



No need to probe IBB over my father's death - Abiola's son **Pg 5**

Nigerian breaks Guinness record with 106-hour sewing marathon **Pg 10**



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## Macron to EU colleagues: Stop buying American, buy European

*"Those who buy Patriot should be offered the new-generation Franco-Italian SAMP/T. Those who buy the F-35 should be offered the Rafale," French president says.* **Pg 18**



59 killed in 'catastrophic' fire at illegal North Macedonia nightclub **Pg 20 & 21**

Newcastle stun Liverpool in League Cup final to end 56-year trophy drought **Pg 25**

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Asake buys father new house, funds medical bills **Pg 14**

US forces kill 31 in Trump-ordered strikes on Houthi rebels **Pg 22**



US monster storm leaves at least 32 dead **Pg 23**

# 2025 Budget: Rivers Assembly denies receiving Fubara's letter, says gov insincere

By Dave Oludare Oso

The tussle between the Rivers State House of Assembly and Governor Siminalayi Fubara appears to be getting worse with the lawmakers accusing the governor of frustrating the implementation of the Supreme Court's judgment, particularly the directive requiring him to re-present the 2025 budget to the lawmakers.

Making the accusation through its Chairman, House Committee on Information and spokesperson, Dr Enemi George, in Port Harcourt, the state capital, on Sunday, the Assembly, which is loyal to the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, urged the public to pressure the governor to follow due process in presenting the 2025 budget, rather than attempting to gain public sympathy by portraying lawmakers as obstacles.

He challenged the governor to produce an acknowledged copy of the letter he claimed to have sent to the House.

George said, "Last week, we were told that on his way to Ogoni for a programme, the governor made a stopover at the gate of the House of Assembly Quarters to grant an interview to the press.

"In that interview, he claimed that he had sent a letter to the House of Assembly indicating his intention to visit and present the appropriation bill, a claim we found rather astonishing as no such letter was received by the House of Assembly.

"His aides later alleged that they forwarded a letter through WhatsApp to some members of the House, which was also awkward, unprofessional and embarrassing."

George added, "As I speak, the social media space is awash with stories about a purported letter from the governor to the House of Assembly expressing his intention to visit the house to present the appropriation bill for the year 2025.

"Nothing can be farther from the truth.



We want to state categorically that there is no such letter before the House of Assembly nor any of its staff.

"We challenge the governor and his aides to produce an acknowledgement copy of such a letter or any evidence that such a letter was sent or received by the House of Assembly. It is absolutely untrue and unfortunate. The general public must as a matter of importance ignore such claim.

"It is now very obvious that if at all there was such a letter, the intended recipient was not the legislature, but the public, and the clear intention was to play to the gallery, whip up public sentiment, demonize the House of Assembly and set the public against us. This is demeaning, denigrating and perilously unfortunate."

George further said the governor frustrated all the House's efforts to work with him to resolve the lingering crisis immediately after the Supreme Court judgment, particularly on the aspect of presenting the Appropriation Bill in the interest of the state.

George stated, "Recall after the recent Supreme court judgment on the budget of our state, it became absolutely necessary for the Governor of Rivers State, His Excellency, Sir Siminalayi Joseph Fubara, to present the appropriation bill to the legislature for consideration and passage.

"Also recall that immediately after the judgment, this house wrote to the governor, calling on him to immediately present the budget for speedy consideration.

"It was our hope that by the 15th of March, 2025, we would have concluded the process of passing the appropriation bill into law, so as to give us enough time to approach the Federal Government to release funds meant for our state which have been seized by the judgement of the Supreme Court.

"This we did in the interest of our dear state and in pursuit of peace, recognising that no government can function optimally without a harmonious co-existence between the executive and the legislature."

According to George, House staff members who attempted to deliver the letter to the Government House were assaulted and turned away.

The Martin Amaewhule-led lawmakers then resorted to using a courier service, but the governor still did not respond.

He added, "The governor did not heed to our call, nor did he demonstrate any intention to.

# THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

## PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

## PRODUCT COLOUR

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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
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4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
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9X5	206,000.00
9X4	177,500.00
9X3	150,000.00
8X6	216,000.00
8X3	98,500.00
7X4	164,002.00
6X4	94,010.50
6X3	78,500.00
6X2	47,500.00
5X5	100,000.00
5X4	61,500.00
5X3	57,819.00
5X2	40,379.50
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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
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4X2	22,350.00
3X2	16,763.00
2X2	10,877.00
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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
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6X2	40,000.00
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5X4	65,833.00
5X3	49,375.00
5X2	32,916.50
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4X3	39,499.50
4X2	26,333.50
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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
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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
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# I'm not dumping APC for SDP, says ex-Senate President, Lawan

By Dave Oludare Oso

Senator Ahmad Lawan, who was the President of the 9th Senate, has denied reports and posters in circulation insinuating that he is set to leave the ruling party for the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The former senate president has restated his loyalty and commitment to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Lawan, who represents Yobe North Senatorial District and presently chairs the Senate Committee on Defence, declared in a statement signed by his Media Adviser, Ezrel Tabiowo and released on Sunday that “the reports are entirely false, baseless, and without any merit.”

The statement said Lawan “remains a steadfast and loyal member of the APC, a party he has proudly associated with and contributed to since its formation”, adding that “he remains a key stakeholder in the APC and will continue to work with the party and the government to ensure the success of their collective goals.”

“For the record, throughout his political career spanning twenty-five years as a member of the National Assembly, Senator Ahmad Lawan is one of Nigeria’s few politicians with no defection record since inception.

“In 1999, he was elected into the House of Representatives; and transitioned to the Senate in 2007, on the platform of the All People’s Party (APP), which was later renamed ‘All Nigeria



People’s Party (ANPP)’.

“The ANPP was amongst the three minority parties that merged to birth the All Progressives Congress on 6th February, 2013.

“Senator Lawan is a firm believer in the vision and principles of the APC, and he continues to work tirelessly with other party leaders and members to strengthen the party and advance its agenda for the betterment of our nation,” it stressed.

The statement further reiterated the full support of the former Senate President for Governor Mai Mala Buni of Yobe State, “in his commendable efforts to deliver good governance and improve the lives of the people of the state”, saying that he remains committed to working with him to achieve the shared vision of a prosperous state.

It also expressed Lawan’s strong support for the policies and reforms of the President Bola Tinubu-led administration, declaring his believes in the administration’s commitment to transforming Nigeria and addressing the challenges facing the nation.

“We urge the general public, party members, and supporters to disregard these unfounded rumours and posters, as they are nothing but the handiwork of mischief-makers seeking to create unnecessary distractions and buzz for a mapped out political agenda,” the statement pleaded.

It added that “Lawan remains focused on his responsibilities as a lawmaker and a leader, and he is committed to supporting the APC-led administration under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in delivering good governance and sustainable development to all Nigerians.”

# No need to probe IBB over my father's death - Abiola's son

By Dave Oludare Oso

One of the sons of the late Chief Moshood Abiola, who was acclaimed to have won the June 12, 1993 presidential election, Jamiu has stated that probing former military Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida, over the death of his father is unnecessary.

He spoke in a recent interview with PUNCH.

Jamiu explained that the time for such investigations had passed, stating that many key figures involved in the June 12 tragedy are no longer alive.

Jamiu said, "There is no need for prosecution or probe. So many years have passed and most of the good and bad actors in the June 12 tragedy have passed away."

