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lacks constitutional right



# The New Daily Prime

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# Nigeria, Brazil finalise \$1.1bn agricultural partnership to boost food security

By Friday Omosola

Nigeria and Brazil have entered the commercial phase of the \$1.1 billion Green Imperative Project (GIP), a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing food security and driving agricultural transformation in Nigeria.

Stanley Nkwocha, Vice President Kashim Shettima's spokesperson disclosed this in a statement yesterday, highlighting the project's potential to increase agricultural productivity and attract private-sector investments.

The Green Imperative Project, recognized as Africa's largest agricultural initiative focused on sustainable, low-carbon farming, is designed to create structural frameworks that will improve food production efficiency in Nigeria.

The agreement builds upon the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in 2018.

It is also part of a broader collaboration, including the \$4.3 billion second phase of the project and the \$2.5 billion JBS initiative, both signed in Brazil last year during President Bola Tinubu's official visit, bringing the total investment to nearly \$8 billion.

Shettima, speaking at the signing ceremony at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, described the commencement of the commercial phase as a significant step in the Tinubu administration's efforts to strengthen food security.

"As we tackle food security challenges under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's 8-point agenda, we must leverage existing initiatives like the GIP to ensure policy continuity, maximize strategic opportunities, and reinforce investor confidence," Shettima stated.

He noted that the project aligns with the administration's broader agricultural policies and will bridge the gap between small-scale farmers and key value chains across the sector.

"For decades, low productivity has plagued our agricultural sector. Nigerians have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, but many lack the resources needed to take their first steps toward economic growth.

"The GIP is a game-changer, seamlessly integrating with our policies and prioritizing small-scale farmers while fostering a robust



agricultural value chain," he added.

Shettima acknowledged that while Nigeria is entering the project's implementation stage later than expected, the collaboration with Brazil marks a turning point.

He pointed to 2025 as a critical year for achieving food security and diversifying Nigeria's economy.

Brazil's Ambassador to Nigeria, Carlos Garcete, expressed his country's enthusiasm for the partnership, emphasising that negotiations spanning seven years had culminated in securing financing from private and regional development banks for the project.

"This initiative, valued at approximately \$1.1 billion, will enable the importation of agricultural equipment, including tractors and spare parts. More importantly, assembly operations will take place in Nigeria, utilizing local labour. Additionally, trained personnel will be available to handle repairs and maintenance, ensuring sustainability," Garcete explained.

On behalf of the Brazilian government, he commended President Tinubu for successfully concluding the negotiations, signalling a strengthened bilateral relationship between the two nations.

Jigawa State Governor, Umar Namadi, hailed the agreement as a crucial development for subnational governments, noting that agriculture remains central to Nigeria's economic strength.

"For us at the state level, this is a landmark achievement. Agriculture plays a vital role in our economy, and this agreement reaffirms the Tinubu administration's commitment to revolutionizing the sector," he said.

Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, also celebrated the initiative, stating that Benue, as Nigeria's 'food basket' stands to benefit immensely.

"Benue doesn't just hold the basket; we provide the food and surpluses that sustain the nation. We fully support this project and will work towards its successful implementation," Alia assured.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Yusuf Tuggar described the signing as a landmark achievement in South-South cooperation between Nigeria and Brazil.

He noted that the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs recently visited Nigeria for bilateral discussions with President Tinubu, underscoring both nations' dedication to the partnership.

"Brazil's agricultural success story—transforming its barren savannah into one of the world's most productive farmlands—offers valuable lessons for Nigeria. This collaboration is a major step towards replicating that success here," Tuggar remarked.

The Green Imperative Project is expected to serve as a catalyst for modernizing Nigeria's agricultural sector, fostering job creation, and ensuring long-term food security.

# 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
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1X1	4,315.00

### POLITICAL COLOUR

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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
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### PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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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
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### PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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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
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CENTRESPREAD B&W	800,000.00
CENTRE SPREAD HALF COLOUR	575,000.00
CENTRESPREAD STRIP COLOUR	191,668.50
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PHOTO NEWS (3X3)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
PHOTO NEWS (4X4)	53,333.30	4,250.00	57,583.30
PRESS RELEASE (4X4)	30,000.00	2,250.00	32,250.00
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# Over 150 Nigerian women, children deported from Libya

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

More than 150 Nigerian women and children were deported by Libyan authorities on Tuesday under a UN-affiliated “voluntary return” scheme for irregular migrants, an immigration official and UN sources said.

Libya is a key departure point on North Africa’s Mediterranean coast for migrants, mainly from other parts of Africa, risking dangerous sea voyages in the hope of reaching Europe.

Speaking to AFP, Mohamad Baredaa of Libya’s migration agency said the migrants deported on Tuesday were all Nigerian “women accompanied by children.”

Sources at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN agency involved in the repatriation scheme, said the group included 160 women and 17 children.

Dressed mostly in black tracksuits, they



gathered at a waiting room in a Tripoli detention centre before being taken by bus to the Libyan capital’s Mitiga airport.

Baredaa said several more repatriation flights were due to leave this week from Mitiga and an airport in Benghazi, in the country’s east, carrying groups of Bangladeshi, Gambian and Malian migrants.

Violence and instability in Libya since the

2011 overthrow and killing of dictator, Moamer Kadhafi in a NATO-backed uprising helped turn the country into a fertile ground for human traffickers.

According to the IOM, there are more than 700,000 migrants in Libya.

Libyan authorities, however, say the actual figure is much higher.

Imad Trabelsi, the interior minister of Libya’s UN-recognised government in Tripoli, said this week that there might be “more than four million migrants” in the country, but admitted exact figures were unavailable as many were undocumented.

Seeking to assuage concerns among Libyans, Trabelsi said on Monday that the country “will not bear the burden of illegal immigration alone and will not become a settlement zone.”

# Tinubu appoints Kukah as Kaduna varsity pro-chancellor

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has named Bishop Matthew Kukah, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, as the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council for the Federal University of Applied Sciences, Kachia, Kaduna State.

Alongside this appointment, the President also approved key leadership positions within the institution.

Prof. Qurix Williams Barnabas has been appointed as the Vice-Chancellor, Sanusi Gambo Adamu as the Registrar, Ibrahim Dalhat as the Bursar, and Prof. Daniel Abubakar as the University Librarian.

Furthermore, Tinubu constituted members of the university’s Governing Council, selecting Mr Thomas Etuh (North Central), Chief Fabian Nwaora



(South East), Prof. Femi Taiwo (South West), and Zarah Bukar (North East) to serve in this capacity.

These individuals were chosen for their exemplary records in academia, administration, and leadership, reflecting the government’s commitment to fostering quality education in Nigeria.

President Tinubu tasked them with leveraging their expertise to establish the university as a center for innovation, skills development, and research in line with the administration’s ‘Renewed Hope Agenda.’

He further encouraged the newly appointed officers to provide strategic leadership and lay the groundwork for the institution’s long-term success as it prepares to welcome its first set of students in September 2025.

The Federal University of Applied Sciences, previously known as Nok University, underwent a name change following its acquisition by the federal government.

# Wike revokes PDP national secretariat's land

By Dave Oludare Oso

For failing to pay twenty (20) years ground rent, Nyesom Wike, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) minister, on Tuesday revoked the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) national secretariat's land, housing the famous Wadata House in Abuja.

The minister issued the revocation notice in a letter dated March 13, 2025, titled, "Notice of right of occupancy with file no: MISC 81346 in respect of plot no: 243 within central area district, Abuja," on Tuesday.

The Director, Land Administration (FTC), Chijioke Nwankwoeze signed the revocation notice.

The director, in the statement, said the leading opposition party has failed to pay the annual ground rents due on the property for twenty (20) years, from January 1, 2006, to January 1, 2025, despite many publications in several national dailies and electronic media to pay up every outstanding bill and ground rent on its property.

The letter read, "I have been directed to refer to the above Right of Occupancy granted to PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP), NATIONAL SECRETARIAT and inform you that the Minister of Federal Capital Territory has in the exercise of powers conferred on him under the Land Use Act No. 6 of 1978, Cap. L5, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, revoked your rights, interests and privileges over Plot No. 243 within Central Area, Cadastral Zone A00, Abuja.

"The revocation is in view of your continued contravention of the terms and conditions of grant of the Right of Occupancy by failing to pay the annual ground rents due on the property for twenty (20) years, from 1st of January 2006 to 1st of January 2025.

"This is despite the many publications



made by the FCT Administration since 2023 in several national dailies and on electronic media requesting all allottees of plots in the Federal Capital Territory to pay up every outstanding bill and ground rent on their property.

"You would please note that the said breaches by PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP), NATIONAL SECRETARIAT (MISC 81346) run contrary to the provisions of Section 28, Subsection 5 (a) and (b) of the Land Use Act."

The minister added that the FCTA administration he led will henceforth take immediate possession of the party secretariat until all bills are settled.

On Monday, NEW DAILY PRIME reported that the minister revoked 4,794 land titles in the FCT, over non-payment of ground rent estimated at N6.9 billion for more than 40 years.

This was contained in a statement signed by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Communications and Social Media, Lere Olayinka following a press briefing by the Director of Lands, Chijioke Nwanwkoze, on Monday.

According to the statement, a total of

8,375 property owners in the Central Area, Garki I and II, Wuse I and II, Asokoro, Maitama and Guzape, had not paid ground rent in the last 43 years.

He further stated that the property owners owed a total of N6,967,980,119, while 4,794 land titles are in default of ground rent payment for 10 years and above.

Olayinka noted that the revocation followed multiple publications and announcements on broadcast media by the FCT Administration since 2023, adding that payment of ground rents was provided by extant laws.

"It should be noted that the FCTA made numerous publications in national newspapers and announcements on broadcast media since 2023, calling on defaulters to pay up all outstanding bills and ground rents. All these yielded little response, as several allottees failed to pay.

"It is important to state that payment of ground rent on landed properties in the FCT is founded on extant legislation. It is clearly stipulated in the terms and conditions of the grant of Right of Occupancy, and it is due for payment on the first day of January, each year, without demand."

# Tinubu declares state of emergency in Rivers, suspends Fubara, lawmakers for 6 months

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



In a historic move, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has declared a state of emergency in Rivers State and suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for six months.

The announcement was made during a nationwide broadcast on Tuesday, where the President cited the escalating political crisis in the state as the reason for his intervention.

“By this declaration, the Governor of Rivers State, Mr. Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, Mrs. Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the House of Assembly of Rivers State are hereby suspended for an initial period of six months,” Tinubu stated.

The crisis in Rivers State has been ongoing for months, fueled by a power struggle between Governor Fubara and the state lawmakers, many of whom are loyal to former governor and current FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike. The political turmoil has led to instability in governance, legal disputes, and legislative conflicts, prompting federal intervention.

