



NEC endorses \$90bn agribusiness, approves textile development board Pg 2

Dele Momodu accuses Tinubu of using intimidation to force defections Pg 11



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NEC endorses \$90bn agribusiness, approves textile development board

By Friday Omosola

The National Economic Council (NEC), chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima, has approved a series of far-reaching economic initiatives.

They include the establishment of a Cotton, Textile and Garment Development Board and the adoption of a national agribusiness and livestock transformation strategy expected to generate up to \$90 billion by 2035.

These resolutions were reached during the 149th NEC meeting held on Thursday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The Council, comprising the 36 state governors, key federal ministers, and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, also observed a minute of silence in honour of victims of recent attacks in Benue and Plateau States.

Addressing council members, Shettima said the newly approved initiatives reflect the administration's focus on economic revitalisation and long-term stability.

"We must rise above partisanship and focus on building a nation that delivers for all," Shettima stated, urging leaders to act decisively and avoid mere rhetoric.

NEC greenlit the formation of the Cotton, Textile and Garment Development Board, which will operate under the Presidency and be funded through the textile import levy collected by the Nigeria Customs Service.

The board will serve as the regulatory and developmental authority for the sector, aiming to revitalise an industry once central to Nigeria's economy.

"With cotton capable of thriving in 34 states, our continued reliance on imports is unacceptable," the Vice President noted.

"Our goal is not just regulation—it is a revival. This is an opportunity to re-industrialise and restore pride in local production."



Also endorsed was the National Livestock Growth Acceleration Strategy (NL-GAS), inherited and expanded from the existing National Livestock Transformation Plan.

The initiative is designed to modernise animal husbandry, promote ranching, and reduce conflicts between farmers and herders.

The livestock strategy targets \$74–\$90 billion in sectoral growth by 2035 and prioritises investments in animal health, water resource management, feed and fodder production, breed improvement, and statistical data systems.

NEC encouraged states to establish counterpart ministries to align with the Federal Ministry of Livestock Development and unlock investor interest in transforming Nigeria into a red meat export hub.

The Council also approved the transfer of N100 billion previously committed by NEC to support livestock modernisation, and endorsed stronger collaboration with state governments, private investors, and foreign partners.

In line with the federal government's food security agenda, NEC approved the formal establishment of the Green Imperative Project (GIP) national office in Abuja and regional offices across the six geopolitical zones.

The GIP aims to boost agricultural productivity and drive inclusive growth.

A presentation by the Minister of Education highlighted the federal government's plan to equip five million Nigerian youths with industry-relevant skills by 2030.

NEC endorsed the recommendations, with state governors urged to adopt the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programme to tackle youth unemployment and drive entrepreneurship.

The Accountant-General of the Federation reported that, as of April 2025, the Excess Crude Account stood at \$473,754.57, the Stabilisation Account had a balance of N63.5 billion, while the Natural Resources Development Fund held N72.8 billion.

In his closing remarks, Vice President Shettima stressed the need for action over policy formulation, saying, "We are not merely responders to crises. We are architects of a sustainable future."

He proposed that NEC conduct field visits through its Implementation Monitoring Committee to evaluate progress and ensure that citizens feel the real impact of government decisions.

THE NEW DAILY PRIME RATE CARD

PUBLIC NOTICE COLOUR

PRODUCT COLOUR

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SIZE	TOTAL RATE
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10X5	255,238.00
10X4	206,890.50
10X3	179,608.00
9X6	254,977.00
9X5	225,738.00
9X4	193,500.00
9X3	166,223.50
8X6	225,368.50
8X3	106,934.50
7X4	180,173.50
6X4	100,434.50
6X3	82,750.00
6X2	52,499.50
5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
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
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FULL PAGE	329,868.50
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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
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4X3	31,000.00
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POLITICAL COLOUR

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POLITICAL BLACK & WHITE

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10X6	217,830.00
10X5	192,305.50
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1X1	3,292.00

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9X5	168,191.50
9X4	N/A
8X6	N/A
8X3	N/A
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5X4	42,825.00
5X3	29,858.00
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4X3	N/A
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EARPIECE INSIDE PAGE(1.5X2)	117,875.00
EARPIECE BACK PAGE	236,796.50
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DOUBLE SPREAD B & W	725,000.00
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Tinubu: Climate crisis demands bold, united leadership

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has called on world leaders to show unity, courage, and consistent commitment in tackling the escalating global climate crisis.