He added that the ideal time for a probe would have been during the second term of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, when Nigeria's democracy was more stable and many individuals involved were still alive and could provide accurate accounts of events.

Jamiu further stated that for those interested in knowing more, his book, 'The President Who Never Ruled,' offers insights into the annulment and the surrounding events.

"It (the book) will let you know exactly what happened during the annulment and why it happened," he said.

However, he cautioned readers to



approach it with the goal of understanding the truth, not seeking revenge.

Jamiu said the best way to compensate the Abiola family would be for Nigerians to embrace the values of unity and national cohesion that were exemplified on June 12, 1993.

He explained, "The best way to compensate our family is for the Abiola family to see all Nigerians adopting the attitude they adopted on the day of June 12, 1993, which in a nutshell is to reject tribalism and religious differences when electing leaders and to see themselves as members of the same family regardless of their states of origin."

He further noted that Nigerians should focus on transforming the country from a divided nation to a unified one.

"By so doing they will be heeding the call of President Bola Tinubu to shun ethnicity and transforming Nigeria from

a country to a nation.

He added, "I will not ask for more than that because to do so would bring down the high standing of Moshood and Kudirat Abiola following their unique sacrifice. They gave up their lives and will be rewarded with more than 500 million years in a place better than any castle in this world."

While acknowledging that any worldly honours bestowed upon his late parents would be appreciated, Jamiu firmly believes that such recognition pales in comparison to the eternal reward his parents are enjoying.

Concluding, Jamiu said, "Any worldly honour given to them is definitely welcome, but believe it or not, it will be only a drop in the ocean compared to what they are enjoying right now and will continue enjoying while every single one of those who cheated and killed them burn in hell forever and ever by the special grace of God."

# SERAP sues Akpabio over Natasha's suspension

By Friday Omosola

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed a lawsuit against Senate President Godswill Akpabio over his failure to reverse what the organisation describes as the 'unlawful suspension' of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

SERAP argued that the suspension, which bars Akpoti-Uduaghan from legislative activities for six months, violates her fundamental right to freedom of expression and deprives her constituents of their right to political participation.

The lawsuit, filed at the Federal High Court in Abuja, also challenges the withholding of her salary and allowances during the suspension period.

Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan was suspended after reportedly 'speaking without permission' and 'refusing to accept her new seats' in the Senate chamber.

The Senate's decision has sparked public debate, with critics describing it as a suppression of dissenting voices in the legislature.

In the suit, numbered FHC/ABJ/CS/498/2025, SERAP is seeking an order of mandamus directing Akpabio to reinstate Akpoti-Uduaghan and fully restore her legislative rights and entitlements.

Additionally, SERAP is requesting a perpetual injunction to prevent further disciplinary actions against the senator for exercising her constitutional rights.

SERAP contends that 'no one should ever



be punished for speaking without permission' and that Akpoti-Uduaghan's suspension is a deliberate attempt to silence her.

The organisation argued that the Senate's decision violates Section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution, which guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of expression.

Additionally, SERAP contends that the suspension contradicts Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which explicitly protect free speech.

The organisation further asserts that the punishment has a 'chilling effect' on other lawmakers, discouraging them from freely expressing their views for fear of similar repercussions.

Moreover, SERAP emphasised that the Senate's action undermines the rights of Akpoti-Uduaghan's constituents, who duly elected her to represent them in the legislature.

SERAP also referenced the Declaration of

Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, which states that any restrictions on free speech must be lawful, necessary, and proportionate in a democratic society.

SERAP, through its legal representatives Kolawole Oluwadare and Adelanke Aremo, insists that the Senate must uphold the rule of law rather than suppress dissent.

The organisation emphasised that the right to freedom of expression is not just a personal right but a 'cornerstone of democracy' that ensures transparency and accountability in governance.

The lawsuit highlights that the Senate Standing Orders 2023 cannot override the constitutional and international protections of free speech.

No date has been fixed for the hearing of the case.

However, the outcome of this legal challenge could set a significant precedent for the protection of lawmakers' rights and the broader issue of freedom of expression in Nigeria's democratic institutions.

# Lagos Corps member alleges threat to life after criticising Tinubu administration

By **Helen Okechukwu**

**U**shie Uguamaye, a youth corps member serving in Lagos State, has urged citizens to hold the Nigerian government accountable if anything happens to her.

She made this call after criticising President Bola Tinubu's administration over the economic hardship resulting from inflation via her TikTok page bearing talktoraye on Saturday.

In the video, she highlighted the effect of the economy on her as a National Youth Service Corps member while lamenting that the financial strain has dragged her into a depressed state.

She described Tinubu as a terrible leader while calling for his urgent intervention in the suffering of Nigerians and added that Lagos State, where she serves, "smells" with poor living conditions.

Following the upload, the Tiktoker said she has then been receiving threat after the video was sent to her NYSC group, prompting a call from NYSC officials, requesting to take down the video.

While expressing her disappointment over the attempts to silence her on her Instagram #iamraye\_\_, she wrote,, "Dear Nigerians, I am already getting threatened by the NYSC board to stop speaking on this issue. Less



than 24 hours, I'm already getting threatened by the government starting with the NYSC board!.

"Dear Nigerians, they have my address. In case you guys don't see me online, please you know who to hold accountable. I didn't do anything wrong I just asked that they work on the inflation.

"Why can't I speak up? Being an NYSC corper doesn't mean I signed up my right to complain.

"Why can't the government listen to the critics of its citizens? They believe they have a chain on me, which is NYSC, and they are using it to hold me. #officialasiwajubat I didn't do anything wrong. I criticised your government and I demand that we are being heard."

The corp memeber noted further, "Deleting this content is of no use: because they already know me.

However, deleting it means whatever they do to me, nobody would know. If they decide to give me a hefty punishment, nobody would know because I used my own hands to cover it by deleting what I started.

"She's asking people to Identify me? I'm not a criminal. Reading the NYSC rules, I didn't commit any crime. Ask the NYSC lady to stop asking people to point me out, ATP she's acting scary.

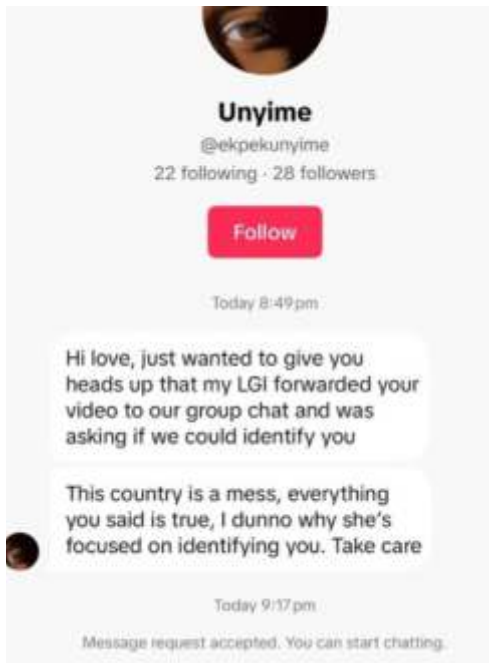
"All I did was lament, all I did was complain. I'm getting tons of messages like this from my fellow corpers. What is wrong with just one person complaining? Why are they looking for me like I'm a criminal? I'm not dumb.

Continue reading  
on next page

## Cont from page 7

“I made sure to not accuse the government of anything maliciously! I questioned them. I asked questions. As an NYSC Corper, I didn’t sign off my freedom of speech.