Vice Admiral Ibok-Ette Ibas Appointed as Administrator

As part of the emergency measures, President Tinubu has appointed retired Vice Admiral Ibok-Ette Ibas as the state’s administrator, assigning him the task of restoring order and ensuring governance continuity.

“In the meantime, I hereby nominate Vice Admiral Ibok-Ette Ibas (retd.) as Administrator to take charge of the affairs of the state in the interest of the good people of Rivers State. For the avoidance of doubt, this declaration does not affect the judicial arm of Rivers State, which shall continue to function in accordance with their constitutional mandate,” the President added.

Vice Admiral Ibas, a former Chief of Naval Staff, is expected to restore stability, curb political unrest, and ensure that governance continues smoothly in Rivers State during the six-month emergency period.

PDP Rejects Emergency Rule, Calls Tinubu’s Move Unconstitutional

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has rejected the state of emergency, describing Tinubu’s decision as unconstitutional and an attempt to

override the will of Rivers voters.

“The unconstitutional declaration by President Tinubu, suspending a democratically elected governor and appointing an unelected individual, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ette Ibas (retd.), to govern the state, is a direct attack on our democracy and an abrogation of the people’s democratic rights,” the PDP said in a statement.

The opposition party questioned the legality of Tinubu’s actions, stating that Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution does not grant the President unilateral powers to remove a sitting governor or dissolve a state legislature without National Assembly approval.

“Nothing in Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution grants the President the exclusive power to suspend an elected governor and state lawmakers. This is an illegal attempt at state capture and a violation of democratic principles,” the PDP statement continued.

The party further alleged that the emergency rule in Rivers State is part of a broader plot by the All Progressives Congress (APC) to weaken opposition-led states.

# Shettima urges National Assembly to prioritise unity, national development

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Vice-President Kashim Shettima has called on the National Assembly to honour its sacred responsibility of leadership by prioritising unity and national development over political divisions and partisan interests.

Shettima made the call during an Iftar (breaking of Ramadan fast) event hosted by President Bola Tinubu for the leadership and members of the House of Representatives at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, on Monday, March 17.

Speaking on behalf of President Tinubu, Shettima urged the lawmakers to embrace their roles with humility and a shared commitment to progress.

He emphasised the importance of cooperation and collaboration in fostering national growth, stating: "In the end, history will not judge us by the number of personal battles we fought against one another, but by the bridges we were able to build together."

Shettima continued, "We are gathered here this evening not as adversaries in a contest for power, but as partners in the noble task of nation-building."

Reflecting on the significance of Ramadan, which coincides with the Lenten season, the Vice-President called for deep introspection and a renewed commitment to Nigeria's unity.

He noted that the sacred month served as a reminder to choose "stability over strife, collaboration over conflict, and dialogue over discord."

"What binds us as a nation is far greater than what divides us," he said.

In his remarks, Shettima commended President Tinubu's leadership, describing him as a "man of vision and inclusivity." He further praised the President for his trust in the National Assembly, adding, "In President Tinubu, you have not just a leader you can trust, but a leader who trusts you. He sees you as stewards of our democracy, as voices of the people, and as partners in our shared aspiration to build a better Nigeria."

The Vice-President also expressed optimism about the country's economic trajectory, asserting that the government's policies were yielding positive results.



"We are now on the path to sustained economic growth, and with perseverance, we will create a Nigeria where every citizen can thrive," Shettima stated.

He also lauded the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abbas Tajudeen, and the House leadership for promoting harmony within the legislature.

"There can be no development without peace, and there can be no peace without development. The unity within the House is a testament to our collective resolve to move Nigeria forward," he added.

Shettima urged the legislators to govern with empathy, fairness, and justice, reminding them that their positions were a sacred trust bestowed by the Nigerian people.

"Leadership is not about personal gain; it is about service. It is a burden vested in us by God, tested by history, and measured by the impact we leave behind," he said.

Earlier, Speaker Abbas Tajudeen expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for the invitation and his continued respect and concern for the House of Representatives. Reflecting on the importance of Ramadan, the Speaker urged both Muslims and Christians to dedicate the fasting period to prayer for the country.

"As we all know, the month of Ramadan entails many things, one of them is reflection; where were you before, where are you now, and where do you want to be? I believe Nigeria, more than ever before, needs this type of reflection," Abbas said.

He called on citizens to pray for the country's economy, security, and for the leadership to be guided in their decisions.

"Prayers for the economy; prayers for improved security, prayers for the leaders, and prayers for the citizens," he added.

In a show of solidarity, Abbas pledged that every member of the House of Representatives supported President Tinubu's leadership. He also noted that the policies of the administration were aimed at improving the lives of Nigerians.

As a gesture of goodwill, Abbas announced that, on behalf of the House of Representatives, the sum of N705 million had been donated to the President.

The donation, which represents a six-month 50 per cent salary deduction from each member, was intended to support the humanitarian initiatives of the President and assist vulnerable people across the country.

# Jandor never 'our own', planted by APC to destabilise us - PDP

By Dave Oludare Oso

The return of the Lagos Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in the 2023 general elections, Abdul-Azeez Adediran, popularly known as Jandor to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has drawn the ire of his former party.

Lagos State chapter of the PDP has blasted Adediran, who announced his return to APC at a news conference on Monday in Lagos.

The former PDP flagbearer, who was the leader of the influential Lagos4Lagos Movement, had announced his resignation from the PDP on March 3, 2025, citing a lack of discipline in the party and betrayal by its leaders.

He was a mole

The Deputy Chairman of the PDP in Lagos, Tai Benedict, in his reaction to the defection on Monday, said Jandor was never "our own" and was allegedly planted by the APC to destabilise the PDP.

Benedict said, "He was never our own. He was an agent sent to our party to destroy our party. The very first time I saw him, I told him to explain – that you are an agent of the APC, sent to our party because they knew we had a bright chance to win that election.

"Although he denied it, eventually, I was vindicated. This was somebody who came to the party, and the first thing he did was to start accusing the leaders and the next thing he did was to disorganise a united party to the national level until he got the ticket of our party from the back.

"You know, it's very unfortunate, very unfortunate. We have never had it so badly. But all I have to say is we thank God. We're okay with his exit.

"He came, he singularly picked his running mate. It has never happened. He said because Funke (Akindele) had over three million followers on Instagram, that will



make his victory (at the 2023 governorship poll) easier. But we had only 62,000 votes."

"For me, I thank God that he has left our party. It's not a good thing to lose membership in parties, I quite agree with that. It's not good to lose your members to other parties but there are some members that if they leave, you'll be happy. One of such members is Jandor."

Jandor has only traced his roots back home – APC

In another development, the APC in the state has welcomed Jandor, describing him as a vibrant young man who only traced his roots back home.

Seye Oladejo, the party's publicity secretary, told newsmen in an interview on Monday that APC was ready to work with Jandor.

"Like all politicians, Jandor came to the party with ambition. At the time, that could be realised quickly on the platform of the conservatives, which has been rejected at the polls several times by the people of Lagos.

"So, now that he's back, we're happy to work with him. We appreciate the fact that Lagos has been better and safer in the

hands of the progressives, who have enjoyed uninterrupted trust and confidence from the people.

"We believe in our party that there is sufficient opportunity for him, like many others, to contribute his quota to the continual success of our government and growth of our party," Oladejo said.

He said the party was expecting more politicians to defect to the APC.

"In the days ahead, we're expecting more decamps as we approach the next election."

Dismissing the PDP's claim that the APC planted Jandor to destabilise the opposition, Oladejo said, "It shows how inept in ideas this so-called opposition is."

"We're talking about a party that's perpetually in crisis. We're talking about a party that can't organise itself, and they want to govern. The electorates in Lagos are informed, they are sophisticated.

"They're just looking for excuses to justify their incompetence, and the fact that they're incapable of mobilising whatever modicum of support they have for election victory."

# Corps member, Uguamaye apologises for calling Lagos 'smelly'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**T**he controversial corps member, Ushie Rita Uguamaye, who was in the eye-of-the-storm over her social media scathing criticism of the government last week, has apologised for “talking down” on Lagos.

The serving corps member in Lagos, made headlines when she posted a video criticising government policies.

In the viral video, Uguamaye called President Bola Tinubu a “terrible leader” and questioned the government’s commitment to tackling the biting economy.

She lamented the poor living conditions in Lagos and argued that

the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme is not “beneficial.”

Her outburst led to mixed reactions from government circles, the NYSC, and Nigerians living in Lagos State.

In a follow-up post, Uguamaye has apologised for some of her comments which she said were misconstrued as “talking down” on Lagos.

“I’m sorry for those born and raised in Lagos State if you feel offended by what I said. But as a visitor here, I could tell there was a difference in the atmosphere and air quality,” the corps member wrote in part.

“If the way that I put it triggered your

emotion and love for your birth state, I am sorry. I didn’t mean to talk down on your birth state.

“The complaints I made are valid, regardless of whatever lifestyle you think I’m living. I work 45+ hours a week and should be able to afford to hang out with my friends every weekend. However, I can’t. You spend all week working and can’t even feel alive on the weekends.

“I encourage all of us to ask for what we believe we deserve. I know distractions will take us again very soon. But if we stay committed to asking for better, we will get better.”

# Rivers Crisis: Tinubu ousts Fubara, appoints ex-naval chief as Administrator

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, suspending Governor Siminalayi Fubara, Deputy Governor Ngozi Odu, and all members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for an initial period of six months. The announcement was made on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in a nationwide broadcast, where the President cited escalating political instability and security threats, including recent acts of vandalism on oil pipelines by militant groups.

The decision comes after months of rising political tension between Governor Fubara and pro-Wike lawmakers, which had resulted in legislative disputes, security concerns, and governance paralysis. President Tinubu, in justifying the drastic measure, stated that his administration could no longer stand by while Rivers State spiraled into chaos, lawlessness, and economic sabotage. He emphasized that recent security intelligence indicated that militant activities had intensified, with critical oil infrastructure coming under attack while the state government failed to act decisively.

In response to the crisis, President Tinubu has appointed Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas as the administrator of Rivers State, granting him full control over the affairs of the state during the emergency period. His appointment is expected to bring stability, security, and disciplined governance to the troubled state, given his extensive background in military strategy, leadership, and national security.

Born on September 27, 1960, in Nko, Cross River State, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas has had a distinguished career in the Nigerian Navy, where he served as the 22nd Chief of Naval Staff from July 2015 to January 2021 before retiring. His vast experience in maritime security, counterinsurgency operations, and governance makes him a strong choice to oversee the administration of Rivers State during this critical period. After retiring from active military service, he transitioned into diplomacy and served as Nigeria's Ambassador to Ghana, further broadening his expertise in strategic international relations.

