained that three critical gas supply pipelines—GTS 1, GTS 2, and GTS 4—are currently down for repairs because of illegal connections by thieves.

These pipelines are essential for the company's operations, and the attacks have created a severe bottleneck in NLNG's production capacity.

"In the current moment, I am only running two trains out of six," Mshelbila lamented.

"We are facing serious challenges due to these pipeline attacks, and it has greatly impacted our ability to meet international demand for LNG."

He further emphasised the importance of rethinking energy security, noting that while progress has been made in securing oil infrastructure, the same level of attention has not been given to gas security.

"Energy security should be as important as national security," he stated.

"Gas security, however, has deteriorated. Until we can safeguard these pipelines, we will continue to underperform."

The vandalism has not only affected NLNG's operations but also hampered Nigeria's LNG exports. Earlier this year,



the country saw a 20% decline in LNG exports due to pipeline destruction, and delays of at least 10 days are expected for upcoming shipments.

Dr. Mshelbila also highlighted the international impact of the pipeline attacks. Countries in Europe and beyond have shown interest in importing LNG from Nigeria, but the country's inability to meet these requests due to security challenges has left it unable to compete with stronger producers like Qatar and the United States.

"Countries like Qatar and the U.S. are in a stronger position to meet LNG demand, while we are unable to capitalize on these opportunities due to the security challenges surrounding our gas infrastructure," Mshelbila remarked.

Despite these setbacks, Mshelbila praised the Nigerian government for its efforts to create a favorable environment for investments in NLNG, particularly in the successful development of the Train 7 project, a \$5 billion investment.

He noted that the public-private partnership model has proven successful, bringing in significant investor interest.

"Train 7 is a reflection of the success of this model. It has attracted

overwhelming investor interest, which speaks to the sound governance and structure of the company," he said.

However, he also noted that while NLNG's success serves as a model, the broader Nigerian economy faces significant challenges, especially in securing energy infrastructure and attracting investments.

The Special Adviser to the President on Energy, Olu Verheijen, echoed Dr. Mshelbila's sentiments, emphasizing the importance of transparent governance and financial rigor in attracting investment to Nigeria's energy sector.

She highlighted that the NLNG model, built on clear governance and stable companies, should be replicated to address the nation's energy needs.

"The NLNG model is one that we should aim to replicate. Companies with clear governance and commercial processes will help attract the capital needed to address our energy needs," Verheijen said.

Despite these positive developments, she cautioned that the security challenges surrounding Nigeria's energy infrastructure need urgent resolution to ensure the sector's continued growth and sustainability.

46 killed in Sudan military plane crash

By Dave Oludare Osoi



Forty-six people were killed when a Sudanese military transport plane crashed into a residential neighbourhood on the outskirts of Khartoum, the regional government said in a statement on Wednesday.

The statement said the Antonov aircraft went down on Tuesday night near Wadi Seidna air base, one of the army's largest military hubs in Omdurman, northwest of the capital.

The army, which has been at war with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, said the plane crashed during takeoff, killing and injuring both military personnel and civilians.

"After a final tally, the number of martyrs reached 46, with 10 injured," the Khartoum regional government's media office said in a statement.

The army-aligned health ministry had previously reported at least 19 dead.

On Wednesday, witnesses described hearing a loud explosion and seeing several homes damaged in the area. The crash also caused power outages in nearby neighbourhoods.

The ministry said emergency teams rushed injured civilians, including children, to a nearby hospital.

A military source cited a technical malfunction as the cause of the crash, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment to the media.

The recent escalation follows significant advances by the army in central Sudan and the capital Khartoum in its multi-front offensive against the RSF.

Late on Saturday, RSF signed a charter

with allied political and armed groups in Nairobi, Kenya, paving the way for the formation of a parallel government in rebel-held areas.

Since April 2023, army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy and RSF commander Mohamed Hamadan Daglo, once allies, have been locked in a deadly power struggle.

The war, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives, erupted after a rift emerged between Burhan and Daglo over the future structure of the government.

The conflict has triggered one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters in recent memory, according to the United Nations, displacing over 12 million, plunging the country into hunger and crippling critical infrastructure.

Lagos Assembly Clerk threatens legal action against Speaker Meranda

By Damilola Olufemi

The Clerk of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Olalekan Onafeko, has threatened to take legal action against Speaker Mojisola Meranda through his lawyers for contempt of court.

This followed the verdict by Justice M.N Esove of the National Industrial Court reinstating Onafeko and ordered Babatunde Ottun, who was appointed to replace Onafeko to stop identifying himself as the Clerk until substantive case is settled.

Onafeko was removed as Clerk of the House on January 13, 2025.

His removal followed the impeachment of former Speaker Mudashiru Obasa.

Meanwhile, Speaker Meranda's alleged non-compliance with the court's order has prompted Onafeko's lawyers to consider pursuing contempt proceedings against her.

In an attempt by the legal team of Onafeko to enforce the court verdict, they were unable to access his office as it had been padlocked.

A member of the legal team, Barrister Yusuf Nurudeen, while speaking to the press, noted that such an act leads to contempt of court.

He said: "We are here this morning to give effect to the order of the court made on the 19th of February 2025. The court by Honourable Justice Maureen Nkechinyerehuo Esove of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN), sitting in Lagos, has ordered that Olalekan Onafeko, resume his office as the Clerk of the



Lagos State House of Assembly.

"That order was made, and we have served the order on the House of Assembly duly acknowledged by the House of Assembly.

"We are here today to give effect to the order of the court. We got here this morning. We were not welcomed, but the office is not open. As law-abiding citizens, we have to leave and look for another day to come back because we need to effect that order of court.

The legal professional stated that Onafeko, a civil servant of up to 30 years in service, has served the Lagos State government meritoriously with several letters of recommendations and promotions till he was appointed the Clerk of the Lagos State House of Assembly.