“Leave me alone bruh. they keep calling me and I’ve switched of my phones now they are texting me my personal details on WhatsApp to inform me they know me well.



“Dear NYSC if you say a corper has faulted, you wouldn’t treat them like this and scare them! You are scaring me for my dear life. Please, leave me alone. You told me to report to the office on Monday. Okay! What else? Why are you looking for me? I just exercised my right to using the ‘Freedom of Speech’ this is the right of every citizen. Except they tell me being an NYSC Corper removes me from being a citizen.”

## Nitizens reaction

In regard to the development that has spiked widespread reactions from netizens, some are of the opinion that she has violated the code of conduct of upholding the constitution, while others are calling for her safety.

Debby\_debra, an X user noted, “People often overlook the broader implications of issues, focusing solely on activism. As part of their induction, corps members take an oath to uphold laws, regulations, and guidelines. Compliance with these rules is mandatory. The woman who admonished her assumed she was speaking to someone familiar with the scheme’s rules, much like her own daughter.

An x user, AdeeyoTolani2 added, “A lot is wrong with the video she made..there’s a freedom of speech but that freedom should be watched.. NYSC has Bye laws that guide you which restrict you from speaking against your Government.. Nigerians and emotions are like 5&6.

Sule\_zarto said, “Is the Nysc rules and regulations above the constitution that guaranteed freedom of speech. Don’t be sentimental please.

Chiukwujioko, “If Nigerian youth allow a finger on her by the Government, then we are all failures. I think, she’s the one to spark the long awaited revolution. We are waiting. We must all stand by her now.... Enough is enough.

Another nitizen, Opera Isiocha added, “That woman must be identified and shown to Nigerians so that they know who she is in case anything happens to that lady. What a country.

Samson Ajisafe, another X user expressed concern over her mental health that should be checked, “Anyone threatening this innocent, frustrated young lady is an enemy of this govt and govt shd disown them, this young lady is frustrated and her condition should not be worsen pls.



# We'll defend ourselves against herdsmen attacks, IPOB tells Police

By Dave Oludare Oso



**P**roscribed sectional group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has said that the Igbos will defend themselves from attacks by herdsmen in the Southeast.

This reaction comes on the heels of the summoning of some leaders of Bende Local Government Area in Abia State over allegations of killing a Fulani herder by the Police.

While condemning the summon, spokesman of the group, Emma Powerful, who signed the statement cautioned the Abia State Police Commissioner to stop intimidating Igbos.

He said, "The attention of the global family and movement of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) worldwide has been drawn to the summoning of some leaders from Bende Local Government in Abia State by the Abia State Police Commissioner over the false accusations of a murder of a Fulani

terrorist herdsman in their community.

"The IPOB intelligence unit has confirmed that Abia State Police Commissioner and his group of clueless and unprofessional officers summoned the leaders of Nkpa Community for defending their community against the murderous Fulani terrorists who rape their women and kidnap people for ransom.

The group alleged that "The Fulani terrorists informed their brothers in the Nigeria Police that the community murdered one of their terrorist brothers. The Fulani terrorists are setting the stage to invade the community with this false accusation. The false alarm was a strategy used by the notorious Nigeria Police to intimate the Nkpa Community for obstructing terrorists's plans.

"The terrorists-sympathetic Nigeria Police Commissioner in Abia State should stop intimidating our people in

order to leave their communities vulnerable to Fulani to attack and kill them at will. ESN does not need the communities' approval to defend our land against Fulani terrorists.

"IPOB worldwide is bringing to the attention of the Abia Police Commissioner and the terrorists-sympathetic federal government that IPOB will never allow their plans to intimidate Ndigbo not to defend themselves against the rampaging Fulani terrorists.

"Self-defence is an inalienable right of every person. Only a tree will stand and watch while being cut down. The Nigerian government and her compromised judiciary and security are all colluding to frustrate people's efforts to defend themselves against the state-sponsored terrorists. IPOB refuses to allow Ndigbo to be vulnerable to Fulani terrorist attacks without resistance."

# Nigerian breaks Guinness record with 106-hour sewing marathon

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**O**luwaseun Kuforiji, a Nigerian fashion designer, has made history by setting a new Guinness World Record for the longest sewing marathon.

He accomplished this incredible feat by sewing non-stop for 106 hours and 55 minutes, crafting 22 handmade items during the challenge.

The record-breaking event, dubbed a “sew-a-thon,” took place in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, from January 22 to 26, 2025. Kuforiji’s determination and endurance earned him a place in the Guinness World Records, making him the first Nigerian to achieve such a milestone in sewing.

A test of skill and endurance

Guinness World Records officially confirmed his achievement, stating:

“The longest sewing marathon is 106 hours, 55 minutes, and 20 seconds. It was achieved by Oluwaseun Kuforiji (Nigeria) in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun, Nigeria, from January 22 to January 26, 2025. During his attempt, Kuforiji successfully sewed 22 items.”

For Kuforiji, this record was not just about endurance but also about celebrating fashion craftsmanship and creativity. His goal was to inspire aspiring designers and encourage people to appreciate the skill and dedication required in the fashion industry.

A journey of passion and dedication

After officially receiving his record, Kuforiji took to Instagram to share his excitement and gratitude. In his post, he



wrote:

“It’s Official! I am beyond thrilled to announce that my Guinness World Record attempt has been officially approved! I am now the record holder for the Longest Sewing Marathon, with an incredible time of 106 hours, 55 minutes, and 20 seconds!

“This achievement wouldn’t have been possible without the unwavering support, encouragement, and prayers from my family, friends, team, and well-wishers. I sincerely appreciate everyone who stood by me throughout this journey. Your belief in me kept me going.

“Thank you all for being part of this historic moment!”

A milestone for Nigerian fashion

Kuforiji’s achievement is a significant

milestone for the Nigerian fashion industry. His dedication highlights the potential of local talent and the importance of handmade craftsmanship in a world dominated by mass production.

By setting this record, he has not only made a name for himself but also put Nigeria’s fashion industry in the global spotlight. His story is an inspiration to young designers and creative minds across the country, proving that hard work and perseverance can lead to extraordinary success.

With his new title as a Guinness World Record holder, Kuforiji hopes to use his platform to further promote fashion craftsmanship and inspire creativity in others. His journey is a reminder that passion, commitment, and resilience can turn dreams into reality.

# TRAGIC! Police inspector shoots self dead in Ogun

In mysterious circumstances, a police inspector, Ajele Oloyede, has reportedly died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound at a ceramics company in Igbesa, Ogun State, where he was stationed as part of the security team.

Confirming the story on Sunday, the Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, Omolola Odutola, said the tragic incident took place on Thursday.

The Public Relations Officer said that another officer, Tolorunloju Stephen, from the Force Headquarters Annex in Lagos, discovered the situation upon his return from Ikeja at around 1:20 p.m.

Odutola said Stephen found Oloyede resting his head on a table inside the



security office. When he inquired about his condition, Oloyede reportedly assured him that he was fine.

However, further details surrounding the circumstances of his death remain unclear.

Odutola said Stephen then placed his bag and pistol on the table and stepped into the restroom. Moments later, a gunshot was

**By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

heard. Odutola stated that Stephen allegedly found Oloyede lying in a pool of blood.

The PPRO said, "With the help of private security personnel, the wounded officer was immediately taken to Ota General Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead by the doctor on duty.

