



SENATE: Court reverses self, upholds Natasha's suspension Pg 13

Lagos business etiquette: the dos and don'ts Pg 22 & 23



The New Daily Prime

f @new_daily_prime x @prime_dai11149 @ @new_daily_prime ...your prime source for excellence in journalism

Trump working to reinstate over 24,000 fired federal workers Pg 28



N'Golo Kanté's traditional wedding holds in Mali Pg 35



I am happy to be back with France squad, says Mbappe Pg 36



How the UK's welfare cuts will change claimants' lives Pg 30



ISWAP terrorists execute three Nigerian soldiers in Yobe Pg 17

Trump releases JFK assassination documents Pg 23



Strange disease kills 6 Kebbi varsity students, many hospitalised Pg 21

Natasha calls Senate “secret society” where members are intimidated, silenced

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Suspended Kogi Central Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has made serious allegations against the Nigerian Senate, describing it as a “secret society” where lawmakers are intimidated into silence by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio.

In an interview with the BBC Hausa, Akpoti-Uduaghan claimed that senators are too afraid to voice differing opinions for fear of losing opportunities, privileges, and their ability to speak in the Senate.

Akpoti-Uduaghan further accused the Senate leadership of creating a culture of fear, where any criticism of the Senate President or opposing his views could result in retaliation, including being sidelined from parliamentary activities.

“There is this culture of fear among the senators. If you dare to criticise the Senate President or express a differing opinion, you risk having all opportunities blocked, and you will not be allowed to speak,” she said.

In addition to the claims of intimidation, Akpoti-Uduaghan made explosive allegations of sexual harassment against Senate President Akpabio.

She recounted an incident where she was teased by Akpabio and five other senators for not wearing her wedding ring, with comments that included, “Is there another way of betraying your husband?” and “Your husband seems to be enjoying you... you might be able to twist that beautiful waist of yours.”

According to Akpoti-Uduaghan, the comments were made in a public Senate session, with others laughing along.

When questioned about the validity of her allegations, Akpoti-Uduaghan affirmed that she has evidence to support her claims of misconduct.

She also referenced a previous incident where Akpabio allegedly made advances toward her, suggesting a



pattern of inappropriate behaviour.

The accusations have sparked controversy, with Senate Deputy Majority Leader Senator Onyekachi Nwebonyi vehemently denying the allegations.

Nwebonyi dismissed Akpoti-Uduaghan’s claims, insisting that there was no attempt by the Senate President to harass or intimidate her either privately or during Senate proceedings.

READ ALSO: Senate suspension: FG intervenes, groups root for Natasha, Akpabio

“Natasha’s behaviour in the Senate does not reflect that. There was never a time the Senate President made any attempt to harass Senator Akpoti at his home or made any inappropriate statements in the Senate,” Nwebonyi said.

Nwebonyi also rejected the notion that the Senate functions as a “cult,” where members are silenced or gagged by leadership.

He maintained that the Senate operates as a space for free debate and that Akpoti-Uduaghan’s account was inaccurate.

The conflict between Akpoti-Uduaghan

and the Senate President escalated after she was suspended for six months on March 6, following a heated altercation over a seating arrangement she believed was intended to undermine her.

The suspension was announced after a confrontation between the two, which Akpoti-Uduaghan claimed stemmed from her refusal of Akpabio’s alleged advances.

In the wake of her suspension, Akpoti-Uduaghan escalated her claims to the international stage, lodging a petition with the United Nations’ Inter-Parliamentary Union. She accused the Nigerian Senate of political victimisation and called for international intervention to hold the Senate accountable.

The senator also highlighted a series of punitive measures imposed upon her following her suspension, including withdrawal of security, salary cuts, and a ban from the National Assembly for six months.

The controversy surrounding Akpoti-Uduaghan’s suspension continues to attract national and international attention, as the Kogi senator demands accountability for what she describes as political and gender-based retaliation.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

**EFFECTIVE FROM
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

SIZE	TOTAL RATE
FULL PAGE	372,500.00
HALF PAGE	213,000.00
QUARTER PAGE	106,500.00
14X2	118,000.00
10X6	261,585.50
10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
5X3	66,875.00
5X2	42,916.50
4X4	60,166.50
4X3	36,499.50
4X2	29,333.50
3X3	28,000.00
3X2	17,400.00
2X2	13,000.00
2X1	8,600.00
1X1	4,400.00

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

POLITICAL COLOUR

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

POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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

CORPORATE BLACK & WHITE

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

PUBLIC NOTICE BLACK & WHITE

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

PRODUCT BLACK & WHITE

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

SPECIAL POSITIONS

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

ALLURE RATE

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

PICTURE & CAPTION

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

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

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

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

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

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

2,000.00
 3,750.00
 4,250.00

CONTACT US

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

E-mail Address:
info@newdailyprime.news
 Terms and Conditions apply

ALL RATES ARE VAT INCLUSIVE

State of Emergency: FG deploys soldiers, tanks to Rivers Govt House

By Dave Oludare Oso

Citing the need to prevent further breakdown of law and order, President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday evening declared a state of emergency in Rivers State in a nationwide broadcast.

Consequently, the president suspended the state governor, Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, Mrs Ngozi Odu, and all members of the House of Assembly for an initial six months.

In the nation-wide broadcast, Tinubu announced the nomination of retired Vice Admiral Ibokette Ibas as the Rivers State administrator to steer the affairs of the state.

Meanwhile, soldiers moved into the Rivers Government House in Port Harcourt, a few hours after the declaration.

According to a reliable source, the governor was still in his official residence in the Government House when the troops swarmed over the premises around 9 pm.

The source stated, "Well, as I speak to you now, there are soldiers inside Government House but the governor is in his residence."

Also, an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) was stationed at the entrance of the seat of power in the state overlooking the road.

Several Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs) with full lights, were parked outside the main gate of the Government House along Azikiwe Road in Port Harcourt, at about 9pm.

It could not be ascertained if the governor was about to leave the Government House.

Meanwhile as a result of the unfolding developments, residents and motorists were seen rushing home to their families immediately after the news of the state of emergency filtered in, in many parts of the Port Harcourt metropolis.

People were also seen on the streets discussing the latest issue as some residents expressed dismay over the



announcement and blamed the political actors for what happened.

In his broadcast, the President Tinubu said he was disturbed by the unfolding events in the state, which appeared to have defied political solutions, stalled development and progress and denied the people of the state the dividends of democracy.

What the President said

The president said, "In the circumstance, having soberly reflected on and evaluated the political situation in Rivers State and the Governor and Deputy Governor of Rivers State having failed to make a request to me as President to issue this proclamation as required by section 305(5) of the 1999 Constitution as amended, it has become inevitably compelling for me to invoke the provision of section 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended, to declare a state of emergency in Rivers State with effect from today, 18th March, 2025 and I so do.

"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.

"In the meantime, I hereby nominate Vice Admiral Ibokette 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 clarified that the emergency declaration did not affect the judicial arm of Rivers State, which will continue to function in accordance with its constitutional mandate.

According to him, the Administrator will not make any new laws but is free to formulate regulations as may be found necessary to do his job, but such regulations will need to be considered and approved by the Federal Executive Council and promulgated by the President for the state.

**Continue reading
On next page**

Continue from page 4

Also in attendance were the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu, and other top government officials.

Meanwhile, the just-suspended governor, Fubara has responded to his suspension.

In a statement he personally signed, Fubara called for calm, saying, “We will engage with all relevant institutions to ensure that our democracy remains strong and that Rivers State continues to thrive.”

In the statement titled, “Press Release by the Executive Governor of Rivers State,” the suspended governor blamed the members of the state Assembly loyal to Wike, saying they frustrated all his attempts to comply with the verdict of the Supreme Court.

Fubara said, “My dear Rivers People, I address you today with a deep sense of responsibility and calm, as we navigate this unfortunate moment in our state’s political history.

“Since assuming office as your governor, all my actions and decisions have been guided by my constitutional oath of office and a great sense of duty.

“We prioritised the protection of lives and property and ensured the continuous progress of our dear state.

“Even in the face of the political impasse, we have remained committed to constitutional order and the rule of law, putting the interest of our people above all else.

“This was why, immediately after Mr. President’s intervention to broker peace, we did not hesitate to implement the agreed terms in good faith, including welcoming back commissioners who had previously resigned on their own volition.

“Furthermore, we moved swiftly to comply with the Supreme Court’s

judgement immediately we received the certified true copy of the judgment to return the state to normalcy.

“These steps were taken not for personal gains but to foster peace, unity and stability in our dear State.

“Unfortunately, at every turn, members of the Rivers State House of Assembly frustrated our efforts, thus making genuine peace and progress difficult.

“Our priorities remained the security of lives and property and advancing the well-being and prosperity of Rivers people.

“Yes, we have political disagreements, but good governance had continued, salaries have been paid, and great projects were being executed to move the state forward. Above all, Rivers State is safe, secure and peaceful under our watch.

“At this critical time, I urge all Rivers people to remain peaceful and law-abiding. We will engage with all relevant institutions to ensure that our democracy remains strong and that Rivers State continues to thrive.

“We have always been a resilient people, and we will face this situation with wisdom, patience, and unwavering faith in the democratic process.”

How the trouble started

Fubara and 27 lawmakers loyal to the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, have been involved in a face-off which has heightened tension in the state.

Though the President intervened, the crisis escalated as Fubara, the lawmakers and Wike failed to reach an agreement.

Fubara demolished the state Assembly after it was bombed on October 29, 2023, thus preventing the opposition lawmakers from sitting.

He also presented the 2024 budget before four legislators loyal to him, stating that the pro-Wike lawmakers had defected

from the ruling Peoples Democratic Party to the All Progressives Congress.

However, a Rivers State High Court ruled that the 27 lawmakers remained valid members of the PDP.

On February 28, 2025, the Supreme Court affirmed the judgments of the Court of Appeal and the Federal High Court, both in Abuja, which had earlier declared the acts against the 27 members of the Rivers State House of Assembly members as unlawful and illegal.

A N10m fine was imposed on Fubara to be paid to the assembly and the 27 members who instituted the suit against him.

The Federal High Court had held that the receipt and disbursement of monthly allocations since January last year by the governor was a Constitutional aberration that must not be allowed to continue.

Justice Joyce Abdulmalik who delivered the Federal High Court judgment, had last year issued an order that the presentation of the 2024 budget by Fubara before a four-member Rivers House of Assembly was an affront to the Constitutional provision.

Specifically, the judge had said that Fubara’s action in implementing unlawful budget smacked gross violations of the 1999 Constitution he swore to protect.

The judge had restrained the Central Bank of Nigeria, Accountant General of the Federation, Zenith Bank and Access Bank from further allowing Fubara to access money from the Consolidated Revenue and Federation Account.

Affirming the judgment, the Supreme Court ordered the CBN and the AGF to stop further release of financial allocations to the Rivers State Government with immediate effect.

**Continue reading
On next page**

Continue from page 5

The apex court directed that the order shall be in force until Fubara stopped all his illegal, unlawful and unconstitutional activities.

Specifically, the court said that no money shall be released to the state government until a lawful Appropriation Law is enacted under Amaewhule as the speaker.

Justice Emmanuel Agim, who delivered the judgment, also ordered the 27 lawmakers to resume immediately.

The apex court lambasted the governor for engaging in criminal activity of demolishing the House of Assembly with impunity just to prevent the 27 legislators in the house from sitting to carry out lawful activities.