"So you can't just by a motion of one honourable who has not even put five years, 10 years into the service of Lagos State government, just wake up and say you are suspending someone for financial misappropriation without

any letter stating what he has done at any point in time.

"Today makes it about 40-something days no letter has been served on him for any infractions he has committed in service of Lagos State government.

"We don't know why this is going on, and that's why we are here this morning to give effect to the order of the court. He is a civil servant, and there are rules and procedures under the Lagos State Public Service 2015, where someone who is on level 13 should be suspended or be dealt with. None of these things have been abided by."

He added that the Speaker would be sued for contempt for disobeying court order.

He said, "They have joined issues with us in court, they have filed their processes, they have engaged lawyers including a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), they should interpret the law for them and its consequences."

Delta police deploy tactical teams to Ogwashi-Uku over security issues

By Helen Okechukwu



In response to growing security concerns in Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State Commissioner of Police, CP Olufemi Abaniwonda, has ordered the immediate redeployment of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in the area.

Edafe Bright, the police spokesperson in a document shared on Wednesday said tactical police teams have been stationed at strategic points to curb the rising cases of kidnapping and armed robbery.

The Delta State Police Command, acknowledging public outcry on WhatsApp and other social media platforms, has mobilized personnel to tackle the situation.

CP Abaniwonda directed the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations), DCP Aina Adesola, to oversee the deployment of operatives from specialized units, including the Dragon Patrol, Eagle-Net, and Rapid Response Squad (RRS), to various locations in Ogwashi-Uku.

Read Also: [Sanwo-Olu-opens-Lagos-police-station](#)

Furthermore, the Special Anti-Kidnapping and Cyber-Crime Squad (SAKCCS) has been instructed to relocate to the area and employ intelligence-driven operations to track down and apprehend suspected criminals.

Officers from the State Intelligence

Department (SID) have also been assigned undercover duties to gather information that will aid in dismantling criminal networks.

Reaffirming the command's commitment to public safety, CP Abaniwonda assured residents of Ogwashi-Uku and the entire state that security forces will remain vigilant in the fight against crime.

He urged citizens to remain alert, continue their lawful activities, and report any suspicious individuals or movements to the police.

For immediate security concerns, residents can reach the command through the following dedicated lines: 08036684974, 08114895600, and 08025666914.

NDDC MD urges police authorities to evaluate officers' mental health

By Helen Okechukwu

Advocating for professionalism, the Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Samuel Ogbuku, has urged Nigeria Police Force (NPF) authorities to perform mental health evaluations on its officers.

This was made known on Tuesday through a document issued in Port Harcourt by NDDC Director of Corporate Affairs, Seledi Thompson-Wakama.

Thompson-Wakama, however, disclosed that Ogbuku said this during the fifth edition of the Strategic Security Conference and Retreat for Senior Police Officers in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

The conference was titled "Improving Nigeria's Internal Security and Economic Prosperity through Inclusive Policing."

He hailed the police officers for their efforts, sacrifices, and contributions in protecting the country.

He urged Nigerians to support the officers by reporting and providing relevant information to solve crimes and track criminals, stating, "If the police are reported to be



failing in their duties."

Ogbuku praised the police retreat, organised by Inspector General Kayode Egbetokun, as a step toward improving law enforcement.

He stressed that the retreat will tackle unprofessional conduct and help implement sustainable policies.

"The police authority should also evaluate the mental health of its officers through psychological testing. This is to ensure that emotional intelligence is at play during the execution of their duties."

He highlighted the NDDC's support for security agencies, noting the installation of 60kva solar inverters at police

headquarters in nine Niger Delta states, with Imo State's completed and others in progress.

"To enhance operatives' performance, the NDDC has also supplied communication gadgets to the Rivers Police State Command and repaired the failed mast and armoured personnel carriers in Rivers and Bayelsa States.

"The Commission has also provided six 250-horsepower Yamaha outboard engines and also rehabilitated six of the outboard engines to combat crime in Bayelsa State and the Niger Delta region at large," he added.

Ogbuku emphasised that these efforts reinforce the partnership between the NDDC and the police force in enhancing regional security.

NIMR urges better surveillance, advanced kits for VHF detection

By Helen Okechukwu

To prevent outbreaks, the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) has called for improved border surveillance and advanced kits for early detection of Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs).

This call came following results obtained from research conducted in some part of the country between 2018 and 2022.

Speaking to journalists on Tuesday at the monthly institute's conference in Lagos, the Director of Research at NIMR, Prof. Rosemary Audu, urged improved border scrutiny to prevent impacts that pose a health challenge.

VHFs, a group of illnesses caused by viruses that damage the blood vessels and can cause severe bleeding.

While sharing the findings, Audu, a professor of Medical Virology stated that the research conducted showed the presence of diseases such as dengue fever, yellow fever, Lassa fever, Zika virus, and chikungunya.

She highlighted that while some hemorrhagic fever viruses may cause mild symptoms such as body aches and fatigue, they can also lead to severe complications, including organ damage, internal bleeding, and death.

Strengthening monitoring at the country's entry points, she noted, is



essential for identifying travellers carrying these infections, as they pose a significant health risk.

“Emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, particularly VHFs, are common in Nigeria,” she stated.

“From the results I have presented so far, there is a need to enhance the diagnostic capacity of detecting these viral infections in patients with fever. Beyond malaria, there are other things that can cause illness in a patient.

“Health workers should have a high index of suspicion, as there are many other things that can cause illnesses that anti-malaria drugs cannot address.”

She explained that the primary equipment used for testing and research on VHFs in the country is the PCR machine, but access remains limited as only a few laboratories

have the necessary facilities.

Additionally, she emphasised the need to strengthen surveillance systems for emerging infectious diseases, particularly at border entry points.

“We still need to improve on what we have,” she said. “We need to probably get cellulose kits that will be available for labs to use in the country to detect VHFs for proper management, though they are expensive.”