"Police officers visited the scene, and the deceased's pistol was recovered. His body has been deposited at Ota General Hospital for autopsy, while we have begun notifying his family."

She disclosed that the case would be transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department in Elewera for further investigation.

# Amnesty slams NYSC for threatening Lagos corper over anti-Tinubu video

**By Friday Omosola**

Amnesty International has condemned the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) for threatening Ushie Uguamaye, a corps member serving in Lagos after she criticised President Bola Tinubu's government over inflation and economic hardship.

The New Daily Prime reported that Uguamaye, in a video shared on her TikTok account #talktoraye on Saturday, voiced frustration over Nigeria's worsening economic conditions.

She lamented that hard work seemed futile amid financial struggles and openly criticised Tinubu, calling him a "terrible leader" while questioning the government's efforts to alleviate citizens' suffering.

In another video posted on Sunday, she alleged that the NYSC threatened her life, stating that she received multiple calls and a summons notice.



Reacting to the alleged intimidation, Amnesty International, in a statement on its X page, strongly condemned the threats.

The organisation asserted that the corps member has the right to express her discontent peacefully.

It further emphasized that instead of threatening her for speaking out on rampant inflation, authorities should focus on addressing the country's economic crisis.

"The lady alleged that NYSC officials threatened her for refusing to delete the video. Millions of people in Nigeria are facing extreme poverty. So far, the authorities have failed to put in place effective mitigation measures, leaving millions of people without the hope of getting out of the economic challenges and enjoying their human rights.

"The Nigerian authorities must stop responding with violence and threats to individuals and groups who express dissenting opinions — in utter disregard for Nigerian constitution and international law. Holding and voicing dissenting views is not a crime", the statement added.

# NDLEA foils drug trafficking to US, Saudi Arabia, Others

By Helen Okechukwu

**N**igerian authorities have frustrated the plans of some Drug Trafficking Organisations (DTOs) attempting to traffic hard drugs to the United States of America (US), Saudi Arabia, Italy, Poland, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In a document shared on the agency's website on Sunday, Femi Babafemi, Director of Media & Advocacy, stated that drugs such as cocaine, tramadol, loud, molly, among others, were concealed inside prayer beads, packs of board games, and female clothing.

The drug dealers attempted to ship the consignment via logistics firms and Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos.

Two suspects have reportedly been arrested after a team from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) aborted their mission at MMIA, Lagos.

"One of them is a 43-year-old businesswoman, Jakpor Egware May, who was nabbed at the Gate 'C' departure hall of the Lagos airport while attempting to board an Air France flight to Italy on Saturday, March 8, 2025," Babafemi stated.

About 190 parcels of tramadol 225mg and another parcel of skunk, a strain of cannabis, concealed inside her luggage were recovered after a search operation.

Babafemi disclosed that the 43-year-old businesswoman confessed to having bought the drugs with the intention of reselling them in Italy.



Similarly, on March 11, a 60-year-old suspect, Yahaya Ayinla, was arrested at Lagos airport while attempting to ship 400 grams of skunk hidden inside clothing bound for New York, United States of America.

On the same day, along the Kabba-Obajana highway in Kogi State, no fewer than 58,300 pills of tramadol were found inside a commercial bus en route from Lagos to Abuja.

"At some logistics companies in Lagos, efforts by drug traffickers to export over two kilograms of loud, molly, tramadol 365mg, and 225mg hidden in Vitamin C bottles and female clothing to the US were thwarted by NDLEA operatives of the Directorate of Operations and General Investigation (DOGI).

"Other shipments of 230 grams of cocaine concealed in prayer beads, soles of locally made shoes, and packs of board games heading to Saudi Arabia, Poland, and the UAE were also intercepted between Monday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 12."

Authorities on March 12 recovered 727 blocks of compressed skunk weighing 479kg at the Chalawa area in Kano State

from a 40-year-old suspect, Hassan Harun.

On March 13, Idris Hamza, 21, was apprehended with 4,900 pills of tramadol 225mg after a raid in Kachia, Kaduna. Similarly, on March 14, in the Hayin Banki area of Kaduna North LGA, the anti-drug agency recovered 2,900 tablets of tramadol 225mg from a 25-year-old, Aminu Magaji.

On Friday, March 14, NDLEA operatives recovered 40,200 tablets of tramadol 225mg from Olowoko Faruk and Akeem Ridwan along the Ilorin-Jebba expressway, Bode Saadu, Kwara State.

A day earlier, on Thursday, March 13, officers also seized 21,700 capsules of the same opioid from a suspect, Salisu Usman, along Eiyenkorin expressway, Ilorin.

In Taraba State, NDLEA officers arrested Polycarp Adeku, 35, on March 14 at Bente Road, Kurmi LGA, with 15.77kg of skunk.

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Similarly, in Osun State, a commercial bus from Lagos Island was intercepted on March 13 in front of King University, Ode-Omu, carrying 48.7kg of Ghanaian Loud, Colorado, and Canadian Loud, all variants of cannabis.

Nine suspects were later arrested in Osogbo and Ile-Ife during follow-up operations.

Meanwhile, in Abuja, a 58-year-old suspect, Ade Esan (aka Pastor), was arrested along Gwagwalada expressway on March 11 with 27,800 pills of tramadol 225mg.

That same day, another suspect, Usman Mohammed, 26, was nabbed

with quantities of skunk and cocaine at Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.

In Abia State, NDLEA operatives raided the Ntigha community, Isiala-Ngwa North LGA, on March 15, arresting a 34-year-old suspect, Chinaza Nwogu (aka Young Money).

Seized from him were 274 grams of heroin, 141 grams of methamphetamine, 2.931kg of cannabis sativa, 4 grams of cocaine, and cash amounting to N753,015.

In addition to these arrests, NDLEA continued its War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign with sensitization programs in schools, worship centers, workplaces, and communities across

the country.

Educational sessions were held in Lagos, Adamawa, Kogi, Anambra, and Ekiti states, among others.

Chairman and CEO of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Rtd), commended the officers of various commands, including MMIA, DOGI, Kano, Kwara, Kaduna, Taraba, Abia, Osun, and FCT, for their dedication to combating drug trafficking with their renovative approaches.

## Controversial TikToker, Murja Kunya arrested for Naira mutilation

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Kano State has arrested controversial TikToker, Murja Ibrahim Kunya on charges of Naira mutilation and abuse, specifically for spraying money—an act that violates Nigerian law.

NEW DAILY PRIME gathered that the popular TikTok star, who has had brushes severally with law officers, was arrested by EFCC operatives at a social event on Sunday.

A source within the commission confirmed to Freedom Radio Kano that Murja is currently in EFCC custody.



The EFCC has been intensifying its crackdown on individuals who engage in the indiscriminate spraying of money at events such as parties and birthday celebrations.