The President's decision to impose emergency rule has sparked widespread reactions across political circles, civil society organizations, and the general public. Supporters of the move argue that it is a necessary intervention to restore order and protect critical infrastructure, especially given the economic significance of Rivers State as one of Nigeria's largest oil-producing states. Critics, however, have raised constitutional concerns, questioning the legality of suspending an elected government without due process and



warning of potential democratic backsliding.

Before the declaration, political tension in Rivers State had reached a boiling point. The crisis originated from an intense power struggle between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who now serves as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The fallout between the two had led to an attempted impeachment of Fubara by pro-Wike lawmakers, an incident that nearly resulted in a full-blown constitutional crisis. Although a peace deal was brokered under President Tinubu's mediation, tensions continued to fester, spilling over into violent clashes, arson attacks on local government offices, and administrative dysfunction.

The Supreme Court ruling on the legitimacy of the Rivers State House of Assembly members further deepened the crisis. The court had ruled that Governor Fubara had voluntarily withdrawn his case challenging the defection of 27 pro-Wike lawmakers, effectively recognizing their continued membership in the legislature. This verdict strengthened the opposition against Fubara while leaving the state in a state of political deadlock. With the legislative and executive arms of government paralyzed, governance in the state suffered, leading to delays in budget implementation, stalled development projects, and a weakened security structure.

The economic implications of the crisis have been severe, with businesses experiencing disruptions, investors pulling out, and oil production facing serious threats due to pipeline vandalism. The Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of Rivers State, which heavily depends on commercial activities in Port Harcourt, has taken a significant hit. Financial experts warn that continued instability could worsen unemployment, slow down infrastructure

development, and erode public confidence in the state's governance structure.

According to Vanguard, political analysts have weighed in on the situation, with Professor Busuyi Mekusi, a political expert, describing the declaration of a state of emergency as both "a strategic move and a dangerous precedent." He noted that while the intervention could restore security, it also raises concerns about executive overreach, particularly in a democracy where elected officials are expected to complete their tenure.

Reactions have also poured in from opposition parties, human rights activists, and civil society groups, some of whom have vowed to challenge the legality of Tinubu's decision in court. Meanwhile, the President has assured that the emergency rule will be strictly temporary, with a review set for the end of the six-month period to determine if normal governance can be restored.

Vice Admiral Ibas is expected to assume office immediately, working closely with security agencies to restore peace, protect infrastructure, and ensure continuity of essential government functions. With Rivers State now under direct federal control, all eyes will be on how the administration navigates the political crisis and what the long-term implications will be for Nigerian democracy and federal-state relations.

As the situation continues to unfold, there remains uncertainty over how Governor Fubara and his supporters will respond, whether legal battles will arise, and if the people of Rivers State will embrace the new leadership or resist it. One thing remains clear—Nigeria is entering uncharted political territory, and the developments in Rivers State could have far-reaching consequences for governance across the country.

# Peter Obi unveils TikTok page, seeks followers

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The Labour Party (LP) presidential candidate in the 2023 general elections, Peter Obi, has opened a TikTok page.

The former Anambra State governor made the announcement on his X handle on Tuesday.

On the TikTok page, the former LP presidential flagbearer uploaded a video seeking followership and moves to build a new Nigeria that is possible.

He said, "This is my official and only TikTok page. Kindly join me towards building a new Nigeria that is

possible."

## THE MAN PETER OBI

Peter Gregory Obi, CON (born 19 July 1961) is a Nigerian politician and businessman who was the governor of Anambra State under President Olusegun Obasanjo from 17 March 2006 to 3 November 2006, when he was impeached.

He was reinstated on 9 February 2007 and continued his tenure until 2010. He was reelected for his second term until 7 March 2014.

Obi sought the Nigerian vice

presidential nomination in 2019, along Atiku Abubakar after decamping to Peoples Democratic Party but lost to Muhammadu Buhari.

He became a member of the Labour Party in 2022 and was handed the presidential ticket by Patrick Utomi during the primary election of the party.

He selected Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed as the vice presidential candidate for the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, and their ticket lost to president and vice president, Bola Tinubu and Kashim Shettima.

# PDP rejects Fubara's suspension, says Tinubu lacks constitutional right

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Less than two hours after President Bola Ahmed Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, suspending Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his deputy, Ngozi Odu, for six months alongside the 27 lawmakers.

The president, during the live broadcast, said, "By this declaration, the Governor of Rivers State, Mr. Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, Mrs. Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the House of Assembly of Rivers State are hereby suspended for an initial period of six months."

Shortly after the declaration, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) issued a press statement, signed by the National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, rejected the decision, describing it as unconstitutional and undemocratic.

It also added that it was a violation of the 1999 Constitution and an attempt to override the will of Rivers State voters.

The statement read, "This unconstitutional declaration by President Tinubu, suspending a democratically elected governor and appointing an unelected individual, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (rtd), to govern the state, is a direct attack on our democracy and an abrogation of the people's democratic rights."

The party alleged that this action was part of a broader scheme to capture Rivers State for the All-Progressives Congress (APC), accusing the ruling party of orchestrating a crisis to justify federal intervention.

"This is the climax of a well-oiled plot to forcefully take over Rivers State. The APC has been bent on stoking crises to ensure that democracy is ultimately truncated in the state," the statement added.

The PDP also argued that the reasons given by President Tinubu for declaring emergency rule didn't meet the



constitutional requirements outlined in Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution.

PDP questioned the legality of Tinubu's emergency rule in Rivers.

The PDP warned that the decision was unconstitutional, pointing out that Section 305(2) of the 1999 Constitution requires the National Assembly's approval for a state of emergency to take effect.

Quoting the Constitution, the PDP stated, "For the avoidance of doubt, Section 305 (2) provides that 'The President shall immediately after the publication, transmit copies of the Official Gazette of the Government of the Federation containing the proclamation, including the details of the emergency, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each of whom shall forthwith convene or arrange for a meeting of the House... to consider the situation and decide whether or not to pass a resolution approving the proclamation.'"

According to the PDP, Tinubu's unilateral action, without National Assembly approval was illegal.

The party insisted that the President

couldn't remove an elected governor and install an appointed administrator.

"Mr. President should recognize that his order for an unelected individual to take over the government of Rivers State is illegal and a clear recipe for crisis. It threatens peace and stability not only in Rivers State but across the entire nation," the PDP warned.

The PDP further cautioned Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (rtd.) against assuming the position of Rivers State administrator, warning that any attempt to usurp democratic governance in the state would not be accepted.

"Governor Fubara was democratically elected for a four-year tenure, which cannot be unconstitutionally abridged. Nigeria is not under military rule where state governance is determined by appointment rather than by the people," the PDP stated.

The party urged Vice Admiral Ibas to uphold the Constitution and avoid actions that could derail democratic governance in Rivers State.

# Suit challenging Dangote Refinery's N100bn import licence quashed

By Dave Oludare Oso

Dangote Petroleum Refinery and Petrochemicals has won a lawsuit challenging its FZE's N100 billion import licence.

On Tuesday, the Federal High Court Abuja dismissed the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission's (FCCPC) request to join the lawsuit.

FCCPC's joinder request was dismissed by Justice Inyang Ekwo while ruling on its application to join and prove Dangote's alleged planned monopoly in the oil and gas sector.

The pending suit by Dangote Refinery, marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1324/2024, seeks to void import licences issued to some Nigerian oil companies by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA).

These companies include the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Matrix Petroleum Services Limited, A.A. Rano Limited, and four others.

In its motion and accompanying processes, the FCCPC legal team, led by Barr Olarenwaju Osinaike, had stated that FCCPC is seeking to be joined as a necessary party to the present proceedings because its interest would allegedly be affected by the outcome of the suit.

The Commission stated that the case involves whether preventing the oil companies in dispute from operating the said licenses would lead to anti-competition or monopoly in favor of Dangote Refinery, among others.

He submitted that one of the main issues raised in the refinery's originating summons allegedly "relates to anti-competition and monopoly in the petroleum industry sector."



He drew the court's attention to the functions of the FCCPC, which, according to him, include eliminating anti-competitive agreements, and misleading, unfair, deceptive, or unconscionable marketing, trading, and business practices.

The FCCPC contended that Nigeria operates a free-market economy, allowing individuals and entities to participate in various sectors without hindrance.

But in its counter to FCCPC's request to join the suit, Dangote Refinery responded that: "It is not true that the plaintiff's suit is monopolistic but solely aimed at revamping local refining of petroleum products in Nigeria."

Ibrahim submitted that his client was granted a licence by NMDPRA under the Petroleum Industry Act to import, produce, and refine petroleum products.

He maintained that NMDPRA should only grant import licenses in line with Section 317(8) and (9) of the Petroleum Act, which permits the import of refined products only when there is a shortage in local production.

"Dangote Refinery is able to meet the daily consumption demand of the country," he stated, adding that NMDPRA allegedly granted licences to the defendants to import petroleum products contrary to Section 317(8) and (9) of the Petroleum Industry Act.

"The Petroleum Industry Act does not give the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) authority to issue licenses or impose levies on the plaintiff," he continued, describing the FCCPC as a "meddlesome interloper" that should not be allowed to join the suit.

He further submitted that FCCPC has no business in a case revolving around the PIA—an Act of the National Assembly.

He stated that FCCPC should instead seek an amendment to the law if it has any grievance regarding the petroleum sector.

Ruling on the joinder application by FCCPC, Ekwo said while the law allows a necessary party to join a case, that party must prove its relevance in the matter.

# 'Political tyranny' - Bode George condemns Tinubu over Rivers state emergency

By **Friday Omosola**



**F**ormer Deputy National Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Bode George, has criticised President Bola Tinubu's decision to impose a state of emergency in Rivers State.

He described it as a direct assault on democratic governance.

Condemning the move, George declared, "This is absolute Armageddon—total disrespect for constituted authority. The Constitution has been viciously violated."

Expressing his outrage, he continued, "We can't keep quiet.

This is recklessness of the highest order. What did Fubara do? As Commander-in-Chief, Tinubu gave Wike soldiers and security agents to destabilize Rivers State.

"The governor has no control over security agencies, yet he remained calm. Nobody has explained what he did to warrant this dictatorial emergency rule."

Drawing parallels with past political turmoil, George remarked, "This is exactly how it started in 1962 and 1983. It's a dress rehearsal for what Tinubu wants to do in 2027. The APC wants to take control of all states through unconstitutional means."

Challenging the legitimacy of Tinubu's actions, he asked, "Did he get National Assembly approval before his broadcast? What happened in Rivers is the hand of Esau and the voice of Jacob.

"Why didn't he declare a state of emergency in Lagos when lawmakers were fighting? Why invite Diете-Spiff and Niger Delta leaders last week if he already planned this?"

George posed a pointed question: "Is Tinubu now transforming into a civilian dictator?"