The expert further disclosed that the NIMR team plans to expand VHF surveillance by conducting studies on viral infections in other regions.

However, she pointed out that inadequate and inconsistent funding continues to hinder research efforts.

She urged relevant authorities to prioritise funding for infectious disease research to enhance Nigeria's preparedness for future outbreaks.

Remi Tinubu flags off campaign to eliminate HIV/AIDS, syphilis, others

By Helen Okechukwu

As number of people living with HIV/AIDS soar high within Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu's wife, Senator Oluremi has integrated a campaign, "Free to Shine" aims to lessen rising infection rate among women and children.

Mrs. Tinubu, during the flag-off ceremony of the Organisation of African First Ladies for Development "Free to Shine" campaign held on Tuesday, stressed the significance of this development.

The event took place at the North-West zone in Kaduna State.

She further highlighted that in the Sub-Saharan region in Africa, Nigeria has the highest number of HIV infections due to its population affecting children, youth, women, and marginalised groups.

The campaigns aims to create awareness, offer supports and adequate treatment to children born with HIV.

"The goal of the Free to Shine campaign is to raise awareness, renew our commitment, and take collective action against HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and hepatitis. We must deepen engagement with traditional and faith-based institutions to address cultural and religious influences on HIV prevention behaviours," she explained.



While citing the numbers of affected people from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Nigeria's first lady states that in 2024 over 100,000 children and nearly two million adults live with HIV.

"It is reported that most infants born to HIV-positive mothers are not tested within the first two months of birth, largely due to the fact that the mothers are not aware or ignorant of the consequences of their inaction," she added.

Targeting 2030 for the triple elimination of HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and hepatitis, she said, "I have also decided to advocate for the triple elimination of HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and hepatitis by 2030. This campaign will cover the six geopolitical zones of the nation.

Also at the event launching, the Governor of Kaduna State, Uba Sani, praised Senator Oluremi for her

commitment and leadership style in serving the country.

Speaking at the event, he appealed that both state and federal governments should strengthen their health policies on HIV/AIDS, syphilis, and hepatitis.

"In the design and implementation of our interventions, we should ensure that we fully involve people living with HIV/AIDS and patients with syphilis and hepatitis. We should also engage communities and carry out intensive and extensive awareness/sensitisation on these diseases."

However, the campaign cut across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, accompanied by community engagement, rising awareness, and active participation.

Dignitaries attended the ceremony, including government officials and traditional rulers, among others.

I have been broken, not destroyed – Naira Marley breaks silence on Mohbad

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

After months of accusations, Naira Marley finally speaks out as court clears him of any involvement in the death of his former signee, Mohbad.

In a heartfelt statement shared on his X (formerly Twitter) handle, Naira Marley expressed deep sorrow over the tragedy. He also lamented the pain of being wrongfully accused of causing the young artist's death.

Naira Marley's emotional response

"I never thought silence could be so loud," he wrote. "I never thought someone I called my brother, someone I protected, would leave this world with my name in his shadow. I have carried this weight, this pain, this shame that was never mine to bear."

The singer admitted that mistakes were made in his past dealings with Mohbad but insisted they were strictly business-related and never personal. He maintained that before Mohbad's passing, they had reconciled and put their differences behind them.

He further accused those who were present at the time of Mohbad's death of allowing the public to wrongfully blame him instead of revealing the truth.

"You let them tear me apart. You let them call me a killer while you sat there, knowing the truth. Now, you tell the story?" he asked.

Naira Marley also criticized those close to Mohbad for delaying his burial, stating that if the truth had been told from the start, the late singer would have received the peace he deserved.



Months of accusations and public scrutiny

Mohbad, a rising star in Nigeria's music industry, died on September 12, 2023, under controversial circumstances. His sudden death triggered widespread speculation, with many fans and industry insiders demanding answers.

As a former signee of Naira Marley's record label, Marlian Music, suspicions quickly turned to his former boss. Many accused Naira Marley of being involved, despite his consistent claims of innocence.

The controversy led to his arrest and legal battles, forcing him to defend himself in court. After a detailed investigation, the court ruled that neither Naira Marley nor any other accused individuals were responsible for Mohbad's death.

Relief after clearing his name

Reacting to the verdict, Naira Marley expressed a mix of relief and pain. He emphasized that he faced the justice system head-on rather than running from the allegations.

"You never thought I would survive," he stated. "You never thought I would walk through the fire and face my people. Maybe you hoped I would stay a fugitive. Instead, I stood before the justice system, spent time in jail, and faced everything head-on while you changed the story again and again."

He also reaffirmed his belief that, in time, the truth will prevail.

"But God sees all. The truth does not shake. The lies will fade, and time will reveal everything," he wrote.

What's next?

With the legal chapter now closed, focus shifts to uncovering the real cause of Mohbad's untimely death. His body has yet to be laid to rest, further fueling demands for justice and closure from his grieving fans and loved ones.

As the entertainment industry reflects on the tragic loss, many hope that the full truth will soon emerge, providing finality to one of Nigeria's most talked-about music industry controversies.

Always verify before donating to online medical fundraisers - Kate Henshaw

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Kate Henshaw warns against fake medical fundraisers, urging donors to verify claims before offering financial support to avoid falling for fraud.

Her cautionary message came after a resurfaced tweet exposed a suspected scam involving a woman who solicited funds for cancer treatment but vanished after receiving donations.

Henshaw, known for her outspoken nature, reacted to the tweet on X, formerly Twitter, emphasising the need for extra vigilance. She suggested that donors take additional steps, such as visiting hospitals in person, to confirm the legitimacy of medical fundraisers.

Fraudulent fundraiser sparks debate

The controversy began when a social media user recalled an incident in which a woman posted an emotional video pleading for help to treat cancer. Moved by her distress, well-meaning individuals donated money and shared proof of their contributions. However, once the funds were transferred, the woman stopped responding to messages.