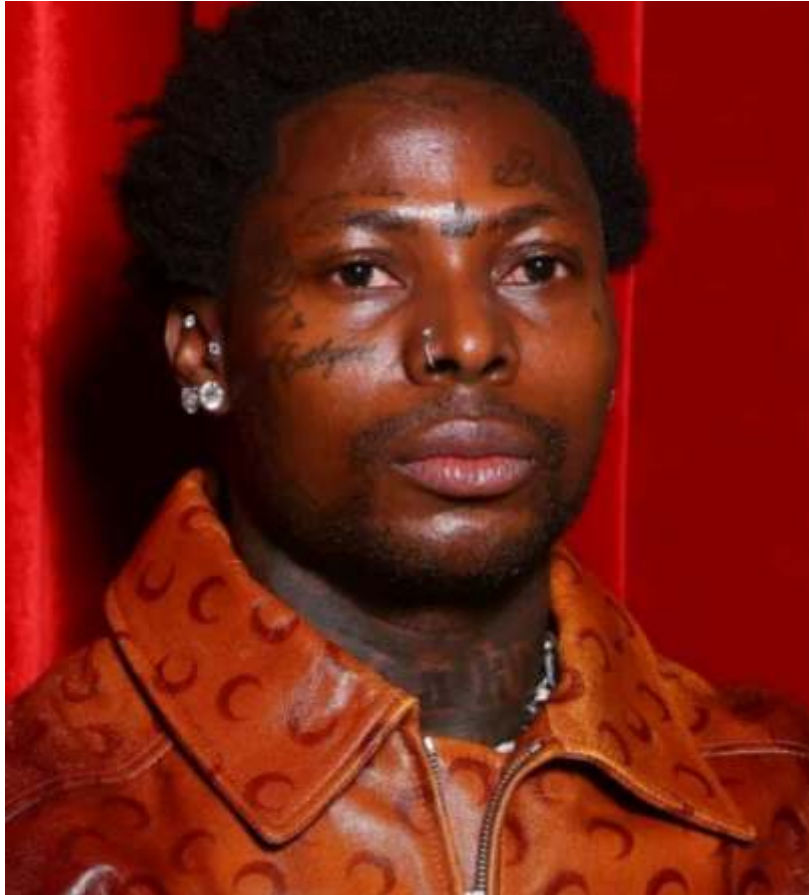
In recent times, the commission also arrested other TikTok influencers,

including Al'amin G-Fresh and Ashir Idris, on similar charges.

As of now, neither the EFCC nor Murja Ibrahim Kunya's legal representatives have issued an official statement regarding the matter.

# Asake buys father new house, funds medical bills

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**R**ave-of-the-moment singer, Ahmed Ololade Ayinde Odunsi, better known as Asake has bought a house for his father, Fatai Odunsi, and also sent money to take care of his medical bills.

This comes few days after the father took to social media to accuse Asake of abandoning him, since his health began deteriorating in 2022.

Odunsi, who has been battling a stroke, also alleged that Asake has not been financially supportive despite his fame and success.

However, in a new video released on Sunday, Asake's

father revealed that his son has reached out to him.

Speaking in Yoruba, Mr Odunsi said "I am proud of him" as he showered prayers on Asake.

He added that he called Asake out because it has been long he saw him.

Mr Odunsi said: "His mother ought to ask him when last he saw me. That was what got me angry, but we have sorted out all the problems. We are no longer fighting."

He further confirmed that Asake has told house agents to get him a new house, saying "Asake said he will do everything that I want.

We have settled, no more problems. They are now looking for a new house that he will buy for me. He has settled everything."

The older Odunsi also confirmed that Asake has agreed to take care of his 11-year-old daughter, Zeenat.

Odunsi said: "He has never denied his child, but he has now promised to take full responsibility on the child."

He added that he will also be going to hospital tomorrow as Asake has sent him all he needed.

# 'Nigeria has no plans for you' - Tems' manager, Awoniyi tells youths

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

**M**uyiwa Awoniyi, the manager of Grammy-winning Nigerian singer Temilade Openiyi, popularly known as Tems, has issued a strong warning to Nigerian youths.

He cautioned them against expecting too much from the government, arguing that leaders have no concrete plans for the people.

Taking to his X handle, Awoniyi wrote, "Nigeria has no plans for you."

His post quickly sparked debate, drawing mixed reactions from the public. Some agreed with his statement, pointing to the country's long-standing issues, while others insisted that citizens should focus on contributing to nation-building instead of waiting for government intervention.

This statement adds to the growing frustration among young Nigerians about the state of the nation.

Many believe that political leaders have continuously failed to address key challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and poor infrastructure. Others, however, argue that relying solely on the government is unrealistic and that citizens must take initiative to create change.

Rema's take on nation-building

Awoniyi's comment comes shortly after Nigerian music star Rema shared his own thoughts on the country's struggles. In a



recent interview, Rema expressed concern that many young Nigerians have lost hope due to the numerous challenges facing the nation.

Despite these issues, the "Calm Down" hitmaker urged the youth not to give up on Nigeria. He emphasized that building a better country is not just the government's responsibility—it requires active participation from citizens as well.

"I will continue to do my best to contribute to the development of this country," Rema vowed. His words served as a call to action, encouraging young people to stay engaged and push for positive change.

A growing frustration

The frustrations expressed by Awoniyi and Rema reflect a broader sentiment among Nigerian youths. Many feel disillusioned by the lack of opportunities and the slow pace of progress. Unemployment remains high, inflation is rising, and insecurity continues to be a major concern.

Young Nigerians have increasingly taken to social media to voice their dissatisfaction. Many call for better governance, accountability, and policies that support economic growth and job creation. Some are also seeking opportunities abroad, feeling that their future prospects are better outside the country.

Hope amid the challenges

Despite these struggles, some believe that change is possible. Activists and entrepreneurs continue to push for reforms, while young innovators are creating solutions in business, technology, and entertainment.

While the debate continues, one thing is clear—Nigeria's future depends on both its leaders and its people. Whether through music, activism, or entrepreneurship, young Nigerians are finding ways to make their voices heard.

The question remains: Will the government rise to the occasion, or will the people have to build the nation on their own?

# I will get married before having children - Rema

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

**N**igerian singer Rema has made it clear—he does not plan to have children outside of marriage, emphasizing his strong values and intentional lifestyle.

The award-winning artist also strongly disapproves of promiscuity, emphasizing that he lives with intention and discipline.

In a recent interview, Rema shared his thoughts on family, relationships, and his personal values. He explained that he wants to build a strong family unit and avoid becoming a father by accident.

“I feel like there’s a need for us [family] to grow bigger and build an empire if possible,” he said. “I don’t want fatherhood to be something that just happens by mistake. I am very intentional about my life, and I don’t really mess around.”

Rema’s remarks come at a time when many celebrities choose alternative family structures. However, the singer stands firm in his beliefs, making it clear that he values stability and long-term planning.

Rema makes history on rolling stone cover

The “Calm Down” hitmaker continues to break barriers in the global music industry. He recently became the first Black African artist to be featured on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, a milestone that highlights his rising influence.

His music has taken Afrobeats to new heights, earning him international recognition. His unique



sound, blending Afrobeats with elements of pop and R&B, has captivated audiences worldwide.

Close bonds with Ayra Starr and Tyla

Beyond his music, he also opened up about his relationships with fellow artists Ayra Starr and South African singer Tyla. He described both as close friends, emphasizing the strong bond they share.

“Ayra is family, for sure. Tyla is family too,” he said. “We’ve been good friends for a long time, even before the fame.”

This statement reflects the strong sense of camaraderie among Afrobeats and global artists who continue to support each other in the industry.

Selena Gomez praises Rema’s talent

American singer and actress Selena Gomez also expressed her admiration for him. In a chat with

Rolling Stone, she praised his artistry and the success of their collaboration on the remix of Calm Down.

“I am completely impressed with Rema as an artist,” Gomez said. “I believe his future is limitless. Even before I joined the remix, I was already a fan of the song. What amazes me the most is how the track continued to grow, even a year after its release.”