Speaking yesterday during a high-level virtual dialogue on climate and the just transition, Tinubu reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to driving a new approach in which climate action and economic growth progress hand in hand, rather than in conflict.

“The global climate emergency demands our collective, courageous, and sustained leadership. For Nigeria, the urgency of this moment is clear: we view climate action not as a cost to development, but as a strategic imperative”, said Tinubu.

The meeting, co-hosted by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, sought to

accelerate global climate ambition ahead of COP30, which Brazil is set to host.

Leaders from 17 countries, including China, the European Union, climate-vulnerable nations, and key regional blocs such as the African Union, ASEAN, and the Alliance of Small Island States, took part in the meeting.

The leaders sent a clear message: climate action is advancing at full speed.

Addressing the session from Abuja, President Tinubu outlined Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) as a bold and pragmatic roadmap for achieving net-zero emissions by 2060.

The ETP targets five key sectors—power, cooking, transport, oil and gas, and industry—and estimates a financing requirement of over \$410 billion by 2060 to realise

these objectives.

“We are, therefore, in the process of aligning our regulatory environment, fiscal incentives, and institutional frameworks to ensure that energy access, decarbonisation, and economic competitiveness proceed in lockstep. We are also taking leadership on Energy Access”, he said.

He emphasised Nigeria's role as an anchor country in the Mission 300 initiative, implemented in partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

The initiative aims to provide electricity to 300 million Africans by 2030.

Continue reading
on next page

Cont from page 4

He recalled his participation in the Dar es Salaam Declaration earlier this year, as well as Nigeria's presentation of its National Energy Compact, which sets out reform commitments, investment opportunities, and measurable targets to expand access to clean energy and clean cooking solutions.

“This compact is among the first of its kind in Africa and lays out our policy reform commitments and specific investment opportunities in the energy sector. It sets quantifiable targets to grow electricity access and increase clean cooking penetration.

“We are working to build capacity and ensure that we meet these targets, reflecting not just our ambition but also our commitment to deliver on that ambition measurably,” he said.

As part of the broader energy reform

framework, President Tinubu announced the finalisation of the Nigeria Carbon Market Activation Policy in March 2025.

This policy is expected to unlock up to \$2.5 billion by 2030 through high-integrity carbon credits and related investments.

He revealed that Nigeria is actively updating its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with a comprehensive revision scheduled for presentation by September 2025.

“Our climate strategy extends beyond planning and regulation — it is also firmly grounded in market reform. We are working to position Nigeria as a leading destination for climate-smart investment through the establishment of a Global Climate Change Investment Fund, which

will serve as a platform to blend public and private capital, de-risk green infrastructure, and finance clean energy solutions at scale,” he said.

The fund will support key national priorities such as green industrial hubs, e-mobility infrastructure, regenerative agriculture, and renewable energy mini-grids for underserved communities.

President Tinubu appreciated international partners, particularly the United Nations and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), for their advisory and technical support.

“These partnerships are a shining example of the value of multilateral cooperation in climate action. We are ready to collaborate, lead, and deliver — because we understand that the time for climate action is not tomorrow; it is now,” he said.

INEC open to non-PVC voting in 2027, awaits legal backing

Rotimi Oyekanmi, Chief Press Secretary to the INEC Chairman, said on Wednesday that the commission is keen on leveraging technology to expand voter access. Nonetheless, he emphasised that any deviation from the current PVC-only system requires legislative backing.

This development aligns with comments made by INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, during a quarterly consultative meeting with Resident Electoral Commissioners held in Abuja in December 2024.

Yakubu underscored the increasing importance of technology, especially the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), in improving the electoral process.

He remarked, “The commission also



believes that with the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, the use of the Permanent Voters' Cards as the sole means of identification for voter accreditation on Election Day should be reviewed. Those who already have the PVCs can still use them to vote, but going forward, computer-generated slips issued to the voter or even downloaded from the Commission's website will suffice for voter accreditation. This will

By **Damilola Olufemi**

not only save cost, it will also eliminate the issues around the collection of PVCs and the diabolical practice of buying up the cards from voters to disenfranchise them.”