“This is such a terrible thing to do,” the post read. “No one knows who genuinely needs help anymore. Do you remember the lady who had cancer on her hand? She made a heartbreaking video, and people rushed to donate. We raised funds for her, and donors even sent screenshots. But when I asked her how much she had received, she accused me of disturbing her and then stopped replying to messages. I had to take down the tweet. It turned out to be a scam. This is truly awful.”

Henshaw calls for caution

Reacting to the post, Henshaw did not mince words. She urged the public to be more diligent before donating to online medical fundraisers. The actress



highlighted the importance of verifying medical cases firsthand to prevent falling victim to deception.

“When it comes to medical issues, please verify,” she wrote. “If you can, visit the hospital unannounced. See things for yourself. The heart of man is wicked! Imagine someone saying you are disturbing them after you helped. Sick!”

Her statement resonated with many social media users, who expressed shock and anger over the scam. One commenter wrote, “I can’t believe someone would fake an illness just to scam people. Some people are truly criminally minded.”

Henshaw replied with a touch of irony, saying, “When sickness comes, she will say it’s her village people.”

Growing concerns over medical scams
Cases of fraudulent medical fundraisers have become increasingly common, raising concerns about online charity appeals. Many donors contribute out of goodwill, only to later discover they have been deceived.

Scammers often exploit public sympathy by sharing distressing images, fabricated medical reports, and emotional stories. In many cases, they use social media’s vast

reach to spread their pleas rapidly, making it difficult to differentiate between genuine and fraudulent cases.

Experts advise donors to conduct thorough background checks before offering financial help. They recommend reaching out to hospitals directly, verifying medical reports, and ensuring the legitimacy of fundraisers through trusted sources.

A call for accountability

Henshaw’s stance reflects a growing demand for accountability in online fundraising. While social media has provided a powerful platform for raising funds, it has also made it easier for scammers to take advantage of public generosity.

As fraudulent cases continue to emerge, Henshaw’s message serves as a wake-up call. She urges people to ask questions, verify details, and avoid donating blindly.

“Giving should come from the heart,” she said, “but wisdom should guide generosity.”

Her words remind the public that while kindness is commendable, due diligence is essential to prevent exploitation.

Wizkid reconciles with Reekado Banks after long feud

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

After years of tension, Nigerian music stars Wizkid and Reekado Banks have finally reconciled, reuniting in Lagos and sparking excitement among fans.

Their fallout, which began in 2020, is now a thing of the past as the two were seen together in Lagos.

A long-awaited reunion

For the first time in nearly four years, Wizkid and Reekado Banks appeared in public together. A viral video captured the moment they dined alongside rapper Shallipopi at a Lagos restaurant. Fans quickly took to social media to celebrate their reunion, marking the end of a rift that once made headlines.

The 2020 fallout

Their conflict started in October 2020 during Nigeria's #EndSARS protests, a movement against police brutality. At the time, Reekado Banks announced the release of a new song titled Omo Ologo, featuring Wizkid. The timing, however, did not sit well with Wizkid. He publicly criticized Reekado Banks, calling him a "clout animal" for promoting music during a national crisis.

Wizkid's frustration was evident in his response. He commented under Reekado Banks' post, saying, "Delete this dude. I can't believe you are even doing this at a time



like this. Old song! #EndSARS fool!" The harsh words shocked many fans and led to a deep rift between the two artists.

Signs of reconciliation

Since the fallout, the two singers had kept their distance, avoiding public interactions. However, Wizkid's visit to Reekado Banks' newly opened lounge in Lagos signaled a change. The casual and friendly atmosphere in the video showed no signs of lingering hostility.

Although neither artist has publicly addressed the reconciliation, their recent interaction speaks volumes. Sharing a meal together suggests they have moved past their differences.

Fans react to their reunion

Supporters of both artists flooded social media with reactions. Many expressed joy, calling the reunion a positive step for Nigerian music. Some even reminisced about their past collaborations, hoping for new

music from the duo.

"This is what we love to see! Brothers settling their differences," a fan wrote on X (formerly Twitter). Another user commented, "Now we need another Wizkid and Reekado Banks song. The industry needs this energy!"

A fresh start?

With their fallout now behind them, many wonder if the two stars will collaborate again. While there is no official confirmation of new music, their reunion raises hope. Their ability to reconcile shows maturity and a shared love for music.

In the ever-evolving Nigerian music scene, rivalries come and go. But in this case, Wizkid and Reekado Banks have shown that friendships can be mended, no matter how public the dispute. Their fans will be watching closely, hoping that this marks the beginning of a new chapter.

Mohbad's Father denies approving nurse's release

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Joseph Aloba, father of late Afrobeats star Mohbad, denies ordering the release of the nurse who allegedly treated his son before his death.

Aloba refutes claims of involvement. In a public statement, Aloba dismissed the allegations, calling them false and misleading. He emphasized that he had never met the nurse and could not have given any instructions regarding her release.

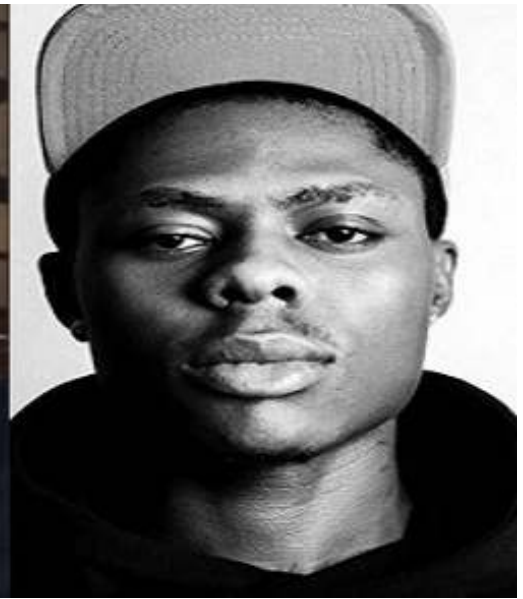
"I have never set my eyes on the auxiliary nurse who was said to have treated my son. Therefore, I couldn't have instructed anyone to let her go," Aloba said firmly.