Her endorsement further solidifies Rema’s growing status on the international stage. With high-profile collaborations and global recognition, he continues to cement his legacy as one of the most influential Afrobeats artists of his generation.

As he charts new milestones in his career, his personal values remain just as important to him as his success. Whether in music, family, or friendships, he stays committed to authenticity and purpose.

# How my kidney failed, liver shut down – Reality TV star, Bambam recalls childbirth experience

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

**R**eality TV star and actress Bamike Olawunmi, better known as Bambam, has opened up about her traumatic childbirth experience.

What should have been a joyful occasion nearly ended in tragedy.

Speaking on the Me & My Girls podcast, Bambam recalled the life-threatening complications she faced while giving birth to her first child, Zendaya, in 2020. She and her husband, Teddy A, welcomed their daughter just a year after their wedding. However, the delivery process quickly became a nightmare.

## Severe health complications

During labor, Bambam's body started shutting down. Her kidney failed, her heart weakened, and her liver stopped functioning properly. The situation escalated rapidly, putting both her life and her baby's in serious danger.

"A lot of stillbirths happen because of negligence," she stated. "Sometimes the doctor is not competent. Other times, the nurse fails to act on time. In some cases, families arrive at the hospital too late."

She explained that her daughter, Zendaya, had detached from the placenta before birth. This condition, known as placental abruption, can cut off the baby's oxygen supply and lead to stillbirth. The actress recalled how



dangerously close she came to losing her child.

"She had already detached from the placenta," she said. "If I had been just a second late, she would have lost oxygen. I could have had a stillbirth. That thought haunts me."

## The emotional toll

The near-death experience left Bambam deeply shaken. The fear of losing her child stayed with her long after the delivery.

"Every time I look at her, I think, 'What if?' Those thoughts haunted me," she confessed. "Even now, just remembering it makes me anxious."

The trauma affected her mental health. She revealed that she struggled with overwhelming fear and anxiety, which made it difficult for her to move forward. Eventually, she sought therapy to help

her heal and focus on gratitude instead of fear.

"I had to get therapy to walk me through being grateful," she admitted.

## A call for better maternal care

Bambam's experience highlights the risks many women face during childbirth. She emphasized the need for proper medical care and early intervention to prevent tragic outcomes.

Her story sheds light on the importance of competent healthcare professionals and the dangers of medical negligence. Many stillbirths, she noted, could be prevented with better medical attention.

By sharing her experience, Bambam hopes to raise awareness about maternal health. Her courage in speaking out serves as a reminder of the strength mothers show in bringing life into the world.

# Macron to EU colleagues: Stop buying American, buy European

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

*“Those who buy Patriot should be offered the new-generation Franco-Italian SAMP/T. Those who buy the F-35 should be offered the Rafale,” French president says.*

French President Emmanuel Macron’s comments come as European NATO members have become even more dependent on U.S. weapons than ever before.

French President Emmanuel Macron wants to lead a charm offensive to convince EU countries to stop buying U.S. defense equipment and buy French and European instead.

Macron, who has been calling for years to direct defense spending toward EU products, said he wants to convince other European countries that are currently “buying American” to shift to local options.

“My intention is to go and convince European states that have become accustomed to buying American,” he said on Saturday in an interview with several French media including Nice-Matin and Le Parisien.

“Those who buy Patriot should be offered the new-generation Franco-Italian SAMP/T. Those who buy the F-35, should be offered the Rafale. That’s the way to increase the rate of production,” he said.

Macron’s comments come as European NATO members have become even more dependent on U.S. weapons than ever before.



This month, the Netherlands and Belgium confirmed they would still buy American-made F-35 fighter jets, while Portugal is wobbling about replacing its U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets with more modern F-35s because of “the recent position of the United States, in the context of NATO.”

Macron said he has asked French defense companies to cut red tape and reduce costs to become a more attractive option, Nice-Matin reported.

The French president also clarified what a possible deployment of European troops to help Ukraine could look like. The goal is to “deploy a few thousand men per nation, at key points, to carry out training programmes” and “show our support over the long term,” he said.

Macron said that the conditions laid

down by Russian President Vladimir Putin to agree on a ceasefire in Ukraine “are unacceptable.”

“This would mean a partial invasion of Ukraine and a freeze on the conflict, without offering any security or guarantees for the future,” Macron said.

Macron announced for “the coming weeks” a reform of the so-called “Service National Universel” — a voluntary service for people aged between 15 and 17 that includes sporting activities, civic education and a stint at a state organization or nongovernmental organization — “to meet the nation’s needs and the priorities we have identified.”

The French president, however, ruled out a comeback of compulsory military service.

# Vatican releases 1st photo of Pope Francis since his hospitalisation

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**T**he Vatican press office released a photo of Pope Francis on Sunday in a private chapel of Rome's Gemelli Hospital, where he continues to receive treatment.

The photo shows the 88-year-old pontiff seated in his wheelchair in front of an altar.

It is the first photo released of the pope since he entered the hospital on Feb. 14 and was diagnosed with bilateral pneumonia.

Pope Francis on Sunday, March 16, 2023, in his private chapel in his 10-floor apartment in Rome's Gemelli Hospital. Vatican

The photo was taken in the private chapel of the pope's 10-floor apartment in Gemelli, according to the Holy See, the Vatican's press office.

It was unclear who concelebrated Mass with the pope. The Vatican press office said the pope had no visitors on Sunday.

The pope continued with respiratory and motor physiotherapy and "benefitted from it," according to the Vatican.

The pope also "did a bit of work" on Sunday, according to the Vatican.

Sunday marked the 31st day the pope has been in the hospital.

The Vatican press office previously released an audio recording of the pope made on March 6, which was broadcast that day at the start of the rosary held in St. Peter's Square.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers for my health from the Square, I accompany you from here. May God bless you and the Virgin protect you. Thank you," the pope said in the recorded statement made in Spanish.

# 59 killed in 'catastrophic' fire at illegal North Macedonia nightclub

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**D**ozens of people were killed when a fire ripped through an illegal nightclub in North Macedonia's southern city of Kocani, prompting a bribery and corruption investigation that has led to the arrests of several local officials who allegedly allowed the club to remain open, authorities said Sunday.

At least 59 people — all aged 18 to 23 — were killed and 155 others injured, North Macedonian Interior Minister Panche Toshkovski said during a news conference on Sunday.

Among the victims was a police officer, who was in the Club Pulse nightclub on duty, Toshkovski said.

The nightclub had been operating illegally for more than a year with a fake license and no valid permit, according to Toshkovski.

At the time of the fire, the nightclub was packed to twice its official capacity of 250 people, and there was only one exit for people to escape, Toshkovski said.

Toshkovski said more than 20 people are suspected of wrongdoing, including 15 who were being questioned by police on Sunday.

One of the main organizers of the nightclub was arrested on suspicion of being directly responsible for the deadly blaze, Toshkovski said.

The names of those arrested or undergoing questioning were not immediately released. But Toshkovski said they include the former secretary of state at the Ministry of Economy, as well as a senior official from the ministry.



Toshkovski also said the region's former director for protection and rescue and three other employees of the institution were also being questioned as part of the investigation. He added that some of the suspects involved in the illegal nightclub were killed in the fire.

All individuals with outstanding arrest warrants have been located, Toshkovski said.