Fubara in his reaction pledged to comply with the judgment.

Situation worsens as lawmaker plot gov's removal

On Monday, the state Assembly initiated impeachment proceedings against the governor and his deputy.

The Martin Amaewhule-led Assembly served Fubara and Odu with a notice of alleged gross misconduct, signalling an imminent impeachment process.

The notice listing the alleged misconduct sent to the Speaker was a sequel to a letter dated March 14, 2025, signed by 26 members of the

Assembly.

Amaewhule sent the notice in two separate letters he signed on Monday, March 17, 2025 and addressed to the governor and his deputy.

The development heightened the political tension in the state, as some Ijaw groups had threatened a crisis in the region if Fubara is impeached.

The groups- Ijaw National Congress, the Ijaw Youth Council and other groups expressed strong opposition to the potential impeachment of Fubara, who is of Ijaw descent.

They warned that such actions could lead to unrest, emphasising their commitment to defending the governor's mandate and cautioning that his removal might destabilise the region and affect oil production.

Alluding to these developments, Tinubu in his broadcast also cited the Supreme Court judgment which held that 27 members of the House who had allegedly defected "are still valid members of Rivers State House of Assembly and cannot be prevented from participating in the proceedings of that House by the 8th Respondent (that is, the Governor) in cohorts with four members."

Noting the threat by some militants to attack oil facilities, the President disclosed that the security reports made available to him showed that between Monday and Tuesday,

there had been disturbing incidents of vandalization of pipelines by some militants without the governor taking any action to curtail them.

He stated, "Some militants had threatened fire and brimstone against the perceived enemy of the governor who has up till now not disowned them. Apart from that, both the House and the governor have not been able to work together.

"Both of them do not realise that they are in office to work together for the peace and good governance of the state.

"The latest security reports made available to me show that between yesterday (Monday) and today (Tuesday), there have been disturbing incidents of vandalization of pipelines by some militants without the governor taking any action to curtail them.

"I have, of course, given stern orders to the security agencies to ensure the safety of lives of the good people of Rivers State and the oil pipelines.

"With all these and many more, no good and responsible President will standby and allow the grave situation to continue without taking remedial steps prescribed by the Constitution to address the situation in the state, which no doubt requires extraordinary measures to restore good governance, peace, order and security."

Dangote Refinery suspends sale of petrol in Naira

By Dave Oludare Oso

Dangote Petroleum Refinery has announced that it has suspended the sale of petroleum products in naira.

This was announced in a notice sent to petroleum marketers on Wednesday afternoon, NEW DAILY PRIME has learnt.

The company said the decision is temporary, explaining why it took the decision.

“We wish to inform you that, Dangote Petroleum Refinery has temporarily halted the sale of petroleum products in Naira. This decision is necessary to avoid a mismatch between our sales proceeds and our crude oil purchase obligations, which are currently denominated in U.S. dollars.”

“To date, our sales of petroleum products in Naira have exceeded the value of Naira-denominated crude we have received. As a result, we must temporarily adjust our sales



currency to align with our crude procurement currency.

“Our attention has also been drawn to reports on the internet claiming that we are stopping loading due to an incident of ticketing fraud. This is malicious falsehood. Our systems are robust and we have had no fraud issues.

“We remain committed to serving the Nigerian market efficiently and sustainably. As soon as we receive an allocation of Naira-denominated crude cargoes from NNPC, we will promptly resume petroleum product sales in Naira. We appreciate your understanding

and cooperation during this period.”

Recall that the federal government kicked off the Naira-for-crude deal sale with Dangote Refinery in October 2024.

With the deal, Dangote Refinery sold to Nigerian marketers in naira because it buys crude in the local currency through NNPC.

In the past few months, the price of premium motor spirit fell to at least N860 per litre as a price war between Dangote Refinery and NNPC kicked off.

Tinubu swears in Ibas as Rivers administrator

By Friday Omosola

President Bola Tinubu has inaugurated Vice Admiral Ibok Ibas (retd.) as the sole administrator of Rivers State, following his controversial declaration of a state of emergency.

The ceremony, held at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, was attended by top government officials, including Chief of Staff Femi Gbajabiamila, Attorney General of the Federation Lateef Fagbemi, and Presidential Principal Secretary Hakeem Muri-Okunola.

Tinubu's decision to install an administrator comes after he suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara, Deputy Governor Ngozi Odu, and the entire state House of Assembly for an initial six-month period.



The crisis in the state has been simmering for months, driven by a fierce political battle between Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who now serves as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

The rift deepened when 27 state lawmakers defected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC), further destabilizing governance in the resource-rich state.

Defence minister backs state of emergency in Rivers state

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, has voiced strong support for President Bola Tinubu's decision to impose a state of emergency in Rivers State, deeming it an essential step towards restoring stability to the region's turbulent political environment.

In a statement released on Tuesday, March 18, by the Ministry's Director of Information and Public Relations, Matawalle emphasised the significance of this decisive move in addressing the ongoing political crisis, which has hindered the effective governance and welfare of the people of Rivers.

Matawalle reflected on President Tinubu's address regarding the state of emergency, acknowledging the gravity of the political turmoil and the urgent need for intervention.

The minister pointed to the serious consequences of the crisis, which he believes has stifled the state's development and democracy.



The statement further highlighted the controversial demolition of the Rivers State House of Assembly by the state governor, which has left the legislature inoperable for over fourteen months.

Matawalle described this as a key factor contributing to the ongoing political impasse, obstructing the government's ability to function effectively.

Matawalle also referenced the recent Supreme Court ruling, which affirmed the constitutional necessity of a functioning legislature and criticised the governor's actions as

unconstitutional.

The minister expressed concern over the rising incidents of vandalism and threats from militants, reinforcing the need for a coordinated effort to restore peace and security.

He reiterated the Federal Government's commitment to safeguarding citizens and critical infrastructure in the state.

"The Nigerian Military is on high alert to secure government assets and protect public order, Any attempts to disrupt stability or attack government facilities will be met with a firm response from security forces," the statement read.

Matawalle concluded by urging all stakeholders to seize this opportunity for renewed governance, hoping the state of emergency will lead to a more peaceful and democratic Rivers State for the benefit of its residents.

Things to know about the new Rivers administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



President Bola Tinubu has appointed Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas as the Sole Administrator for Rivers State following the suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his deputy, Mrs. Ngozi Odu, for six months.

This move comes in the wake of a state of emergency declared in Rivers to address the ongoing political unrest.

Admiral Ibas, a seasoned military officer with an extensive career in the Nigerian Navy, was previously the 22nd Chief of the Naval Staff, a role he held from 2015 until his retirement in 2021.

His new appointment places him at the helm of governance in the state, where he will oversee efforts to restore order and stability.

Below are things to know about the new administrator:

Born on September 27, 1960, in Nko, Cross River State, Ibas embarked on his military career in 1979 when he enlisted in the Nigerian Defence Academy.

He was commissioned as a sub-lieutenant in 1983 and has since undertaken numerous prestigious training programmes, including courses in Underwater Warfare, Amphibious Warfare, and Defence and Strategic Studies.

Ibas has held various commanding and staff roles throughout his career, both at sea and in the administration of military operations. He served on several ships, including NNS Ruwan Yaro, NNS Obuma, and NNS Aradu, before becoming the commanding officer of the Nigerian Navy Underwater Warfare School.

His other notable positions include Director of Logistics at the Nigerian Navy, Chief of Administration at Naval Headquarters, and Flag Officer Commanding the Western Naval Command.

In addition to his military expertise, Ibas has contributed to national security and maritime affairs, serving as a key advisor on numerous strategic matters.

His leadership in the Nigerian Navy culminated in his appointment as Chief of the Naval Staff in 2015, a position he held for six years.

As the Sole Administrator of Rivers, Admiral Ibas will be tasked with overseeing governance and restoring peace in a state grappling with significant political turmoil.

The region has been in crisis following the governor's suspension and the dissolution of the state legislature, a situation exacerbated by widespread instability and militant activities.

Ibas's extensive leadership experience in high-stakes environments, particularly his track record in managing complex military operations, positions him as a crucial figure in stabilising the state.

From critic to enforcer: Tinubu's U-turn on emergency rule

By Friday Omosola

It is no longer news that President Bola Tinubu has declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, suspending Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, and all elected members of the State House of Assembly for an initial period of six months.

In a nationwide broadcast on Tuesday, Tinubu announced the emergency measure and appointed former Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Ibokette Ibas (retd.), as the administrator to oversee the state's affairs.

The 1999 Constitution, under Section 305, grants the President the power to declare a state of emergency under specific conditions.

However, such a proclamation must be published in the government gazette and submitted to the National Assembly for approval.

A two-thirds majority of the National Assembly is required to validate the declaration, ensuring checks and balances to prevent executive overreach.

Tinubu's decision has sparked widespread criticism, with many arguing that he lacks the constitutional authority to suspend a duly elected governor.

Among those who condemned the move are former Anambra State Governor Peter Obi, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), among others.

Meanwhile, this newspaper gathered that Tinubu is the third president to declare a state of emergency since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999.

His Tuesday proclamation marks the fourth time a sitting president has invoked emergency powers.

History of states of emergency

The first state of emergency in Nigeria was declared in May 2004 by then-President Olusegun Obasanjo in Plateau State, one year into his second term.

Like Tinubu, Obasanjo suspended the governor and the State Assembly, appointing Major General Chris Alli (retd.) as administrator to restore order.

Obasanjo's action followed violent clashes between Muslims and Christians, which led to a breakdown of law and order. He subsequently removed Governor Joshua Dariye, accusing him of failing to contain the violence.



In October 2006, Obasanjo again imposed a state of emergency—this time in Ekiti State—following the controversial impeachment of Governor Ayo Fayose, which plunged the state into chaos.

He suspended Fayose and appointed Brigadier General Adetunji Olurin (retd.) as administrator until stability was restored.

In May 2013, amid the escalating Boko Haram insurgency, then-President Goodluck Jonathan declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states.

Unlike Obasanjo, Jonathan did not suspend the governors or lawmakers but instead deployed additional troops and imposed curfews to curb insurgent activities.

Once opposed, now in favour

A resurfaced newspaper clipping shared by ArchivingNG on X shows an excerpt from 'The Comet' quoting Tinubu as condemning Obasanjo's 2004 suspension of Dariye, calling it illegal.

Tinubu was among the political figures who fiercely opposed Obasanjo's move, arguing that it set a dangerous precedent.

Similarly, Tinubu, as leader of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), criticised Jonathan in 2013 for allegedly using the state of emergency as a tool to weaken elected governments in opposition-controlled states ahead of his re-election bid.

In an opinion piece published by Premium Times on May 15, 2013, titled 'Jonathan Bares His Fangs, By Bola Ahmed Tinubu', he accused Jonathan of intimidating and emasculating the governors of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa.

Tinubu warned that Nigeria was witnessing a dangerous trend in governance, describing

the move as a deliberate attempt to subvert constitutional democracy.

A decade later, Tinubu now finds himself championing the very measure he once opposed.

His article read thus: "The body language of the Jonathan administration leads any keen watcher of events with the unmistakable conclusion of the existence of a surreptitious but barely disguised intention to muzzle the elected governments of these states for what is clearly a display of unpardonable mediocrity and diabolic partisanship geared towards 2015.

