



Let's bury the hatchet,  
Fubara begs Rivers  
lawmakers **Pg 2**

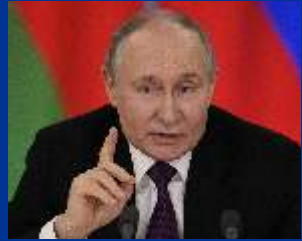


Natasha files contempt charge  
against Akpabio, others over  
suspension **Pg 7**

# The New Daily Prime

[@new\\_daily\\_prime](#) [@prime\\_dai11149](#) [@new\\_daily\\_prime](#) ...your prime source for excellence in journalism

## EU announces \$5bn investment in South Africa as Trump tariffs war escalates **Pg 32**



Russia rejects US,  
Ukraine 30-day  
ceasefire **Pg 33**



2027: Obi, Bauchi  
gov hint at stronger  
partnership **Pg 6**



US Reps tell Trump to impose  
sanctions on Nigeria over  
killings of Christians **Pg 5**



Bruno Fernandes' hat-trick  
sends Man United into  
Europa quarter-final **Pg 39**

Lagos becomes Africa's  
second-largest city  
economy as GDP hits  
\$259bn **Pg 10**



How to survive Nigeria's current heatwave **Pg 19**

# Let's bury the hatchet, Fubara begs Rivers lawmakers

By Dave Oludare Oso



**G**overnor Siminalayi Fubara has offered the olive branch to members of the Rivers State House of Assembly, appealing to them to embrace peace for the resolution of the political impasse in the oil-rich state.

The governor, who spoke on Thursday appealed to the lawmakers to put the interest of the people of the state above everything.

Speaking during the commissioning of some projects in the Okrika Local Government Area of the state, Governor Fubara said, "It is important at this stage that we all embrace peace."

Furthermore, Fubara said he needed peace to govern the state well and called on all dissatisfied political actors in the state to put all that had happened behind and commit to the full implementation of the February 28, 2025 raft of decisions handed over by the Supreme Court.

The governor said, "The Supreme

Court has made its judgment, we don't have any option but to abide by it, and by the special grace of God, we have started the process.

"We are appealing to other parties: consider the interest of Rivers State. The only thing that we owe this state is peace and development.

"I am open any day, any time for total peace in our state because if I have to govern well, there is the need for peace."

The protracted feud between the pro-Wike House of Assembly and Fubara reached a disappointing crescendo on Wednesday as the governor was denied access to the Assembly Quarters when he showed up to represent the 2025 Budget of the state, as mandated by the House after the Supreme Court verdict of February 28, 2025.

Talking after the lawmakers' show of shame, the governor said he communicated his visit to Speaker Martins Amaewhule but the

Assembly said it received no correspondence to the effect.

Just as the drama unfolded in the South-South state on Wednesday, Fubara's estranged godfather and predecessor Nyesom Wike said at a media chat in Abuja that there is nothing wrong if the lawmakers decide to sack Fubara for alleged impeachable offences, including withholding their salaries for months.

In its February 28, 2025 judgment, the Supreme Court recognised Amaewhule as the House Speaker and barred the apex bank, CBN and others from releasing funds to the government of Rivers State until it purges itself of what the court described as flagrant disobedience to court orders.

The apex court also declared the local government election conducted in the state on October 5, 2024, as invalid and ordered the governor to conduct a fresh poll as well as re-present the 2025 Budget to the Amaewhule-led Assembly.

# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM  
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
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

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	329,868.50
HALF PAGE	192,500.00
QUARTER PAGE	100,000.00
14X2	109,500.00
10X6	242,500.00
10X5	237,500.00
10X4	192,500.00
10X3	171,000.00
9X6	232,500.00
9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
4X4	55,000.00
4X3	31,000.00
4X2	22,003.50
3X2	17,260.00
2X2	12,945.00
2X1	8,630.00
1X1	4,315.00

### POLITICAL COLOUR

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,200,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	885,000.00
FULL PAGE	420,000.00
HALF PAGE	213,250.00
QUARTER PAGE	115,012.50

### POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	RATE
CENTRESPREAD	1,050,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD	745,000.00
FULL PAGE	315,777.50
HALF PAGE	184,700.00
QUARTER PAGE	95,222.50

### CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	254,533.50
HALF PAGE	142,787.50
QUARTER PAGE	80,706.50
14X2	78,222.50
10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
10X4	142,787.50
10X3	121,355.50
9X6	192,305.50
9X3	107,757.50
8X6	170,725.00
8X3	70,390.00
7X4	58,666.50
6X4	67,048.00
6X3	53,361.50
6X2	37,694.00
5X6	83,850.00
5X4	55,900.00
5X3	43,705.00
5X2	27,938.00
4X4	44,493.00
4X3	33,524.00
4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
2X1	5,588.50
1X1	2,795.50

### PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	280,690.00
HALF PAGE	164,178.00
QUARTER PAGE	84,641.50
10X6	228,000.00
10X5	201,600.00
10X4	149,440.00
10X3	127,108.00
9X6	201,600.00
9X5	169,050.00
9X4	137,875.00
9X3	112,875.00
8X6	179,368.00
8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
6X2	40,000.00
5X6	98,749.50
5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
4X4	52,666.50
4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
3X2	19,750.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	6,500.00
1X1	3,292.00

### PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	210,795.50
HALF PAGE	124,236.00
QUARTER PAGE	70,950.00
14X2	76,128.35
10X6	194,961.00
10X5	162,222.445
10X4	103,963.00
10X3	N/A
9X6	162,222.445
9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
7X4	72,676.00
6X4	65,000.00
6X3	41,124.50
6X2	29,858.00
5X6	71,378.00
5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
5X2	22,841.00
4x4	N/A
4X3	N/A
4X2	17,737.50
3x3	23,458.00
3X2	14,923.00
2X2	10,200.00
2X1	5,439.50
1X1	2,700.00

### SPECIAL POSITIONS

2X6 FRONT PAGE	700,000.00
2X6 BACK PAGE	300,000.00
2X6 INSIDE PAGE	155,000.00
3X6 FRONT PAGE	1,200,000.00
4X6 FRONT PAGE	2,250,000.00
5X6 FRONT PAGE	3,350,000.00
10X6 FRONT PAGE	8,250,000.00
EARPIECE FRONT PAGE(1.5X2)	246,500.00
EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PUBLIC NOTICE)	1,027,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD COLOUR (PRODUCT)	929,000.00
CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
DOUBLE SPREAD COLOUR	721,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	432,881.00
DOUBLE SPREAD STRIP COLOUR	144,294.00
CENTRE SPREAD B&W	835,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF PAGE B & W	550,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
DOUBLE SPREAD HALF B & W	425,000.00
FULL WRAP AROUND	15,000,000.00
HALF WRAP AROUND	8,500,000.00
HALF PAGE FRONT	5,500,000.00

### ALLURE RATE

SIZE	RATE	TOTAL
CENTRESPREAD		967,500.00
DOUBLE SPREAD		806,250.00
ALLURE COVER		750,000.00
(IBC) Inside Back Cover		376,250.00
(IFC) Inside Front Cover		430,000.00
(BC) Back Cover		483,750.00
Full Page		430,000.00
10X5		295,625.00
Half Page		225,000.00
EVENT		250,000.00

### PICTURE & CAPTION

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

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

**SERIES DISCOUNT**  
5 PAGES 2.5%  
10 PAGES 5%  
15 PAGES & ABOVE 7.5%

**SURCHARGE**  
PAGE 3 (100%)  
PAGE 4, 5, 7 AND 8 (50%)  
PAGE 2 (75%)

**LOOSE INSERT**  
LEAFLET, POSTERS 1,000 COPIES  
SPECIAL INSERTS (8 PAGES) COPIES  
SPECIAL INSERTS (4 PAGES) 1,000 COPIES  
HANDLING CHARGES FOR LESS THAN 35,000 COPIES  
HANDLING CHARGES MORE THAN 35,000 COPIES

**CLASSIFIED ADVERT RATES**  
CHANGE OF NAME  
GUIDE BLACK & WHITE  
GUIDE COLOUR

25,000.00  
45,000.00  
30,000.00  
75,000.00  
100,000.00

2,000.00  
3,750.00  
4,250.00

#### CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:  
[info@newdailyprime.news](mailto:info@newdailyprime.news)  
Terms and Conditions apply

**ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE**

# Obasanjo criticises Lagos-Calabar highway, Vp's N21bn residence as wasteful, corrupt

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

**F**ormer President Olusegun Obasanjo has sharply criticised the N15.6 trillion Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway project and the N21 billion spent on the construction of a new official residence for Vice President Kashim Shettima, describing both as wasteful, corrupt, and a reflection of misplaced priorities under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

In his new book 'Nigeria: Past and Future,' released to mark his 88th birthday, Obasanjo condemned the federal government's decisions, stating that the Lagos-Calabar highway project, which will cost a staggering N4.93 billion per kilometre, was a form of financial mismanagement.

He highlighted concerns over the lack of competitive bidding for the contract, which was awarded to Gilbert Chagoury's Hitech Construction Company, a long-time business associate of Tinubu.

The first phase of the project, running from Eko Atlantic to the Lekki Deep Sea Port, has already cost N1.06 trillion, or six per cent of the total budget.

Obasanjo expressed disappointment over the current state of governance, accusing politicians of prioritising personal enrichment over the well-being of the Nigerian people.

"The majority of those who have been opportune to hold leadership positions are ill-prepared, self-centred, and corrupt. They are out to corruptly enrich themselves while the nation continues to wallow in abject poverty and



underdevelopment" he stated, referring to both current and past leaders at various levels of government.

The former president also slammed the expenditure on the Vice President's new residence, particularly in the context of the country's economic struggles.

He termed the project "a conduit designed to embezzle public funds" and an example of "small minds" in leadership, pointing out that such spending is particularly egregious in times of hardship.

Obasanjo's book, which paints a damning portrait of Nigerian leadership, also addresses the issue of mismanagement at the state level.

He recounted instances of governors who, after accumulating massive debts before taking office, suddenly found the means to pay off their loans within two years of assuming power—raising suspicions of corrupt enrichment.

"The state resources are captured and

appropriated to themselves with a pittance to staff and associates to close the mouths of those who could blow the whistle," Obasanjo said, adding that this pattern of behaviour is widespread across the country with few exceptions.

In addition to his critiques of corruption, Obasanjo advocated for a shift in Nigeria's political system.

He called for a re-evaluation of Western liberal democracy, suggesting that it may not be the best fit for African nations.

"We should seek democracy within African history, culture, attributes, and characteristics," he proposed, introducing the concept of "Afrodemocracy" as a possible alternative to Western models.

As the country grapples with growing concerns over governance and national development, Obasanjo's candid remarks serve as a call for introspection and systemic change in Nigeria's political landscape.

# US Reps tell Trump to impose sanctions on Nigeria over killings of Christians

By Dave Oludare Oso

Members of the United States House of Representatives have called on President Donald Trump to impose sanctions on Nigeria over the continuous killing of Christians in the country.

The demand was made during a congressional hearing on the worsening religious persecution in Nigeria, where lawmakers and experts detailed the scale of violence against Christians and other minorities.

During the session, the House discussed the persistent attacks carried out by Islamist extremists, which have resulted in thousands of deaths and mass displacement.

The lawmakers also criticised the Joe Biden's administration for reversing Nigeria's designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) without justification.

"In December 2020, President Trump designated Nigeria a CPC only to be reversed without justification by Secretary Blinken in November of 2021," Representative Chris Smith stated.

"Religious leaders in Nigeria were outraged by Sec. Blinken's decision."

Smith, who authored the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, argued that Nigeria's government had failed to protect its Christian population despite constitutional guarantees of religious freedom.

"The Government of Nigeria has failed to make progress against religiously motivated persecution of Christians despite religious freedom being enshrined as an essential human right in its Constitution."

Highlighting the extent of the violence, Smith referenced reports from Genocide



Watch. "Genocide Watch has called Nigeria 'a killing field of defenceless Christians,'" he said.