Toshkovski said the Ministry of Economy and Public Prosecutor's Office are collecting documents related to the nightclub and those alleged to have been responsible for the tragedy.

Dr. Kristina Serafimova, the head of the Kocani General Hospital, told ABC News that those who perished were killed by smoke inhalation, burns and a stampede triggered by the fire. Serafimova said there was only one exit from the nightclub.

Another 155 people were injured in the incident, all of whom are aged between 14 and 24, Serafimova and

Toshkovski said. At least 27 of those injured are in critical condition and are on respirators and fighting for their lives, Serafimova and Toshkovski said.

At least 13 of the critically injured victims were transferred to hospitals in Thessaloniki, Greece, for treatment, Toshkovski said.

A switchboard operator at one of the hospitals treating victims told ABC News, "It's a catastrophic tragedy."

The manager of the band DNK, which was performing at Club Pulse when the fire broke out, told ABC News that the venue had a maximum capacity of 500 to 700 people. The band, which consists of eight members, was performing at the time of the fire and some of them were among the injured, the manager said.

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The mayor of Strumica, Konstantin Kostantinov, told ABC News that the 24-year-old drummer for DNK is among those who died in the nightclub fire.

Kostantinov also expressed condolences and support for families who lost loved ones, adding that the whole of North Macedonia is in shock and mourning over this tragedy.

Pope Francis, who remains hospitalized in Rome for treatment, sent a telegram to Bishop Kiro Stojanov in Skopje, North Macedonia, expressing his condolences, according to the Vatican.

In the telegram, which was signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state, the pope said he is praying “for those who lost their lives” and for their loved ones.

As more details of the incident emerged, the families of the young people who attended the concert — some of them underage — appealed for information on social media, sharing phone numbers and personal details in the hope that those still missing can be found.

Serafimova told ABC News that only around half of the victims were

carrying identification. Family members of the missing have been asked to come to Kocani hospital to help identify their loved ones, she added.

The blaze began around 2:35 a.m. local time, according to Interior Minister Toshkovski, who said the venue’s roof was set on fire by pyrotechnics used by clubbers.

North Macedonian Prime Minister Hristijan Mickoski wrote on X, “The loss of so many young lives is irreparable, and the pain of the families, loved ones and friends is immeasurable.”

“The government is fully mobilized and will do everything necessary to deal with the consequences and determine the causes of this tragedy,” Mickoski added.

“In these times of deep sadness, when our hearts are broken with pain due to this terrible tragedy, I call for unity, solidarity, humanity and responsibility.”

Among those offering condolences from abroad was Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. “I wish those who were injured a speedy recovery,” he wrote in a post to X. “Ukraine mourns alongside our [North] Macedonian friends on this sad day.”

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama said his nation was ready “to provide any assistance that may be needed.”

European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos said on X that she was “deeply saddened” by the “terrible tragedy.”



# US forces kill 31 in Trump-ordered strikes on Houthi rebels

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

**Y**emen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have vowed to meet "escalation with escalation" after a wave of deadly US air strikes, with witnesses to the bombing saying Sunday they were taken aback by its intensity, even after years of war.

US President Donald Trump said he had ordered the strikes and threatened more were to come if the rebels kept up their repeated attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Attacks on the rebel-held capital Sanaa, as well as on areas in Saada, Al-Bayda and Radaa, killed at least 31 people and wounded 101, "most of whom were children and women", Houthi health ministry spokesperson Anis Al-Asbahi said.

An AFP photographer in Sanaa heard explosions and saw plumes of smoke rising Saturday night.

Footage on Houthi media showed children and a woman among those being treated in a hospital emergency room, including a dazed girl with blackened legs wrapped in bandages.

One father of two, who gave his name as Ahmed, told AFP his "house shook, the windows shattered, and my family and I were terrified".

"I've been living in Sanaa for 10 years, hearing shelling throughout the war. By God, I've never experienced anything like this before," he said.

Trump, in a post on social media, vowed to "use overwhelming lethal force" to end the Houthi attacks, which the rebels say are in solidarity with Palestinians amid the Gaza war.

"To all Houthi terrorists, YOUR TIME IS



UP, AND YOUR ATTACKS MUST STOP, STARTING TODAY. IF THEY DON'T, HELL WILL RAIN DOWN UPON YOU LIKE NOTHING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN BEFORE!" he said.

Trump also issued a stern warning to the group's main backer.

"To Iran: Support for the Houthi terrorists must end IMMEDIATELY!" he said, adding it would be held "fully accountable" for any continued threats.

The Houthis vowed the strikes "will not pass without response", while Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi condemned the deaths and said Washington had "no authority" to dictate Tehran's foreign policy.

The Houthi Ansarullah website slammed what it called Washington's "criminal brutality".

US Central Command, which posted videos of fighter jets taking off and a bomb demolishing a compound, said "precision strikes" were launched to "defend American interests, deter enemies, and restore freedom of navigation".

"Yesterday's shelling in Al-Jiraf (northern Sanaa) was absolutely terrifying: six strikes in a row," 43-year-old father of three Malik told AFP.

"My children were screaming and crying in my arms. It's the first time I've ever said the Shahada," he added, referring to the prayer that is recited before death.

The Houthis' political bureau said its "forces are fully prepared to confront escalation with escalation".

The rebels, who have controlled much of Yemen for more than a decade, are part of the "axis of resistance" of pro-Iran groups staunchly opposed to Israel and the United States.

They have launched scores of drone and missile attacks on ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said the Houthis had "attacked US warships 174 times and commercial vessels 145 times since 2023".

The campaign put a major strain on the vital route, which normally carries about 12 percent of world shipping traffic, forcing many companies to take a costly detour around southern Africa.

– 'Fully prepared' –

# US monster storm leaves at least 32 dead

By Dave Oludare Oso

**V**iolent tornadoes ripped through parts of the US, wiping out schools and toppling semitractor-trailers in several states, part of a monster storm that killed at least 26 people as more severe weather was expected late Saturday.

In western Kansas, a dust storm was reported to have killed eight people as high winds produced blowing dust over the interstate, causing collisions of more than 55 vehicles on the I-70.

In Mississippi, Governor Tate Reeves announced that six people had died in three counties and three more people were missing. There were 29 injuries across the state, he added in a nighttime post.

Missouri recorded more fatalities than any other state as it withstood scattered twisters overnight that killed at least 12 people, authorities said. The deaths included a man who was killed after a tornado ripped apart his home.

“It was unrecognizable as a home. Just a debris field,” said Coroner Jim Akers of Butler county, describing the scene that confronted rescuers. “The floor was upside down. We were walking on walls.”

In Arkansas, three storm-related deaths have been confirmed in Independence county with an additional 29 people injured in eight counties, according to the Arkansas division of emergency management on Saturday morning.

Three people were killed on Friday in car crashes during a dust storm in Amarillo county in the Texas panhandle, according to Sgt Cindy Barkley of the state’s department of public safety. One pileup involved an estimated 38 cars.

“It’s the worst I’ve ever seen,” Barkley



said, calling the near-zero visibility a nightmare. “We couldn’t tell that they were all together until the dust kind of settled.”

In Mississippi, Governor Tate Reeves announced on Saturday morning that at least three people have been injured and were hospitalized in Grenada county, adding that the number is expected to increase.

Six counties have reported damage including Calhoun, Carroll, Grenada, Humphreys, Leflore and Montgomery. Grenada county has been hit the hardest, Reeves said. A shelter has opened up in the Grenada City auditorium for those in search of refuge.