"Borno and Yobe states have been literally under armies of occupation with the attendant excruciating hardship experienced daily by the indigenes and residents of these areas. This government now wants to use the excuse of the security challenges faced by the Governors to remove them from the states considered hostile to the 2015 PDP/Jonathan project.

"Let me be quick to say that this administration will be setting in motion a chain of events the end of which nobody can predict. Experience has shown clearly that actions such as this one under consideration often give root to radical ideologies and extremist tendencies, a direct opposite of the intended outcome of unwarranted and unintelligent meddlesomeness.

"The present scenario playing out in the country reminds one of the classical case of a mediocre craftsman who continually blames the tools of his trade for his serial failure but refuses to look at his pitiable state to adjust.

**Continue reading
On next page**

Cont from page 10

“It has become crystal clear, even to the most incurable optimist, that the country is adrift. That the ship of the Nigerian state is rudderless is clearly evident in the consistent and continual attacks ferociously executed by elements often referred to as the insurgents in some northern states of the federation, particularly Borno and Yobe states respectively.

“Indeed, no part of the country is immune from the virulent but easy attacks, veritable indices of a failing state. Unfortunately, the tenuous and uncoordinated approach adopted by this government betrays a grossly incompetent disposition which stands at variance with current realities in the country, nay the international community where acts of terrorism are engaged and contained.

“No Governor of a state in Nigeria is the Chief Security Officer. Putting the blame on the Governors, who have been effectively emasculated, for the abysmal performance of the government at the centre which controls all these security agencies, smacks of ignorance and mischief.

“Terrorist acts are perpetrated routinely and the government at the centre appears incapable of stemming the tide of the horrendous crimes unleashed on the hapless populace. The considerable ease with which lives and property are destroyed daily should excite deep introspection on the part of a government truly desirous of finding a lasting solution.

“The Constitution provides that the safety and welfare of citizens shall be the primary purpose of having that structure of any political leadership in the first instance. This Government, through acts of omission and commission, has fallen far short of expectations. It actively encourages schisms and all manner of divisive tendencies for parochial expediency. Ethnicity and religion become handy weapons of domination. Things have never been this bad.

“The response to the pervasive chaos in the Northern region of the country has been militarisation, mass arrests and extra-judicial killings by the Joint Task Force,

JTF, a convenient euphemism for an army of occupation seemingly set loose on the people of the localities concerned. The tenor of the State of Emergency declared by the Federal Government yesterday portends danger for the polity. The full militarisation of security operations in these states will compound the already tense situation.

“Both local and international media are awash with news of reckless attitudes of the invading forces. The fact that security operatives are killed cheaply and reprisals from the state find expression in organised pogroms in the immediate communities is sure evidence of a government which lacks the basic understanding to appreciate the enormity of the current security challenges. If development is about the people, all measures put in place for the sustenance and maintenance of the super-structure of the society must take into cognisance local contents.

“It is evident from the grim experiences in recent times that this government has failed, or does not know that it must avail itself of the benefits accruable from an exchange of ideas and notes on the latest in terms of technology and human resources among nations of the modern world, especially those which have been fighting terrorist organisations over the years, on the most effective mode of combating this menace. Technologically advanced countries of the world will never discard the idea of the need for the establishment of an effective local intelligence outfit.

“Our suggestions along this path have always been met with suspicion and acerbic criticisms from both the informed and the ignorant alike. A government which stoutly defends its opposition to the decentralisation of the police force from its present over-centralised command structure is already experimenting with all manner of means patently extra-legal.

“The massacres of local communities attendant upon the attacks on security agents by unknown elements will further alienate the people who should, ordinarily, partner with the government in securing their immediate environments. An army which invades a community maiming, raping and

killing defenceless civilians will end up radicalising the youths whose parents and young ones have been wiped out most cowardly and recklessly.

“This government should concentrate more on encouraging the development of local intelligence which will, inexorably, lead to the practice of true federalism. Adopting the use of excessive force against those perceived as harbouring terrorists does not portray this government as possessing the wherewithal to find abiding solutions to the lingering security challenges.

“The President’s pronouncement, which seeks to abridge or has the potential of totally scuttling the constitutional functions of Governors and other elected representatives of the people, will be counterproductive in the long run. A State of Emergency already exists in the states where JTF operates. Residents of these communities live in constant fear. Their rights are violated with impunity under the guise of searching for terrorists in their respective domains.

“Hiding under some nebulous claims which border on the intractability of the security challenges posed by Boko Haram or some acclaimed traditionalists who have killed some policemen to render ineffective the constitutional powers vested in elected Governors and other representatives of the people, perceived as not amenable to manipulation for the 2015 project amounts to reducing serious issues bordering on the survival of the country to partisan politics.

“Let all those who love this country genuinely advise the federal government not to tinker with the mandates of these Governors under any guise. It is a potentially destructive path to take.

“If the security of a society is about the protection of lives and property of the citizenry, the involvement of the people is a sine qua non to effective intelligence gathering. Any measures put in place which alienate the people, in particular their elected representatives, should be considered as fundamentally defective by every right thinking person in the country.”

NBA slams Tinubu over Rivers emergency rule, calls gov's suspension unconstitutional

By Helen Okechukwu

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has strongly criticized President Bola Tinubu over his declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State and the suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara and other elected officials.

The NBA condemned the move as unconstitutional and a dangerous precedent that undermines Nigeria's democracy.

In a statement issued on 18 March, and signed by its president, Mazi Osigwe, SAN, the NBA asserted that the President lacks the constitutional authority to unilaterally remove or suspend an elected governor and lawmakers under the guise of emergency rule.

Tinubu's Action Sparks Constitutional Crisis

The NBA warned that Tinubu's decision violates Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution, which governs the declaration of a state of emergency.

While the President can declare an emergency, the NBA emphasized that the Constitution does not grant him the power to dissolve a duly elected government.

The association insisted that only constitutional and legal mechanisms should be used to resolve political tensions.

"The purported removal of Governor Fubara, his deputy, and members of the Rivers State House of Assembly is therefore unconstitutional, unlawful, and a dangerous affront to our nation's democracy," Osigwe stated. "Any such action is an unconstitutional encroachment on democratic governance and the autonomy of state governments."

Political Tensions Do Not Justify Emergency Rule

The association questioned whether the



crisis in Rivers State meets the legal requirements for a state of emergency. Section 305(3) of the Constitution allows for emergency rule only in cases of war, external aggression, natural disasters, or a complete breakdown of law and order.

The NBA stressed that political conflicts and legislative disagreements do not justify such extreme measures.

"Political disagreements, legislative conflicts, or executive-legislative tensions do not constitute a justification for emergency rule. Such conflicts should be resolved through legal and constitutional mechanisms, including the judiciary, rather than executive fiat," the statement added.

However, the NBA has urged the National Assembly to reject any attempt to ratify the suspension of elected officials, stating that under Section 305(2), a state of emergency must receive legislative approval within two days if the National Assembly is in session, or ten days if it is not.

The NBA warned lawmakers against setting a precedent that could enable future abuses of power.

The crisis in Rivers State has drawn the

attention of civil society groups and international observers, with concerns that Tinubu's actions could damage Nigeria's democratic reputation.

The NBA called on the judiciary, human rights organizations, and foreign allies to closely monitor the situation.

"We call on all relevant authorities to act in accordance with the law and the best interest of the country. Nigeria's democracy must be protected at all costs, and the Constitution must be upheld as the supreme legal authority in all circumstances.

As tensions rise, legal experts anticipate a court challenge to determine the constitutionality of Tinubu's actions.

"The NBA remains committed to upholding the Constitution, defending democratic governance, and ensuring that the rule of law prevails in Nigeria.

"A state of emergency is an extraordinary measure that must be invoked strictly within constitutional limits. The removal of elected officials under the pretext of emergency rule is unconstitutional and unacceptable.

SENATE: Court reverses self, upholds Natasha's suspension

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Federal High Court in Abuja has reversed its earlier order nullifying the Senate's suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

Reversing the court's March 4 order, which had declared any action taken against Natasha during the suit's pendency null and void, Justice Obiora Egwuatu ruled in favour of the Senate's application.

Justice Egwuatu initially granted Natasha's five reliefs, including Order Number Four, rendering any Senate actions against her ineffective.

The ruling came after her counsel, Sanusi Musa, SAN, moved an ex-parte motion marked FHC/ABJ/CS/384/2025.

In the suit, Natasha sued the Clerk of the National Assembly, the Senate, Senate President Godswill Akpabio, and Senator Neda Imasuem, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges, and Code of Conduct.

She sought an interim injunction restraining the Senate from investigating her alleged misconduct during the February 20 plenary, which led to her suspension.

However, through its lawyer, Chikaosolu Ojukwu, SAN, the Senate challenged the ex-parte order on March 17, arguing that Order Number Four was vague and went beyond the court's jurisdiction.

Ojukwu contended that the order prevented the Senate from carrying out its legislative duties, which could lead to a constitutional crisis.

"The said Order No. 4 as granted effectively restrains the Senate from conducting any of its legislative duties," Ojukwu argued.



He stated that enforcing such an order would violate the doctrine of separation of powers under Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution.

He further argued that the court had been misled into granting an "interlocutory" order and should not have been issued before hearing from all parties.

Other defence lawyers, including Charles Yoila (for the Clerk of the National Assembly), Kehinde Ogunwumiju, SAN (for Akpabio), and Umeh Kalu, SAN (for Imasuen), supported Ojukwu's position.

However, Natasha's lawyer, Michael Numa, SAN, described the argument as a conspiracy against her.

He insisted that the court had the power to hold the Senate accountable for violating its directive.

"This is an invitation to anarchy, my lord," he said, urging the court to dismiss the Senate's application.

Despite Numa's objections, Justice Egwuatu ruled in favour of the defence and vacated Order Number Four. The case was adjourned to March 25 to hear all pending applications.

Following the March 4 order, the Senate proceeded with Natasha's six-month suspension. She later filed a contempt charge, arguing that the suspension constituted a "wilful disobedience" of the subsisting court order served on the defendants on March 5.

The dispute between Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Senate President Godswill Akpabio escalated after she accused him of sexual harassment.

During a heated Senate session, she confronted Akpabio over the alleged misconduct, leading to a tense exchange. The situation worsened when she was referred to the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges, and Code of Conduct for alleged misconduct related to the incident.

The committee's findings resulted in her suspension, which she challenged in court.

Meanwhile, the court's reversal means that any consequences of Natasha's suspension, including her removal from Senate proceedings, stand until further legal action is taken.

Tinubu meets Rivers state administrator Ibas after emergency declaration

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**



Just one day after declaring a state of emergency in Rivers State, President Bola Tinubu has met with Vice Admiral Ibok-Étè Ibas, the newly appointed sole administrator tasked with overseeing the state's governance.

Ibas arrived at the Presidential Villa at approximately 12:48 pm (local time) for the crucial meeting, which comes amid a tense political crisis in the oil-rich state.

On Tuesday, March 18, Tinubu declared the emergency measure, suspending Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, Mrs. Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for an initial period of six months.

In a national broadcast, the President cited prolonged political instability, constitutional breaches, and security threats as the main reasons for the

drastic decision.

The crisis in Rivers State has resulted from an escalating power struggle between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who is now the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

The resulting deadlock has paralysed the state's governance, with no clear resolution in sight.

As part of his emergency declaration, President Tinubu appointed Ibas, who served as Chief of Naval Staff from 2015 to 2021 under former President Muhammadu Buhari, as the administrator to restore order.