"Over 52,000 Christians in Nigeria have reportedly been targeted and killed by Islamist extremists, while approximately 34,000 moderate non-Fulani Muslims have been murdered in Islamist attacks since 2009."

He added that about five million Nigerians, mostly Christians, had been forced into Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and refugee settlements across the region.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee had previously passed Smith's resolution, H. Res. 82, urging the Biden administration to redesignate Nigeria as a CPC.

However, the resolution never reached the House floor.

On March 11, 2025, Smith reintroduced it as H. Res. 220. "While I strongly believe that President Trump will again designate Nigeria a CPC—and do much more to assist the persecuted church, including outreach to Nigerian President Bola Tinubu—last night I reintroduced the resolution," Smith said. "Help can't come

fast enough."

The hearing, titled "Conflict and Persecution in Nigeria: The Case for a CPC Designation", featured testimonies from religious leaders and policy experts.

Bishop Wilfred Anagbe of the Diocese of Makurdi stated, "A long-term, Islamic agenda to homogenize the population has been implemented, over several presidencies, through a strategy to reduce and eventually eliminate the Christian identity of half of the population."

He detailed how Christians faced exclusion from power, abductions, rapes, killings, and land seizures by Fulani herders, all without government intervention.

Nina Shea, Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute, emphasised Nigeria's status as the world's deadliest country for Christians.

"Nigeria is a country of superlatives—Africa's most populous country, its largest economy and, alarmingly, the entire world's deadliest country for Christians," she told the House panel.

# 2027: Obi, Bauchi gov hint at stronger partnership

By Friday Omosola

**B**auchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, has signalled his readiness to work alongside Labour Party's Peter Obi as the 2027 general elections draw closer.

Mohammed made this known on Thursday when he hosted the former presidential candidate at the Bauchi State Government House.

Their closed-door discussion, which lasted over an hour at the Ramat House, was followed by a media briefing.

While neither leader explicitly confirmed the formation of a political alliance, Mohammed emphasised the importance of collaboration in strengthening governance and providing credible opposition.

“As an individual, I am open to working with Peter Obi to foster unity, bridge divides, and promote good governance across the country.

“We must come together to rescue this nation from those who lack vision and leadership. Now is the time for sincerity, focus, and commitment to real change,” Mohammed declared.

He noted that their meeting signified a larger movement that resonated with many leaders across the political spectrum.

“This engagement is just the beginning. Going forward, you will witness increased cooperation between myself, Governor Obi, PDP



Governors, and the PDP as a whole.”

The discussions reportedly covered various national issues, including political developments in states like Rivers.

Mohammed also commended Obi for his commitment to national progress.

“It’s always a pleasure to engage with him and learn from his deep insights and data-driven approach. Many of us in the PDP have long respected his perspective. This meeting isn’t our first, and it certainly won’t be the last,” the governor remarked.

Obi, on his part, explained that his visit was primarily to deliberate on Nigeria’s current challenges, consult with Governor Mohammed, and explore solutions for national development.

“I am here for consultations and discussions on the future of our

country. As the chairman of the PDP Governors Forum and a key political figure, Governor Mohammed plays a crucial role in shaping national discourse,” Obi stated.

Acknowledging the pressing challenges facing Nigeria, he underscored the importance of addressing key developmental issues, especially those affecting northern Nigeria.

“The North is vital to the country’s overall progress. We must tackle poverty head-on and make significant investments in agriculture. Our focus should be on critical issues of national development rather than distractions,” Obi stressed.

Both leaders affirmed their commitment to ongoing dialogue and cooperation, hinting at the possibility of deeper engagements soon.

# Natasha files contempt charge against Akpabio, others over suspension

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Senator representing Kogi Central, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, has filed a contempt charge against the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio over the six-month suspension slammed on her by the Senate.

Also, she cited the Clerk of the National Assembly and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Code of Conduct, Senator Neda Imasuem as contemnors in the Form 48 she entered before the Federal High Court in Abuja, on Thursday.

The beleaguered legislator maintained that her suspension constituted a willful disobedience to a subsisting order the court issued against the defendants on March 4.

The court, based on her application, in a notice of disobedience of court order signed by its Registrar pursuant to Section 72 of the Sheriff and Civil Process Act 2004, urged the Defendants/Contemnors to take notice of their wilful disobedience of the order that was issued against them by Justice Obiora Egwuatu.

It warned that disobedience of the subsisting order rendered Akpabio, Senator Imasuem and the Clerk of the National Assembly liable for contempt of court, for which they may be committed to prison.

According to the Form 48, the defendants/contemnors, “deliberately and contumaciously disregarded” a binding directive of the court and “proceeded with acts in flagrant defiance of the authority of the court.”



It was alleged that an enrolled order of the interim injunction that was issued by the court, was duly served on the defendants on March 5.

Justice Egwuatu had on the strength of an ex-parte application that Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan filed through her team of lawyers led by Mr. Michael Numa, SAN, restrained the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Code of Conduct, from “proceeding with the purported investigation against the Plaintiff/Applicant for alleged misconduct sequel to the events that occurred at the plenary of the 2nd Defendant on the 20th day of February, 2025, pursuant to the referral by the 2nd Defendant on 25th February, 2025 pending the hearing and determination of the Motion on Notice for interlocutory injunction.”

The court further issued an order “directing the 1st -4th Defendants to come and show cause why an order of interlocutory injunction should not be granted against them restraining them from proceeding with purported investigation against the Plaintiff for alleged misconduct without affecting

her privileges as stipulated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended), the Senate Standing Order 2023 and the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act.”

”As well as an order declaring that any action taken during the pendency of the suit “is null, void and of no effect whatsoever.”

More so, Justice Egwuatu gave Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan the nod to serve the processes on the defendants through substituted means, by either handing them to the Clerk of the National Assembly, or by pasting them on the premises of the National Assembly or by publishing same in two national dailies.

The Senate President, Akpabio has in response to the suit, challenged the jurisdiction of the court to meddle in the affairs of the Senate.

The court adjourned further proceedings in the case till March 25.

# Court schedules Nnamdi Kanu's trial for March 21

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

The Federal High Court in Abuja has set a new trial date for Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), for Friday, March 21, 2025.

The case file was transferred to Justice James Omotosho, following a reassignment after the recusal of the previous judge, Justice Binta Nyako.

Kanu faces a seven-count terrorism charge brought against him by the Federal Government.

The trial had previously been delayed after Justice Nyako stepped down from the case on September 24, 2024, citing allegations of bias raised by Kanu and his legal team. Kanu's lawyers had requested that the case be transferred to another judge.



Despite initial resistance from the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, who returned the case to Nyako, Kanu's legal team continued to oppose her involvement in the trial. This led to further adjournments, with the case being postponed indefinitely.

In a move to resolve the issue, Kanu's legal team, led by Aloy Ejimakor, wrote to the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, in February 2025, seeking her intervention.

They requested that the trial be moved either to another judge in Abuja or to the Southeast region.

On March 8, 2025, Ejimakor confirmed that they had received two official letters: one from the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho, and another from the Chief Justice of Nigeria, informing them of the reassignment of the case to Justice Omotosho.

With the new judge now in place, the trial is set to resume on March 21, 2025. Kanu's legal team and supporters will be watching closely as the case progresses.

# ALLEGED AGE FALSIFICATION: Lawmakers move to probe Rivers' Chief Judge

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The Rivers State House of Assembly has concluded plans to investigate the state's Chief Judge, Justice Simeon Amadi, over allegation of falsification of age.

This come amid the ongoing political crisis in the state.

Events of the last few months, which arose as a result of the falling-out of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) minister, Nyesom Wike, and Governor Siminalayi Fubara, have risen to a nauseating crescendo, culminating in the Wednesday barring of the governor from accessing the Assembly complex, thereby frustrating his presentation of the 2025 budget to the lawmakers.

On Thursday, yet another negative twist was added to the crisis as the State's Chief Judge was alleged to have



falsified his age during the plenary at the Assembly.

Events unfurled after the presentation of some documents to the Speaker by the Leader of the House, Hon. Major Jack.

Moments afterward, the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Dumle Maol, raised an allegation against the Chief Judge of the

state, Justice Simeon Amadi, saying, "These documents before me simply say that the Chief Judge of the state, Justice Simeon Amadi, falsified his age in service. Mr. Speaker, that is a very serious allegation, and I do hope that this House takes legislative notice."

The House debated the issue and resolved to write a letter to the Director of the Department of State Services (DSS) to conduct an investigation on the issue, and report its findings to the House.

Weighing in, the Speaker, Martin Amaewhule, said, "The documents are simply suggesting a case of age falsification by the Honourable Chief Judge of the state, Justice Simeon Amadi. What it means is that there has to be an investigation to that effect."

# El-Rufai: Benue gov, Senator deny defection rumours ahead of 2027 elections

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Amid swirling speculation about political realignments ahead of the 2027 general elections, Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, and former Minister of State for Finance, Senator Nenadi Usman, have firmly rejected reports suggesting they are planning to defect to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) alongside former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai.

The rumours, which gained momentum after a viral video showed El-Rufai visiting the SDP headquarters in Abuja, sparked further speculation when Usman, a Labour Party (LP) chieftain, was seen at the same event.

El-Rufai's visit, where he alleged that the Federal Government was intentionally causing crises within opposition parties, was interpreted by some as a precursor to a mass defection to the SDP, a narrative fuelled by his presence alongside Usman and other political figures.

In a statement released by his Chief Press Secretary, Tersoo Kula, Governor Alia categorically dismissed the rumours, labelling them a baseless attempt to sow discord between him and President Bola Tinubu.

Alia emphasised his loyalty to the All Progressives Congress (APC), stating, "These actions not only wholly miss the mark but also portray a significant lack of awareness regarding my bond with the president."

He further reiterated his commitment to the ruling APC, highlighting the efforts his administration has made to strengthen the party in Benue and align the state more closely with the Federal



Government.

"Since assuming office, we have worked tirelessly to reconnect Benue with the Federal Government, securing major appointments and other benefits for our people," he added.

Alia also warned that any attempts to undermine his leadership would fail.

"A wise individual builds a strong foundation and does not seek shelter elsewhere," he said, reaffirming his support for President Tinubu's 'Renewed Hope Agenda.'

Similarly, Senator Nenadi Usman, the Labour Party's Caretaker Chairman, addressed the defection rumours, clarifying that she had not left the LP for the SDP.

Usman explained that her presence at the SDP event was simply to welcome El-Rufai, who was aligning with the opposition, and that she had been invited by SDP National Chairman, Alhaji Shehu Gabam.

"I was invited by my colleague, the National Chairman of the SDP, Alhaji Shehu Gabam, to receive Mallam El-Rufai at the SDP Secretariat in Abuja, Mallam's decision to align with the opposition underscores the importance of a strong opposition in a healthy democracy." Usman clarified in a statement.

While Usman acknowledged the role of the opposition in ensuring government accountability, she made it clear that she remained committed to the Labour Party.

"The Labour Party remains dedicated to fostering a strong and effective opposition where diverse perspectives unite for the common good, The more united the opposition, the stronger our democracy becomes." she asserted.

In conclusion, Usman welcomed all political stakeholders willing to work for the well-being of Nigerians, saying, "A New Nigeria is Possible," referring to Labour Party's ongoing commitment to working with other opposition forces for national progress.

# Lagos becomes Africa's second-largest city economy as GDP hits \$259bn

By Friday Omosola



Lagos State has solidified its position as one of Africa's leading economic powerhouses, with its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) soaring to \$259 billion based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

This milestone, announced yesterday during the launch of the Lagos Economic Development Update (LEDU) 2025, places Lagos as the second-largest city economy on the continent, trailing only Cairo, Egypt.

According to the report, Lagos recorded significant economic growth in the first half of 2024, expanding to N27.38 trillion, a substantial rise from N19.65 trillion in 2023.

This growth underscores the state's resilience amid Nigeria's economic reforms and continued investment in infrastructure.