INEC seeks compliance with legal frameworks

He reiterated that any alteration to voting procedures must comply with legal frameworks.

“It is not our stand-alone that is important. Equally critical is what the existing law says. While the commission is favourably disposed to the recommendation by stakeholders (that PVCs alone should not be the only criterion for voting at an election), the law needs to be amended to reflect it,” he said.

Edun announces forensic audit of NNPC, highlights economic reforms

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**



The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, has announced that a forensic audit of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) will soon begin.

Edun made this known during the Nigerian Investor Forum, held alongside the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington DC.

He stated that the recent changes in NNPC's leadership were part of wider efforts by the Federal Government to examine and reform the company.

While addressing global investors, including representatives from J.P.

Morgan, Edun outlined key reforms introduced by the administration of President Bola Tinubu to revive the economy and build investor confidence.

He said the government's economic measures had laid a strong foundation for attracting private investment, with a growth target of seven per cent annually. He reported that the Nigerian economy grew by 3.84 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024 and recorded overall annual growth of 3.4 per cent.

Edun described the reforms as "unprecedented" and affirmed the government's commitment to continue implementing them. He noted improvements in the country's budget deficit, trade

balance, and exchange rate stability.

He added that the focus had shifted to strengthening key sectors such as agriculture and infrastructure. On agriculture, he said the government aimed to close the food supply gap by increasing domestic production rather than relying on imports.

In terms of infrastructure, Edun announced the rollout of 90,000 kilometres of fibre optic cable to expand internet access, particularly for the benefit of young Nigerians and technology startups.

He also said that 4,000 kilometres of roads had been earmarked for private sector participation, with 1,000 kilometres already approved for construction.

CBN approves cash BTA for 2025 Hajj pilgrims to ease travel demands

By **Friday Omosola**

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has approved the use of cash transactions for Nigerian pilgrims undertaking the 2025 Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

This decision comes after Vice President Kashim Shettima intervened, urging President Bola Tinubu to reconsider the previously proposed mandatory use of debit cards for the Basic Travel Allowance (BTA).

His appeal was relayed through the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), which had raised concerns that the card system could complicate the logistics and smooth execution of the pilgrimage.

Following a meeting with Shettima, NAHCON's Commissioner for Policy, Personnel Management & Finance, Aliu Abdulrazaq, confirmed that pilgrims would now be permitted to carry cash for their travel allowances.

Abdulrazaq said, "The meeting addressed the federal government's policy on the card for BTA in 2025 Hajj operations. After a series of discussions, the Vice President took action and invited the Central Bank's Deputy Governor to resolve the issue.

"Out of the magnanimity of the CBN and appeal made by the Vice President, they dropped the idea of a card for pilgrims in the 2025 Hajj, and they conceded to people having cash instead of a card. This is a landmark achievement for NAHCON.

"If you go to Saudi Arabia, mostly the areas where the pilgrims are going to perform their rituals, there is only one Automated Teller Machine there, and it is always crowded – it poses so much difficulties for pilgrims to purchase whatever they want to purchase.

"Secondly, 95 per cent of the pilgrims from Nigeria are peasant farmers, and they have difficulties with electronic payments. Even with the cash, some of them have difficulties identifying the currencies. These variables make it important for them to have the cash they are used to.

"From now on, we are even more



confident that the Hajj operations will be very seamless for the pilgrims. All arrangements have been in top gear, but the BTA was our fear; today, the fear has now been addressed."

Earlier this year, CBN introduced a new payment method for the BTA for Nigerians travelling for the 2025 Hajj pilgrimage.

Under the updated system, each pilgrim will be provided with an ATM card for withdrawals and transactions during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The new initiative also requires all intending pilgrims to open a BTA-linked bank account.

In response to the development, Mustapha Ali, Secretary of the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON), emphasised that the change is not a concession or subsidy from the federal government.

"There is a need for clarification we want to make. It is not a concession or intervention by the federal government. It is not a subsidy either.

"The Vice President intervened because most of the pilgrims make purchases in the streets of Mecca or Medina, and they do not need debit cards to make their

purchases. Now it is allowed for them to carry cash. The CBN will provide the cash at the market rate," he said.