Tinubu further clarified that the judiciary in Rivers State would remain unaffected by the emergency rule and continue to function as mandated by the Constitution.

"I have soberly reflected on and evaluated the political situation in Rivers State, "The governor and deputy governor of Rivers State have failed to make a request to me as President to issue this proclamation, and it has become inevitably compelling for me to invoke section 305 of the Constitution to declare a state of emergency in Rivers State," Tinubu said in his broadcast.

The President's declaration has received mixed reactions, with some applauding the move as necessary for restoring peace, while others criticise it as an overreach.

In the wake of the declaration, Ibas's role is seen as pivotal in stabilising the state and bringing about much-needed peace.

The former naval chief, with his extensive leadership experience, is now tasked with managing the state's affairs until normalcy is restored.

FG to release Rivers allocation to administrator amid emergency rule

By Friday Omosola

The Federal Government (FG) has announced that Rivers State's allocation from the Federation Account will be directed to the state's Administrator, retired Vice Admiral Ibok-Étè Ibas.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Presidential Villa in Abuja on Wednesday, the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, defended President Bola Tinubu's decision to impose a state of emergency in Rivers State.

He described the intervention as a necessary step to prevent the state from descending into chaos.

Fagbemi also dismissed speculations linking the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and former Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, to the political turmoil that led to the emergency declaration.

Addressing concerns about the disbursement of federal funds to the state, the Minister clarified that the allocation would be made available to Ibas upon request.

READ ALSO: Rivers State of Emergency: Unconstitutional,



reckless, says Peter Obi

“Given the exceptional circumstances, it is appropriate for the funds to be released through the Administrator,” Fagbemi stated.

Justifying the President's action, he argued that Tinubu's intervention was neither premature nor excessive, emphasising that multiple attempts had been made to resolve the crisis before the emergency declaration.

“Would it have been better to wait until the situation became irreparable? The President acted at the right time, after exhausting all avenues for reconciliation,” he said.

On Tuesday, President Tinubu announced a six-month emergency rule in Rivers State, suspending Fubara, his deputy Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the State House of Assembly.

The crisis in Rivers State stems from a fierce political standoff between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, which had effectively stalled governance in the oil-rich state.

To stabilize the situation, the President appointed Ibas as the interim Administrator to oversee state affairs until normal governance structures can be restored.

FG defends Tinubu's state of emergency in Rivers, calls it timely intervention

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Federal Government has defended President Bola Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State, calling it a timely move aimed at preventing a potential crisis in the state.

The Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, made the statement on Wednesday, March 19, while addressing State House correspondents at the Aso Rock Villa in Abuja.

"We are about two years into the administration in the state, Now, when do you think the President should have intervened? Should it have been when everything had been destroyed? I don't think so," Fagbemi said.

He added, "I believe the President has acted decisively. He has given all the parties involved ample opportunity to resolve the issues. Before this, he had tried to mediate and bring them together."

On Tuesday, March 18, Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, suspending Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for an initial six-month period.

In a national broadcast, Tinubu cited



prolonged political instability, constitutional breaches, and security concerns as the driving factors behind the declaration.

The crisis, which has brought governance in the oil-rich state to a standstill, stems from a long-running power struggle between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, who is now the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory.

As part of the emergency measures, the President also appointed Vice Admiral Ibok-Étè Ibas (retd.) as the sole administrator of Rivers State. Ibas, who served as Chief of Naval Staff from 2015 to 2021 under former President Muhammadu Buhari, is tasked with overseeing the

state's affairs until normalcy is restored.

Tinubu explained, "Having carefully assessed the political situation in Rivers State, and considering that the governor and deputy governor did not request the proclamation as required by section 305(5) of the 1999 Constitution, I was left with no choice but to invoke section 305 of the Constitution to declare a state of emergency in the state with effect from March 18, 2025."

The President also assured that the judiciary in Rivers State would remain unaffected by the emergency, continuing to function as per its constitutional mandate.

EFCC arrests Bauchi Accountant General for alleged 70bn fraud

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Accountant General of Bauchi State, Sirajo Jaja, has been arrested by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over allegations of financial misappropriation amounting to ₦70 billion.

Jaja was apprehended in Abuja on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, alongside Aliyu Abubakar, an operator of Jafad Resources Enterprise, an unlicensed Bureau de Change (BDC), and Sunusi Ibrahim Sambo, a Point of Sale (PoS) operator.

The anti-hraft agency said the arrests are part of an ongoing investigation into alleged money laundering, diversion of public funds, and financial misconduct.



The EFCC has also extended its probe to Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, concerning the case.

Further investigations are expected to reveal more details about the alleged

fraud. The EFCC said investigations showed that cash withdrawal of ₦59 billion had been made through various bank accounts opened and operated by the Accountant General on behalf of the state government.

The money was allegedly moved to Abubakar and Sambo, who in turn made cash payments to party agents and associates of the governor.

The BDC operator, Abubakar, earlier jumped bail and has now been rearrested.

EFCC Spokesman, Dele Oyewale, confirmed the arrest.

ISWAP terrorists execute three Nigerian soldiers in Yobe

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

In a distressing piece of news, Boko Haram-backed Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), formerly known as Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād, has released a video showing the execution of three Nigerian soldiers.

According to SaharaReporters, in part of the video, the defenceless and hooded soldiers were shot in the head by the Boko Haram-backed insurgents.

Reports have it that the incident occurred on March 15th, 2025 in Yobe State, North East Nigeria.

The soldiers were said to have been captured in Kamuya and Azare area of the state.

The video showed the three men kneeling in a field and introducing themselves as members of the Nigerian security forces before masked men in fatigues opened fire on them.

Since the death of JAS leader, Abubakar Shekau, ISWAP has been consolidating its grip in locations around Lake Chad.



The sect's membership has swollen with the defection of hundreds of Boko Haram fighters under Shekau.

The Nigerian Army has repeatedly claimed that insurgency had been largely defeated and frequently underplays any

losses.

The terror group has caused over 100,000 deaths and displaced millions of people mainly in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

Despite opposition's provocative act, Rivers secured under me - Fubara

By Alade Adisa

Suspended Governor of Rivers State, Sir Simi Fubara, said despite unwarranted provocation and machinations by those opposed to him to cause trouble in the state, it has been safe, secured and peaceful under his watch. He has also condemned the imposition of the state of emergency in the state. He made the claims in a statement he personally endorsed on Wednesday.

Fubara in the statement he personally signed said: "I address you today with a deep sense of responsibility and calm, as we navigate this unfortunate moment in our state's political history.

"Since assuming office as your Governor, all my actions and decisions have been guided by my constitutional oath of office and a great sense of duty.

"We prioritized the protection of lives and property and ensured the continuous progress of our dear State.

"Even in the face of the political impasse, we have remained committed to constitutional order and the rule of law, putting the interest of our people above all else.

"This was why, immediately after Mr. President's intervention to broker peace, we did not hesitate to implement the agreed terms in good faith, including welcoming



back commissioners who had previously resigned on their own volition.

"Furthermore, we moved swiftly to comply with the Supreme Court's judgement immediately we received the certified true copy of the judgement to return the state to normalcy.

"These steps were taken not for personal gains but to foster peace, unity and stability in our dear State."

Fubara regretted that in spite of all his efforts to implement all terms of agreement for peace and the Supreme Court judgement that the state assembly under the watch of Hon. Martin Amaewhule remained recalcitrant.

He said: "Unfortunately, at every turn, members of the Rivers State House of Assembly frustrated our efforts, thus making genuine

peace and progress difficult.

"Our priorities remained the security of lives and property and advancing the well-being and prosperity of Rivers people.

"Yes, we have political disagreements, but good governance had continued, salaries have been paid, and great projects were being executed to move the State forward. Above all, Rivers State is safe, secure and peaceful under our watch.

"At this critical time, I urge all Rivers people to remain peaceful and law-abiding. We will engage with all relevant institutions to ensure that our democracy remains strong and that Rivers State continues to thrive.

"We have always been a resilient people, and we will face this situation with wisdom, patience, and unwavering faith in the democratic process."

S/South group urges youth to remain patriotic citizens; calls for Wike sack

By Helen Okechukwu

To avert security unrest in the state, the National President of the South South Youth Initiative (SSYI), Mr Oscar Imeabe, has beckoned on Rivers State youths to adhere to law and order as the political turmoil continues to unfold.

In an interview session held on Wednesday, Imeabe, who is also the spokesperson for the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), demanded the vacation of Nyesom Wike, the Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), from office.

He alleged that President Bola Tinubu and the FCT minister were responsible for the crisis witnessed in the state.

During the interview, Imeabe called Tinubu to urgently withdraw the state of emergency declared in the state, noting that the attack on oil wells may not have been executed by the ex-militant group.

Recall that after the explosion that hit the Trans Niger Pipeline located at the borders of the Kpor and Bodo communities in the Gokana Local Government Area (LGA) on 17 March, another explosion occurred on 18 March at the Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni (ONELGA) pipeline, raising security concerns.

Imeabe said, "With the current political crisis that is taking place in Rivers State, I seriously won't like to attribute the recent pipeline explosions in Rivers State or the Niger Delta to the ethnic nationalities or the ex-militant groups that actually made some threats.

Read Also: Akpabio visits Wike amid Rivers state crisis

"A lot of youths have made some threats; some NGOs and civil society organisations also made threats, but none of these are attributed to or related to the recent explosion that has taken place.

He described the attack on the oil wells as a calculated attempt by Tinubu and the former governor of Rivers State, Wike, recalling the explosion which occurred at Kalabari, which took about two months to bring the fire under control, and questioned the time of extinguishing the



Gokana explosion.

"Going by what happened in Bodo yesterday, I can boldly say that the explosion that took place in Bodo was a calculated attempt by Mr President and Nyesom Wike to call for a state of emergency in Rivers State.

"An explosion took place in Kalabari; it took more than two months to stop the fire. Till today, it took months to stop the fire, but the Bodo explosion in the Trans-Niger Pipeline was just five minutes after Shell arrived in that vicinity that the fire was stopped."

While explaining the significant impact of the explosion, the SSYI president disassociates the incident from the threat made by ex-militants, CBOs, youth groups or pressure groups in the state or Niger Delta; calls for an in-depth investigation should be carried out.

He added, "It is obvious that the enemies of Rivers State can also take undue advantage of this particular circumstance, just like the state of emergency can also be a litmus test for what has happened.

"Was there any need for the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State? Go to Borno State where people are visiting. I can also recall vividly when the life of Hope Uzodinma was threatened; some hoodlums got into his house and attacked his private and official vehicles, yet a state

of emergency was not declared in Imo State even when the governor's life was threatened. Even here in the Niger Delta, a lot has happened, but a state of emergency was not declared."

Speaking on the alleged biases over the suspension of Governor Fubara, Imeabe said, "If Tinubu is fair about suspending the governor, why didn't he go further to suspend the perpetrator of the crisis that is taking place in the state, like Nyesom Wike? Why did he refuse to suspend the FCT minister?"

"Several calls have been made in Asaba, Warri, Bayelsa and on the East-West Road, people protested, calling on Mr president to sack the FCT Minister but he didn't see the need.

Emphasising more on the Rivers crisis, he stated, "I want to say that Mr President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Nyesom Wike, the FCT Minister, are responsible for this level of devastation and negative impact that we are getting from what is going on in Rivers State, and it's so sad. Mr President has caused us a lot of economic hardship, and he is giving us more hardship.