# Niger Republic fuel crisis worsens, over 400 petrol stations shut

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Over 400 filling stations owned by independent oil marketers in Nigeria's border communities have remained shut for about four years, following the Nigerian government's directive to curb petrol smuggling into neighbouring countries.

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) declared on Monday that the stations would remain closed despite growing complaints from marketers over revenue losses.

The NCS insisted on sustaining the crackdown on fuel smuggling through its Operation Whirlwind, particularly due to the recent severe petrol scarcity in Niger Republic.

The situation in Niger has led to a sharp increase in petrol prices, with the commodity selling for as high as N8,000 per litre, raising fears of renewed smuggling.

The NCS spokesperson, Abdullahi Maiwada, speaking in a recent interview, stressed that the agency would not relent in its operations.

He said, "You can see us everywhere seizing smuggled fuel. Be it in Adamawa, Taraba, Kebbi, Seme, everywhere. I think if there is any successful operation, it is this Operation Whirlwind. We are really on them. We will not allow fuel to get out of Nigeria illegally."

"You confirm this from our recent seizures. We are not giving them space to smuggle fuel. And apart from the seizures, we are prosecuting kingpins of these smugglers."

"In Adamawa, for instance, there are some suspects that we are taking to court."



When asked about the fate of filling stations in border towns, Maiwada was clear: "Yes, they remain shut."

Marketers lamented that their members have been out of business since 2019, when former President Muhammadu Buhari banned petrol supply within 20km of the border to prevent subsidised fuel from being diverted to neighbouring countries.

Nigeria shares borders with Niger Republic, Benin, Cameroon, and Chad, all of which have been illegal routes used by smugglers.

The National Publicity Secretary of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria, Chinedu Ukadike, criticised the continued ban, stating, "Over 400 stations were shut since the government banned fuel supply in border communities. Since then, the owners of these filling stations have not been doing anything. But I also know that the office of the NSA has been on that matter. They are working with the NMDPRA to open the filling stations."

"Now we are seeing the efforts of

Operation Whirlwind, they should allow the stations to start selling fuel. In line with the PIA, the customs leading this operation are not empowered to seal filling stations. What they are empowered to do is to impound any truck that is crossing the border."

The fuel crisis in Niger Republic worsened last week as petrol prices surged, forcing the country's government to turn to Nigeria for help.

Despite strained diplomatic relations, Nigerian government approved the supply of 300 fuel trucks to Niger.

Maazou Oumani Aboubacar, the Commercial Director of Niger's state-owned oil company Sonidep, confirmed that, "The fuel that came into Niger Republic illegally from Nigeria represented up to half of the market. It supplied the large regions near the border between the two countries."

With Nigerian smugglers supplying up to 50 per cent of Niger's daily petrol consumption before 2023, the removal of Nigeria's fuel subsidy and tighter border controls have left the country struggling to meet its demand.

# Rivers police dispel claims of riot, arson at Wike's residence

By Helen Okechukwu

The Rivers State Police Command has strongly refuted reports circulated online, alleging that violent riots erupted in the state, resulting in setting the residence of Nyesom Wike, incumbent Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) ablaze.

In a press statement issued on Monday to journalists, Grace Iringe-Koko, the police spokesperson described it as “deliberate report, false and baseless” with the intent of inciting unrest and fear among Rivers residents.

She stressed that there is no record of any such incident and assured the public that normalcy prevails across the state.

“The general public is urged to disregard these unfounded claims, which are clearly intended to cause panic and destabilize the relative peace and security enjoyed by the good people of Rivers State,” Iringe-Koko said.

The Command also issued a stern warning to individuals or groups responsible for spreading false information, stating that those found culpable would face the full wrath of the law.



“The full weight of the law will be brought to bear on anyone found guilty of spreading misinformation or attempting to disrupt the peace in any form,” the statement read.

Reaffirming the commitment of the Command to ensuring the safety and security of all residents, the Police encouraged members of the public to rely on credible sources for information and report any suspicious activities to law enforcement agencies.

“Citizens should remain calm and go about their lawful activities without fear, the statement added.

The police spokesperson further encouraged the residents to report any security concerns by using the following official contacts: control Room : 08032003514, 08098880134, PPRO : 09014273818 and CRU : 08120822987, 09035774814.

The Command assured the public that proactive measures are in place to maintain peace and prevent any form of disorder.

Also, residents have been advised to remain vigilant and cooperate with security agencies to safeguard the state from any potential threats.

# SGF Akume disowns aide facing N10bn fraud probe

By Dave Oludare Oso



Secretary to the government of the federation (SGF), George Akume has dissociated himself from his personal assistant, Andrew Uchi, who is currently facing an N10 billion fraud and money laundering investigation.

Reports have it that the now-suspended SGF's aide is being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on allegations bothering on corruption, bribery, and money laundering.

But the Director of Information and Public Relations, Office of the SGF (OSGF), Segun Imohiosen, in a statement, absolved the leadership of the SGF office from the crime.

The OSGF also urged members of the public to avoid speculation, but allow the EFCC carry out a thorough investigation, as the office has a history of promoting integrity, transparency and accountability.

The OSGF also expressed its appreciation for the understanding and support of the public on the matter, while also supporting the ongoing investigation.

According to the statement, "Attention of the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (OSGF) has been drawn to the ongoing investigation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) involving Hon. Andrew Torhile Uchi, Personal Assistant to the Secretary to the Government of the

Federation bothering on allegations of corruption, bribery, and money laundering.

"It is imperative to state categorically that the Office leadership is not in any way involved in the alleged misconduct as it has always maintained a strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and integrity.

"We recognise the efforts of the EFCC on this matter to ensure that those found culpable are held accountable.

"However, we urge the public not to speculate or draw conclusions as investigations are still ongoing.

# Rivers on brink: Blocked allocation threatens economy, security, governance

By Helen Okechukwu

The political battle between pro-Wike allies and Governor Siminalayi Fubara continues to escalate following the Supreme Court judgment, causing significant setbacks to the economy and development of Rivers State, with residents bearing the brunt of the turmoil.

Since December 2023, Governor Fubara and 27 lawmakers, including Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA), Martins Amaewhule, have been locked in a prolonged political crisis. The conflict stems from allegations of defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC), disputes over state fund allocations, and impeachment threats.

This unrest has severely impacted the state's economy and governance. On December 13, 2023, Premium Times reported the demolition of the RSHA complex, coinciding with Governor Fubara's presentation of the 2024 budget proposal to a four-member House of Assembly. The demolition followed an explosion at the assembly building, further deepening the crisis.

At the root of the political discord is a longstanding rift between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who is now Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Their strained relationship nearly resulted in Fubara's impeachment, a move that was prevented when former Assembly Leader Ehie Edison, a pro-Fubara faction leader, refused to endorse it.

Despite peace talks brokered by President Bola Tinubu, which included the reinstatement of pro-Wike lawmakers, tensions persist. Controversies over the 2025 Local Government (LG) elections and incidents of insecurity, including shootings and the burning of LG



secretariats, continue to fuel instability.

The Supreme Court verdict, delivered by Justice Emmanuel Agim, addressed the alleged defection of the 27 lawmakers. The ruling stated that Governor Fubara withdrew the defection case at the Federal High Court in Abuja, meaning that no defection had legally taken place. As a result, the court ruled that the status quo in the House of Assembly must be maintained.

“In light of the foregoing, I hold that Cross-appeal No SC/CV/1175A/2024 lacks merit and is hereby dismissed. The Rivers State House of Assembly should resume sitting with all elected members forthwith,” the judgment read.

The Role of Political Godfatherism in Rivers State

The struggle between political godfathers and their successors has been a recurring trend in Rivers State. Since Dr. Peter Odili's tenure as governor in 1999, there has been a pattern of conflicts between predecessors and their political protégés. This trend continued with the rift between former Governor

Chibuike Amaechi and his political mentor.

Similarly, Wike, who served as governor from 2015 to 2023, publicly denounced political godfatherism in Rivers State, insisting that it could not thrive as it allegedly does in Lagos State.

“It may have happened in Lagos State, but it cannot happen in Rivers. We are quite different. As governor, I will come and go, and I can't stop it. You can't continue to say that you must be a godfather of a state. That is the problem, and it is not possible. Why must I produce? The people of Rivers State should decide who they want to lead them,” Wike stated in a video clip obtained by this reporter.

As the battle for supremacy continued, Wike accused Fubara of attempting to destroy the political structure he built in the state. The issue of godfatherism has been central to the political struggle, ultimately leading to the fallout between both leaders.

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As the battle for supremacy continued, Wike accused Fubara of attempting to destroy the political structure he built in the state. The issue of godfatherism has been central to the political struggle, ultimately leading to the fallout between both leaders.

At a recent thanksgiving event in Asari-Toru LGA, Wike further expressed his grievances, stating that his successor had disregarded his advice, deepening the divide between them.

### Expert Analysis on the Economic and Political Implications

In an interview with New Daily Prime, political analyst, Professor Busuyi Mekusi, highlighted the far-reaching effects of the crisis on governance, the economy, and residents' welfare.

"I was hoping for a resolution to the crisis after the Supreme Court judgment. Unfortunately, the opposing camp seems determined to escalate the conflict against Fubara. What is happening in Rivers State is an effort to strangulate the state economically, particularly in governance and service delivery."

Professor Mekusi further noted that while Rivers State has a substantial Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), it may not be enough to sustain critical development and services.

"Infrastructure development will suffer. Rivers is a unique, oceanic state where building costs are naturally higher than in upland areas. The people will feel the impact," he added.

The analyst also pointed out that

political maneuvering by Wike and the 27 lawmakers has played a significant role in the crisis.

"Victory is sweet, but it must be well managed. I hope they will consider the interests of the people without escalating tensions unnecessarily so that governance can resume and complications affecting Rivers residents can be addressed."

Mekusi described the situation as an attempt to cripple the state's economy, warning that its consequences will be severe.

"Rivers State is being strangled economically, and this goes beyond Fubara. This crisis will have far-reaching effects on the people of Rivers State."

He recalled that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had attempted to mediate before the Supreme Court ruling, but after the visit of PANDEF leaders, he simply advised them to implement the court's decision.

However, Professor Mekusi believes there should be room for a political resolution initiated by leaders within Rivers State or the South-South region.

He also expressed concerns about the implications of a potential impeachment, questioning what would follow if Fubara is removed.

"If Fubara is impeached, they will need to prove that he committed a punishable offense, especially in light of the Supreme Court ruling. The deputy governor is also entangled in the crisis, meaning the Speaker could assume the governor's position. What about the repercussions? What about the

ripple effects of such a move?"

The professor emphasized that political conflicts often trigger unpredictable consequences, describing the recent impeachment moves as a risky strategy.

"There is a possibility that Fubara might be impeached politically, but complications remain. The Chief Judge must set up a panel to investigate the allegations. This is provided for in the constitution. But will the House of Assembly follow the due process, or will external influences come into play?"