The Director of Human Resources at the CBN and Board member representing the CBN at NAHCON, Abba Aliyu, explained the bank's intervention.

He emphasised that the welfare of Nigeria pilgrims remains a top priority for the Nigerian government.

"Given the financial literacy of the pilgrims, it is crucial that we make things easier for them, as many are unfamiliar with how to use ATMs.

"These are among the reasons why, in response to the Vice President's request, the senior management of the Bank kindly addressed these concerns," he stated.

Aliyu also clarified that the government had concluded matters concerning concessions.

"What is being implemented is simply a change in the payment method. Instead of requiring pilgrims to carry cards, they will now receive payments in cash."

NEC pushes for overhaul of livestock practices amid rising violence

By Friday Omosola

The National Economic Council (NEC) has called for a complete rethink of Nigeria's traditional livestock rearing practices.

NEC cited the urgent need to adopt modern, sustainable systems to curb ongoing conflicts between farmers and herders.

The position was taken during NEC's meeting on Thursday at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima.

The session followed renewed outbreaks of deadly violence in parts of the country, including Plateau, Benue, and Kwara States, where dozens of residents were recently killed in attacks by suspected armed groups.

Speaking after the meeting, Bayelsa State Governor, Douye Diri said the council agreed that the outdated model of animal husbandry must be replaced with more structured and modern approaches.

"We can no longer afford to operate in the past. Council strongly believes that modernising livestock production is not just necessary—it's long overdue," Diri stated.

NEC attributed the persistence of farmer-herder clashes to the current nomadic system of livestock movement, which continues to drive land-use disputes and escalate tensions in agrarian communities.

Governor Diri also pointed to the recent establishment of the Federal Ministry of Livestock Development as a positive step.

He added that the ministry had unveiled a strategic plan—the Accelerated Livestock Development and Growth Strategy—aimed at transforming the sector into a \$70–\$90



billion industry by 2035.

Violence between pastoralists and farming communities has become a recurring crisis in Nigeria's Middle Belt, where disputes over land, identity, and dwindling resources have grown more volatile.

In Plateau State alone, recent attacks left more than 100 people dead in just one week, prompting local officials to describe the carnage as 'genocide' allegedly orchestrated by terrorist networks.

While Plateau authorities blamed the killings on external actors, some analysts argue that inflammatory rhetoric often oversimplifies the complex, localised nature of the conflict.

Root causes include competition over land, weak state presence, and unresolved grievances between ethnic and religious communities.

The Fulani, who dominate Nigeria's nomadic herding population, are frequently at the centre of these tensions.

In regions like Benue and Plateau, predominantly Christian farming populations have accused Fulani groups of launching coordinated attacks.

However, Fulani leaders say their communities are also targets of retaliatory violence and discrimination.

Long-standing land disputes, aggravated by climate change, population growth, and political rivalries, continue to fuel unrest.

Limited access to pasture and water has turned once-shared resources into flashpoints for bloodshed.

Security experts warn that without stronger governance, better land-use policies, and sustainable livestock practices, these conflicts will persist.

NEC's latest push for reform signals a recognition at the highest levels of government that Nigeria's agricultural future depends on breaking this cycle of violence.

NiMet strike grounds flights nationwide as workers protest wage issues

By Damilola Olufemi

Flight operations were disrupted on Wednesday at major airports in Lagos, Abuja, and Kano following protests by staff of the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet).

At the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, some airlines such as XEJET, Aero Contractors, and Ibom Air continued operations, while others, including Air Peace, suspended their services.

Air Peace, in a statement posted on its official X handle and signed by its Head of Corporate Communications, Ejike Ndiulo, explained the reason behind its decision: “Due to the ongoing NiMet strike and the unavailability of CNH (hazardous weather) reports required for safe landings, Air Peace has suspended all flight operations nationwide until the strike is over. Your safety is our top priority. We appreciate your understanding and will share updates as the situation unfolds.”

In response to the strike, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, has scheduled a meeting with representatives of the protesting unions to hold today (Thursday).

At the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja, the protest began at 7:00 am, with union members and NiMet staff seen patrolling the airport. Some staff reportedly stayed



overnight at the agency’s premises to ensure full compliance with the strike directive.