"How can an elected democratic president suspend a democratically elected governor? He does not have the constitutional power to suspend a democratically elected governor; you don't have."

Akpabio visits Wike amid Rivers state crisis

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**



Senate President Godswill Akpabio paid a visit to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, at his Abuja residence on Tuesday evening, just hours after President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State.

The visit was confirmed by Wike's spokesman, Lere Olayinka, who shared the news on X (formerly Twitter). Olayinka posted, "The Uncommon Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, during his visit to the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, in his residence today."

At the time of reporting, no official statement had been released regarding the specific agenda of the meeting.

However, Akpabio's visit came at a pivotal moment, following President Tinubu's declaration that suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, and all members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for six months.

The decision, announced in a national broadcast on Tuesday, was justified by Tinubu due to rising political tensions and a breakdown in governance in Rivers State.

The President warned that if the crisis was left unresolved, it could threaten national stability and economic interests.

The political turmoil in Rivers State has largely been driven by a power struggle between Wike, the former governor of the state, and Fubara, his former ally.

Wike, now serving as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, played a significant role in Fubara's rise to the governorship. However, their relationship soured over control of the state's political machinery, leading to months of intense political infighting and defections.

Wike, despite no longer being governor, continues to wield considerable influence in Rivers State, with many of his loyalists holding key positions in the state assembly. His factional rift with Fubara has resulted in two parallel camps within the state's leadership, making it increasingly difficult to maintain political cohesion.

Though the purpose of Akpabio's visit to Wike remains unclear, the timing of the meeting has sparked speculation that it may be linked to the ongoing crisis in Rivers. As the political landscape continues to evolve, it's likely that the meeting could have been an attempt to gauge Wike's position or seek his input on the situation in his home state.

As the federal government works to restore order in Rivers, all eyes will be on how key political figures like Wike and Akpabio navigate the fallout from the state of emergency and the broader implications for the region.

Strange disease kills 6 Kebbi varsity students, many hospitalised

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

An outbreak of a strange disease at Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, have reportedly left at least six students dead, with several others currently hospitalised.

Some students of the university, who spoke on the condition of anonymity since the institution has not made an official statement, revealed that four students mysteriously died last week, while another passed away on Sunday after falling sick overnight.

The students expressed frustration over what they described as the authorities' inaction.

"The situation is getting worse, yet the school management has not taken any decisive action to protect us," a student said.

"We informed the school management about the outbreak earlier, but they showed no concern. Students became unconscious within a short period, and some complained of severe neck pain. We don't know the exact number of affected students, but we have recorded more than six deaths," the student added.

Another student disclosed that vaccines arrived on campus just the previous day, and students had begun receiving them.

However, he noted that the outbreak was not limited to students alone.

"A local friend told me that more than 10 people have been dying daily in the past two weeks," the student claimed.

According to SaharaReporters, yet another student said that despite the alarming situation, the school has yet to formally address students.

"The Students' Union Government (SUG) has also remained silent, apart from sending condolence messages for the deceased," he said.

A 400-level student lamented the worsening situation, saying, "We are not safe here anymore. I have lost two of my classmates to this outbreak. We want the school to be closed until a solution is found. Moreover, the healthcare system in this state is in terrible condition."

He explained that patients at both the Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Birnin Kebbi and the Teaching Hospital in Kalgo, Kebbi, are being attended to in the hospital reception due to a lack of bed space.



There are also complaints of a lack of electricity to run medical tests at the federal medical centre.

"Our SUG is just a figurehead; they are not doing anything. If possible, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) should intervene on our behalf."

He said that a student identified as Abdurraheem Abdul Ganiy was reportedly attended to at the reception of FMC Birnin Kebbi before he passed away Tuesday night due to the unavailability of hospital beds.

Meanwhile, in a statement released on Wednesday, the university's Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mustapha Mansur Ango, advised students to take precautionary measures.

The statement read, "To the entire University staff and students, prevention is better than cure. Sleep in well-ventilated areas, keep your surroundings clean, wash your hands regularly, and maintain good hygiene."

"Sleep in well-ventilated areas. If you experience headache, catarrh or neck stiffness, visit the university clinic immediately."

However, the university management has yet to provide further details on the outbreak or measures being taken to address the situation.

Meanwhile, the Students' Union Government (SUG) of Kebbi State

University of Science and Technology, Aliero, expressed condolences over the passing of Olosoji Samuel Timileyin, a 400-level student in the Department of Architecture.

In a statement released by the Chief Press Secretary to the Union President, Comrade Abdulrahman Ibrahim, the SUG revealed that the deceased was transported to the Federal Medical Centre in Birnin Kebbi for treatment without the necessary consent or prior awareness of the university's relevant staff or the Students' Union Government.

"We wish to formally notify the esteemed Student body of the Kebbi State University of the tragic passing of Olosoji Samuel Timileyin, a dedicated 400-level student in the Department of Architecture. Samuel, who resided off-campus in Aliero, experienced a serious illness that necessitated medical attention. His relatives took the step to transport him to the Federal Medical Centre in Birnin Kebbi for treatment; however, this was done without the necessary and prior consent and awareness of the university's relevant staff neither the Students' Union Government.

"In the wake of this heart-wrenching loss, the Students' Union Government feels the weight of grief deeply and extends its most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Olosoji Samuel Timileyin. President Imamu has conveyed the sentiments of the entire student body, emphasising the profound tragedy that accompanies the loss of a young person with much potential ahead of him.

Lagos business etiquette: the dos and don'ts

By Aanu Adeoye

How to navigate everything from greetings to meetings to dress code in the Nigerian megacity

So you have decided to come to Lagos for a business trip. Why? But seriously, welcome.

You may have heard that Lagos can be chaotic at the best of times. That is true. It's an inevitability when the country's smallest state by land area also holds its largest urban population of more than 20mn. There are more people in Lagos, a tiny strip of land surrounded by water, than in London and New York combined. Pack sunscreen — the sun really shines here. The heat and humidity can leave fairer-skinned people looking rather red.

The first thing to know is that Lagos is not for the faint of heart. Many visitors have opined that the airport, particularly the old international terminal that is now thankfully undergoing some renovations, can often be a taste of what is to come. The airport also holds a valuable lesson: you must exercise patience, lots of it, at every turn in Lagos.

Outside the airport, a sprawling city with snarling traffic awaits. Lagos is a mirror on wider Nigerian society where wealth, often gaudy and sometimes extreme, lives side by side with glaring poverty. If you, dear reader, are visiting Lagos for a business trip, it's likely that you will see floating slum communities as you are being chauffeured to gleaming towers in the business district of Victoria Island or the fancy private members' clubs that dot Ikoyi and its environs.

Anyway, welcome once again. And bear in mind that the only universal code in Lagos is that there are almost no rules and everything is being made up as we go along. If you're a stickler for order or time, as I often am, that may be incredibly frustrating and you need to learn to roll with the punches. But if you're a freewheeling soul not opposed to fun, you've found the perfect city. If there's one thing Lagos knows how to do, it's how to have a good time. After



all, it is the home of *Detty December*, the month-long season of fun and good vibes that marks the end of every year and brings in the Nigerian diaspora and other nationalities too.

“The only universal code in Lagos is that there are almost no rules and everything is being made up as we go along“

Lagos is also the capital of *Afrobeats*, the music genre that has taken the world by storm and got people dancing across the globe, from Johannesburg to London, New York and Australia. As the singer *Banky W* noted in his seminal 2009 hit “*Lagos Party*”, “*Ain't no party like a Lagos party*”. He's right.

Greetings

Hugs with people you barely know are rare (plentiful when you do know them); French-style kisses on the cheek are non-existent. A firm handshake works in most business settings in Lagos, regardless of the gender of the person on the receiving end. Like the rest of the country it inhabits, Lagos has a big culture of loudly cosplaying respect, so a bow of sorts while shaking hands, especially with a much older person, goes a long way. It costs you nothing as an outsider and garners you a

lot of goodwill. There are no downsides to this.

In meetings in restaurants, expect to hear a lot of “*Sir*” and “*Ma*” from wait staff, who pepper every interaction with one or the other. I find most of it overbearing, but these are the unwritten customs of the land. Never call anyone by their first name unless they specifically ask that you do. And even then, exercise restraint. It's usually better to address people as “*Mr*”, “*Mrs*” or “*Ms*”. Most people here use an honorific; you will almost certainly meet a “*Chief*” or “*Dr*”. Call them “*Chief*” and you're halfway to earning their trust. Respect — or, rather, signalling respect — is a big part of Nigerian culture. Go against it at your own risk.

Meetings

Schedule your meetings, but be fully aware that start times are a suggestion in Lagos rather than a binding agreement. If you're 10 minutes late, there's still a very good chance you're early. But always be punctual, and plan ahead on how to beat traffic.

**Continue reading
on next page**

Cont from page 22

You may have to wait. It's not unusual to be kept kicking your heels for 30 minutes or more, especially if you're meeting a "Big Man".

After the exchange of pleasantries, there will be chit-chat about how you're finding Lagos, questions about your family, how the wife/husband and kids are faring back home. Do not fret; your interlocutor is not gathering intel for nefarious purposes. They're trying to get you to relax before delving into the matter of the day. Indulge in it.

Phones will ring during meetings. Your host will almost certainly interrupt a meeting to answer one of their many phones at some point. Bring a business card and hand one out to everyone on the table. It matters little that they may already have your details.

Most importantly, do not come empty-handed: bring "gist". What is gist, I hear you ask? In Nigerian parlance, it's laid-back chatter or gossip, which can be sprinkled throughout your meeting or conversation. You may have come to discuss an oil or telecoms deal, but you will also engage in this dissemination of information of the non-public variety — about a senator, say, who has secured a dodgy contract, or an executive out of favour with the authorities. A London-dwelling friend of mine who regularly visits Lagos for work tells me her meetings are incomplete without this ritual. It's always better if the element of your gist is true, but do not be deterred by sharing that third- or fourth-hand scandalous story you picked up from another meeting. The city runs on gist.

Dress Code

Look smart and come properly

dressed. This is important. People here often use a person's clothes as a proxy for their wealth or standing in society. Mark Zuckerberg's bland T-shirts would do him no favours here. I always advise men to ditch suits if possible in favour of Oxford shirts and trousers, because the heat is stifling and searing. But I am a journalist who is not necessarily bound to the rules of business attire. If you're a man, wear a suit — you may or may not accessorise with a tie. Dresses are typically fine for women.

In the right circumstances, especially if it's in the evening, do not be afraid to wear "trad", as traditional African attires are called in the street lingo. Wearing this as a foreigner, either as a person of colour or an oyinbo (white person), will only delight your hosts and earn you praise. Shop for trad while you're here, too. Tailors will usually deliver to hotels, and your business associates will have tailors to recommend who, for a princely sum, can turn your raw fabric into a ready-to-wear outfit in a matter of days.

Socialising

There's a great chance you will be invited to lunch, dinner or drinks. Say yes. This is unlikely to be a quick coffee. Expect a feast. The city has excellent dining options, and people are all too happy to welcome you into their homes.

Being on a business trip does not preclude you from having fun, so lean into it. If this is your first time in Lagos, ask to try jollof rice, the west African dish — many countries in the region argue about whose version is best. I am biased but for me it's Nigeria's.

Booze will flow at post-work

events. Many a deal is sealed in these relaxed settings. Drink in moderation, especially on weekdays. It's bad form for people to assume you're a drunk. If you're teetotal, attend anyway and sip on the many virgin cocktails that restaurants here have on their menus. Warning: they are sugary.