Mekusi also raised concerns about where the lawmakers would convene their sittings—whether in Rivers State or Abuja—suggesting that political resistance could complicate any impeachment process.

"Fubara has presented himself as someone protecting the resources of Rivers State from alleged looting. If he succeeds in convincing the people, he will have their support. However, Wike once said that if Fubara is removed, nothing will happen. Now, we wait to see if something will happen."

### Conclusion

As the political crisis in Rivers State deepens, its economic and social impacts continue to grow. With governance crippled by political infighting, the fate of Rivers residents hangs in the balance. The coming weeks will determine whether peace and stability can be restored or if the crisis will escalate further, shaping the political landscape of one of Nigeria's most strategic states.

# Another explosion hits Rivers oil facility again

By Helen Okechukwu



**A**nother explosion has reportedly occurred at an oil facility in Okwawriwa, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (LGA), following the Trans-Niger Terminal pipeline explosion that happened in Bodo, Gokana LGA of Rivers State.

The exploded pipeline is said to be a federal pipeline that transports crude oil to Imo State and Brass in Bayelsa State.

It was gathered that the incident

occurred in the early hours of Tuesday.

An eyewitness disclosed that the explosion affected strategic points belonging to Seplat, Agip, and Shell.

Meanwhile, due to the location of the manifold, reports indicate that no casualties were recorded.

However, the explosion caused significant damage within the affected area.

Although the Rivers State Police Command is yet to comment on this recent explosion, anxiety has

gripped residents as the cause of the multiple explosions remains uncertain.

These developments have raised concerns and heightened suspicions of sabotage at both locations, highlighting the need to improve surveillance techniques and security measures.

In light of this, Rivers residents are urged to remain vigilant, while oil companies are expected to maintain a high level of security alertness to prevent a recurrence of such incidents.

# Why blocking Rivers' allocation is dangerous— Don

By Damilola Olufemi and Friday Omosola

The political crisis in Rivers State has taken a new and significant turn with the federal government's decision to withhold the state's monthly allocation, citing a court order. This move has sparked widespread debate, raising concerns about economic instability, governance paralysis, and political maneuvering in one of Nigeria's most strategic oil-producing states.

The feud between Siminalayi Fubara, Governor of Rivers State, and Nyesom Wike, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), has been at the center of this development. The power struggle between both leaders escalated following Wike's alleged unilateral appointment of commissioners and special advisers without consulting the governor. This led to a political split, culminating in the defection of 27 lawmakers from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Despite President Bola Tinubu's intervention, which resulted in an eight-point peace agreement, tensions have remained high, leading to governance dysfunction, security concerns, and financial disruptions. The federal government's decision to withhold Rivers State's allocation—ordinarily disbursed through the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC)—has only worsened the situation, threatening economic stability in a state that contributes significantly to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product



(GDP) through oil and gas revenues.

## Political and Economic Fallout of the Blocked Allocation

The financial implications of this blockade are far-reaching. The withheld funds were essential for infrastructure projects, healthcare, education, and public services, all of which now face possible delays or outright cancellations. Analysts warn that this move could further deter investors and undermine economic growth, not just in Rivers State but also nationally, considering its role in Nigeria's oil and gas industry.

A weakened Rivers economy could trigger a chain reaction affecting employment, businesses, and public-sector salaries, which may escalate social unrest. If internal revenue generation (IGR) fails to bridge the gap, the state

government could struggle to pay civil servants, contractors, and other essential service providers. This, in turn, could lead to mass protests, increased crime rates, and political instability.

In an interview with The New Daily Prime, political analyst Professor Busuyi Mekusi emphasized the dire consequences of withholding funds from Rivers State.

“Even though Rivers can attempt to sustain itself through IGR, there is a high possibility of sabotage at that level as well. A significant portion of the population will be financially disempowered, leading to widespread economic hardship,” Mekusi stated.

**Continue reading  
on next page**

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The professor further explained that the social impact of the crisis would be devastating, with civil servants and their dependents suffering the most.

“There will be economic disorientation. Those who should benefit from these funds, especially at the local government level, will be the hardest hit. Governance in the state will also be severely impaired,” he added.

### Potential Security Implications

Beyond economic consequences, analysts warn that financial instability could exacerbate insecurity. A lack of funds for critical infrastructure and governance could create a breeding ground for militancy and criminal activities. Historically, the Niger Delta region has experienced unrest tied to economic deprivation and political conflicts, and this situation could trigger a resurgence of violent agitations.

Professor Mekusi suggested that if the situation remains unresolved, some citizens may resort to extreme measures to survive, including criminal activities.

“Some may turn to begging or petty

theft, while others, unable to maintain rational judgment, could embrace full-blown criminality. This could escalate tensions significantly,” he warned.

Drawing parallels to historical political crises, he referenced the 2003-2007 Lagos State standoff, where then-President Olusegun Obasanjo withheld federal allocations from Lagos State, when Bola Tinubu was governor. However, Mekusi pointed out that Rivers State may not be able to withstand such financial pressure as Lagos did.

“Lagos managed to survive federal sanctions due to its strong economic base, but the same cannot be said for Rivers. The political environment, economic structures, and social dynamics are entirely different,” he noted.

### Political Tensions and Possible Repercussions

With the political rift between Fubara and Wike deepening, stakeholders warn that the current crisis could lead to further instability, legal battles, and possible impeachment attempts.

Professor Mekusi predicted that the

situation might reshape Rivers State’s political future, emphasizing that if Fubara is removed, his successor would likely have strong support from opposing factions, weakening any resistance from his loyalists.

“If Fubara and his deputy are removed today, a new governor will emerge with his own supporters. That alone could break the resolve of Fubara’s followers. But beyond that, there will be long-term animosities, political vengeance, and unresolved grievances that could spark future conflicts,” he explained.

He further warned that Rivers State may never return to political normalcy, as similar crises in the past have left lasting scars on governance, party loyalty, and public trust in leadership.

“We have seen such turmoil before. Amaechi had to fight hard to survive impeachment, allegedly orchestrated from Abuja at the time. But unlike Amaechi, Fubara lacks the political influence to challenge Wike’s grip on the state. This is a battle of political survival,” he added.

# Rivers Police confirm fire incident on trans Niger Delta pipeline

By Alade Adisa

The Rivers State Police Command has confirmed an incident on the Trans Niger Delta Pipeline (TNP) and has assured residents that the situation is under control.

While confirming that the facility is operated by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), the police disclosed that two individuals have been arrested for questioning regarding the incident.

The command stated that the event occurred on Monday night and reiterated that there is no immediate threat to residents or the environment.

Investigation Ongoing, Cause of Fire Unclear

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Rivers State Command, Superintendent Grace Iringe-Koko, made this known in a statement on Tuesday.

She did not confirm whether the incident was caused by a militant group or whether the fire resulted from an explosion or an oil spill that later ignited.

According to Iringe-Koko, a surveillance team in the area first observed the fire and promptly reported it to SPDC operators. She assured residents that there is no further threat.

Official Police Statement



In the official statement, Iringe-Koko said:

“The Rivers State Police Command wishes to inform the general public that a fire incident occurred at the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC)-operated Trans Niger Delta Pipeline, located at the border of Kpor and Bodo communities.

During a routine night patrol, security operatives observed the incident and promptly alerted SPDC management. The latter initiated necessary safety protocols, including shutting down the affected pipeline. As a result of swift intervention, the situation is now under control, and there is no further threat to residents or the environment.”

She also confirmed that the police have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the fire and to rule out any possible act of sabotage.

Two Suspects Arrested for Interrogation

Iringe-Koko disclosed that two individuals have been taken into custody for questioning as part of the ongoing investigation.

“The Rivers State Police Command has commenced a thorough investigation to determine the cause of the fire. In connection with this, two individuals have been taken in for questioning as part of efforts to uncover any potential act of sabotage.

The Command remains committed to ensuring that perpetrators of criminal activities are identified and brought to justice.

We urge residents to remain calm and vigilant, assuring them of our unwavering commitment to protecting lives and property. The Command will not relent in its efforts to rid the state of criminal elements and maintain peace and security for all.”

# Nigeria urges swift action on Africa's water security

By Helen Okechukwu

Nigeria's Minister for Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Utsev, has called for urgent measures to address Africa's water security and sanitation challenges, citing slow progress toward the Africa Water Vision 2025.

According to News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Utsev made the appeal at the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) West Africa sub-regional meeting and consultation on the post-2025 Africa Water Vision and Policy in Abuja on Tuesday.

Represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr Richard Pheelangwah, the minister expressed concerns over the region's water and sanitation situation.

"Africa remains off track in realising the Africa Water Vision 2025," he stated, citing data from the 2024 Water Sector and Sanitation Monitoring and Reporting (WASSMO) report.

According to Utsev, the report revealed that financing for the water and sanitation sector is inadequate, with heavy reliance on Official Development Assistance (ODA), making sustainable funding difficult.

He further noted that 800 million people in Africa lacked access to safely managed sanitation services, while over 400 million people lacked access to safely managed drinking water.

"Open defecation remains a significant challenge, with 23 per cent of the population still practicing it, far from the five per cent target by 2025.

"The situation calls for action to inject new approaches into existing strategies to attract commensurate financial resources to the water and sanitation sector at all levels," he said.

Utsev also warned that the continent's growing population and climate change would further strain water resources.

"Africa's population is expected to exceed 2.5 billion by 2050, and with an expected 1.5°C rise in average temperature, we face an increase in water-related natural disasters and economic losses," he said.

The minister reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening water security, improving sanitation and hygiene, and enhancing food security.

Read Also:

He outlined several key projects being implemented by his ministry to improve



livelihoods, promote sustainable water management, and maximise socio-economic development.

He also announced plans for a National WASH Policy, developed in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment and other stakeholders, to align Nigeria's water and sanitation efforts with global standards.

The minister commended AMCOW, the AU Commission, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) for leading the development of the post-2025 Africa Water Vision and Policy.

He urged stakeholders to align the new framework with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063, ensuring regional cooperation and better access to funding.

Earlier, the Executive Secretary of AMCOW, Dr Rashid Mbaziira, stressed the need for increased investment in Africa's water sector as the continent reviewed progress on the Africa Water Vision 2025.

He noted that the initial vision, established in 2000, aimed for equitable water resource utilisation to drive development, reduce poverty, and protect the environment.

"Now we are in 2025, which was the target year for achieving that vision. We have assessed what we have accomplished, what remains unachieved, and what needs to be prioritised moving forward.

"Ultimately, water is key to our socio-economic development," Mbaziira stated.

He explained that in 2022, African water ministers decided to evaluate progress and use the findings as a foundation for shaping a new vision aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063.

He highlighted that the meeting provided a platform for West Africa to identify its regional priorities, which would be integrated with insights from other African regions to develop a post-2025 Africa Water Vision.