Similarly, at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport in Kano, many passengers were stranded as a result of the protests. NiMet workers were protesting the non-implementation of the new national minimum wage, among other grievances. Several flights were delayed or cancelled as a result.

Stakeholders react to NiMet strike

The Northwest Zonal Chairman of the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Employees, Timothy Meshelia, confirmed the disruption: “The protesting staff are accusing the management of NiMet of failing to implement the N30,000 and N70,000

minimum wage, non-payment of staff allowances, ignoring requests to include omitted staff in past payments, and neglecting key training programmes, among other issues. The association has given the management one month to implement the new minimum wage or face industrial action.”

Speaking from the union’s perspective, National Deputy President of the National Union of Air Transport Employees, Uzor Oluchi, criticised the agency’s poor treatment of staff.

“The welfare of NiMet staff is very poor. If you come to the aviation industry, NiMet staff are paid less. As I’m talking to you, a level 4 NiMet staff is collecting N31,000 despite the minimum wage that the Federal Government is giving,” she said.

Lagos launches new measures to tackle WAEC low pass rate

By Friday Omosola

In a major financial commitment to secondary education, the Lagos State Government has disbursed more than ₦1.5 billion to fund WAEC fees for over 58,000 public school students who took part in the 2024 WASSCE.

Announcing the development at the 2025 Ministerial Press Briefing in Alausa, Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Jamiu Alli-Balogun, said the move was part of the administration's ongoing free education initiative.

The briefing marked the second anniversary of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's re-election.

To ensure proper monitoring, the commissioner revealed that biometric verification and photo registration were conducted, streamlining the process and confirming 56,134 eligible candidates.

Despite this investment, only 45.7% of students met the benchmark of passing both English and Mathematics.

In response to the disappointing performance, Alli-Balogun announced the rollout of the 'Eko Learners' Support Programme' in January 2025, targeting WASSCE and NECO students with additional academic support, structured tutoring, and motivational resources.

He said the government had met with school principals across all six education districts to design new academic policies.

Among them is the implementation of performance-based promotion, where only students with strong academic



results will advance to terminal classes.

This, he noted, would put an end to automatic promotion and promote a culture of excellence.

"This policy shift is expected to enhance academic performance, inspire students to work harder, and ultimately raise the quality of education in the state," he said.

Touching on inclusivity, Alli-Balogun disclosed that 30,000 out-of-school children had been identified, provided with educational materials, and re-enrolled in public schools under the government's T.H.E.M.E.S+ development agenda, which prioritises education and technology.

He reiterated that the Sanwo-Olu administration considers education a cornerstone of sustainable development and remains committed to reducing dropout rates and related challenges.

On staff development, the commissioner revealed that 4,353 new teachers had

been hired between 2023 and 2024 to strengthen the workforce in secondary schools and vocational institutions.

He added that Governor Sanwo-Olu had approved ₦102.5 million in housing loans for teachers, with ₦43.5 million allocated as car refurbishment support to 121 staff members.

Alli-Balogun also urged students to avoid destructive behaviours such as cultism, drug abuse, and exam malpractice.

He encouraged active participation in co-curricular programmes, including those backed by the ministry and partner NGOs.

To enhance students' overall development, the government has revived physical education, school sports, and interactive learning methods aimed at promoting mental resilience, engagement, and well-rounded growth.

Dele Momodu accuses Tinubu of using intimidation to force defections

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Nigerian journalist and publisher of Ovation Magazine, Dele Momodu, has sharply criticised President Bola Tinubu, accusing him of employing heavy-handed tactics to coerce opposition figures into joining the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television's Politics Today on Wednesday, April 23, Momodu asserted that fear, rather than ideological alignment or genuine loyalty, was the primary driver behind the increasing wave of defections to the APC.

"I'm not surprised, Okowa's defection isn't shocking given the recent harassment he faced," he remarked.

Momodu was referring to former Delta State governor and 2023 vice-presidential candidate for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Ifeanyi Okowa, who announced his defection to the APC earlier this week, alongside Delta State governor Sheriff Oborevwori.

Senator Kawu Sumaila of Kano South also defected from the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) to the APC ahead of the 2027 general elections.