The report attributed the economic surge to strategic policies implemented by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu-led administration aimed at enhancing financial performance and driving economic expansion.

However, despite the impressive growth, the tax-to-GDP ratio remains low at 2.3%, highlighting the need for improved revenue generation strategies.

Looking ahead, the 2025 fiscal projections reflect Lagos State's ambition to sustain its upward trajectory.

The GDP is expected to grow from N54.77 trillion in 2024 to N66.47 trillion in 2025, with real GDP growth forecasted to range between 5.02% and 6.49%.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, speaking on the achievement,

reaffirmed the state's role as a driver of Africa's economic transformation:

"Lagos is not just growing; we are leading. With a GDP of \$259 billion based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), we have cemented our place as Africa's second-largest city economy.

"This milestone is more than a number; it reflects the strength of our economy, the resilience of our people, and our city's role as a hub for investment, trade, and opportunity."

He further emphasised that economic indices like PPP highlight Lagos' competitiveness and cost-of-living advantage.

He added that the state is driving sustainable growth across key sectors, including infrastructure, technology, tourism, and manufacturing.

# Senator Natasha suspended over gross misconduct, nothing else, Senate replies IPU

By Dave Oludare Oso

After Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan raised her suspension at the UN Inter-Parliamentary conference in New York, the IPU assured her it would take steps to address the issue after hearing the Senate's side.

Akpoti-Uduaghan had taken her case before the global institution for them to prevail over what she claimed was an injustice meted on her.

However, after listening to her complaint, the Senate has responded to the IPU through a letter by the Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele.

Chairperson of the House of Representatives Committee on Women Affairs and Social Development, Hon. Kafilat Ogbara, who was attending the event in an official capacity representing Nigeria, read the letter.

The Senate letter read in part, "Senator Natasha-Akpoti-Uduaghan was suspended for gross misconduct and unruly behaviour and not as a result of an allegation of sexual harassment or assault. The authority of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria firmly refutes the deliberate misinformation and false narrative being circulated by certain media organisations regarding the six months' suspension of Senator



Natsaha-Akpoti-Uduaghan.

"Let it be unequivocally stated that Uduaghan was suspended solely for her persistent act of misconduct and disregard for the Senate Standing Orders."

Ogbara, however, called for a thorough investigation into the allegation by Senator Natasha against the Senator President, Godswill Akpabio.

She maintained that procedures and necessary actions under the Senate rules were observed before Senator Natasha's suspension.

Last week, the Senate suspended the lawmaker in a move that has continued to generate debates across the country.

She had initially submitted a petition to the Senate accusing Akpabio of sexual harassment. But

the lawmakers threw it out before suspending her even after submitting another petition.

Senator Natasha vowed to continue the fight against "injustice". But in the wake of the suspension, Akpabio denied the accusations and maintained he has never assaulted women.

Her altercation with the Senate president started on February 20, 2025, after her seat was changed during plenary.

That is not the first time both individuals had issues. In July 2024, Akpabio had while trying to correct her for misconduct told her to follow the rules and that the Senate is not a nightclub where anybody can talk anyhow. The Akwa Ibom lawmaker, however, later apologised to her for the remark.

# 'Rivers of crisis': Constituents move to recall Pro-Wike Speaker

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

The never-ending political crisis in Rivers State may yet get messier, as moves are afoot to recall the Supreme Court-reinstated Speaker of the state House of Assembly, Martin Amaewhule.

According to reports, Kenneth Amadi, a legal practitioner has written to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to commence recall proceedings against the pro-Wike Speaker.

The sad commentary, which is the latest twist in the protracted political crisis in Rivers State, all began when the Rivers State governor (Siminalaye Fubara) fell out with his predecessor, and the currently minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike.

In a recapture of the events, as the relationship between Wike and Fubara deteriorated, some 27 members of the Assembly loyal to Wike, which included Amaewhule defected from the from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Their seats were promptly declared vacant by lawmakers loyal to Governor Fubara setting in motion an unpleasant tango in the courts for several months.

Following their defection and alienation, Fubara worked with the Victor Oko-Jumbo-led three-man faction of the Assembly.

Fubara presented the budget to the Oko-Jumbo group, and they also confirmed commissioner nominees and other appointments coming from the governor.

However, Amaewhule and the 26 others later renounced their defection and the Supreme Court, in a judgement on 28th February, 2025, ordered that they should resume sitting immediately.

The apex court also ordered the governor to represent the 2025 budget to the State Assembly, under Amaewhule's leadership.

Meanwhile, in a new development,



reports have it that recall proceedings have been initiated against Amaewhule on Wednesday, 12th March, 2025.

The letter, dated 7th March, 2025, and addressed to the Resident Electoral Commissioner, INEC, Rivers State, was titled, 'Pre-Action Notice: Request made pursuant to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, and Freedom of Information Act, 2011, for a certified true copy of the verified voter register for Obio/Akpor Federal/State Constituency, Rivers State as preliminary steps towards the recall of Martins Amaewhule, the legislator representing Obio/Akpor State Constituency at the Rivers State House of Assembly'.

A stamp on the acknowledgement copy of the letter showed that it was received by the INEC office on 11th March, 2025.

The lawyer, Amadi, explained in the letter that he is the lawyer to several indigenes of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Amaewhule's constituency.

He further explained that the request is in accordance with the FOI Act, 2011, and sections 69 and 110 of the 1999 Constitution, as well as Section 116 of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) which empowers INEC to conduct recall proceedings against a member of the National Assembly or State Assembly, or Area Council of the FCT, "upon the receipt of a valid petition alleging a loss of

confidence in the member by more than 50% of voters registered to vote in that member's constituency".

Parts of the letter read, "I write in my capacity as a lawyer to several indigenes of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State who are desirous of initiating a recall of Martins Amaewhule for the following reasons:

"Defection from the Peoples Democratic Party to the All Progressives Congress in December 2023.

"Failure to provide effective representation for the majority of the public interests of constituents, instead focusing on his own personal interests and the interests of his political godfather.

"Consistent involvement in undemocratic, illegal and violent impeachment activities since the year 2013 when he moved the motion for impeachment of a duly and legally appointed Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

"Disobedience to the judgment of the Supreme Court of Nigeria delivered on 28th February 2025 which directed all parties to await the final determination of the legal status of Amaewhule and 26 other law-makers of the Rivers State House of Assembly who defected in December 2023.

# Rivers Assembly urges EFCC, ICPC to investigate RSIEC chairman, others

By **Helen Okechukwu**

The Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA) has called for the arrest and investigation of the Chairman of the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC), Retired Justice Adolphus Enebeli, over financial activities of the commission.

The RSHA urged the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to probe Enebeli and four other RSIEC members.

According to Martins Wachukwu, the Special Assistant on Media to the Speaker of RSHA, this resolution was reached during the Assembly's 134th Legislative Sitting on Wednesday.

The move follows a "Warrant of Arrest" previously issued for Justice Enebeli and four other RSIEC members over their refusal to comply with a legislative investigation.

The motion to summon the anti-corruption agencies was sponsored by 26 lawmakers and moved by Hon. Linda Somiari-Stewart, representing Okrika Constituency.

The motion called for the condemnation of the RSIEC Chairman's refusal to subject himself to legislative scrutiny, a demand for the commission's bankers to provide financial records from January 1, 2024, to date, and the involvement of



the EFCC and ICPC in the probe.

Commenting on the motion, Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Martin Amaewhule, cited Section 128 of the 1999 Constitution, emphasizing the Assembly's constitutional power to investigate any person or agency within its legislative purview. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Three Bills Progress in the Assembly

In a separate development, the Rivers Assembly advanced three critical bills through Second Reading. The bills underwent extensive debate, with lawmakers highlighting their significance to governance and legislative efficiency.

The first, Rivers State House of Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Bill, aims to grant the Assembly additional authority, privileges, and immunity in carrying out its legislative functions. This bill has

been referred to the House Committee on Rules and Business for further deliberation.

Additionally, the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) Bill seeks to repeal and replace the RSIEC Law No. 2 of 2018. Its goal is to refine the legal framework guiding the commission's establishment, composition, and operations. The bill was committed to the House Committee on Commissions and Agencies.

The third bill, Rivers State Local Government Bill, 2025, proposes the repeal of existing local government laws from 2018, 2023, and 2024.

It seeks to enact a new, comprehensive law governing local government administration in Rivers State. The House referred this bill to the Committee on Local Government.

# NCS seizes over \$1.1m at Kano Airport, arrests courier

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has intercepted \$1,154,900 and SR135,900 undeclared foreign currency at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA) in Kano State.

Announcing this in a statement on Thursday, NCS spokesman, Abdullahi Maiwada, disclosed that the seizure was made recently during a routine baggage check on an inbound passenger, Hauwa Ibrahim Abdullahi, who arrived on Saudi Airline Flight No. SV401 from Saudi Arabia.

Maiwada said, during the physical examination of the passenger's luggage conducted by NCS officers, the undeclared currency was discovered concealed within palm-date fruit packs locally referred to as Dabino.

He stated that the interception aligns with the NCS's commitment to enforcing financial regulations and preventing illicit financial flows across Nigeria's borders.

The statement read, "In line with established procedures, the suspect and the seized foreign currency have been handed over to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for further investigation and necessary legal action.

"Subsequently, the court convicted the defendant as charged and ordered the forfeiture of the undeclared money to the Federal Government in line with the provisions of the Money Laundering (Prevention and



Prohibition) Act of 2022.

"The Service reiterates that all travellers must comply with Nigeria's financial regulations, particularly the legal requirement to declare any cash or negotiable instruments exceeding the approved threshold when travelling in or out of the country.

"The Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act of 2022 and the Foreign Exchange (Monitoring and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1995, provide clear guidelines on currency declaration.

"Non-compliance with these regulations constitutes a violation of Nigerian law and attracts severe penalties. The Service, therefore, urges the public to adhere strictly to these requirements to avoid legal consequences.

"Under the leadership of the Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, the NCS remains resolute in its enforcement efforts to combat smuggling, illicit financial transactions, and other trans-border crimes.

"This latest seizure highlights the Service's unwavering dedication to protecting the nation's economic interests and ensuring compliance with financial regulations.

"The NCS will continue to collaborate with relevant government agencies and stakeholders to strengthen border security, enhance compliance with financial laws, and safeguard Nigeria's economy.

"Travellers and stakeholders in the financial sector are advised to remain vigilant and always adhere to lawful financial practices."

# EFCC arraigns couple for impersonating Katsina First Lady

By Friday Omosola

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has arraigned a husband and wife, Baba Abubakar Sadiq and Hafsat Lawal, alongside two accomplices, Abdullahi Bala and Ladani Akindele, for allegedly defrauding victims of N197.75 million by impersonating the First Lady of Katsina State, Fatima Radda.

The defendants were brought before Justice Amina Bello of the Kaduna State High Court on a six-count charge bordering on obtaining money by false pretence, money laundering, and stealing.

According to the EFCC, Lawal posed as the First Lady, one of the wives of Katsina State Governor Malam Dikko Radda, to deceive victims into transferring large sums of money.

She allegedly collected N89 million from Aminu Usman, claiming she had \$53,300 to exchange for naira.

Another victim lost N108 million, believing he was buying \$118,300 from the defendants.

Further investigations revealed that Hafsat's husband provided her with two SIM cards registered under the name Mrs Radda on Truecaller.

He then allegedly contacted Ladani



Akindele, a former colleague at a new-generation bank, to obtain the contact details of Hafiz Bashir, Chairman of Unity Bank.

Through this, they secured access to the Bureau de Change operator, whom they eventually defrauded.

The EFCC said the funds were deposited into an account belonging to Bala at Taj Bank, from where they were allegedly laundered and shared among the defendants.

When the charges were read, all four defendants pleaded not guilty. The EFCC's prosecution counsel, Bright C. Ogbonna, opposed their bail applications and requested a trial date.

However, defence lawyers,

including M.S. Katu (for the 1st and 2nd defendants), Jazuli Mustapha (for the 3rd defendant), and Paul A. Okachi (for the 4th defendant), argued that they had filed bail applications and sought oral arguments in court.