"One of the key challenges that has emerged is insufficient financing for the water sector, which has limited its contribution to development. Addressing this gap will be crucial in shaping the way forward," he added.

Goodwill messages were delivered by representatives of AfDB, the AU Commission, Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee and others.

Founded in 2002, AMCOW promotes cooperation, security, economic development, and poverty eradication through effective water resource management and supply services.

In 2008, at the 11th ordinary session of the African Union (AU) Assembly in Sharm el-Sheikh, Heads of State and Government of the AU agreed on commitments to accelerate the achievement of water and sanitation goals in Africa.

AMCOW was mandated to develop and follow up an implementation strategy for these commitments.

# “World now safer,” says Russia after Putin-Trump call

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

A highly anticipated phone call between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin has ended, with a top Russian official declaring that the world is now “a much safer place.”

The 90-minute conversation, which began at 2 PM GMT, focused on securing a ceasefire in Ukraine, according to the White House. While neither Washington nor Moscow has provided full details of the discussion, Russian envoy Kirill Dmitriev hailed the call as a “historic” and “epic” moment in international diplomacy.

“Under the leadership of President Putin and President Trump, the world has become a much safer place today! Historic! Epic!” Dmitriev stated.

Ahead of the call, Trump suggested that negotiations would involve discussions on the division of Ukrainian territory and the control of power plants in the region. Meanwhile, sources told Bloomberg that Putin planned to demand an immediate halt to all Western weapons deliveries to Ukraine as part of any ceasefire agreement. Ukraine has already agreed to a U.S.-proposed 30-day ceasefire, but Putin has expressed serious reservations, stating that Russia would continue fighting until certain conditions are met. Neither the White House nor the Kremlin has provided a detailed breakdown of the discussion so far.

Kirill Dmitriev, a close Putin aide and



international cooperation envoy, was the first Russian official to comment on the talks. Dmitriev, who is also the CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), has been a key figure in Russia-U.S. negotiations on Ukraine, including discussions in Saudi Arabia. His statement reflects Moscow’s optimism about potential diplomatic progress following the Trump-Putin talks.

In an unexpected development, Dmitriev also revealed that he is scheduled to meet with Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk soon to discuss technological advancements and the “future of humanity.” According to Dmitriev, Russia is seeking closer cooperation with Musk and SpaceX to help develop its space agency, Roscosmos, and its state-run nuclear energy company, Rosatom. Musk has not yet commented on the potential meeting or its implications.

As global reactions to the Trump-Putin call unfold, key questions remain over whether Trump will recognize Crimea as Russian territory, if the U.S. will agree to halt weapons shipments to Ukraine, and whether Putin will honor a ceasefire or continue military operations. The conversation has raised speculation about the long-term geopolitical consequences, particularly in relation to ongoing Western sanctions, Russia’s global influence, and the future role of U.S. diplomacy.

The outcome of this diplomatic exchange could reshape U.S.-Russia relations and impact Ukraine’s war strategy in the coming weeks. While official statements from both governments remain scarce, today’s developments mark a turning point in the conflict, with the potential for new alliances and policy shifts. The world will be watching closely as further details emerge.

# Bobrisky vows to name, shame seven Nigerian celebrities he's dated

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**C**ontroversial crossdresser, Idris Okuneye, better recognised as Bobrisky, has disclosed that she has dated several high-profile individuals, called celebrities, in Nigeria.

The (wo)man that had been in news for all the negative reasons ever since she broke into the people's consciousness a decade ago, made this known while speaking about betrayals that drove him into exile.

(S)he confessed to have had intimate relationships with

seven Nigerian celebrities in a recent video shared on Snapchat.

In the heated rant, Bobrisky announced plans to expose and name those celebrities, describing them as fake individuals in the Nigerian entertainment industry.

Reflecting on the condemnation he faced from some Nigerian celebrities and politicians during his EFCC ordeal, he said he had since detached himself from the country's expectations.

He said, "The time is coming when I will list seven celebrities

I have dated in Nigeria. The time is coming when I will expose fake people in that country.

"I never knew I was so special until last year when ministers and senators started discussing me. Imagine a minister leaving work to focus on Bobrisky. Am I that important?"

"If I lived in Nigeria for 100 years, they would never put 'female' on my passport or driver's licence. But here, I'm respected for who I am."

# Herdsmen destroying farmlands in Bayelsa – Singer Timaya cries out

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Afrobeats singer Timaya has raised alarm over the widespread destruction of farms in his home state, Bayelsa, calling for urgent government intervention.

He accused herders of damaging farmlands and called on the government to act swiftly.

Timaya, known for hits like Dem Mama, took to social media on Tuesday to raise awareness. He condemned the ongoing destruction of crops, describing the situation as heartbreaking. He also criticized open grazing and urged herders to adopt modern ranching methods.

In a post on his X handle, he wrote, “Pls the government should do something. They are destroying farms in Bayelsa. Aboki, take your cow inside and feed them. This is so sad.”

<https://twitter.com/timayatimaya/status/1901959437515923788>

Growing concerns over farmland destruction

Farmers in Bayelsa have repeatedly complained about herders trespassing on their land. Reports suggest that cattle trample crops, leaving many farmers devastated. Residents fear food shortages and financial losses if the problem continues.

Many have called on the government to regulate cattle grazing and protect farmlands. However, little action has been taken so far, leaving communities frustrated.



Timaya’s statement adds to the growing pressure on authorities to address the crisis. His influence as a musician has drawn more attention to the issue, sparking debates on social media.

Timaya.

Timaya.

Call for ranching as a solution

The singer also urged herders to stop allowing their cattle to roam freely. He suggested ranching as a more sustainable alternative to open grazing.

Ranching, a method used in developed countries, keeps livestock in designated areas. This prevents conflicts between herders and farmers while ensuring cattle are well-fed. Many experts believe ranching could end clashes over land use in Nigeria.

Despite calls for reform, open grazing remains common in several states. The lack of enforcement of anti-open grazing laws has allowed the problem to persist. Some state governments have attempted to ban open grazing, but implementation remains a challenge.

Government urged to take immediate action

Timaya’s plea reflects the frustration of many Nigerians affected by farmland destruction. He urged authorities to step in before the situation worsens.

Farmers depend on their crops for survival. When herds of cattle destroy their produce, they suffer major financial setbacks. If the issue is not addressed, food prices could rise, affecting the entire country.

Herders argue that they need grazing land for their cattle. However, experts say the solution lies in modernizing livestock farming. By providing ranches and enforcing grazing laws, the government can help both farmers and herders coexist peacefully.

Timaya’s statement has reignited discussions on the future of agriculture in Nigeria. Many hope his voice will push leaders to take decisive action. Until then, the destruction of farmlands remains a pressing concern for Bayelsa residents.

# Annie Idibia leaves rehab amid divorce crisis

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



**S**eparated wife of famous musician, Innocent Idibia, popularly called 2Baba, Annie Idibia, has reportedly left the rehabilitation centre where she was receiving therapy, sources close to the actress has revealed.

Her reason for leaving the rehab programme this time has left people wondering as she was originally anticipated to spend more time in recovery.

The actress, who has struggled with mental and marital issues in the past, sought professional help during what many saw as a watershed moment in her life.

Hence, her unexpected departure has been generating concerns and discussions, especially since she had

been on a personal recovery path away from the spotlight.

According to the people close to the mum of two, she has been carefully meditating on the events that prompted her to seek therapy in the first place.

Her marriage to the famed singer 2baba has been the subject of intense public scrutiny, with problems ranging from accusations of infidelity to family feuds. Those who have spoken with her said that after leaving rehab, she was still figuring out what she wanted to do next.

A source disclosed, “She was meant to stay longer, but for reasons we are yet to fully understand, she decided to leave.

“What’s clear is that she is not giving up on herself. She still wants to heal and rebuild her life.”

Annie had been open about the emotional toll of her relationship before entering rehab, frequently hinting at betrayal and external influences.

With this latest development, those close to her claimed she was reassessing her priorities and focusing on herself.

Another insider shared, “She’s taking things one step at a time.

“There’s a lot she has been through, and leaving rehab doesn’t mean she’s done with her healing process. It just means she’s choosing a different path.”

The actress’ departure from the institution has also reignited debate regarding her marriage to 2Baba, with some fans asking whether the couple’s relationship was irreparable.

# Evolution of aso-oke in Nigerian fashion

ByEyitayo Jemimah Ajayi

Nigerian fashion designers have continually redefined the history of fashion, drawing inspiration from indigenous materials to create contemporary styles. One of the most frequently used materials is aso-oke—a ceremonial Yoruba fabric traditionally woven on a loom. Known for its distinct color and texture, aso-oke symbolizes class and elegance.

Once primarily used for gele (headwraps) and ipele (shawls), aso-oke evolved into a staple fabric for iro and buba (traditional attire). Today, it has transcended its traditional use, becoming a luxury fabric used to create a wide range of outfits, from casual to haute couture.

## Aso-Oke: The Fabric of Innovation

The rise of contemporary aso-oke weavers has significantly increased the fabric's availability, allowing fashion designers to experiment with unique and innovative designs. The weaving industry has become a lucrative venture, attracting artisans and entrepreneurs eager to capitalize on the growing demand. This resurgence has also reshaped the Nigerian fashion industry, encouraging designers to prioritize locally sourced fabrics.

Here are some distinct aso-oke pieces that have made waves in Nigerian fashion:

### Hertunba's Tubo Reni Pièce

Hertunba has consistently showcased its commitment to Nigerian culture. Last year, the brand launched an outfit that incorporated elements from various cultural backgrounds, with aso-oke as a



standout feature. This piece, inspired by The Woman King, captivated audiences for months and remained a major fashion highlight.

### Aso-Oke Pant Trousers

This trend took the fashion world by storm. Initially, designers crafted plain aso-oke pants, but they soon evolved into aso-oke collage trousers, blending different patterns and textures. These pants exude a vintage yet modern appeal, making them a coveted fashion item.

### The Aso-Oke Kimono

Among the most exquisite designs crafted from aso-oke, the aso-oke kimono stands out for its bold aesthetic and luxurious feel. Due to the fabric's natural density and texture, the kimono carries an aura of regality and exclusivity.

### Medlin Boss's Aso-Oke Ensemble for Nancy Isime

This stunning red outfit exemplifies the evolution of aso-oke. Medlin Boss masterfully combined aso-oke trousers with an aso-oke embroidered kimono,

pairing them with a white shirt and a European-style tie—a fusion of tradition and modernity. The result? A show-stopping ensemble that celebrates cultural heritage while embracing contemporary fashion trends.