His statement comes amid growing speculation about the events leading to Mohbad's passing. Some reports had suggested that Aloba played a role in the nurse's release, sparking public concern and debate. However, he insists he had no involvement in such a decision.

Denies setting conditions for DNA test

Beyond the nurse's release, Aloba also addressed claims that he imposed conditions for a DNA test on Mohbad's son. He refuted the allegations, stating that he neither signed nor authorized any document related to the test.

"I never gave any condition for the DNA test," he said. "I never signed any document regarding that, nor did I assign anyone to sign on my



behalf."

Aloba's remarks aim to clear up misinformation and assure the public of his sincerity in handling matters related to his son.

Mohbad's death sparks investigation and public outcry

The controversy surrounding Mohbad's death has fueled intense discussions, with fans and the public demanding clarity and justice. His sudden passing in September 2023 led to widespread outrage and calls for a thorough probe into the events leading up to his demise. The role of the auxiliary nurse remains a key focus in the ongoing investigation.

Aloba stresses commitment to transparency

As investigations continue, Aloba reiterated his commitment to transparency, urging the public to rely on verified information rather than speculation.

His latest statement serves as a direct response to rumors and false reports circulating online. He stressed that he

remains dedicated to seeking the truth about his son's passing and will not be distracted by baseless claims.

Authorities continue investigations
The case has drawn significant attention from both the public and law enforcement. Authorities are still examining the circumstances surrounding Mohbad's death, with many hoping for a resolution that brings justice and closure.

In the meantime, Aloba urged everyone to remain patient as the legal process unfolds. He assured the public that he has nothing to hide and is fully cooperating with investigators.

"I want the truth to come out," he said. "I owe it to my son, his fans, and everyone seeking justice."

As the investigation progresses, Mohbad's fans continue to demand answers, hoping that those responsible for any wrongdoing will be held accountable.

IGoSave urges probe into Nigerian internet providers

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Stand-up comedian Otaghware Onodjayeke, popularly known as Igosave, has urged authorities to investigate telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

He accused them of overcharging citizens and providing poor Internet services.

Concerns over rising data costs

His call comes after recent price hikes by major Internet service providers in Nigeria. Igosave, who is currently in the United Kingdom, compared the efficiency and affordability of data services in both countries.

Igosave shares his experience

In a video shared on his social media, he expressed frustration over the situation. "This is the third time I've gone to my service provider in the UK to buy more data, and they turned me back, saying I still have enough. I bought just 20 gigabytes three weeks ago, and it's still working. The speed is also impressive," he said.

Telecom providers accused of exploitation

The comedian criticized Nigerian Internet providers, claiming they exploit customers. He urged government agencies, including the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), to take action.

Questioning data usage disparities



According to him, Nigerians pay high prices for data that does not last. "A 20-gigabyte plan in the UK lasts for a month, but a 50-gigabyte subscription in Nigeria barely lasts three days. Why is that?" he questioned.

Telecoms compared to internet fraudsters

Igosave likened the telecom companies' actions to Internet fraud, arguing that they deceive customers with overpriced and unreliable services. "They are no different from online scammers. How much is Nigeria's minimum wage, yet they charge so much for data that disappears too quickly?" he added.

Public reaction and online debate

His statement has sparked conversations online, with many Nigerians sharing similar complaints. Some agreed that data in Nigeria is expensive and unreliable, while others called for stricter regulations on telecom companies.

Challenges facing Nigeria's telecom sector

Telecommunication firms in Nigeria have long faced criticism over poor

service quality, high tariffs, and disappearing data bundles. Many customers claim that Internet speeds fluctuate and that data runs out faster than expected.

Possible causes of the problem

Experts attribute these challenges to several factors, including inadequate infrastructure, high operational costs, and government policies. Telecom operators argue that power shortages, multiple taxation, and currency fluctuations impact their services.

The call for government action

Despite these claims, Nigerians continue to demand better Internet services. With digital connectivity playing a crucial role in modern life, reliable and affordable data remains a pressing concern.

What happens next?

As discussions on the issue grow, many hope that authorities will intervene to regulate pricing and improve service quality. For now, Nigerians wait to see if Igosave's call for an investigation will prompt any action.

I don't know why Mohbad bought land in his son's name - Mohbad's father

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The father of late Nigerian singer Mohbad, Mr. Aloba, has sparked controversy after criticizing his son's decision to buy land in his grandson's name.

During a TikTok live session on February 26, 2025, Mr. Aloba questioned why Mohbad, whose real name was Ilerioluwa Aloba, registered two plots of land at Elepe in his son Liam's name.

He said, "Mohbad bought two plots of land in Liam's name, and I don't understand why. As a father, I never bought anything and put Mohbad's name on it, yet he did this for his son."

His statement quickly went viral, drawing strong reactions from the public.

Social media reacts strongly

Many social media users criticized Mr. Aloba for focusing on property instead of honoring his late son's wishes. Some accused him of being more interested in inheritance than in grieving his son's death.

One person wrote, "Some of us knew it was about property all along. This man started complaining about his house right after his son was buried. Mohbad lived among enemies pretending to be family."

Another user questioned his outrage: "Who else should he have used? If he put the land in his wife's name, people would have accused her of wrongdoing. Now he used his son's name, and you're still upset."



Criticism of African parenting culture
Many people used the incident to highlight issues in African parenting. They argued that some parents expect financial support from their children instead of allowing them to make independent decisions.

One comment read, "African parents always see their children as their retirement plan. Mohbad broke the cycle, built a future for his son, and still paid the price."

Another person added, "So now it's wrong for a father to buy land in his child's name? This man should rest. We now see that the real issue is the property."