Expect to eat meals at . . . not mealtimes. Dinner could be at 6pm or 11pm, depending how late an evening goes. Time is a made-up concept in Lagos. You will have to ignore your bedtime and push through.

Lagos loves a raucous party that goes long into the night, particularly at weekends. The party scene is flashy and ostentatious, with exotic bottles of liquor selling for multiples of the national minimum wage. That might be too much for a middle-aged business executive in town for business; ask your contacts to get you into one of the private members' clubs in the city, where the fun is more serene and controlled.

It's always better to have cash, but card transactions work mostly fine here too. Lagos is the epicentre of Nigeria's technology industry, and fintechs and banks have largely solved digital payments. The economy is in shambles, and you're quite likely to have spent more in one seating than your waiter makes in the entire month. Having foreign currency at a time when the local naira is falling also puts you at an advantage. Tip generously.

Aanu Adeoye is the FT's west and central Africa correspondent.

Source; Financial Times

No law allows president to suspend governor – Falz

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi



Rapper and lawyer Falz criticises President Tinubu's decision to declare a State of Emergency in Rivers State, questioning its legality and necessity.

The announcement has sparked debates across the country.

Tinubu suspends governor, lawmakers

On Tuesday, President Tinubu suspended Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara, Deputy Governor Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the State House of Assembly. He then appointed Vice Admiral Ibokette Ibas (Rtd) as the temporary head of the state for six months.

The government claims this move is

necessary due to the ongoing political crisis in Rivers.

Falz questions Tinubu's authority

Falz reacted on his X (formerly Twitter) account, saying the President has no legal right to remove an elected governor. He stressed that a governor can only be removed through impeachment.

"Rivers State, there is absolutely no law that allows a president to SUSPEND a governor," he wrote. "A governor is elected into office and may only be removed by impeachment."

He also questioned whether the situation in Rivers State was serious enough to justify a State of Emergency. "Is Rivers State at war? Is there an

'actual breakdown of public order?' Is there a threat to the existence of the federation?" he asked.

Mixed reactions from Nigerians

Falz's statement has drawn mixed reactions online. Some people support him, saying the President's action is illegal. Others argue that the suspension was necessary to restore order.

The situation in Rivers State remains uncertain. Many Nigerians are waiting to see if the courts or lawmakers will challenge Tinubu's decision.

For now, the crisis continues, and the future of the state's leadership is unclear.

Trump releases JFK assassination documents

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

United States President, Donald Trump has released materials related to the 1963 assassination of former President John F. Kennedy, seeking to honour his campaign promise to provide more transparency about the shock event in Texas.

An initial tranche of electronic copies of papers flooded into the National Archives website on Tuesday evening with a total of more than 80,000 expected to be published after Justice Department lawyers spent hours scouring them.

The digital documents, including PDFs of previously classified memos, offers a window into the climate of fear at the time surrounding U.S. relations with the Soviet Union shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 nearly led to a nuclear war.

The release is nonetheless likely to intrigue people who have long been fascinated with a dramatic period in history, with the assassination and with Kennedy himself.

Many of the documents reflected the work by investigators to learn more about assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's time in the Soviet Union and track his movements in the months leading up to Kennedy's assassination in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

An initial review of the papers did not show deviations from the central narrative.

Trump's secretary of health and human services, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a son of Robert Kennedy and nephew of John F. Kennedy, has said he believes the Central Intelligence Agency was involved in his uncle's death, an allegation the agency has described as baseless.

Kennedy Jr. declined comment when contacted by Reuters on Tuesday.

Jack Schlossberg, JFK's grandson, said on X on Tuesday: "The Trump administration did not give anyone in President Kennedy's family a heads up about the release."

Fredrik Logevall, a Harvard history professor whose books include "JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century 1917-56," said in an email the new documents may help fill in the picture.

"It's valuable to get all the documentation out, ideally in unredacted form. But I don't expect dramatic new revelations that alter in some fundamental way our grasp of the event," he said.

One document with the heading "secret" was a typed account with handwritten notes of a 1964 interview by a Warren Commission researcher who questioned Lee Wigren, a CIA employee, about inconsistencies in material provided to



the commission by the State Department and the CIA about marriages between Soviet women and American men.

Oswald was married to a Soviet woman, Marina Oswald at the time of the shooting.

Department of Defence documents from 1963 covered the Cold War of the early 1960s and the U.S. involvement in Latin America, trying to thwart Cuban leader Fidel Castro's support of communist forces in other countries.

The documents suggest that Castro would not go so far as to provoke a war with the United States or escalate to the point "that would seriously and immediately endanger the Castro regime."

"It appears more likely that Castro might intensify his support of subversive forces in Latin America," the document reads.

One document released from January 1962 reveals details of a top secret project called "Operation Mongoose," or simply "the Cuban Project," which was a CIA-led campaign of covert operations and sabotage against Cuba, authorized by Kennedy in 1961, aimed at removing the Castro regime.

Trump signed an order shortly after taking office in January related to the documents release, prompting the Federal Bureau of Investigation to find thousands of new documents related to the Kennedy assassination in Dallas.

In the scramble to comply with Trump's order, the U.S. Justice Department ordered some of its lawyers who handle sensitive national security matters to urgently review records from the assassination, according to a Monday evening email.

"President Trump is ushering in a new era of maximum transparency," Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said in a post on X.

Alice L. George, a historian whose books, including "The Assassination of John F. Kennedy," explore modern America, said American's curiosity about assassinations and questions about government transparency add "to a sense that there must be important evidence hidden away in these files."

But she said government records were unlikely to resolve questions people still have.

"I think there may continue to be more record releases," she said. "I seriously doubt that any will include great revelations. The Warren Commission report was done well, but it was done when many of the key players were alive. It's much harder to find the truth when most of the people involved are dead."

Kennedy's murder has been attributed to a sole gunman, Oswald. The Justice Department and other federal government bodies have reaffirmed that conclusion in the intervening decades. But polls show many Americans still believe his death was a result of a conspiracy.

Trump has also promised to release documents on the assassinations of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert Kennedy, both of whom were killed in 1968.

Trump has allowed more time to come up with a plan for those releases.

NASA astronauts back on Earth after being stuck months on ISS

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two NASA astronauts stuck onboard the International Space Station (ISS) since June 2024 finally arrived back on Earth on Tuesday evening, more than nine months after the failure of Boeing's pioneering Starliner capsule scuppered their originally scheduled week-long mission.

A SpaceX Dragon capsule containing four astronauts, including Starliner's test pilots Sunita Williams and Barry "Butch" Wilmore, splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Tallahassee, at 5.57pm ET (9.57pm GMT) after a 17-hour descent.

The spacecraft slowed from 17,000mph (27,359 km/h) as it entered Earth's atmosphere and emerged into a clear blue Florida sky before coasting under four parachutes to a gentle splashdown on what a Nasa commentator said was a "calm, glasslike ocean".

"And splashdown. Crew-9 back on Earth. Nick, Aleksandr, Butch and Sunita, on behalf of SpaceX, welcome home," a voice from mission control said, shortly before a pod of frolicking dolphins appeared and swam around the bobbing craft.

"What a ride. I see a capsule full of grins, ear to ear," Nicholas Hague, the third American onboard, replied.

Williams and Wilmore arrived at the ISS on 6 June last year, intending to stay long enough to evaluate Starliner's docking and operational capabilities during its first crewed flight and return home no more than 10 days later.

But a series of technical issues and safety fears led Nasa and Boeing to send the capsule back to Earth empty in September, and extend the pair's stay by making them crew members onboard the space station in place of two other astronauts still on the ground who were reassigned to other future missions.

The Dragon capsule, called Freedom, undocked from the orbiting outpost at 1.05am ET on Monday, containing Williams, Wilmore, Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov.

"We'll miss you, but have a great journey home," NASA's Anne McClain had called out earlier from the space station as the capsule pulled



away 260 miles (418km) above the Pacific.

Hague, who arrived at the space station with Gorbunov in September, said it had been a privilege to "call the station home" as part of an international effort for the "benefit of humanity".

Dressed in re-entry suits, boots and helmets, the astronauts were seen earlier on Nasa's live footage laughing, hugging and posing for photos with their colleagues from the station shortly before they were shut into the capsule for two hours of final pressure, communications and seal tests.

The capsule was lifted on to a recovery vessel about 30 minutes after the splashdown.

"Awesome job, both uphill and downhill," Hague told mission controllers, referring to his flights to and from the space station, immediately before a side hatch was opened and the astronauts were lifted out on stretchers, a routine practice, and taken for medical evaluation.

Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov is helped out of a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft. Photograph: NASA/Reuters

Hague was first to emerge, smiling and waving, followed by Gorbunov, then Williams and Wilmore to cheers and applause from the recovery crew. Williams grinned and waved a thumbs-

up sign; Wilmore shook the hand of a crew member and waved as he was led away.

Williams returned home as the American astronaut with the second-longest combined time in space, 608 days over three visits to the space station, the first in 2006. Only Peggy Whitson, a former chief of Nasa's astronaut office, has more, with 675 days over four space flights.

Williams and Wilmore's odyssey became something of a political football, with the SpaceX founder and Donald Trump acolyte Elon Musk insisting without evidence they had been "abandoned" by the Biden administration, and Trump attempting to paint last week's long-scheduled routine crew rotation flight as a special rescue mission ordered by the White House.

The fallout left the astronauts in an awkward position, with Wilmore telling reporters from space earlier this month that Musk's claim he offered to bring them home last year, but was rebuffed by Joe Biden, was "absolutely factual", while admitting: "We have no information on ... what was offered, what was not offered, who it was offered to, how that process went."

Yet in February he told CNN: "We don't feel abandoned, we don't feel stuck, we don't feel stranded. I understand why others may think that ... if you'll help us change the rhetoric, help us change the narrative, let's change it to 'prepared and committed', that's what we prefer."

Republican congressman relentlessly booed, jeered for supporting Elon Musk

By Dave Oludare Oso

Republican Congressman Mike Flood faced the wrath of angry constituents when he was booed at a town hall in Nebraska on Wednesday.

The congressman was the latest in a series of Republican lawmakers who have been on defence while meeting with Americans in their districts while Congress is on recess.

People across the country have been showing up to raise concerns over the work of Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) as well as other controversial policies in the Trump administration.

Flood was booed mercilessly by attendees at his event in Columbus, NE as he defended spending cuts by the administration carried out by DOGE.

One attendee challenged the congressman on why he does not think the world's richest man doesn't have a conflict of interest.

'What makes you think... he has no conflict of interest? Do you think he would cut that before he would cut our Medicare or our Social Security or our Jobs?' one man asked as the crowd cheered.

'I support Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency,' Flood responded.

The crowd in the auditorium went wild, booing and giving the congressman the thumbs down.

It comes as Musk has moved to gut the government agencies that are responsible for regulating his businesses like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

It was one of the multiple times Flood was met with jeering during his event.

At another point, Flood was booed for arguing in support of Trump's goal to slash spending.



'For the first time in decades, we have a president that is cutting spending and he is looking to find efficiencies, and I support that effort,' Flood said to jeers.

He also enraged attendees who booed when he argued in favor of extending provisions of the Trump tax law.

'We're not going to grow the economy if we don't pass the 2017 extension of the tax cuts that you're already living under,' Flood claimed as constituents shouted their disapproval.