At least 26 tornadoes were reported but not confirmed to have touched down late on Friday night and early on Saturday as a low pressure system drove powerful thunderstorms across parts of Arkansas, Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri, said David Roth, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service’s Weather Prediction Center.

“Today there is a high risk for more tornadoes across Alabama and Mississippi, the chance is 30%,” he said. “That’s pretty significant.”

As the storms regain strength, the highest possible risk of tornadoes and severe thunderstorms was on Saturday night, forecasters said.

The National Weather Service issued multiple tornado and severe thunderstorm warnings early on Saturday morning for areas in Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Texas.

The agency has warned residents not to seek refuge in vehicles outside or under overpasses, as well as not to seek shelter under trees. Instead, it urged residents to get off the road and drive to a designated shelter, basement or safe room. The next best option for shelter is a small, windowless room or hallway on the lowest floor of a sturdy building, according to the agency.

Evacuations were ordered in some Oklahoma communities as more than 130 fires were reported across the state. The state patrol said winds were so strong that they toppled several tractor-trailers.

Forecasters said the severe storm threat would continue into the weekend with a high chance of tornadoes and damaging winds on Saturday in Mississippi and Alabama. Heavy rain could bring flash flooding to some parts of the east coast on Sunday.

# Tories regroup to oust Kemi Badenoch before local election

By New Daily Prime

With the May 1, 2025, local and mayoral elections fast approaching, Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has emerged as a dominant force in the polls, overtaking both Labour and the Conservatives. The rise of Reform UK signals a seismic shift in British politics, as the party positions itself as a serious contender in future elections.

Recent national polling indicates that Reform UK is poised to make significant electoral gains, potentially seizing seats traditionally held by both Labour and the Tories. The Conservatives, currently defending 1,450 seats won during Boris Johnson's tenure in 2021, are widely expected to lose hundreds of seats, with many expected to fall into Reform UK's hands.

A recent poll also suggests that Reform could take the Runcorn and Helsby seat from Labour in an upcoming by-election. This would mark a historic victory, demonstrating that Reform's appeal extends beyond disillusioned Conservative voters and into Labour heartlands.

Mr. Farage has boldly declared that he envisions Reform UK leading the country, stating: "I do believe that we will win the next general election. I do believe I can become the next prime minister." His confidence underscores the party's rapid transformation from an emerging movement into a formidable electoral force.

As the Conservative Party braces for significant losses, reports have surfaced of a behind-the-scenes effort to consolidate right-wing support. Dubbed the 'Unite the Right' campaign, former Tory and Reform aides, backed by major



donors, are strategizing on how to prevent the Conservative Party from falling apart completely.

The Sunday Times has reported that discussions remain open-ended on how the right-wing bloc might be structured, with one proposal mirroring Germany's centre-right model, where the Tories focus on the south and Reform UK dominates the north. The move suggests a recognition that the Conservative Party, in its current form, may no longer be viable as a governing force.

However, Reform UK has vehemently denied any formal discussions about an alliance. A spokesperson for the party dismissed the claims, stating: "There is no deal. The only reason the Tories are talking about it is because their poll ratings are about to fall off a cliff."

As part of their broader efforts to regroup, Conservative insiders are reportedly plotting to remove core leader Kemi Badenoch, believing she lacks the leadership strength needed to prevent electoral collapse.

One anonymous party source allegedly stated: "More and more MPs realize she's doomed. We'll bury her in disaster from the local elections, keep the pressure on, then f— the Conservative Party conference."

The aggressive rhetoric reflects the deepening fractures within the Conservative Party, as it struggles to define its future direction in the wake of declining public support.

Adding further intrigue, Mr. Farage has confirmed that he met with Dominic Cummings, the former chief strategist behind Brexit, for a private dinner to discuss the future of British politics. According to sources, their conversation ranged from the decline of the Conservative Party to Donald Trump's presidency and Elon Musk's vision for government efficiency.

While Farage has denied any plans for an alliance, his engagement with one of the most influential political strategists of the last decade suggests that discussions about Reform UK's role in the political landscape are ongoing and strategic.

# Newcastle stun Liverpool in League Cup final to end 56-year trophy drought

By Oluwatosin Ologun

Newcastle United ended their 56-year trophy drought in dramatic style as defender Dan Burn and forward Alexander Isak sealed a 2-1 win against Liverpool in the League Cup final on Sunday.

Eddie Howe's side made history at Wembley with a superb display that left the runaway Premier League leaders shell-shocked.

Burn put Newcastle ahead late in the first half and Isak's 27th goal in all competitions doubled their lead after the interval.

Federico Chiesa got one back in the closing seconds, but Newcastle held on for their first major silverware since the 1969 Inter-Cities Fairs Cup.

That success in the predecessor to the Europa League is a relic of a bygone era, but this long-awaited triumph will be forever etched in the memories of the Newcastle fans who turned one half of Wembley into a roiling sea of black and white with their ecstatic celebrations.

First domestic cup win in 70 years  
It was also Newcastle's first major domestic prize dating back 70 years to the 1955 FA Cup.

Since the Magpies lifted the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, 30 different English teams had won silverware, while Liverpool had clinched 38 major trophies in that time.

But after losing the 2023 League Cup final against Manchester United, Howe's team returned to Wembley and set the record straight at last.

Newcastle  
"We were well aware of the history and we wanted to do the club proud. We wanted to score, we wanted to perform and we wanted to win," Howe said.

"We are breaking new ground. I thought we were magnificent today."

Eddie Howe's side had endured five relegations to the second tier since their last trophy, with club legends like Alan



Shearer, Paul Gascoigne and Malcolm MacDonald failing to win silverware in their time on Tyneside.

Aside from a brief period when Kevin Keegan's self-styled "entertainers" challenged for the title in the 1990s, Newcastle have endured decades of underachievement and self-inflicted wounds that rendered them a laughing stock for long periods.

All that changed in 2021 when a Saudi-backed consortium completed a takeover from unpopular owner Mike Ashley and quickly hired Howe as their manager.

Thanks to Howe's astute leadership and the Saudi financial backing, Newcastle have been transformed from relegation candidates to silverware winners.

The defeat was another painful blow for Liverpool just days after their Champions League last 16 exit on penalties against Paris Saint-Germain.

But despite failing to win their first trophy under boss Arne Slot, Liverpool still sit 12 points clear at the top of the Premier League, within touching distance of a record-equalling 20th English title.

"It's a very disappointing result. The game went the way Newcastle wanted it.

They deserved to win. We were outplayed in their style. They won more aerial duels than us," Slot said.

Newcastle make history

Liverpool are 23 points ahead of sixth-placed Eddie Howe's side in the league and hadn't lost to them for 17 games dating back to 2015.

But Howe's men were in no mood to be cowed by past failures

Newcastle fans unveiled a banner before kick-off urging their team to "write your name in the history books".

They rose to the challenge in spectacular fashion, snapping into tackles and counter-attacking with purpose, while Liverpool were sluggish and sloppy in possession.

Newcastle's desire and drive were clear to see when Joelinton tracked back from midfield to stop Jarell Quansah in his tracks and celebrated with a fist-pumping roar.

Despite nearly being caught out by Burn's aerial prowess earlier in the game, Liverpool failed to heed the warning as the towering centre-back put Newcastle ahead in the 45th minute.