After hearing submissions from both sides, Justice Amina Bello ruled in favour of the EFCC, remanding the defendants in a Correctional Facility and adjourning the case to March 17, 2025, for bail hearings.

The defendants were initially arrested by the Department of State Services (DSS) before being transferred to the EFCC when their offences were confirmed to be financial crimes.

# Ex-Kwara gov on trial for alleged N5.8bn UBEC fund diversion

By Friday Omosola

The trial of former Kwara State Governor Abdulfatah Ahmed and his Finance Commissioner, Ademola Banu, over the alleged misappropriation of N5.78 billion in public funds, continued yesterday before Justice Mahmud Abdulgafar of the Kwara State High Court in Ilorin.

During the hearing, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) presented its second witness, Musa Oladimeji Dasuki, a retired Permanent Secretary at the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), who served between 2011 and 2020.

Led in evidence by EFCC counsel Rotimi Jacobs, Dasuki testified that the Kwara State Government, under Ahmed's leadership, requested Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) funds for 2013 and 2014 to pay teachers' salaries—despite the funds being allocated for school infrastructure projects.

According to Dasuki, the request was initially made orally by Banu but was later formalized in writing, with a letter conveying the governor's approval.

Following this, the funds were deposited into the state



government's account with Skye Bank Plc.

SUBEB, he said, initially resisted the move, knowing it would disrupt ongoing school projects.

However, the finance commissioner assured them that the funds would be reimbursed once federal allocations were received.

"A letter was written to that effect from the office of the Commissioner for Finance, signed on his behalf, and the money was released immediately upon receiving the letter," Dasuki stated.

Despite these assurances, he revealed, the funds were never repaid, resulting in several uncompleted education projects.

According to the 2013 action plan

submitted to UBEC, the funds were meant for the construction of 40 standard classroom blocks with offices, 40 VIP toilets, and ICT centres across Kwara's 16 local government areas.

However, many of these projects stalled due to a lack of funds.

Dasuki further testified that contractors protested non-payment for completed work, indicating the extent of the financial mismanagement.

During cross-examination, Jimoh Mumini, counsel for the former governor, pointed out that neither Ahmed nor Banu was a member of SUBEB, potentially raising questions about their direct involvement in fund allocation.

Justice Abdulgafar adjourned the case until Thursday, March 13 for the continuation of trial.

# NERC inaugurates new grid code review panel to boost power sector

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has officially inaugurated a new Grid Code Review Panel (GCRP) aimed at enhancing the operational efficiency of the country's power sector.

The grid code, a vital set of technical rules and procedures, governs the operation, maintenance, and development of Nigeria's electricity transmission system.

NERC stated that the newly formed panel will play an integral role in streamlining and improving the power sector by ensuring that operations align with the sector's evolving needs.

In a statement posted on its official X (formerly Twitter) account on Wednesday, March 12, NERC revealed that the panel's primary responsibility would be to evaluate and administer amendments to the grid code, a framework outlining the technical requirements for connecting to and using the national electricity grid.

The grid code serves as the backbone for ensuring the safe, reliable, and efficient transmission of electricity across the country.

The GCRP is tasked with reviewing proposed amendments to the existing grid code, after which it will present its recommendations to the stakeholders' advisory panel for further scrutiny. Once reviewed, the amendments will be submitted for NERC's approval.

According to NERC, the panel consists of 19 members, including 15 principal members and four secretariat staff.



These members have been drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, including generation companies, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), distribution companies, and eligible customers, reflecting the diverse interests within the power sector.

At the inauguration ceremony, Chidi Ike, NERC's Commissioner for Engineering Performance and Monitoring, highlighted the timely nature of the panel's formation, particularly considering that the previous GCRP was established in 2018.

He noted that significant developments have occurred in the operation of the national electricity grid since the last panel was appointed.

"The inauguration of the current GCRP members is critical at this juncture, given the advancements and changes that have taken place since 2018. The landscape of Nigeria's electricity grid has evolved considerably, and the time for a fresh review of the grid code is now," Ike remarked.

In his address, NERC Chairman Sanusi Garba emphasised the importance of the panel's work, urging the members to remain dedicated to their responsibilities.

Garba stressed that the successful review and updating of the grid code would be essential in ensuring that Nigeria's electricity transmission system meets the sector's current and future needs.

Nafisat Ali, the chairperson of the newly inaugurated panel, assured the gathering that the members would collaborate closely to carry out their duties with diligence and professionalism.

Ali expressed confidence that the panel's work would contribute significantly to the continuous improvement of Nigeria's power sector.

This development marks another step forward in NERC's ongoing efforts to strengthen the country's electricity infrastructure and improve service delivery to consumers.

# Lagos HSC holds retreat for hospital quality improvement officers

By Friday Omosola



The Lagos State Health Service Commission (HSC) has organised a two-day retreat for Quality Improvement (QI) officers from the state's 30 General Hospitals, aiming to enhance healthcare service delivery.

Held at Orchid Hotel, Lekki, the retreat was conducted in collaboration with PharmAccess Foundation under its Quality Department, SafeCare Healthcare Standards.

Themed 'Sustaining Quality Healthcare Delivery Through Resilient Processes, Innovation, and Continuous Skills Transfer', the event brought together 180 QI officers, HSC directors, and the Director of Quality at PharmAccess Foundation, Ibronke Dada.

Speaking at the retreat, the Permanent Secretary of HSC, Ademuyiwa Benjamin Eniyewun, emphasized the critical role of Quality Improvement in healthcare, urging officers to take proactive steps to enhance standards in their respective hospital units.

He highlighted its impact on efficiency, patient safety, satisfaction, hospital reputation, and financial sustainability.

Delivering a lecture titled 'Deploying Quality Improvement for Strategic Impact and Operational Efficiency', Eniyewun stressed the importance of reducing patient waiting times.

"Expectation management is key in Quality Improvement. Patients appreciate shorter waiting periods

when seeking medical attention," he noted.

He further emphasised that Quality Improvement should be integrated into every aspect of hospital operations, encouraging officers to adopt systematic approaches and uphold functional standards.

"Quality is everyone's business," he asserted.

In an earlier session, SafeCare Project Manager Peggy Imoniovu urged participants to uphold the highest standards in healthcare delivery.

She underscored the sector's low tolerance for errors, stating, "We must get regulation right to ensure quality healthcare, despite systemic challenges in Nigeria's health sector."

# How to survive Nigeria's current heatwave

By Eyitayo Jemimah Ajayi

The climate has not been friendly to us. Even with the rain we have witnessed, it just keeps getting hotter. Someone said one should not miss heaven because if Nigeria can be as hot as this, then hell will be worse.

The current heatwave started in December, which was meant to be a period of harmattan, a period of dry air but the temperature is always cool. Now, we have been confronted by a desert-like weather. Here are a few ways you can cope.

## 1. Drink enough water, stay hydrated

This is not the period to say you do not like drinking water. In this kind of weather, your body uses up the water content in your body because the environment is not cool enough to provide the coolness it needs.

It is your responsibility to make sure you continually replenish your water content so as not to be dehydrated. If possible, take cold water anytime you feel drenched. But unfortunately, the electricity in Nigeria might not always allow this.

## 2. Wear Loose-Fitting Clothing

Ever wondered why people in hot climates wear loose clothing? It helps with ventilation. While cultural and moral standards may not permit bikinis, you should opt for loose clothes made from lightweight materials. Also, avoid black clothing, as it absorbs and retains heat.

## 3. Use Air Conditioning or a Fan

The downside of this for Nigerians is the unreliable electricity supply. However, this is a good time to invest in solar-powered fans. That said, with the



intensity of the heat these days, even fans seem to be blowing hot air! Still, half a loaf is better than none. You can also invest in portable, rechargeable fans for when you are outdoors.

## 4. Avoid Crowded Places – Stay in Well-Ventilated Rooms

Crowded spaces have become unbearably stuffy due to high humidity levels, leading to increased carbon dioxide emissions. If you find yourself in an overcrowded space with limited airflow, the risk of fainting increases. Always ensure that your surroundings are well-ventilated.

## 5. Use Sunscreen

If you're wondering why sunscreen is necessary, remember that it is not just for skincare enthusiasts. Sunscreen protects your skin from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. With climate change contributing to the depletion of the ozone layer, more UV radiation is reaching the earth, increasing the risk of skin damage. Sunscreen is your best friend in protecting against this.

## 6. Take Cool Baths Regularly

To keep your body cool, take regular cool showers. If possible, soak in a bathtub for a while to lower your body temperature. This refreshes and helps regulate your body heat.

## 7. Minimize the Use of Heat-Emitting Electrical Appliances

Now is the time to switch off unnecessary light bulbs and electronic devices that generate heat. If your computer, TV, or other appliances are not in use, turn them off to prevent additional heat buildup in your space.

## 8. Reduce Your Consumption of Alcohol and Caffeine

Alcohol and caffeine are diuretics, meaning they increase fluid loss in the body. Processing these substances requires significant energy, leading to dehydration and fatigue. Limiting their intake can help you stay hydrated and maintain energy levels.

We hope this heat wave passes soon! In the meantime, follow these tips and other medically approved recommendations to stay cool and safe during this period.

# UPTH Nephrologist warns against herbal remedies, bleaching creams over kidney disease risk

By **Helen Okechukwu**

In marking the 2025 World Kidney Day, a health expert, has warned Nigerians against the intake of herbal remedies and the use of bleaching creams due to their severe health consequences, particularly in relation to kidney disease.

With a significant number of patients affected by kidney disease, Dr. Tams Tamunobelega, a Consultant Physician and Nephrologist at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), advised citizens to avoid creams containing mercury, which is a known contributing factor to kidney disease.

This year's World Kidney Day, celebrated annually on March 13, carries the theme: "Are Your Kidneys Okay? Early Detection, Preventing Kidney Disease."

During an interview session with journalists, Dr. Tamunobelega explained that hypertension is another major contributor to kidney disease and identified HIV as a leading cause.

"The International Society of Nephrology, the global body that regulates kidney care, has set aside the second Thursday of March every year to celebrate World Kidney Day," Dr. Tamunobelega stated, emphasizing that the goal of the theme is to educate and enlighten the public about kidney health.

He further explained that patients suffering from kidney disease often undergo dialysis or require a transplant, which places a significant financial burden on both patients and their families.

"The primary objective is to create adequate awareness and sensitize people about preventive risk factors that cause



kidney disease, so they do not reach the stage of requiring dialysis or an eventual transplant," he noted.

Dr. Tamunobelega also announced that a screening test and a health talk on kidney disease would be conducted at Emmanuel Anglican Church in Rumuokoro.

The event aims to educate the public about the risks associated with late detection and provide strategies for effective disease management.

Read Also: UPTH, Patricare unveil premium facility to curb medical tourism

"If you detect the issue early, you can manage it more effectively. We will also screen the population for risk factors associated with kidney disease. The most common factors include diabetes and hypertension," he explained.

Speaking on government intervention, the nephrologist highlighted that treatment costs have been reduced by 50 percent in about ten centers following government support.

"The government can play a significant role in making favorable policies. Efforts are being made to make kidney transplants more accessible. Appropriate laws can be enacted to regulate kidney transplants and donations," he added.

Furthermore, Dr. Tamunobelega revealed that the Nigerian Society of Nephrology is collaborating with the Federal Ministry of Health to develop guidelines governing kidney donation, addressing ethical concerns surrounding organ donation.

"A lot of people are unaware that the use of herbal remedies and bleaching creams containing mercury can cause kidney problems," he cautioned.

"While you may not have control over developing hypertension due to family history or spontaneous occurrence, you can control your exposure to bleaching creams and herbal remedies," the health expert emphasized.

# NAFDAC urges stakeholders to support war against counterfeit drugs

By Helen Okechukwu

To prevent health complications in Nigeria, the Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (DG-NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has encouraged health stakeholders in the South-South region to support initiatives aimed at curbing counterfeit drugs and products.