Calls for Mr. Aloba to respect Mohbad's wishes

Several people defended Mohbad's decision, saying he had every right to choose what to do with his money.

A user wrote, "Most Nigerian men suffer from this mindset. Imagine being angry that your son secured

property for his child. Mohbad changed the pattern, and yet he is still being dragged even in death."

Others pointed out that a father buying land for his child is a common and responsible decision.

One comment said, "It was Mohbad's choice. Even if he had bought the land in Tinubu's name, it was his money, and his decision should be respected."

Public support for Mohbad's legacy
As the debate continues, many people believe Mr. Aloba's remarks show misplaced priorities. They argue that Mohbad's legacy should be protected rather than dragged into family disputes.

Despite his passing, the late singer's decisions continue to spark discussion. However, the public sentiment remains clear—most people believe that Mohbad's choice to secure his son's future should be respected.

Naira Marley reacts after court clears him, others

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Naira Marley reacts as a Lagos court acquits him, Sam Larry, and Prime Boy of involvement in Mohbad's death, ending months of speculation and legal battles.

The court's decision, delivered on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, came 18 months after Mohbad's sudden and mysterious passing. The ruling marked the end of months of speculation and legal battles surrounding the case.

Court clears Marley, Larry, and Prime Boy

Mohbad, a former signee of Marlian Records, died under unclear circumstances, sparking outrage across social media. Videos that surfaced online allegedly showed instances of bullying and harassment linked to Naira Marley and his associates. Public outcry grew, demanding a thorough investigation and justice for the late singer.

Authorities responded by arresting Naira Marley and Sam Larry in October 2023. Their detention fueled further discussions about the alleged mistreatment Mohbad faced before his death.

However, after reviewing the case, the magistrate court in Yaba, Lagos, ruled in favor of the defendants. The court found no evidence linking them to Mohbad's death and officially acquitted all three men.

Read Also: Why Mohbad will never get justice – VeryDarkMan



Naira Marley reacts to court ruling
Shortly after the verdict, Naira Marley took to social media to express his relief. Posting on X (formerly Twitter), he shared a verse from the Holy Quran:

“And whoever puts all his trust in Allah, He will be enough for him. (65:3)”

The singer also thanked God for what he called his “vindication.” His post quickly gained traction, drawing mixed reactions from fans and critics.

Public reactions and ongoing debate
The ruling has sparked a new wave of discussions. Some fans of the acquitted men celebrated their freedom, believing justice had prevailed. Others, however, still questioned the circumstances surrounding Mohbad's passing and called for further investigation.

Read Also: Police arrest Lil Smart for cyberstalking Naira Marley

Legal analysts noted that while the court cleared Naira Marley and his

associates, it did not necessarily resolve all concerns about the events leading up to Mohbad's death. Many observers continue to call for a deeper probe into the singer's last days.

Mohbad's legacy lives on

Despite the legal outcome, Mohbad's music and influence remain strong. His songs continue to gain streams, and tributes from fans persist. The young artist, known for his distinct voice and passionate lyrics, left a lasting mark on Nigeria's music industry.

While the court case has now ended, the emotions surrounding Mohbad's passing are far from settled. His supporters remain vocal, pushing for transparency and justice in the music industry.

As the dust settles on this high-profile case, attention now shifts to what comes next for Naira Marley and the Marlian Records label. Whether this ruling restores his reputation or leaves lingering doubts remains to be seen.

Trump backs Elon Musk, DOGE's work in first Cabinet meeting

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Donald Trump publicly backed efforts by Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to slash government spending and cut the federal workforce on Wednesday, with the president downplaying potential conflicts between Musk and members of his Cabinet.

Trump opened his first Cabinet meeting shortly before noon at the White House, with Secretary of State, Marco Rubio and Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth seated beside him.

For more than an hour, Trump weighed in a wide range of topics, fielding questions from reporters on Ukraine, Russia, Taiwan, the House Republicans' budget plan and more.

But first, the president allowed Musk, who is not a member of the Cabinet, to address the group and discuss his work to cancel contracts and fire workers across the executive branch. Musk is not formally leading the DOGE task force, but has been tasked with overseeing its work by the president.

"They have a lot of respect for Elon and that he's doing this, and some disagree a little bit, but I will tell you for the most part I think everyone's not only happy, they're thrilled," Trump said.

Over the weekend, Musk sent an email to the entire federal workforce asking them to document five things they accomplished over the past week.

Musk said Wednesday that the email was meant to identify employees who may be getting paid without showing up to work, and that Trump signed off on sending the message. As of Tuesday, the White House



said more than one million federal employees had responded. The president claimed that the assembled Cabinet members were "very much behind" the effort.

"And if they aren't, I want them to speak up," Trump said during the Cabinet meeting, adding that, "in many cases, we haven't gotten responses."

When a reporter asked Musk if he's heard of any Cabinet members who are unhappy with him, the president asked if those in the room had anything to say. None spoke up.

Wearing a shirt that said "tech support," Musk said DOGE's main goal is to help federal agencies address wasteful spending.

"DOGE is a support function for the president and for the agencies and departments, to help achieve those savings and to effectively find 15% in reduction in fraud and waste," Musk said. While he said that DOGE has tried to be transparent by posting all of its savings online, a CBS News analysis found many discrepancies in its so-called "wall of receipts."

Musk also admitted DOGE will make mistakes, revealing that it briefly canceled funding for Ebola prevention efforts distributed by the U.S. Agency for International Development before reinstating them.

On Feb. 11, Musk made a similar claim that the administration had "turned on funding for Ebola prevention and for HIV prevention," an apparent reference to waivers that the government approved, but the New York Times reported the next day that the aid remained frozen. On Feb. 13, a federal judge ordered the administration to reinstate foreign aid contracts and other assistance that had been paused.

During the Cabinet meeting, a journalist asked Trump if it's his view of his executive authority that he has the power to call up any Cabinet official at the table and issues orders that the official is required to follow.