According to Momodu, President Tinubu's administration is more focused on intimidating the opposition than engaging in persuasive governance.

READ ALSO: 'Worse than dictatorship' – Momodu slams Tinubu over Rivers emergency rule

"For me, it's clear that this government's strategy is, 'if we can't persuade you, we'll force you.' And for now, that force appears to be working. But politics can change in 24 hours," he cautioned.

He also lamented the declining spirit of political resilience in Nigeria, drawing



comparisons with iconic African figures.

"We once admired the likes of Nelson Mandela, MKO Abiola, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo for enduring detention in the name of principle. These days, nobody wants to go to detention, Everybody wants to stay at home and talk about the money they've made from politics," he said.

Momodu alleged that nearly every prominent politician has been harassed at some point by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) or the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), suggesting this is being used as a tool of coercion.

He also slammed the internal instability of the APC, stating, "The APC is in more trouble than any other political party in Nigeria. The only thing holding it together right now is the access to resources they have to share."

He added that despite blaming former President Muhammadu Buhari for Nigeria's troubles for nearly two years, the APC is now attempting to reconcile with him.

"Whether he accepts their efforts or not

doesn't matter much to me," he said.

Momodu further alleged that governors are being threatened into aligning with the APC: "They're being told behind the scenes, 'If you support us, we'll leave you alone. If you don't, we'll make life difficult for you.' That's the reality of the current political climate."

Citing the recent suspension of Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara, Momodu claimed it was a deliberate message to discourage dissent.

"Rivers State was peaceful, yet Fubara was suddenly removed in a swift and aggressive move orchestrated by a minister in Abuja, Nyesom Wike. Nothing happened afterward — no consequences. That sent a message, and now everyone is taking note," he said.

In a final word of caution, Momodu urged President Tinubu to uphold democratic principles rather than resort to coercive methods in a bid to secure a second term.

"Tinubu was once a pro-democracy icon. He must now allow democracy to thrive in Nigeria, or he risks facing deep regret later in life."

Sitting governors who switched parties while in office

By Damilola Olufemi



Sheriff Oborevori, the current governor of Delta State, has officially left the Peoples Democratic Party to join the All Progressives Congress.

His defection was confirmed during a press event attended by senior political figures including Senator Ebiowou Manager and Commissioner for Information Aniagwu Charles, who hinted at its potential implications for the 2027 elections.

Party-hopping by governors isn't new in Nigerian politics. Over time, many have changed affiliations mid-term, driven by shifting alliances and personal ambitions. Oborevori, who was elected under the PDP in 2023,

now joins a growing list of state leaders who've made similar political moves.

In Sokoto, for instance, Aminu Tambuwal moved from the PDP to the APC while serving as Speaker, only to return to the PDP as governor in 2018. His predecessors, Attahiru Bafarawa and Aliyu Wamakko, also switched party affiliations while in office.

In Kwara, Abdulfatah Ahmed made headlines with his move from PDP to APC in 2013, only to return to PDP five years later. Similarly, Adamawa's Boni Haruna and Murtala Nyako both crossed party lines during their time as governors.

Imo's Ikedi Ohakim and Rochas Okorochoa also switched allegiances — the former moving to PDP from PPA, and the latter aligning with the APC after beginning with APGA.

Zamfara has seen its own share of movement too. Mahmuda Shinkafi left the ANPP for PDP, while Bello Matawalle made the reverse move, from PDP to APC.

Other states like Benue, Ondo, Rivers, Cross River, Edo, Kano, Kebbi, and Jigawa have all witnessed similar shifts, reinforcing the dynamic and often unpredictable nature of Nigeria's political landscape.

ATBU dismisses senior lecturer over sexual harassment allegations

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



The Governing Council of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi, has officially dismissed a senior lecturer, Dr Usman Aliyu, following allegations of sexual harassment involving a married postgraduate student, Mrs Kamila Aliyu.

The decision was revealed in the university's official newsletter, ATBU Herald (Vol. 39 No. 5, 22 April), following the institution's 96th regular council meeting, which was held on 11 April 2025.

According to the publication, which was obtained by our correspondent on Thursday, April 24, the Governing Council approved Dr Aliyu's dismissal based on the findings of the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee, which concluded that the academic was guilty of misconduct.