In the agency's two-day sensitisation workshop held in Port Harcourt, the DG of NAFDAC gave this charge to the stakeholders.

The workshop, sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, focused on the NAFDAC Green Book, traceability of products, and paediatric regulation.

Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, the Director-General of NAFDAC, who was represented by Fraden Bitrus, the Director of Post-Marketing Surveillance Directorate, highlighted the various measures the agency has deployed over the years to fight against fake medical products.

To prevent health complications in Nigeria, the Director General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (DG-NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has encouraged health stakeholders in the South-South region to support initiatives aimed at curbing counterfeit drugs and products.

In the agency's two-day sensitisation workshop held in Port Harcourt, the DG of NAFDAC gave this charge to the stakeholders.

The workshop, sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, focused on the NAFDAC Green Book, traceability of products, and paediatric regulation.

Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, the Director-General of NAFDAC, who was represented by Fraden Bitrus, the



Director of Post-Marketing Surveillance Directorate, highlighted the various measures the agency has deployed over the years to fight against fake medical products.

These measures include the publication of consumer safety alerts in national newspapers, the "Shine Your Eyes" programme on television, and the adoption of advanced technologies such as Mobile Authentication Service (MAS), Truscan, Minilab, and other surveillance tools.

Adeyeye described Substandard and Falsified (SF) products as a "man-made evil" that has plagued Low- and Medium-Income Countries (LMICs), with counterfeiters employing increasingly sophisticated methods to expand their illicit trade.

She emphasized NAFDAC's commitment to leveraging technology and modern regulatory mechanisms to curb the menace.

"Therefore, the Agency is poised to use technologies and modern means to mitigate the activities of counterfeiters; therefore, the need for sensitisation of stakeholders is apt," she stated.

The workshop provided participants with crucial information and hands-on training

on the NAFDAC Green Book, the Traceability Regulation 2024, and the Paediatric Regulation 2024.

Adeyeye explained that the Green Book is an online resource designed to help stakeholders verify the authenticity of products by searching for a product's name, brand, or registration number.

She urged stakeholders to utilize the technology tool at <https://bit.ly/4KFZvza> to verify product authenticity and prevent substandard products from infiltrating the supply chain.

She further highlighted the importance of the NAFDAC Paediatric Regulation 2024, which addresses the specific needs of children's healthcare beyond existing regulatory frameworks.

Rivers State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Adaeze Oreh, represented by Mrs. Quanta Dapper, Coordinator of Drug and Substance Abuse Control in the state ministry, commended NAFDAC for its proactive approach.

# IPOB slams NAFDAC for midnight raid on Onitsha drug market

By Helen Okechukwu

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a separatist group, has strongly condemned operatives of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) for conducting a midnight raid on the Onitsha drug market.

The market, widely known as Ogbo Ogwu, is located at the Head Bridge in Anambra State.

In a statement on Thursday, IPOB's Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, accused NAFDAC operatives of looting goods under the guise of searching for fake drugs.

Describing the incident, Powerful alleged that the agency deliberately obstructed CCTV cameras before the raid, questioning its motives and demanding accountability and transparency.

According to the statement, Powerful also noted that NAFDAC has yet to provide evidence of destroying the impounded fake drugs after the operation at the Onitsha drug market.

While criticizing the actions of fake drug dealers and requested the looted good to be returned to their respective traders, Powerful stated, "At the same time, we condemn the criminal raids by NAFDAC on people's shops in their absence while blackmailing all the traders as dealers of fake drugs.

"The act of blocking surveillance cameras with black nylon bags is criminal. In every shop at the market,



NAFDAC operatives broke into people's stores and shops.

"This unlawful activity by NAFDAC officers was conducted in the middle of the night.

Read Also: NAFDAC DG reveals agency is severely understaffed

"NAFDAC looted people's shops in Onitsha and labeled all the drugs they carted away as fake without providing evidence to support their claims.

"The questions NAFDAC must answer are: Why raid people's shops in the middle of the night in the absence of the owners?

"Why did NAFDAC officers block the surveillance cameras in the market while conducting the raid?

"How did NAFDAC determine whether the drugs they seized were fake or genuine?

"Where did NAFDAC deposit all the drugs they claimed were counterfeit?

"Why did NAFDAC seal the entire drug market, punishing both the guilty and the innocent?

"IPOB does not support the activities of fake drug peddlers in the Onitsha market, but NAFDAC must uphold citizens' rights and act with professionalism, not like a rogue agency.

"Nigerian government agencies always apply a heavy-handed approach against the Ndigbo, while using a softer approach when dealing with other ethnic groups," the the separatist group expressed.

# How my NYSC khaki became a price tag in Asaba

By Toheeb Babalola

After hearing inspiring stories from predecessors who had undergone the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the joy of wearing a lemon-coloured khaki and white shirt became a dream for me.

Some of these stories, particularly Mr. Moriyanu's (not his real name), remain stuck in my head. In 2002, Moriyanu was deployed from his hometown in the Southwest to a state in the Southern geopolitical zone. Despite studying Mechanical Engineering, he was assigned to a community primary school as his Place of Primary Assignment (PPA). The most fascinating part of his story was that he never lacked anything—food, money, or fabric—throughout his service year.

“Toheeb, during our time, we got these things for free,” Moriyanu smiled as he recounted his experience. “When we went to the local markets in our khaki uniform, people gave us food and money because they saw us as the messiahs of their community.”

Nearly three decades later, the four cardinal programs of NYSC, which Moriyanu and his contemporaries benefited from, remain in place. This reinforced my belief that I would receive the same treatment.

## A Reality Check in Asaba

Fast forward to February, when I began my service year in Asaba, the capital of Delta State—a completely unfamiliar place for me. Everything—the environment, language, and culture—felt foreign. However, with Moriyanu's story in mind, I remained unconcerned, reassuring myself, “Toheeb, everything will be as easy for you as it was for Moriyanu.”

However, within my first week in Asaba, I quickly realized that roadside food vendors showed no regard for my khaki uniform.

As I settled in, I walked around comparing food prices at different canteens. Both roadside vendors and restaurants charged ₦1,200 for a plate of carbohydrates, which



included Apku/Eba, soup, and meat. This was too expensive for me to afford, considering my monthly NYSC allowance.

Surprisingly, the price remained consistent everywhere in Asaba. I thought to myself, “These roadside food vendors and restaurants must be holding regular meetings. How are roadside vendors competing with restaurants? Back in my hometown of Ibadan, a plate of carbohydrates costs as little as ₦500.”

## An Unpleasant Encounter with a Food Seller

One evening in the third week of February, after returning from my primary assignment, I was exhausted and starving. Wearing my khaki uniform, I had ₦1,200 on me and found a roadside food vendor near the Directorate of SDGs Offices.

I ordered Eba and did not bother asking for the price, assuming it was still ₦1,200.

As I rinsed my hands, I admired the steaming hot eba, neatly served on a plate with egúsí soup, biscuit bones, and meat. I devoured the meal as if I had never tasted food before—it went down smoothly in my stomach within 10 minutes.

As I prepared to leave, I handed the vendor ₦1,000 and ₦200 notes. To my surprise, she examined the money and acted as if something was missing. As I stood up, she said in pidgin English, “Oga corper, your money never complete. Your money na

₦1,500.”

Hearing this, I became angry and started sweating. “When did you change the price? You didn't inform me earlier,” I asked, frustrated.

She grabbed my jacket and insisted I balance the ₦300 before leaving.

“Oga corper, you dey craze for head o. Don't play with me o. Na Asaba you dey o,” she agitatedly warned. Feeling powerless in an unfamiliar environment, I reluctantly transferred ₦300 from my bank's mobile app to her—to protect NYSC's reputation and avoid further humiliation.

Beyond this unpleasant experience, I soon realized that whenever I tried to buy other items in the city, vendors would increase their prices upon noticing my khaki uniform. Misconceptions about corps members earning ₦77,000 monthly only made matters worse.

Let's break it down: If you spend ₦1,500 per meal, three times a day (₦4,500 daily), and multiply that by 30 days, your monthly food expenses alone amount to ₦135,000—far exceeding the ₦33,000 NYSC allowance. Surplus or deficit?

Now, I believe Moriyanu's story is truly reflected in his name, which means “I received the wonder of God.” His experience cannot be compared to the realities that corps members face today in their new environments.

# Court issues arrest warrant for VeryDarkMan in Mercy Chinwo case

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

A magistrate court in Abuja has ordered the arrest of popular social media personality Martins Vincent Otse, widely known as VeryDarkMan (VDM).

The court took this action after he failed to appear for a hearing regarding allegations of criminal defamation against gospel singer Mercy Chinwo.

The Chief Magistrate Court in Wuse Zone 6, Abuja, issued the bench warrant on Thursday, March 13, 2025. Magistrate Emmanuel Iyanna directed the Nigeria Police Force and other law enforcement agencies to arrest and bring VDM to court. The order came after the blogger ignored a summons served on March 5, 2025.

## Lawyer's appeal rejected

VDM's lawyer, Deji Adeyanju, urged the court to reconsider the warrant. He promised to personally ensure his client's appearance in court. However, Magistrate Iyanna rejected the appeal and insisted that security agencies must enforce the order.

When contacted, Adeyanju confirmed the development.

"Yes, a bench warrant has been issued against him for failing to show up in court," he told Channels Television. "This is more of a media trial than an actual prosecution."

**Defamation allegations and evidence**  
The legal dispute stems from



statements made by VDM on social media. He accused Chinwo of being involved in a contractual dispute and allegedly diverting \$345,000 linked to her former record label boss, Ezekiel Onyedikachukwu, also known as Eezee Tee.

Chinwo, through her legal team, presented documentary evidence to counter these claims. The evidence included emails and payment receipts. Her lawyers argue that these documents prove VDM's statements were false and damaging to her reputation.

## Legal charges against VeryDarkMan

Chinwo's legal representatives, led by Pelumi Olajengbesi of the Abuja-based law firm Law Corridor, stated that the blogger's actions violate:

### Section 391 of the Penal Code

Section 24(1)(B) of the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act 2015

Civil suit Seeking ₦1.1 billion in damages

Beyond the criminal case, Chinwo has also filed a civil suit against VDM at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. She is seeking ₦1.1 billion in damages. Additionally, she has asked the court to order VDM to:

Delete all alleged defamatory statements

Issue a public retraction

Apologize publicly for his claims

### Public reactions and next steps

The case has sparked debates on social media, with supporters and critics sharing their opinions. Some argue that VDM is being unfairly targeted, while others insist that spreading false information should have legal consequences.

As the legal battle unfolds, all eyes are on how authorities will enforce the court's order and whether VDM will comply with the summons.

# I once lived in a “demon-possessed” house unknowingly

## - Williams Uchemba

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actor Williams Uchemba shared a chilling Abuja experience in a viral video, describing eerie events that left him shaken.

According to Uchemba, he unknowingly lived in a house that he believes was haunted by malevolent spirits.

During his stay, he noticed strange and unsettling changes in his life. His finances took a sharp downturn, and his health began to deteriorate. At first, he dismissed these challenges as mere coincidences. However, over time, he realized that every tenant in the building faced similar struggles.

“I thought it was just a rough patch,” Uchemba said. “But then, I noticed that none of my projects were moving forward. It wasn’t just about money—my health was also failing.”

### A Series of Unexplained Events

Uchemba recalled how the unusual occurrences intensified. He started feeling an overwhelming sense of unease in the house. His plans kept falling apart, and nothing seemed to work out. That was when he began to suspect that something sinister was at play.

The actor said he later discovered that he was not alone in this struggle. Other tenants in the building shared similar stories. They, too, faced unexplained financial troubles and health issues. The pattern was too strong to ignore.

Realizing the severity of the situation, Uchemba turned to prayer



and fasting. He hoped to break free from whatever force was affecting his life. That was when things took an even darker turn.

### A Disturbing Vision

As Uchemba intensified his prayers, he started witnessing strange things. He recalled having a frightening vision of a creature roaming the compound.