"Oh, yeah, they'll follow the orders, yes," the president said, adding, "of course, no exceptions."

Bibas family laid to rest as thousands line streets of Israel

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Thousands of people lined the streets of Israel on Wednesday to pay their respects to Shiri Bibas and her two young sons as their funeral procession made its way to a cemetery in the south of the country.

Bibas was 32 and her sons, Ariel and Kfir, were 4 years old and just shy of 9 months old when they were taken hostage by Hamas during the Oct. 7 2023, terrorist attacks. Clutching her children as fighters barked orders, she looked terrified in a video taken near their home in kibbutz Nir Oz in southern Israel.

While Hamas said early in the war that the three had been killed, the Israeli government had been unable to confirm their deaths.

Forensic examinations later showed that a casket bearing the image of Shiri Bibas did not contain her body, although Hamas returned her remains Monday.

Her husband and the children's father, Yarden Bibas, 35, was also abducted Oct. 7 2023, and returned alive Feb. 1, apparently unaware that his family had died.



As black vans carried the caskets and grieving relatives through the central city of Rishon LeZion, huge crowds of Israelis stood on side streets and main roads and wept.

Many held blue-and-white Israeli flags punctuated by the orange balloons and clothing that mourners and activists have adopted in honor of the Bibas boys' red hair.

One image showed Shiri Bibas' sister, Dana Silberman-Sitton, reaching out from one of the black vans to hold the hand of a well-wisher in another vehicle.

Smaller groups of mourners did the same on the rural highways that the procession used to reach the Tsoher cemetery in the south of the country, where they were laid to rest.

While the family requested that only those invited attend the funeral, it asked that the ceremony be screened in Tel Aviv's "Hostage Square," given the level of heartache the family's fate has generated across the country.

Since the start of the war in the Gaza Strip, the square has become a focal point for protesters to vent their frustrations with the Israeli government over the return of the 251 hostages captured Oct. 7, 2023, when about 1,200 people were also killed per Israeli tallies.

Israel's ensuing military offensive in Gaza has killed more than 48,000 Palestinians, according to the enclave's Hamas-run Health Ministry, and forcibly displaced most of its 2.3 million population.

Ukraine, US close to reaching mineral deal – Zelenskyy

By Dave Oludare Oso

Ukraine and the U.S. have outlined an agreement in which they would jointly fund Ukraine's future security and reconstruction using an investment fund powered by the country's rare earth minerals, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday.

However Zelenskyy said the deal would fail if it did not adequately provide for Ukraine's future security against Russia — and only looked after American interests.

“If I see and hear a broader vision from him [President Donald Trump] — one that aligns with our concept of a just peace for Ukraine — then this agreement can be part of broader security guarantees,” Zelenskyy told a news conference.

Whereas his prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, appeared to offer concrete details at an earlier news conference of how the agreement would be signed and implemented, Zelenskyy was far less equivocal in his account of events.

“This agreement could be a major success, or it could pass quietly,” he said. “The key factor will be my conversation with President Trump,” which Trump said is set for Friday, though Zelenskyy indicated that no final decision about timing had been made.

Zelenskyy said he had “not yet seen the full, final version” but would be reviewing it soon.

The Ukrainian president also gave a far more measured view than that of a senior White House official involved in negotiations, who told NBC News late Tuesday that the agreement was “at the 99 yard line with one inch to go.”

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters Wednesday morning that negotiators were “very close to the finish line,” and said, “We expect the deal to be signed this week.”



“And as President Trump said yesterday, if Zelenskyy wants to come to this White House to sign that deal, he is open to that,” she added.

Relations between Ukraine and its American benefactor have soured over the past week. Trump sparked outrage in Ukraine and Europe by suggesting that Ukraine should use its mineral wealth to pay back the U.S. for military aid delivered during the war.

When Zelenskyy outright rejected the suggestion, Trump falsely called him a “dictator” and repeated the false claim that Ukraine was responsible for being invaded by Russia.

The deal detailed by Zelenskyy and his administration Wednesday appeared to find compromise on some of the disagreements, but also left much up in the air.

The U.S. and Ukraine have outlined their intention to establish an investment fund, drawing money from as-yet untapped seams of Ukraine's wealth of rare earth minerals. Both countries would then use this fund to invest in Ukraine's reconstruction and security, Shmyhal said in an earlier address.

However, Zelenskyy said that the exact nature of these security guarantees — the central priority for Ukraine — were still unclear.

“Although this agreement is economic, I strongly advocated for at least some mention of security guarantees for Ukraine,” he said.

“Government officials briefed me that security guarantees were included in the agreement in some form, but I don't yet have full details.”

Another key point for Zelenskyy is that Ukraine's critical and rare earth minerals will not be used to pay back the U.S. for military and humanitarian assistance provided so far.

The fund would only include new mineral deposit licenses, rather than existing operations, and all profits would be split evenly, the Ukrainian president said.

Trump has repeatedly criticized the multibillion-dollar assistance given to Kyiv under then-President Joe Biden. He says these costs should be underwritten by European powers, on whose doorstep the conflict sits.

JD Vance reacts as Trump fails to endorse him as next US president

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Vice President of the United States J.D. Vance has reacted after President Donald Trump refused to outright endorse him as his successor.

Trump speaking with Fox News host, Bret Baier, said he wasn't yet ready to endorse Vance for a 2028 presidential run of his own.

But he added "No, but he's very capable."

When asked in an interview with the Daily Mail about Trump's remarks, Vance laughed it off.

"I think he said exactly what he should have said, which is: "It's too early", he replied.

Vance said that his only current focus is "the American people's business" and not politics.

He added: "There will be a time to focus on politics, of course — [like] the midterms [in November 2026] — so let's do a good job and then worry about the midterms.

"And then we'll worry about presidential politics at the appropriate time."