The aso-oke movement is here to stay. Nigerian youth can embrace and explore this rich textile tradition, learning the art of weaving and incorporating aso-oke into modern designs. Today, aso-oke is regarded as a luxury fabric, with high demand and limited supply. Many individuals are revamping their mothers' old aso-oke fabrics into stylish, contemporary outfits.

However, despite its growing popularity, the number of skilled weavers remains low, leading to high production costs and long waiting periods. While a few stores specialize in aso-oke, there is still a need for more retail outlets to make the fabric more accessible.

One thing is certain—the aso-oke revolution is far from over. It continues to shape Nigerian fashion, proving that heritage and modernity can coexist beautifully.

# It's insane to consider women in their late 30s old - Lady Gaga

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

**L**ady Gaga has strongly condemned ageism in the pop music industry, rejecting the idea that women in their late 30s are considered “too old” to be pop stars.

The 38-year-old singer criticized the idea that women in their late 30s are considered “old” for a pop star.

She made this statement while accepting the Innovator Award at the 2025 iHeartRadio Music Awards. The event took place at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on Monday, March 17.

Lady Gaga: “I’m just getting started”

During her speech, Gaga addressed the industry’s perception of age. She admitted feeling conflicted about receiving a lifetime achievement-style award at this stage in her career.

“I don’t totally know how to think about this,” she said. “Winning an award that honors my entire career at 38 is hard to wrap my head around.”

She then challenged the notion that a woman in her late 30s is too old to be a pop star.

“The world might think that’s old, which is insane,” she said. “But I promise you, I’m just getting warmed up.”

Her words drew loud applause from the audience, reinforcing her message that talent and creativity have no age limit.



A history of pushing boundaries

Lady Gaga, known for hits like Poker Face, Shallow, and Bad Romance, has built her career on breaking stereotypes. She has consistently reinvented herself, proving her versatility in music, acting, and fashion.

Her latest comments add to a growing conversation about ageism in entertainment. Many female artists have spoken out about the pressure to stay young in an industry that often favors youth over experience.

Gaga’s speech also resonated with fans, many of whom praised her for addressing the issue. Social media buzzed with support, with hashtags like #GagaNotOld and #AgeIsJustANumber trending after the event.

Nigerian stars lose to South Africa’s Tyla  
Meanwhile, the awards also saw a tough competition in the new

World Artist of the Year category. Nigerian superstars Burna Boy and Tems were among the nominees. However, South African singer Tyla took home the trophy.

Tyla, best known for her viral hit Water, has gained global recognition in recent months. Her win marked a major milestone for South African music on the international stage.

Despite the loss, Burna Boy and Tems remain two of Africa’s most influential artists. Both have won multiple international awards and continue to shape the global music scene.

Age is just a number

Gaga’s powerful speech serves as a reminder that music should not have an expiration date. Artists evolve, and their creativity does not disappear with age.

As she put it: “I promise you, I’m just getting started.”

# Putin agrees to 30-day halt to attacks on Ukraine's energy grid

By Dave Oludare Oso

Vladimir Putin has agreed to a limited ceasefire against Ukraine's energy infrastructure, but the Russian leader declined to commit to a month-long full truce, after a high-stakes phone call with Donald Trump.

A statement said Putin had issued an order to the Russian military to suspend strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said late on Tuesday that he would support a US proposal for a limited ceasefire aimed at halting attacks on each side's energy infrastructure.

If upheld by both sides, a halt to attacks on energy infrastructure would mark the first partial ceasefire in more than three years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

But Putin again pushed back against Trump's much sought-after plan for an immediate 30-day total ceasefire, which Ukraine agreed to last week, denting hopes of the US president's plan bringing a quick end to hostilities.

On his Truth Social platform, Trump described the conversation with Putin as "a very good and productive one", writing: "We agreed to an immediate Ceasefire on all Energy and Infrastructure, with an understanding that we will be working quickly to have a Complete Ceasefire and, ultimately, an END to this very horrible War between Russia and Ukraine."

The US president added: "Many elements of a Contract for Peace were discussed, including the fact that thousands of soldiers are being killed, and both President Putin and President Zelenskyy would like to see it end. That process is now in full force and effect, and we will, hopefully, for the sake of Humanity, get the job done!"

A White House statement said Washington and Moscow had also agreed to begin negotiations on the "implementation of a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, full ceasefire and permanent peace."

"These negotiations will begin immediately in the Middle East," the White House said.

During the call with Trump, which lasted two and a half hours, Putin reiterated his concerns over a range of issues that he



said must be addressed before the fighting could end, according to the Kremlin statement.

The "series of significant issues" included how such a ceasefire would be enforced and whether it would give Ukraine an opportunity to strengthen its forces and receive western military aid, it said.

Russia has given no indication that it plans to halt its own regrouping during the ceasefire, raising fears in Kyiv that Putin may use the pause to prepare for further hostilities.

The Kremlin's account of the call said Putin set several maximalist conditions for a lasting ceasefire, including the suspension of western arms and intelligence support for Ukraine. Putin also demanded that Ukraine halt the mobilisation of new recruits.

"It was emphasised that a key condition for preventing the escalation of the conflict and working toward its resolution through political and diplomatic means must be the complete cessation of foreign military aid and the provision of intelligence to Kyiv," the Kremlin said.

People inspect energy infrastructure damaged by Russian shelling in March 2024, at an undisclosed location in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine. Photograph: Igor Tkachenko/EPA

There was also no indication that Putin had abandoned any of his most hardline objectives in the war in Ukraine.

He told Trump that peace talks must "take into account the unconditional necessity to remove the initial reasons for the crisis and Russia's legal security interests."

In recent statements, Putin outlined these demands, which include a commitment to keeping Kyiv out of Nato, the demilitarisation of Ukraine, and full control over the four regions Moscow annexed in 2022 – effectively undermining Ukraine's independence.

Russia's maximalist demands will put Trump in a tough position, as he has pledged to secure both sides' agreement on an immediate 30-day halt to the fighting before working out the details of a longer-term settlement.

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy said he hoped to speak to Trump about his talks with Putin.

"I think it will be right that we will have a conversation with President Trump and we will know in detail what the Russians offered the Americans or what the Americans offered the Russians," Zelenskyy told reporters during an online briefing.

Some of Trump's recent remarks have raised concerns that the US may prioritise securing a deal over protecting Kyiv's interests. Before the call, he posted on Truth Social that "many elements of a Final Agreement have been agreed to, but much remains."

# Rwanda expels Belgian diplomats after cutting all ties

By Dave Oludare Oso

Rwanda has officially severed diplomatic ties with Belgium, and ordered all Belgian diplomats to leave within 48 hours.

Belgium responded by declaring Rwandan diplomats unwelcome, calling Kigali's decision "disproportionate"

The diplomatic fallout follows allegations that Belgium has been pushing for international sanctions against Rwanda over its role in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conflict

Rwanda has announced the immediate termination of its diplomatic relations with Belgium, a move that has further strained the already tense relations between the two nations.

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and the Belgium flag. Photos: Paul Kagame, Flagfactory. Source: UGC

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation accused Belgium of consistently mobilising against Rwanda in various forums.

"The government of Rwanda today notified the government of Belgium of its decision to sever diplomatic relations effective immediately.

"Rwanda's decision has been taken after careful consideration of several factors, all linked with Belgium's pitiful attempts to sustain its neocolonial delusions," the statement read.

As part of the decision, the Rwandan government has ordered all Belgian diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours.

"All Belgian diplomats in Rwanda are required to leave the country within 48 hours. In compliance with the Vienna Convention, Rwanda will assure the protection of the premises, property and archives of the Belgian diplomatic mission in Kigali," the statement added.

What led to the Rwanda-Belgium fall out?

According to Rwanda, Belgium has consistently undermined Rwanda, both before and during the ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Kigali accused Brussels of using lies and manipulation to create an unjustified,



hostile perception of Rwanda, in attempts to destabilise both Rwanda and the neighbouring region.

Rwanda also accused Belgium of its destructive historical role that led to the 1994 Genocide.

"Beyond Belgium's role in fueling the ethnic extremism that resulted in entrenched discrimination and persecution, and ultimately the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, it has also allowed Belgian territories to be used by groups that propagate genocide denial and sustain genocide ideology," Rwanda said.

The East African nation reiterated that it is committed to safeguarding its national interests, and the dignity of its citizens, as well as upholding the principles of sovereignty, peace, and mutual respect.

How did Belgium react to its diplomats being kicked out of Rwanda?

The severance of ties drew a stern reaction from Belgium, which condemned Rwanda's move as an overreaction.

Belgian Foreign Minister, Maxime Prevot stated that his country regretted Rwanda's decision, describing it as "disproportionate" and indicative of Kigali's unwillingness to engage in open diplomatic dialogue.

"Belgium regrets the decision of Rwanda to cut off diplomatic relations with Belgium and declare Belgium's diplomats persona non grata. This is disproportionate and shows that when we disagree with Rwanda, they prefer not to

engage in dialogue," Prevot wrote on his X account.

Following Rwanda's expulsion of Belgian envoys, Belgium has responded in kind by declaring Rwandan diplomats unwelcome within its borders.

"Belgium will take similar measures, declaring Rwanda's diplomats persona non grata and denouncing our governmental cooperation agreements," he added.

Relations between Rwanda and Belgium have been deteriorating in recent months, with Belgium voicing concerns over Rwanda's role in the unrest that has plagued the mineral-rich region.

Is Rwanda sponsoring M23 in the DRC conflict?

Rwanda is facing allegations of backing the M23 rebel group, which recently seized Goma, sparking mass protests and a jailbreak of over 4,000 prisoners in DRC.

While Kigali denies involvement, UN reports claim it supplies arms and support to the rebels, escalating tensions that led the DRC to cut diplomatic ties.

The DRC government accused Rwanda of using M23 as a proxy to exploit the region's mineral wealth, with Uganda also facing similar allegations.

The withdrawal of East African Community troops has further fueled fears of a wider regional war, as diplomatic efforts falter.

# Judge rules DOGE's USAID dismantling likely violates the Constitution

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A federal judge ruled Tuesday that the dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) likely violated the Constitution and blocked billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from further cuts to the agency.

U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang in Maryland ordered the Trump administration to restore email and computer access to all employees of USAID, including those who were placed on administrative leave.

The lawsuit singled out Musk as a defendant covered by the preliminary injunction, arguing

that he was wielding power the Constitution reserves only for those who win elections or are confirmed by the Senate.

Thousands of people participate in a protest against Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in Washington on March 14, 2025.

Thousands of people participate in a protest against Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in Washington on March 14, 2025. Allison Bailey/NurPhoto/Shutterstock

The order comes in a lawsuit filed by attorneys for USAID

employees and contractors.

Chuang said the evidence suggests that Musk made decisions to shut down USAID's headquarters and website despite the administration's claim that he was merely President Donald Trump's advisor.

Musk's public statements and social media posts demonstrate that he has "firm control over DOGE," the judge concluded.