“I saw a demon-like, dwarf-like being running around,” he revealed. “It wasn’t just a dream—it felt real. That’s when I knew something was seriously wrong with that house.”

His vision left him deeply unsettled. The sight of the eerie figure confirmed his suspicions about the house’s dark energy.

### Escape and Reflection

Uchemba eventually moved out of the house. After leaving, he noticed

an immediate improvement in his life. His health stabilized, and his finances started recovering.

Looking back, the actor believes his experience serves as a warning. He urged people to be cautious about the places they live.

“Not every house is just a building,” he cautioned. “Some places have histories we don’t know about.”

His story has since sparked discussions online. Many people shared similar experiences, while others questioned whether supernatural forces were truly at play.

Despite the debates, Uchemba remains convinced that his ordeal was real. For him, the events in that house were more than just bad luck—they were a battle against something unseen.

# Alleged Cheating: Ifeluv considers suing Oluwadolarz

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

The estranged fiancée of popular comedian Oluwadolarz, Ifeluv, has hinted at possible legal action while addressing their widely publicized breakup.

In a strongly worded Instagram post, she accused the comedian of infidelity and revealed that she took their personal issues online to distance herself from him.

## Accusations of infidelity

Ifeluv made it clear that she was not responsible for the breakdown of their relationship. She claimed Oluwadolarz was the only one who cheated and expressed frustration over his persistent attempts to reconnect. According to her, she felt forced to speak out publicly as a way to stop him from contacting her.

“You were the only one cheating in our relationship,” she wrote. “A lot of people won’t understand, but I came online just so he would leave me alone.”

She also mentioned that she had considered obtaining a restraining order against him due to his continued pleas for reconciliation.

## Asserting self-worth

Ifeluv did not hold back in her statements. She described her former relationship with Oluwadolarz as a mistake, emphasizing that she values her self-respect and body. However, she made it clear that while she regrets the relationship, she does not regret having their son.



“My body and my worth mean everything to me. You were my mistake, but I will never regret my son,” she wrote.

Her post suggested that she wanted to end all communication with Oluwadolarz, making it clear that she would not entertain any further attempts at reconciliation.

## Hinting at legal action

While Ifeluv stated she would no longer discuss the matter publicly, she warned that she was considering taking legal steps against the comedian. Without specifying details, she hinted that Oluwadolarz might have legal troubles ahead.

“I promise not to say anything more on this issue, so as not to offend certain people,” she wrote. “But don’t think I’ve forgotten. A crime from a hundred years ago can still come back to haunt you.”

She concluded her statement by stressing that her main focus was their son and moving on from the situation.

## Social media reactions

Following her post, social media users weighed in on the controversy. Some supported Ifeluv, praising her for standing up for herself. Others criticized her for taking their private issues to the public.

Meanwhile, Oluwadolarz has yet to respond to the accusations. His silence has fueled further speculation about the situation.

## Ongoing tension

This is not the first time their relationship has made headlines. The couple, once seen as a happy pair, has faced rumours and controversies in the past. However, this latest development suggests that their split is far from amicable.

If Ifeluv follows through with legal action, the drama could take a new turn. For now, all eyes remain on Oluwadolarz’s next move. Will he break his silence or let the allegations go unanswered?

Only time will tell.

# Uzor Arukwe responds to criticism over 'simp' role in movie

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**N**ollywood actor Uzor Arukwe has addressed criticism over his portrayal of an affluent Igbo man in Omoni Oboli's new movie, *Love In Every Word*.

Some viewers claim his character, Odogwu Obiora, presents Igbo men as "simps" who excessively pamper their partners.

Arukwe played Odogwu, a wealthy businessman who showers his girlfriend, Chioma (played by Bambam), with expensive gifts and attention. While many, especially female viewers, praised the film for depicting a loving and generous partner, some men argued that it misrepresented male responsibilities in relationships.

## Social media reactions

On social media, opinions were sharply divided. Some viewers applauded the film for showing how men should treat their significant others, while others felt it set unrealistic expectations. One critic, an X user named Himp2million, strongly disagreed with the portrayal. He wrote, "Anambra men are not simps. Your movie is liked only by ladies who have always had the illusion of an odogwu that'll spend his last dime on them."

## Arukwe's response

Arukwe wasted no time responding. He defended his character's actions and rejected the notion that generosity equates to weakness. In a direct reply, he wrote, "Taking care of your woman and spending money on her doesn't make you a simp. It only makes you a



responsible man."

He continued, "How else do you show love to your partner if you can't take care of their needs from the abundance of your wealth?" His statement quickly gained traction, sparking further debate among fans and critics alike.

## Ongoing debate over male roles in Nollywood

This is not the first time Arukwe has faced criticism over his portrayal of Igbo men in Nollywood films. In 2023, some viewers accused him of exaggerating his Igbo accent in Funke Akindele's hit movie, *A Tribe Called Judah*. They claimed his performance reinforced stereotypes rather than presenting a balanced image of Igbo culture.

Despite the backlash, Arukwe remains a respected figure in Nollywood. Known for his versatility, he has played a wide range of roles, from tough criminals to influential businessmen. His ability to embody different characters has earned him a

loyal fanbase, but it has also made him a target for criticism when certain portrayals don't sit well with audiences.

## The bigger picture

The debate over *Love In Every Word* highlights a larger conversation about gender roles and expectations in Nigerian society. Some believe Nollywood should portray relationships in a way that aligns with cultural values, while others argue that movies should challenge outdated norms and offer fresh perspectives.

For Arukwe, his role in *Love In Every Word* was simply a performance, not a statement on how all Igbo men behave. However, as Nollywood continues to evolve, discussions like this will likely shape how male characters are portrayed in future films.

Love it or hate it, *Love In Every Word* has sparked conversations—and that, in itself, is the power of cinema.

# I got death threats after Elon Musk shared fake news about me – Ayo Edebiri

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Actress Ayo Edebiri says she got death threats and racial slurs after billionaire Elon Musk shared a false report linking her to a *Pirates of the Caribbean* role.

The controversy began in February 2024 when a fake news report claimed that Disney was considering Edebiri as a replacement for Johnny Depp in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise. Musk, the owner of X (formerly Twitter), reacted by posting, “Disney sucks.” His comment helped spread the false claim, leading to a wave of online harassment against the actress.

Edebiri speaks out on social media

Edebiri addressed the situation in a recent Instagram story. She recalled the intense backlash she faced, saying:

“Just remembering when I got some of the most insane death threats and racial slurs of my life (idk if it’s the #1 moment, but for sure top 3) for a fake reboot of a movie I had never even heard of because of this man. LMAO. So not only is he [Elon Musk] double Sieg Heil-ing fascist, he’s an idiot but anyway.”

Her statement highlighted the personal toll of misinformation and the power of social media to spread false narratives. She expressed frustration that a completely baseless rumor could spiral out of control and lead to real threats against her safety.

Musk’s influence on the incident

Musk’s influence played a major role in amplifying the fake report. With over 150 million followers on X, his posts reach millions within minutes. While some users quickly debunked the claim, others believed it, attacking Edebiri with racist and violent



messages.

This is not the first time Musk has faced criticism for spreading misinformation. He has previously shared conspiracy theories and misleading claims, often sparking backlash. Critics argue that his position as a powerful business figure comes with a responsibility to verify information before posting.

The dangerous spread of misinformation

For Edebiri, the experience was a harsh reminder of how dangerous false reports can be. She did not audition for a *Pirates of the Caribbean* reboot, nor was she ever in talks with Disney about the role. However, the mere suggestion of her involvement was enough to trigger widespread hate.

The situation also highlights the toxic side of online culture. Public figures, especially women and people of color, often face intense scrutiny and abuse, even over baseless rumors. Social media platforms have struggled to address this issue, as harassment continues to be a major problem.

Support and response from fans

Despite the threats, Edebiri has continued to focus on her career. She has gained widespread recognition for her work in Hollywood, starring in hit TV shows and films. Her talent and hard work have earned her critical acclaim, making her one of the industry’s rising stars.

Following the controversy, some social media users expressed support for Edebiri, condemning the attacks against her. Many called for stricter measures to prevent misinformation and online harassment.

Ongoing debate over social media responsibility

As for Musk, he has not responded to Edebiri’s comments. However, the incident adds to ongoing debates about the impact of social media, the responsibility of public figures, and the consequences of spreading false information.

The backlash against Edebiri serves as a reminder of how quickly misinformation can spread—and how real the consequences can be.

# 'How stunted growth almost cost me my life' – Aki

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nollywood actor Chinedu Ikedieze, widely known as “Aki,” has revealed the challenges he faced growing up with stunted growth.

In a recent interview with Chude Jideonwo, he shared how his diagnosis at age nine led to intense bullying, emotional pain, and even thoughts of suicide.

During the interview, Aki recalled visiting a hospital with his mother after falling sick. The doctor’s words left a lasting impact on him. “The doctor told my mother, ‘Madam, stop worrying. He has no problem. Just make sure he studies and goes to school,’” he said.

At the time, he had never heard the term “stunted growth.” When he saw the words “growth retardation” on his medical report, he struggled to understand what it meant. But as time passed, he heard those words again and again.

## Bullied and taunted by peers

The actor’s childhood was far from easy. After his diagnosis, he became a target for bullying. Peers mocked his height and called him names. The constant ridicule took a serious toll on his mental health.

“People taunted me. I cried several



times. They called me names. It got so bad that I thought of ending it all,” he admitted.

Despite his pain, he found strength in his mother’s words. She encouraged him to focus on education, telling him it would be his greatest weapon in life. “You are small; you cannot carry cement or do furniture work. The best thing for you is to study,” she would often remind him.

## Choosing education over despair

Rather than let the negativity consume him, Aki decided to focus on his studies. He saw education as his only path to success. His determination paid off. He not only performed well in school but also built a successful career in Nollywood.

Today, he is one of Nigeria’s most beloved actors, known for his iconic roles in films and TV series. His journey is a powerful reminder that resilience and hard work can overcome even the toughest challenges.

## A message of hope

Aki’s story inspires many who face similar struggles. He wants others who deal with self-doubt and bullying to know that their circumstances do not define their future.

“Obstacles may be painful, but they do not have to determine your destiny,” he said.

Through his success, he hopes to encourage others to keep pushing forward, no matter how difficult the journey may seem.

# Eniola Ajao's 'Owambe Thieves' premieres in cinemas April 18

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood's Eniola Ajao brings *Owambe Thieves* to cinemas nationwide on April 18, 2025, promising suspense, drama, and an unforgettable experience.

The highly anticipated film promises an intense mix of suspense, deception, and high-stakes drama, making it one of the biggest Nollywood releases of the year.

Directed by Adeoluwa Owu and produced by Ajao, *Owambe Thieves* tells the gripping story of a struggling married couple who take a desperate gamble to secure a better life. However, their actions quickly spiral out of control, dragging them into a dangerous world of power struggles, betrayal, and unforeseen consequences.

Backed by top Nollywood studios—Anthill Studios, Lighthouse Pictures, and FilmOne Studios—the movie boasts a stellar cast, promising an unforgettable viewing experience.

Ajao promises a groundbreaking cinematic experience

Ajao recently shared her excitement with fans, unveiling the film's first official animated poster. In a passionate statement, she described *Owambe Thieves* as a unique blend of drama, comedy, and family values, all wrapped in an electrifying storyline.

"We are thrilled to present the first official animated poster for the most-anticipated movie of all time,



*Owambe Thieves*," she wrote. "This film captures the essence of owambe—unity in diversity, culture, fashion, and entertainment. It's a mix of undiluted drama, humor, suspense, and raw emotions."

She emphasized the film's top-notch production quality, highlighting its star-studded cast and meticulous attention to detail. "*Owambe Thieves* is unlike anything you have seen before. It is entertainment at its finest—unrivaled and unforgettable. Get ready for a cinematic experience like never before."

Star-studded cast and high production value

Although the full cast list remains under wraps, sources suggest that *Owambe Thieves* features some of Nollywood's biggest names. The combination of seasoned actors and fresh talent is expected to bring the story to life in a powerful way.