James David Vance (born James Donald Bowman; August 2, 1984) is an American politician, author,



attorney, and Marine Corps veteran serving as the 50th vice president of the United States since 2025 under President Donald Trump.

A member of the Republican Party, he represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate from 2023 to 2025.

Vance was born in Middletown, Ohio. After high school, Vance joined the Marine Corps, where he served as a military journalist from 2003 to 2007, and was deployed to the Iraq War for six months in 2005.

He graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in 2009 and Yale Law School with a law degree in 2013.

He practiced briefly as a corporate lawyer before embarking on a career in the tech industry as a venture capitalist. His memoir,

Hillbilly Elegy, was published in 2016^[2] and adapted into a film in 2020.

Vance won the 2022 United States Senate election in Ohio, defeating Democratic nominee Tim Ryan. After initially opposing Donald Trump's candidacy in the 2016 election,

Vance became a strong Trump supporter during Trump's first presidency. In July 2024, Trump selected Vance as his running mate before the Republican National Convention. He served as Ohio's senator until his resignation in preparation to assume the vice presidency in January 2025.

Vance is the third-youngest vice president in U.S. history, as well as the first millennial to hold the office.

Trump announces \$5m 'Gold Card' visa for wealthy immigrants

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



President Donald Trump has suggested the introduction of a “gold card” visa — a potential opportunity for foreign investors to buy their way to American citizenship.

The U.S. currently offers a similar opportunity through the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Programme, which was established in 1990 and is administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

According to USCIS’s website, the visa is open to investors who “make the necessary investment in a commercial enterprise in the United States,” as well as “plan to create or preserve 10 permanent full-time jobs for qualified U.S. workers.”

But Trump’s recent suggestion would replace the EB-5 programme, and instead, the Republican president plans to propose a “gold card” visa to the tune of \$5 million.

“We are going to be selling a gold card,” Trump explained to reporters. “We are going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million.”

“It’s going to give you green card privileges, plus it’s going to be a route to (American) citizenship, and wealthy people would be coming into our country by buying this card,” the president continued.

When a reporter asked if it was possible for a Russian oligarch to obtain the card, Trump answered in the affirmative.

“Yeah, possibly,” the U.S. leader replied. “Hey, I know some Russian oligarchs that are very nice people.”

At least one other member of the Trump administration has signaled support for the measure. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick accused the EB-5 program of being “full of nonsense, make-believe and fraud.”

“It was a way to get a green card that was low price,” Lutnick said. “So the president said, rather than having this sort of ridiculous EB-5 programme, we’re going to end the EB-5 programme. We’re going to replace it with the Trump gold card.”

Cristiano Ronaldo, Mane on target as Al Nassr bounce back

By Dave Oludare Oso

Cristiano Ronaldo, Mane on target as Al Nassr bounce back

Cristiano Ronaldo and Sadio Mane's second half strikes secured crucial three points for title aspirants Al-Nassr against Al-Wehda in Saudi Pro League.

The match started an hour after the scheduled kick-off time as Al-Nassr's team bus broke down en route to The King Abdulaziz Sports City.

The visitors started the game without two star players Marcelo Brozovic and Jhon Duran who missed due to suspension.

To make matters worse, star defender Aymeric Laporte was forced to leave the pitch with an injury in the 12th minute of the match as Salem Al-Najdi replaced him.

Al-Nassr failed to make any major impact in the first 45 minutes as the hosts dominated proceedings.

HOW IT WENT DOWN

Cristiano Ronaldo got a chance on the stroke of half-time to break the deadlock as he unleashed a powerful shot but Al-Owaishir did well to make a diving save and deny the superstar from scoring the opener.



Al-Wehda's resistance did not last long though, as Ronaldo finally scored just three minutes into the second half. Angelo Gabriel sent in an inch-perfect curling cross from the right flank and the Portugal icon comfortably found the back of the net with a header.

Just eight minutes after conceding the goal, Al-Wehda had a golden opportunity to restore parity in the game when Morad Mohammad Abdullah Khodari found himself in a scoring position from close range. The forward, initially, did well to control the ball but his final delivery was way off target.

In the dying moments of the match, Al-Nassr were awarded a penalty when an Al-Wehda player used his arm to block Ronaldo's free-kick. Sadio Mane took the resulting spot-kick and found the back of the net to

secure the victory.

THE MVP

Ronaldo was kept silent for the majority of the first half and his first attempt at goal, on the stroke of half-time was saved by the goalkeeper. The lethal goalscorer, however, rose to the occasion just after the break and ensured his side walked away with all three points with a clinical header.

THE BIG LOSER

Abdullah Khodari had the easiest chance of the match to score the equaliser less than 10 minutes after Al-Wehda conceded. He initially did well to control the ball inside the Al-Nassr box and found himself in a goalscoring position, but his final shot was off target from a close range.

Referee banned six months after asking Messi for autograph

By Dave Oludare Oso



A referee has reportedly been banned for six months after asking Lionel Messi for his autograph at the end of an Inter Miami game.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Mexican referee Marco Antonio Ortiz Nava approached Messi at the final whistle of Miami's CONCACAF Champions Cup win over Kansas City last week and asked for his autograph to give to a family member with special needs.

North America's controlling football body (CONCACAF)

opened disciplinary action against the 36-year-old. According to ESPN, Ortiz Nava has been 'banned from officiating in CONCACAF competitions for six months'.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

This is not a good look for Ortiz Nava, who is said to have acknowledged his mistake and apologised for his actions, as questions of impartiality may now dog his career as an official. The report adds that if he reoffends, he will be 'punished indefinitely'.

DID YOU KNOW?

ESPN's source states that while Ortiz Nava cannot officiate in CONCACAF competitions for half a year, he will continue refereeing in Mexico's Liga MX – which is part of the CONCACAF confederation.

WHAT NEXT?

Away from this officiating debacle, Messi's Miami will play the second leg of their Champions Cup first-round second leg tie against Kansas next Wednesday.