The judge acknowledged that it's unlikely that USAID is no longer capable of performing some of its statutorily required functions.

# Israeli overnight airstrikes kill over 400 Palestinians, shattering truce deal

By Dave Oludare Oso

Over 400 Palestinians have been reportedly killed by renewed Israeli airstrikes on Gaza overnight, casting major doubt on the ongoing ceasefire deal.

Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the operation had been carried out "to achieve the war objectives set by the political leadership, including the release of all the hostages".

Hamas described the attack as a "blatant violation of all international and humanitarian conventions."

In a statement Netanyahu said the attack had been agreed jointly with Israel's defense minister Israel Katz "after Hamas repeatedly refused to release our hostages and rejected all the proposals it received from the US president's envoy, Steve Witkoff, and from the mediators."

"Israel will, from now on, act against Hamas with increasing military strength," the prime minister's office said.

Israeli soldiers operate at a post on the Israeli side of the border between Israel and Gaza, with the wreckage of the territory in the background, 18 March. Photograph: Amir Cohen/Reuters

The Hamas-run government media



office in the territory called on the international community to "break their silence and take immediate action" to prevent the Israeli attacks, and said rescue operations were being hampered by a lack of fuel.

Israel controls the entry of goods and services into the Gaza Strip, and has been blockading humanitarian aid, having recently also cut off electricity supplies.

Palestinian health ministry officials claimed many of the dead were children, while the Israeli military claimed it hit dozens of what it termed "terror targets".

Access for international journalists to the Gaza Strip has been limited by Israel, and it has not been possible to independently verify the casualty figures being issued during the conflict.

A woman carrying a child reacts as

she identifies a body in the Al-Ahli hospital, 18 March. Photograph: Jihad Alshrafi/AP

In Israel the Hostages and Missing Families Forum criticised the latest move, saying the Israeli government had "chosen to abandon the hostages" adding that "military pressure endangers both the hostages and the soldiers."

59 hostages are believed to still remain in captivity in Gaza, having been seized by Hamas and other groups during the deadly 7 October 2023 attack inside southern Israel, when 251 people are believed to have been abducted. Not all of the remaining hostages are thought by Israeli authorities to be alive.

The conflict in the Middle East has destroyed countless lives and the horrific scenes since 7 October 2023 from Gaza and Israel have haunted millions around the world.

# Tesla shares drop as BYD unveils ultra-fast charger, advanced ev technology

By **Fatimah Idera**

**T**esla shares fell after Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer BYD reportedly unveiled a new ultra-fast charger capable of fully charging a car in just five minutes.

BYD plans to launch vehicles equipped with this technology next month. The company claims that its Super e-Platform provides a range of nearly 250 miles in approximately the same time it takes to refuel a gas-powered car, according to Bloomberg.

The company has yet to respond to requests for comment.

**BYD Shares Soar While Tesla Stock Declines**

Shares of BYD surged to an all-time high in Hong Kong following the announcement. Meanwhile, Tesla's stock dropped more than 5% intraday, falling to around \$224.

Tesla is reportedly planning to roll out a more affordable version of its Model Y SUV in China next year, but concerns over competition and regulatory hurdles have put pressure on its stock.

**Analysts Cut Tesla Price Targets Over Self-Driving and Robotaxi Concerns**

Financial analysts have lowered their forecasts for Tesla, citing concerns over its self-driving technology and robotaxi rollout in China and Europe.



RBC Capital cut its price target for Tesla from \$440 to \$320, citing a worsening outlook for autonomous driving adoption in key markets, according to MarketWatch.

Tesla's Full Self-Driving (FSD) system has yet to receive regulatory approval in China, raising further uncertainties.

Meanwhile, BYD is reportedly working with Chinese AI startup DeepSeek to integrate advanced AI technology into its smart driving system.

According to Visible Alpha, the current analyst consensus target for Tesla is around \$359.

**Tesla Faces Production & Revenue Forecast Cuts**

Investment firm Oppenheimer projects that Tesla will deliver 30,000 fewer vehicles than previously expected and has reduced its fiscal 2025 revenue

projection by 2%, bringing it down to \$97.9 billion.

Tesla shares have struggled in recent weeks, as market confidence in the company's long-term growth wanes amid intensifying competition from Chinese EV makers and global economic uncertainty.

Tesla's stock has been on a downward trajectory, losing nearly half its value since the beginning of the year. It is currently on pace to fall for a ninth consecutive week—its longest losing streak in recent history.

Despite these challenges, Tesla continues to push ahead with its expansion plans, new product launches, and cost-cutting strategies to remain competitive in the evolving EV market.

# Messi out of Argentina's next World Cup qualifiers

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi has not been included in Argentina's squad for their forthcoming World Cup qualifiers against Uruguay and Brazil.

The 37-year-old returned to Miami's starting line-up for their Major League Soccer win over Atlanta United but picked up an injury during Sunday's game.

Inter later confirmed the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner has a "low-grade" injury to his adductor muscle.

Messi was rested for three Miami games before coming off the bench and scoring in last week's Concacaf Champions Cup win at Jamaican side Cavalier.

Messi said in a story on Instagram, external that it was a "shame to miss two such such special qualification games".

"I wanted to be there as always but at the last minute, a minor injury forced me to take a break before playing again," he said.

"But I'll be supporting and cheering from here like a fan."

Argentina can secure qualification for next year's World Cup in this round of games as the holders visit Uruguay and host Brazil.

They lead South America's 10-team qualifying group by five points from Uruguay with six games remaining, with Brazil seven points adrift in fifth.

The top six qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup while the seventh-placed team goes into a play-off.

After 12 rounds, Messi is the top scorer with six goals, taking his overall tally to 112 from 191 international appearances.

Argentina will also be without injured Roma striker Paulo Dybala and River Plate full-back Gonzalo Montiel.

Brazil will be without Messi's former Barcelona team-mate Neymar as a thigh injury has denied the Santos forward, 33, a return to the national team.

# Trippier reveals he took pay cut to join Newcastle

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Newcastle United defender Kieran Trippier has revealed that he accepted a pay cut to join the club from Atlético Madrid, dismissing claims that money was his primary motivation.

Trippier, 34, made this known following Newcastle's 2-1 triumph over Liverpool in the Carabao Cup final on Sunday. Speaking in an interview with CBS Sports, the England international reflected on his decision to return to the Premier League and his belief in Newcastle's project.

## Sacrificing for the Bigger Picture

Trippier's move to Newcastle in January 2022 raised eyebrows, especially since the club was battling relegation at the time. Many speculated that financial incentives played a role in his decision, but the experienced full-back has now clarified his reasons.

"People questioned why Newcastle and why I left Atlético Madrid, but I have no regrets in my career," Trippier said. "When I signed for Newcastle, they were 19th in the league. People thought it was about money, but I actually took less money to come here."

According to Trippier, his decision was influenced by family considerations and a desire to be part of an ambitious project.

"I wanted to come back to the north for my family. When I first arrived at the club, there were questions, but I had worked with the manager before. I knew what he expected and demanded, and I wanted to help the club build," he added.

From Relegation Battle to Trophy Winners



When Trippier arrived at St. James' Park, Newcastle was struggling to stay in the Premier League. However, the club's fortunes changed dramatically under manager Eddie Howe. Trippier, who had previously worked with Howe at Burnley, played a key role in the team's resurgence.

In just two years, Newcastle has gone from fighting relegation to competing for European places and winning silverware. Their victory in the Carabao Cup final marked the club's first major domestic trophy since 1955, a milestone that Trippier is particularly proud of.

"I wanted to be part of this journey. It was never just about me personally but about helping Newcastle grow," he said. "Finally, we have got a winner's medal."

## Leadership and Experience

Trippier's leadership has been invaluable for Newcastle. His experience playing at the highest levels—including winning La Liga with Atlético Madrid, reaching the Champions League final with Tottenham, and featuring in England's

Euro 2020 run—has been crucial in shaping the club's mentality.

As one of the senior players, he has also played a mentorship role for younger teammates, helping them adapt to the demands of elite football.

## What's Next for Newcastle?

With their Carabao Cup triumph, Newcastle has taken a major step forward in their long-term plans. The club, backed by ambitious owners, is aiming to establish itself as a consistent top-four contender in the Premier League.

Trippier remains focused on continuing Newcastle's progress and is confident that the club can achieve even more in the coming years.

"This is just the beginning," he said. "We have built something special here, and I believe we can keep improving."

Newcastle fans will certainly be grateful for Trippier's decision to join the club, as his presence has been instrumental in their transformation from relegation strugglers to trophy winners.

# Arokodare excited about Super Eagles call-up for 2026 WCQ

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



**G**enk striker Tolu Arokodare has expressed his excitement after receiving his first-ever call-up to the Super Eagles for Nigeria's 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Rwanda and Zimbabwe.

The 24-year-old, currently the top scorer in the Belgian Jupiler Pro League with 17 goals, was initially named in the 39-man provisional squad before

making the final 23-man list.

Speaking to NFF TV, Arokodare admitted he was surprised but also confident that his performances would earn him national team recognition.

"I knew it was coming because I was doing pretty well, and I was hoping for it," he said. "Being in the final 23 makes me feel blessed and grateful. It means a lot to represent my country."

The forward, who was among the early arrivals in the Super Eagles' Kigali camp, added that playing for Nigeria is a childhood dream come true.

The Super Eagles will face Rwanda on March 22 before taking on Zimbabwe on March 26 as they continue their push for a place at the 2026 World Cup.

# Osimhen to decide future in April – Galatasaray

## VP Kavukcu

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Galatasaray vice president Abdullah Kavukcu has confirmed that Nigerian striker Victor Osimhen will decide his next career move in April.

Osimhen, currently on loan from Serie A club Napoli, has been a key player for the Turkish Super Lig champions. However, his future remains uncertain, with top European clubs, including Chelsea, Manchester United, and Arsenal, also vying for his signature.

Speaking to Turkish journalist Nevzat Dindar, Kavukcu

revealed: “Osimhen will tell us his decision next month. At the moment, the top five clubs in the world are also interested in him.”

Despite strong competition, Galatasaray remain keen on securing Osimhen on a permanent deal. Kavukcu emphasized the club’s ambition and financial strength to keep the 26-year-old.

“In January, there was talk of his departure, but he stayed. He loves Galatasaray very much. Although we are aiming for the title, we have not yet had any direct discussion with Victor,” he added.

Kavukcu also dismissed the idea that Galatasaray would be unable to retain Osimhen, insisting that the club’s stature makes it an attractive destination for top players.

“Galatasaray are a top club. If it wasn’t so, Victor would not have come. His staying at Galatasaray is not impossible.”

Osimhen’s final decision could shape Galatasaray’s future plans as they aim to strengthen their squad for both domestic and European competitions.