The production team has also gone to great lengths to ensure that the film meets international standards. From stunning visuals to a gripping soundtrack, *Owambe Thieves* is designed to leave a lasting impression on viewers.

A must-watch for Nollywood fans

With its mix of drama, suspense, and humor, *Owambe Thieves* is poised to become a fan favorite. The film explores themes of love, ambition, and survival, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking.

As the release date draws closer, excitement continues to build. Fans are eagerly waiting to see how Ajao and her team bring this thrilling story to the big screen.

Mark your calendars—*Owambe Thieves* arrives in cinemas nationwide on April 18, 2025.

# Rapper DDG fires cameraman for flirting with his date

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

American rapper and YouTuber Darryl Dwayne Granberry Jr., better known as DDG, has fired his cameraman for flirting with his date during a livestream.

Cameraman's flirting interrupts dinner

A viral video from his recent broadcast shows DDG dining at a restaurant with model Tiana. However, the evening took an unexpected turn when his cameraman, Johnny, repeatedly interrupted by flirting with the model. His actions seemed to annoy him, who decided to take immediate action.

DDG sends instant termination message

Instead of confronting Johnny on the spot, the rapper sent him a text message. Moments later, DDG looked at him and said, "Check your phone, Johnny." The cameraman then held up his phone to the camera, revealing the message from his boss. It read: "You fired after stream."

Fans react to sudden dismissal

The sudden firing has sparked conversations online, with fans reacting to the incident. Some supported his decision, saying Johnny crossed a line by flirting with his boss's date. Others found the situation amusing, calling it one of the most unexpected firings



caught on camera.

DDG's eventful personal life

Known for his music and YouTube content, has been in the spotlight for his personal life as well. Since his split from singer and actress Halle Bailey, he has been seen going on dates with different women. His dating life has become a topic of discussion among fans, especially after this viral moment.

Rapper plans move to Nigeria

In addition to his love life, DDG recently made headlines for another reason. He announced plans to relocate to Lagos,

Nigeria, expressing frustration with life in the United States. His statement surprised many, as he has built his career in the U.S. However, he did not share further details about when or why he plans to move.

A livestream to remember

The rapper's decision to fire his cameraman mid-livestream adds another chapter to his eventful life. Whether it was a justified reaction or an over-the-top response, fans continue to debate the drama online.

# EU announces \$5bn investment in South Africa as Trump tariffs war escalates

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

European Union leaders announced 4.7 billion euros (\$5.1 billion) in investments in South Africa on Thursday to support green energy and vaccine production, and agreed to start talks on new trade deals with Africa's most advanced economy.

The announcement came at the first bilateral summit between the bloc and the African country in seven years.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President António Costa and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa spoke of the need to boost international cooperation during the meeting, held at the South African leader's Cape Town office.

Their message stood in contrast to the Trump administration's confrontational foreign policy and trade tariffs.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump said in a social media post that he would impose a 200% tariff on European wine, Champagne and spirits in an escalation of a trade war with the EU.

"We will defend our interests," von der Leyen said in response to Trump's latest threat. "We've said it and we've shown it, but at the same time I also want to emphasize that we are open for negotiations."

Von der Leyen also said that Europe was looking to deepen its trade relationship with South Africa, already the EU's largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa.

"We want to strengthen and diversify our supply chains but we want to do it in cooperation with you," she said, sitting next to Ramaphosa.

She described it as a new chapter in their relations and referred to South Africa as a reliable partner. "On both sides there's



high respect for stability, predictability and reliability," she said.

Ramaphosa said the summit came at a time of increasing global uncertainty. Both the EU and South Africa have felt the impact of Trump's first months of his second term.

South Africa has been singled out for sanctions by the Trump administration over domestic and foreign policies that the U.S. leader has cast as anti-American — a reference to South Africa launching a case at the top U.N. court accusing U.S. ally Israel of genocide in the war in Gaza, as well as to South Africa's ties with China and Iran.

Trump issued an executive order last month cutting all U.S. funding to South Africa, accusing it of a human rights violation against a white minority group in the country, and of supporting some "bad actors" in the world, such as the Palestinian militant group Hamas and Iran.

Von der Leyen's visit also reemphasised the EU's support for South Africa's presidency of the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations this year, another area where the United States has criticised South Africa while boycotting some early G20 meetings.

South Africa hopes to use its leadership of

the group to make progress on help for poor countries, especially on debt relief and more financing to mitigate the impact of climate change.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio dismissed some of those priorities for the G20 and skipped a foreign ministers meeting of the group in South Africa last month. He also said that he wouldn't attend the main G20 summit in Johannesburg in November, indicating that the U.S. would give little attention to attempts at international cooperation through the bloc, which includes 19 of the world's major economies, the EU and the African Union.

The EU said that the vast majority of the new investment in South Africa — \$4.7 billion out of the \$5.1 billion — would be to help South Africa transition from its coal-based economy to greener energy supplies.

That new pledge came a week after the U.S. withdrew from an agreement to give funding to South Africa and two other developing nations to help them transition to clean energy sources that was seen as a possible blueprint for more deals to reduce carbon emissions across the world. The EU has also pledged money to that Just Energy Transition Partnership and said that it's still committed to the programme.

# Russia rejects US, Ukraine 30-day ceasefire

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In a significant turn of events, Russia has declared that it does not seek a temporary ceasefire in Ukraine but instead aims for a long-term peace settlement that prioritizes its strategic interests. This statement comes as a U.S. delegation arrives in Moscow for crucial negotiations.

Yuri Ushakov, Russian President Vladimir Putin's foreign policy adviser, announced on Thursday that Moscow views the proposed 30-day ceasefire—brokered after talks between the U.S. and Ukraine—as a mere “temporary breather” for Ukrainian forces. Speaking on state television, Ushakov emphasized that Russia expects the U.S. to consider its geopolitical concerns in future negotiations.

“We do not need a temporary truce,” Ushakov stated. “We are working toward a comprehensive agreement that ensures Russia's long-term security and strategic stability.”

Moscow's position remains firm on several longstanding conditions, which have been central to its approach to peace negotiations:

Ukraine renouncing NATO membership and adopting a neutral stance, a legally binding agreement prohibiting the deployment of foreign troops or military bases in Ukraine, international recognition of Russian sovereignty over Crimea and the four Ukrainian regions Moscow claims to have annexed, and an end to NATO's eastward expansion, which Russia cites as one of the ‘root causes’ of the ongoing conflict.

These demands have been at the core of Russia's diplomatic posture since the war escalated in 2022. While Ukraine and Western nations have categorically rejected Russia's claims over occupied territories, the Kremlin insists that any peace framework must address these issues.

Amidst Russia's firm stance, a U.S. delegation has arrived in Moscow for high-stakes discussions. The American team, led by senior officials, is expected to engage with Russian counterparts on potential diplomatic solutions. However, Russia's rejection of a short-term ceasefire could complicate negotiations.

“We expect the U.S. to take Russia's positions into account in further work together,” Ushakov stated, signaling that Moscow will not accept what it perceives as one-sided compromises.

As the situation unfolds, all eyes are on the Kremlin and Washington to see whether a pathway to peace can emerge. The U.S. has yet to formally respond to Russia's latest statements, and it remains unclear how Ukraine will react to Moscow's call for a long-term agreement rather than a temporary pause in hostilities.

# Judge orders Trump administration to reinstate thousands of fired employees

By Dave Oludare Oso

A federal judge has ordered half a dozen federal agencies to “immediately” reinstate probationary employees fired last month as part of the Trump administration’s effort to rapidly shrink the federal workforce, calling the effort a “sham.”

The preliminary injunction issued from the bench Thursday by US District Judge William Alsup requires the departments of Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Interior and Treasury to rehire the employees.

The judge said that he might extend the order to cover other federal agencies at a later time.

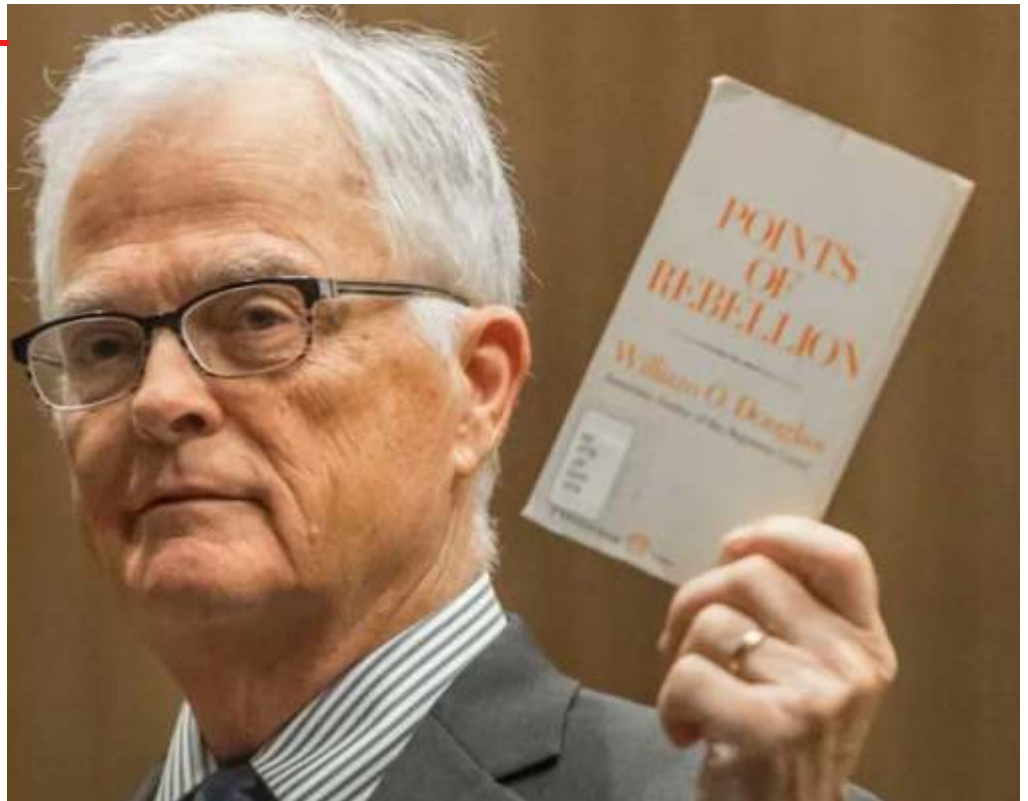
Alsup, an appointee of former President Bill Clinton, said he was making the ruling because he believes the Office of Personnel Management unlawfully directed the agencies earlier this year to lay off the probationary employees, who generally have been on the job for less than a year.

“The court finds that Office of Personnel Management did direct all agencies to terminate probationary employees with the exception of mission critical employees,” he said, rejecting arguments from the Justice Department that OPM merely issued “guidance” to the agencies that then led to the firings.

The judge said the order is effective immediately: “This is the order and it counts.”

The ruling came in a case brought by labor unions and others challenging OPM’s role in the firings, which affected thousands of employees and sent shockwaves through various federal agencies, some of which later rehired some of the workers.

Alsup was highly critical of the



administration’s justification for firing the employees. OPM had provided agencies with a template termination letter that cited the employee’s “performance” as the reason they were being let go. But the judge said that rationale was the government’s attempt to end-run federal law setting up specific rules for reducing the federal workforce.

“The reason that OPM wanted to put this based on performance was at least in part in my judgment a gimmick to avoid the Reductions in Force Act,” the judge said. “Because the law always allows you to fire somebody for performance.”

“It is a sad day when our government would fire some good employee and say it was based on performance when they know good and well that’s a lie,” he added. “That should not have been done in our country. It was a sham in order to try to avoid statutory requirements.”

Federal probationary employees have typically been in their positions for one year, but some jobs have two-year probationary periods. The employees may be new to the federal workforce, but

they also could have been recently promoted or shifted to a different agency.

Alsup’s ruling is one of the most significant yet in cases testing the administration’s authority to quickly reduce the number of federal employees—a key priority that has been central to the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency. A similar case brought by Democratic state attorneys general is pending in Maryland.