During the town hall, attendees started chanting 'tax the rich' while Flood was discussing the U.S. national debt.

The congressman was the latest in a series of GOP lawmakers who've been on defense while meeting with Americans in their districts while Congress is on recess.

People across the country have been showing up to raise concerns over the work of Elon Musk and DOGE as well as other controversial policies in the Trump administration.

Flood was booed mercilessly by attendees at his event in Columbus, NE as he defended spending cuts by the administration carried out by DOGE.

One attendee challenged the congressman on why he does not think the world's richest man doesn't have a conflict of interest.

'What makes you think... he has no conflict of interest? Do you think he would cut that before he would cut our Medicare or our Social Security or our Jobs?' one man asked as the crowd cheered.

'I support Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency,' Flood responded.

The crowd in the auditorium went wild, booing and giving the congressman the thumbs down.

Rep. Mike Flood (R-NE) faced booing and jeers at his town hall in Columbus where constituents expressed frustration over his support for Elon Musk and DOGE and slammed his response to Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Zelensky

Rep. Mike Flood (R-NE) faced booing and jeers at his town hall in Columbus where constituents expressed frustration over his support for Elon Musk and DOGE and slammed his response to Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Zelensky

It comes as Musk has moved to gut the government agencies that are responsible for regulating his businesses like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

It was one of the multiple times Flood was met with jeering during his event.

At another point, Flood was booed for arguing in support of Trump's goal to slash spending.

'For the first time in decades, we have a president that is cutting spending and he is looking to find efficiencies, and I support that effort,' Flood said to jeers.

He also enraged attendees who booed when he argued in favor of extending provisions of the Trump tax law.

Trump working to reinstate over 24,000 fired federal workers

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Donald Trump's administration says it is moving to reinstate more than 24,000 probationary workers it fired as part of its efforts to slash the size of the federal workforce.

Officials at 18 departments and agencies on Wednesday submitted signed declarations detailing their teams' efforts to rehire the fired workers in order to comply with court orders.

Last week two federal judges ordered the administration to temporarily reinstate thousands of probationary workers who were fired.

The documents are the first full accounting of how many people lost their jobs in the Trump administration's mass firings of probationary workers, who have typically held their positions for less than two years and don't have full civil service protections.

But many of the employees being reinstated won't be getting right back to work; instead, they'll be placed on administrative leave, including at the Education Department and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, two agencies that have been targeted for dismantling, and a number of other major federal departments.

Protesters hold signs in solidarity with the American Federation of Government Employees of District 14

A rally in support of federal workers at the Office of Personnel Management in Washington on March 4. Alex Wroblewski / AFP - Getty Images

Several of the officials said in the filings that reinstating employees to "full duty status would impose substantial burdens" on their departments or agencies, noting that the employees would need to be onboarded again, complete training and paperwork, and receive applicable security clearances and government equipment.

Officials also said that while their departments and agencies were working to reinstate probationary employees, "an appellate ruling could reverse the district court's order shortly after terminated employees have been reinstated."



"In short, employees could be subjected to multiple changes in their employment status in a matter of weeks," the officials said.

Charles Spitzer-Stadtlander, a Federal Aviation Administration probationary employee who was fired last month in the widespread cuts, was reinstated Tuesday, according to an email shared with NBC News.

The email said the Transportation Department was "rescinding" his initial termination to be "in compliance" with the order from U.S. District Judge James Bredar in Maryland last week. Spitzer-Stadtlander will receive backpay as well, the email said.

The court filings on Tuesday said fired probationary workers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been put on administrative leave, but three CDC workers told NBC News on Monday evening that they had not yet been reinstated.

"I feel like I'm being gaslighted," said Sarah Boim, a former communications specialist at the agency, said Tuesday. "What I'm being told my experience is is so deeply different than what my real experience is. It's disconcerting, and it makes me angry."

When reached again on Tuesday, the three workers said they had not

received any notice related to paid administrative leave. The CDC did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, in the second of the two cases dealing with the reinstatement of the workers, U.S. District Judge William Alsup took issue with putting those who are rehired on administrative leave, telling the government's lawyers Monday night that doing so "would not restore the services the preliminary injunction intends to restore."

"The Court has read news reports that, in at least one agency, probationary employees are being rehired but then placed on administrative leave en masse," Alsup said in a filing. "This is not allowed by the preliminary injunction, for it would not restore the services the preliminary injunction intends to restore."

Alsup, who serves the Northern District of California, asked that the government "state the extent to which any rehired probationary employees are being placed on administrative leave" by Tuesday at noon.

The federal government moved last month to fire probationary employees after agency leaders were advised by the Office of Personnel Management to dismiss the workers, NBC News previously reported.

Meloni rejects trade war with US, cautions EU against economic self-sabotage

By Dr. Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has urged the European Union (EU) to avoid engaging in a retaliatory tariff war with the United States, warning that escalating trade tensions could fuel inflation and economic instability across Europe.

Speaking ahead of an EU leaders' summit in Brussels, Meloni cautioned against reacting to US-imposed tariffs with countermeasures, emphasizing that such a response could lead to an economic downturn that neither side can afford. She called on the European Commission to initiate urgent negotiations with the Trump administration to prevent further escalation.

"It is not wise to fall into the temptation of reprisals that become a vicious circle in which everyone loses. We must continue to work concretely and pragmatically to find common ground and avoid a trade war that would benefit neither the US nor Europe," she told the Italian Parliament on Tuesday.

Her remarks come as Brussels prepares to impose tariffs of up to 50% on key US imports, including whiskey, motorcycles, and jeans, starting April 1. This move follows Washington's reintroduction of a 25% levy on European steel and aluminum imports. In response, US President Donald Trump has threatened a 200% tariff on all European alcohol imports, including Italian wine and spirits.

The trade tensions, which began during Trump's first term as a dispute over trade imbalances and industrial subsidies, have escalated into retaliatory tariffs affecting multiple industries, including steel, aluminum, agriculture, and technology.

Meloni, the only European leader to attend Trump's inauguration, has maintained a diplomatic approach, balancing strong ties with Washington while aligning with the EU's stance on global trade and security.

She has criticized the EU's strategy of countermeasures, warning that an escalating trade war would weaken the European economy by reducing purchasing power and potentially forcing the European Central Bank (ECB) to raise interest rates.

"The result would be inflation and monetary tightening that dampens economic growth. Italy's energies must be spent in the search for common-sense solutions between the US and Europe," she stated.



The economic implications of the ongoing tariff war are significant. The imposition of tariffs on steel and aluminum, along with retaliatory measures, has already led to price increases and disruptions in supply chains. European businesses, particularly in the luxury goods and agricultural sectors, could suffer from reduced access to the US market, while American industries could face higher costs on imported European products.

At the heart of this trade conflict lies a broader debate over economic sovereignty and transatlantic cooperation. While some EU leaders advocate for greater independence in trade and defense, others, including Meloni, have stressed the importance of maintaining strong ties with the US.

Beyond trade, Meloni has also addressed Europe's defense strategy, pushing back against calls from France and Germany for greater European military autonomy. She reaffirmed Italy's commitment to NATO and transatlantic security, arguing that Europe cannot ensure its own defense without the support of the US.

"It is at best naive and at worst crazy to think that today we can secure Europe without NATO," she said, reiterating her belief that the Euro-Atlantic framework remains essential for stability.

Meloni also voiced concerns over the EU's €150 billion ReArm Europe initiative, a Brussels-led plan to finance

national defense investments through joint loans. She suggested that the proposal could lead to unsustainable debt levels for heavily indebted nations like Italy, which already carries a debt burden of over 135% of GDP.

Additionally, she dismissed proposals from France and Britain to deploy European troops to Ukraine, warning that such an intervention could be both risky and ineffective. However, she acknowledged the need to strengthen Italy's defense capabilities, particularly in countering cybersecurity threats, hybrid warfare, and infrastructure security.

As the economic and political fallout from the EU-US tariff dispute continues to unfold, the potential consequences extend beyond trade and diplomacy. The situation raises questions about global trade stability, economic recovery post-COVID, and the future of transatlantic cooperation.

With the EU and US locked in an escalating tariff battle, Meloni's call for pragmatic diplomacy reflects growing concerns among European leaders that protectionist policies and trade restrictions could lead to long-term economic instability. The next few months will be critical in determining whether both sides can reach a compromise or if the trade conflict will deepen, with lasting effects on global markets and political alliances.

How the UK's welfare cuts will change claimants' lives

By New Daily Prime

Radical changes that will cut income for 1mn people may not get many more into work, say analysts

UK ministers have set out plans for a radical reform of welfare for the sick and disabled — including a £5bn cut to spending on health-related benefits, a new duty for claimants to engage with job support programmes, and a £1bn investment in back-to-work programmes.

Work and pensions secretary Liz Kendall said the changes would ensure sick and disabled people had “the same rights, choices and chances as everyone else”, while keeping support in place for those who could never work because of the severity of their conditions.

But analysts say that if the government presses ahead, in the face of fierce resistance from backbench Labour MPs, about 1mn people will have their income cut — yet only a small proportion will enter work as a result.

How will the current system change?

The government wants to ensure that benefits claimants have a financial incentive to work, receive much better support to help them find employment and do not risk losing vital income if they try a job and it doesn't work out.

This will mean scrapping the “work capability assessment” for means-tested incapacity benefits and channelling all claimants through the assessment for “personal independence payments”, the main disability benefit, from 2028-29.

The idea is to decouple financial support from people's work status but the change will mean some people lose eligibility.

There will be a new “right to try” work, with a guarantee that this will not “in and of itself” trigger a health reassessment or loss of benefits.

There will be a new duty on people receiving incapacity benefits to join regular “conversations” to learn about the job support available to them, with potential sanctions if they do not engage.

The government also wants to boost the



basic rate of jobless benefits and cut incapacity benefits to address what it calls “perverse incentives”.

But it will add just £7 a week to the standard rate of jobless benefits in the universal credit system, taking it from £91 to £98 in 2026-27. Meanwhile the health element of UC will be cut by £47 to £50 per week for new claimants, and frozen for existing recipients — with young people under 22 excluded entirely, subject to consultation.

The biggest change is a significant tightening of eligibility for disability benefits. Changes to the assessment for personal independence payments will mean people only qualify for its “daily living” element — worth up to £108.55 per week — if they face big barriers to performing daily tasks such as cooking, washing, reading or going to the toilet.

Who will lose out?

Overall there will be less financial support available for people who have a wide range of health conditions, with much tighter eligibility for new claimants and for some existing benefits recipients when their claims are reassessed.

There will be a modest boost — of £7 a week in 2026-27 — to people claiming jobless benefits without health support, and a bigger, time-limited boost for people with a work history who suffer short spells of unemployment.

But Louise Murphy, senior economist at

the Resolution Foundation think-tank, said these “tiny gains” would be “completely overshadowed” by the scale of income lost by those who will receive reduced or no support.

Between 800,000 and 1.2mn people looked likely to lose eligibility for Pip, she said — in particular, those with musculoskeletal conditions, who often struggle with a range of tasks but do not have severe difficulties in a single area.

Stephen Evans, chief executive of the Learning & Work Institute, a research organisation, said that over time, up to 1mn new benefit claimants could receive £2,000 per year less than they would today, because only those who passed the Pip assessment would receive the health-related element of UC.

Young people could be especially hard hit if they were excluded even from the reduced rate of health-related support through UC, Murphy noted.

Kendall said the package of reforms would save taxpayers “more than £5bn” by 2029-30 — making them the biggest cuts to welfare since 2015, when then Conservative chancellor George Osborne imposed austerity.

She said that, without the changes, the government would be spending more than £70bn on incapacity and disability benefits in five years.

Officials say cuts to Pip will account for the bulk of the savings but the green paper

Ben & Jerry's CEO sacked amid ongoing dispute with parent company Unilever

By Fatimah Idera

Ben & Jerry's has dismissed its Chief Executive, David Stever, amid a longstanding conflict with its parent company, Unilever, over the ice cream maker's political activism. Court documents reveal that Unilever is replacing Stever, citing concerns over his outspoken stance on social issues.

The documents further allege that Unilever, a multinational consumer goods giant, took action to remove Stever following repeated disputes over the company's history of activism. The development coincides with the U.S. government's removal of hundreds of alleged Venezuelan gang members under a now-blocked authority.

According to the filings, Unilever believed that Stever's vocal support for political causes conflicted with its corporate governance policies. The controversy intensified last month when Ben & Jerry's accused Unilever of pressuring the company to halt public criticism of Donald Trump.

Ben & Jerry's, founded in 1978 by Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, was acquired by Unilever in 2000. As part of the merger agreement, an independent board was established to safeguard the brand's mission and commitment to social causes. However, Unilever retained primary responsibility for financial and operational decisions, leading to ongoing tensions between the two entities.

One of the most notable disputes arose in 2021 when Ben & Jerry's announced it would cease selling ice cream in Israeli-occupied



Palestinian territories, stating that continuing sales in the region would contradict the brand's values. In response, Unilever sold the business to its Israeli licensee, effectively bypassing Ben & Jerry's decision.

The latest court filings, submitted to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, claim that Unilever sought to curb Stever's political statements and warned him against continuing the brand's tradition of activism.

"Unilever has repeatedly threatened Ben & Jerry's personnel, including CEO David Stever, should they fail to comply with Unilever's efforts to silence the social mission," the filing alleges.

"On March 3, 2025, Unilever informed the independent board that they were removing and replacing Mr. Stever as Ben & Jerry's CEO."

Despite the announcement, Stever—who has been with Ben & Jerry's since 1988, starting as a company tour guide—is still listed as CEO on the company's website.

The conflict between Ben & Jerry's and Unilever may soon shift as Unilever plans to spin off its ice cream division into a separate company. The new company, which will include brands such as Magnum and Wall's, is expected to be headquartered in the Netherlands, with its primary stock market listing in Amsterdam.

While the future of Ben & Jerry's leadership remains uncertain, the move to separate Unilever's ice cream business could signal a potential easing of tensions between the two entities. However, it remains to be seen whether the brand will continue its activist-driven identity under new leadership.

US troops could be drafted if Russia-Ukraine conflict turns World War III - Trump

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

US President Donald Trump has warned that American troops “could be” drawn into the conflict if Russia’s war on Ukraine escalates into “World War III.”

The 78-year-old president made the remarks on Fox News on Tuesday, hours after a nearly two-hour phone conversation with Russian President, Vladimir Putin.

Trump, in a chat with Laura Ingraham on The Ingraham Angle, admitted that “Russia has the advantage” in the war and said, “We want to get it over with.”

The president described his call with Putin as “great” and said he had pushed for a 30-day ceasefire, though the Russian leader only agreed to halt attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

“Right now, you have a lot of guns pointing at each other, and a ceasefire without going a little bit further would have been tough,” Trump stated.

He insisted that his efforts aimed to prevent US involvement in the conflict but warned, “Look, we’re doing this – there are no Americans involved.”

“There could be if you end up in World War III over this, which is so ridiculous. But, you know, strange things happen.”

Despite a limited ceasefire on energy targets, both Kyiv and Moscow accused each other of launching fresh attacks early Wednesday.



Ukraine reported that Russia’s drone strikes damaged two hospitals in Sumy, forcing evacuations.

In the Kyiv region, a Russian attack injured a 60-year-old man and damaged several houses.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed that Russia launched over 40 drones following Trump’s call with Putin.

Ukrainian air defence shot down 72 of 145 drones fired by Russia overnight, but significant damage was reported in Sumy, Odesa, Poltava, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, and Chernihiv regions.

Zelensky had previously agreed to a US-proposed 30-day ceasefire, but after the renewed attacks, stated, “Today, Putin de facto rejected the proposal for a complete ceasefire. It would be right for the world to reject in response any attempts by Putin to drag out the war.”

His chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, reinforced this message, saying,

“Russia is attacking civilian infrastructure and people – right now.”

Trump reiterated that he believed the war would not have happened if he were still president. “We had a great call. It lasted almost two hours. Talked about a lot of things and toward getting it to peace. This was a war that would have never happened if I were president,” he said.

Meanwhile, Russian airstrikes continued targeting Ukraine’s energy sector, with Moscow also reporting Ukrainian drone attacks on its oil facilities.

Following the Putin-Trump call, Zelensky spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

“We are in constant communication. I am confident that there will be no betrayal from our partners and that the assistance will continue,” he said.

Six dead, 40 missing in Italy boat disaster

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Six people have died and 40 are missing after a boat disaster off the Italian island of Lampedusa.

The wreck occurred on Tuesday afternoon. A half-sunken dinghy was spotted by Italian police patrols close to the islet of Lampione.

The Italian coastguard rescued 10 people. The search for survivors resumed early on Wednesday morning.

According to reports in the Italian press, survivors told rescuers there were about 56 people on the vessel, which had left from Sfax in Tunisia and got into difficulty owing to bad weather. They said many had fallen into the sea.

The bodies of six people were taken to Lampedusa. Six men and four women were among the survivors transferred to a reception centre on the island.

“The deaths in the Mediterranean of those who set out in search of a more dignified future point a finger towards our own inability to imagine a future capable of giving hope and horizons of life,” said Father Marco Pagnello, the director of the Italian unit for the Catholic church-run charity Caritas.

“During days in which the merciless violence of wars are



once again getting the upper hand over the prospect of peace, all the more is required of everyone, but especially those who have received the mandate to work for the common good, to respond first and foremost to the needs of those who are forced to abandon their home. We cannot get used to these [tragic] events as if they are business as usual.”

The wreck comes amid a steady increase in the number of people arriving in Italy after making the perilous journey across the Mediterranean from north Africa in search of refuge.

The rise was most noticeable in January, when 3,368 people arrived compared with 2,258 in the same month in 2024. Most of the people who came towards the end of that month had left from Libya, with whom Italy has a controversial pushback

deal.

The increase is believed to have been connected to the arrest in Italy of Osama Najim, a Libyan warlord wanted by the international criminal court for suspected war crimes, including abuse of migrants and refugees held in Libyan detention centres as part of the pact.

Najim was subsequently released and deported back to Tripoli, causing uproar in Italy.

At least 248 people are estimated to have died while trying to cross the Mediterranean in January and February, according to figures from the International Organisation for Migration. An estimated 2,300 either died or went missing during the crossing in 2024.

Google agrees to pay \$28m in racial bias lawsuit

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Google has agreed to pay \$28 million (£21.5m) to settle a lawsuit that claimed white and Asian employees were given better pay and career opportunities than workers from other ethnic backgrounds, a law firm representing claimants said Wednesday.

The technology giant confirmed it had “reached a resolution” but rejected the allegations made against it.

The case filed in 2021 by former Google employee, Ana Cantu, said workers from Hispanic, Latino, Native American and other backgrounds started on lower salaries and job levels than their white and Asian counterparts.

The settlement has been given preliminary approval by Judge Charles Adams of the Santa Clara County Superior Court in California.

The case brought by Ms Cantu against Google relied on a leaked internal document, which allegedly showed that employees from some ethnic backgrounds reported lower compensation for similar work.

The practice of basing starting pay and job level on prior salaries reinforced historical race and ethnicity-based disparities, according to Ms Cantu’s lawyers.

The class action lawsuit was filed



for at least 6,632 people who were employed by Google between 15 February 2018 and 31 December 2024, according to Reuters news agency.

Cathy Coble, one of the lawyers representing them, praised the “bravery of both the diverse and ally Googlers who self-reported their pay and leaked that data to the media.”

“Suspected pay inequity is too easily concealed without this kind of collective action from employees,” Ms Coble added.

The technology giant denied that it had discriminated against any of its employees.

“We reached a resolution, but continue to disagree with the allegations that we treated anyone differently, and remain committed to paying, hiring, and

levelling all employees fairly,” a Google spokesperson told the BBC.

Earlier this year, Google joined a growing list of US firms that are abandoning commitments to principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their recruitment policies.

Meta, Amazon, Pepsi, McDonald’s, Walmart and others have also rolled back their DEI programmes.

It comes as US President Donald Trump and his allies have regularly attacked DEI policies.

Since his return to the White House, Trump has ordered government agencies and their contractors to eliminate such initiatives.

N'Golo Kanté's traditional wedding holds in Mali

By Dave Oludare Oso



World Cup winner and renowned Franco-Malian footballer, N'Golo Kanté has reportedly held a traditional wedding ceremony in Bamako, Mali.

The wedding of the 33-year-old Al-Ittihad and French national team star is reportedly to a Malian woman, and has captured global attention.

The wedding pictures have gone viral on social media, sparking admiration among fans,

particularly in Africa reinforcing his connection to the continent.

Known for his humility, and tireless work rate, Kante made a name for himself with Chelsea, lifting Premier League and UEFA Champions League titles.

He was also instrumental as France won the 2018 FIFA World Cup in style.

The photos of the alleged wedding ceremony were marked by traditional Malian attire and

showcased Kanté and his bride in elegant, culturally rich outfits.

Kante was vibrant in white and gold traditional flowing garments and his bride in a stunning purple dress and headscarf of Malian culture.

Kanté, who was brought up in Rueil-Malmaison, France has maintained a low-profile personal life and the fans were delighted to see pictures of his wedding go viral.

I am happy to be back with France squad, says Mbappe

By Oluwatosin Ologun



Kylian Mbappe said on Wednesday he was delighted to be reunited with his France team-mates as he prepares to win his first international cap in six months against Croatia in the Nations League quarter-finals.

“I feel good, I feel happy to be playing football, I feel happy to be here,” said France captain Mbappe at a news conference in Split.

The 26-year-old missed two matches in October due to injury and another two in November — when coach Didier Deschamps opted to rest him during a difficult period for the player as he adapted to life at new club Real Madrid.

But ahead of Thursday’s first-leg clash in Croatia, Mbappe said he was “delighted to be back with the group”.

“Most of the team-mates who are here, we talk pretty much all the time. I go on holiday with some of them. It’s a pleasure to be here. The situation may have been unclear to people outside, but it’s always been clear internally,” he added.

The 2018 World Cup winner made a long-expected move to Real Madrid last summer, but, by his own admission, had difficulties finding his top form for the reigning Spanish and European champions.

Mbappe also found himself at the centre of a scandal last autumn, with Swedish press reporting on a rape investigation in which they alleged his name appeared. However in December, the Swedish courts closed the case without prosecuting anyone.

“A career is not linear. You have to refocus on what makes you happy and get back to work. If I had to do things differently? I would have played better,” said Mbappe, looking back at the end of 2024.

France take on Croatia in Split on Thursday, before hosting the return fixture in three days’ time at the Stade de France in Paris.