“I tend to doubt they you’re telling me the truth”

The decision came after Alsup unloaded on the Justice Department for not making the acting head of the Office of Personnel Management available to testify about the Trump administration’s decision to fire scores of probationary employees.

He had ordered acting OMB director Charles Ezell to testify during Thursday’s hearing, where he would likely face tough questions from attorneys representing the labor unions that are challenging his agency’s role in the firings.

# President Duda urges U.S to station nuclear warheads in Poland

By **Fatimah Idera**



**T**he President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, has called on the U.S. to transfer nuclear weapons to Polish territory as a deterrent against future Russian aggression. According to reports from the Financial Times, President Duda stated that he had recently discussed the proposal with U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy.

Poland, which had previously stated that it would be ready to host U.S. weapons under a nuclear arms-sharing program, has also recently expressed interest in a proposal by French President Emmanuel Macron to extend France's nuclear umbrella to European allies.

"The borders of NATO moved east in 1999, so 26 years later, there should also be a shift in NATO's infrastructure eastward," Duda said. He added that "it would be safer if those weapons were already in the country."

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, a political opponent of Duda, said on Thursday that he believed such matters should be addressed discreetly rather than in media interviews. However, he acknowledged that the president had good intentions.

"We should formulate certain expectations publicly only when we are certain, or have reason to believe, that such appeals or calls will be heard. American

administration and President Trump—is prepared for a positive response," Tusk told reporters.

Galvanized by Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine three years ago, Poland now allocates a higher proportion of its gross domestic product (GDP) to defense than any other NATO member, including the United States.

Last year, Poland's defense spending reached 4.1% of GDP, according to NATO estimates, and it plans to increase this to 4.7% this year. Duda has also proposed enshrining a minimum defense spending threshold of at least 4% of GDP in the Polish constitution.

# Trump threatens 200% tariff on French wine, other EU alcohol products

By Dave Oludare Oso



President Donald Trump on Thursday threatened to impose a 200% tariff on alcohol products from France and other European countries.

The tariff threat comes after the European Union plans to move ahead with a proposed tariff on American whiskey.

“If this Tariff is not removed immediately, the U.S. will shortly place a 200% Tariff on all WINES, C H A M P A G N E S , & ALCOHOLIC PRODUCTS COMING OUT OF FRANCE A N D O T H E R E . U . REPRESENTED COUNTRIES. This will be great for the Wine and Champagne businesses in the U.S.”, Trump said in a post on

Truth Social.

The president’s threat comes after the European Commission on Wednesday said it will impose counter tariffs on 26 billion euros (\$28 billion) worth of U.S. goods exports in response to Trump’s 25% tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

French Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin responded to Trump’s post on Thursday, saying the country will protect its industries.

President Trump “is launching the escalation in the trade war he chose to start,” Saint-Martin said in a post on X that was translated to English. “France remains determined to respond with the European Commission and our partners.”

“The countermeasures we take today are strong but proportionate,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement.

“Our countermeasures will be introduced in two steps. Starting with 1 April and fully in place as of 13 April. In the meantime, we will always remain open to negotiation.”

EU wine exports to the United States were worth 4.9 billion euros last year, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat. That was 29% of the EU’s overall exports of wine. Of the EU exports to the United States, France made up almost half and Italy almost 40%.

# High school runner who hit opponent head with baton faces assault charge

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A high school track athlete faces a misdemeanor charge of assault and battery after a now-viral video showed her hitting a competitor's head with her baton during a relay event.

Alaila Everett, a senior at I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth, was running the second leg of the 4×200-meter relay when her baton struck Kaelen Tucker, a junior from Brookville High School, in the head.

It happened March 4 during the Virginia State High School League Championships at Liberty University in Lynchburg.

Bethany Harrison, the commonwealth's attorney for the city of Lynchburg, confirmed to ABC News on Thursday that a misdemeanor charge of assault and battery was issued against Everett in the matter.

Additional details on the case were not immediately available.

Video of the incident showed Tucker staggering and reaching for her head after being hit before going off the track. She dropped her baton and was attended to by medical personnel shortly after the incident.

She would later be diagnosed with a concussion, she told ABC affiliate WVEC in Hampton, Virginia.

"I was so in disbelief," Tucker told WVEC. "I didn't know what happened."

Everett contended that baton strike was an accident in an interview that aired Tuesday on "Good Morning America."

"I would never do that on purpose," Everett said. "That's not in my character."



The 18-year-old said that during the race, her arm became stuck, and her baton inadvertently struck Tucker as they neared the corner of the track.

"Her arm was literally hitting the baton — until she got a little ahead, and my arm got stuck like this," she said while holding a baton to emphasize the movement.

The Everetts say they believe their video shows that Tucker's proximity to their daughter led to an accidental collision.

According to the family, Tucker was running too close to Everett when she tried to cut ahead, which caused Everett to lose her balance and the baton to make contact with Tucker.

Following the incident, the athletic director at I.C. Norcom High School and Everett's father apologized to the Tucker family in a phone call, according to Tucker's parents.

The Virginia High School League told ABC News on Monday that it is reviewing the incident.

"The VHSL membership has always made it a priority to provide student-athletes with a safe environment for competition," the league said in a statement.

The Portsmouth NAACP said it is also reviewing the incident as well as "racial slurs and death threats" toward the Everett family.

"We are committed collectively to ensuring that the criminal justice system, which we feel is not warranted in this situation, is executed fairly and based on due process," the organization said in a statement on Wednesday while calling for Everett to be "void of any criminal proceedings."

"From all accounts, she is an exceptional young leader and scholar whose athletic talent has been well-documented and recognized across our state," the Portsmouth NAACP said.

"She has carried herself with integrity both on and off the field and any narrative that adjudicates her guilty of any criminal activity is a violation of her due process rights."

# Remaining migrants at Guantanamo Bay moved to Louisiana to await deportation

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

All of the remaining migrants being held at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba have been moved to Louisiana over the last two days, according to a U.S. official.

In late January, President Donald Trump announced he was signing an executive order “to instruct the departments of Defence and Homeland Security to begin preparing the 30,000-person migrant facility at Guantanamo Bay.”

But since then, the number of migrants sent to be temporarily held there has only reached the low hundreds, and now the Department of Defence and the Department of Homeland Security are discussing whether to make further use of the base.

U.S. officials confirmed the 195 tents, capable of housing 500 migrants, at Guantanamo Bay did not meet ICE’s requirements for holding migrants, such as having air conditioning and other amenities.

Illegal alien holding tents at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay in support of the Department of Defence and Department of Homeland Security mission to expand the Illegal Alien Holding Operations Center during Operation Southern Guard at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Feb. 16, 2025.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said in February that Guantanamo Bay’s high-security prison facility



could house “the worst of the worst” criminals being deported.

He called the base “the perfect place to provide for migrants who are traveling out of our country,” including for “hardened criminals.” Hegseth then visited Guantanamo Bay in late February, and a bipartisan congressional delegation toured the migrant detention facility on Friday.

However, there are now no more military flights carrying migrants to Guantanamo Bay scheduled for at least the next 48 hours, the official said.

U.S. officials told ABC News it is possible some of the hundreds of U.S. troops sent to the base to help prepare it to house migrants might be relocated to help with the southern border mission in another capacity.

As of Friday, there were 41 migrants at the base awaiting deportation,

almost equally split between low threat and high threat, all of whom have now been flown by non-military aircraft on Tuesday and Wednesday to be held in Alexandria, Louisiana, where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has a processing facility, according to the U.S. official.

“It was clear that this was entirely for optics and the fact that Donald Trump wanted to be able to say that he was sending immigrants to Guantanamo Bay, with all of its history of human rights abuses and with no actual operational value,” Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Ca., who was part of the congressional delegation at Guantanamo Bay, told ABC News on Wednesday.

Jacobs told ABC News that officials at Guantanamo Bay said it cost \$16 million to stand up the migrant camp, noting that each tent allegedly cost \$3.1 million to construct despite not being up to DHS standards.

# Bruno Fernandes' hat-trick sends Man United into Europa quarter-final

By Oluwatosin Ologun

**M**anchester United are through to the Europa League quarter-final after Bruno Fernandes scored a hat-trick in a 4-1 win over Real Sociedad on Thursday night.

For United fans, it was enough for a 5-2 win on aggregate and a night which looked set to be filled with nerves and anxiety ended in a party atmosphere.

A pair of converted penalties either side of half-time — after the hosts had gone behind early on via another spot kick — and a smart finish late in the game meant the United captain took away the match ball.

Diogo Dalot put the icing on the cake in stoppage time on a very good night for Ruben Amorim and his men as they cruised through with a 5-2 aggregate win.

United will face French side Lyon in the quarter-final.

## We need to help Bruno win titles – Amorim

There hasn't been much for United fans to cheer, but this was one of their best performances under Amorim as Manchester United's season has been on life support, but with Bruno Fernandes providing resuscitation, Ruben Amorim's team are still alive.

The win and happy moments are inspired by Fernandes and if he remains fit and in form, he could yet drag this team to a trophy and UEFA



Champions League qualification.

“We already spoke about Bruno a lot of times,” Amorim said afterwards.

“We know that sometimes he is frustrated. We know he wants to win so bad, so when things are not going well, he is changing position and going after the ball. Sometimes, he needs to trust his teammate, but when we need it, he is always there. He can bring the ball forward, he can score goals, he can defend. He is a perfect captain for our team and we need to help him win titles.”

## What's next for Man United

A Europa League quarter-final awaits for Manchester United, but not just yet.

Plenty of their players will take a well-earned rest after this weekend for the

fortnight-long international break. But not before they visit Leicester City — a team they have already beaten three times this season — on Sunday evening.

Despite tonight's victory, anything less than a win in that Premier League game will pile the pressure right back on Ruben Amorim.

## Europa League quarter-final line-up in full

With that Rangers shootout victory, we now know which teams will do battle in the Europa League quarter-finals:

**Bodo/Glimt vs Lazio**

**Lyon vs Manchester United**

**Rangers vs Athletic Club**

**Tottenham vs Eintracht Frankfurt**

# Patrice Motsepe re-elected unopposed as CAF President for second term

By Dave Oludare Oso

South African mining magnate Dr Patrice Motsepe has been re-elected unopposed for a second four-year term as president of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) at the 14th CAF Extraordinary General Assembly in Cairo on Wednesday, March 12.

The re-election was attended by FIFA president Gianni Infantino.

The 63-year-old, who has led CAF since 2021, had remained reserved about seeking re-election but confirmed his decision in October 2024 following numerous requests from CAF member association presidents and other key football stakeholders across the continent.

Motsepe, the owner of South African club Mamelodi Sundowns, expressed his continued commitment to enhancing African football, stating, “The goal remains making African football competitive on the international stage, stabilising finances, and investing in infrastructure that allows our teams and players to thrive.”

One of the key areas Motsepe highlighted for his second term is the development of stadium infrastructure.

He pointed out the progress made in



this area since his first term, saying, “In 2021, 36 countries were not playing football in their countries. Now that number has been reduced to 12, but it is still a big challenge.”

Motsepe’s re-election without opposition is viewed as a vote of confidence in his leadership, which has helped CAF recover from a period of financial instability following the termination of its \$1 billion TV rights deal with Lagardère.

Under his stewardship, CAF has stabilised its finances, settled past debts, increased prize money for its competitions, and boosted financial support for member associations.

A highlight of his first term was the \$72 million profit generated from

last year’s Africa Cup of Nations in Ivory Coast, 18 times greater than the profit from the 2022 edition. The tournament also attracted a record global audience of 2 billion viewers.

While Motsepe’s re-election was uncontested, elections for positions on CAF’s executive committee took place, with Cameroonian football legend Samuel Eto’o securing a seat. Additionally, the assembly voted in Africa’s representatives for the FIFA Council.

Motsepe’s unopposed re-election reflects the confidence CAF member associations have in his leadership as he continues to steer African football toward greater success on the global stage.