The official dismissal letter read: "Following the report of the Senior Staff Disciplinary Committee that found you guilty of an indecent relationship involving a student of the university, Mrs Kamila Rufai Aliyu of the Department of Chemical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Engineering Technology, the council has subsequently approved your dismissal from the services of the university with immediate effect."

Mrs Kamila Aliyu had submitted a formal petition to the university last year, accusing Dr Aliyu of sexual harassment and claiming he threatened to jeopardise her academic progress unless she met his demands.

In response to the allegations, Dr Aliyu filed a defamation lawsuit against the student, the department, and the

university. Nevertheless, the institution continued its internal investigation.

The university maintained that its actions were in accordance with "Chapter 3, Item F, I (o) of the Senior Staff Conditions of Service of the University," as detailed in a statement signed by Alhaji Abdullahi Suleiman, the Senior Deputy Registrar of Senior Staff Establishment.

The dismissal letter also contained directives for the return of university property.

"You are hereby directed to hand over all the property of the university in your possession to the Head of Department and your identification card to the Chief Security Officer of the university," the statement read.

Global Immunization in Crisis: WHO, UNICEF, Gavi warn of rising disease outbreaks amid funding cuts

By Helen Okechukwu

Global immunization efforts are teetering on the edge as vaccine-preventable diseases resurge and health systems face unprecedented pressure.

Marking World Immunization Week slated to run between 24 April to 30 April, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and Gavi—the Vaccine Alliance—issued a stark warning: misinformation, population growth, humanitarian crises, and significant funding cuts are endangering decades of progress and leaving millions vulnerable.

Outbreaks of diseases like measles, meningitis, and yellow fever are rising dramatically, says WHO document shared on Thursday to journalists.

Once-controlled illnesses, including diphtheria, are threatening to re-emerge, further straining health systems already battered by post-pandemic recovery challenges.

Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General underscored the urgency, saying, “Funding cuts to global health have put these hard-won gains in jeopardy. Countries with limited resources must invest in the highest-impact interventions –and that includes vaccines.”

Measles has made a dangerous comeback, with cases soaring to an estimated 10.3 million in 2023—a 20% rise from the previous year. The trend continued into 2024 and 2025, with 138 countries reporting cases and 61 facing disruptive outbreaks, marking the highest 12-month count since 2019.

In Africa, meningitis cases surged in early 2025, with over 5,500 suspected infections and nearly 300 deaths reported



in just the first quarter.

Yellow fever, once on a declining path, has reappeared in 12 African nations with 124 confirmed cases this year. Similarly, outbreaks have emerged in the Americas, totaling 131 cases across four countries.

A recent WHO survey of 108 country offices revealed that nearly half are experiencing moderate to severe disruptions in vaccination campaigns, routine immunization, and supply access due to declining donor funding.

Disease surveillance systems are also compromised, heightening the risk of uncontrolled outbreaks.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell warned, “The global funding crisis is severely limiting our ability to vaccinate over 15 million vulnerable children in fragile and conflict-affected countries. We cannot afford to lose ground in the fight against preventable diseases.”

Despite these setbacks, progress continues in some areas. The ‘Big Catch-Up’ initiative, launched in 2023, aims to reach children who missed vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Routine immunization has expanded, and

HPV vaccine coverage in Africa doubled from 21% to 40% between 2020 and 2023.

New vaccines, including those for malaria and pneumococcal disease, are being introduced across high-burden countries.

Vaccination campaigns have eradicated meningitis A in parts of Africa, and a new multivalent vaccine is offering broader protection. However, the resurgence of yellow fever and other diseases signals the critical need for sustained immunization efforts.

Gavi CEO Dr. Sania Nishtar emphasized, “Increasing outbreaks of highly infectious diseases are a concern for the whole world. Gavi’s next strategic period has a clear plan to bolster our defences by expanding investments in global vaccine stockpiles and rolling out targeted preventive vaccination in countries most impacted by meningitis, yellow fever and measles.”

To support this mission, Gavi will host a high-level pledging summit on 25 June 2025, aiming to raise at least US\$ 9 billion. The funds are expected to protect 500 million children and save at least 8 million lives between 2026 and 2030.

NAFDAC alerts public on Zovirax IV Infusion 250mg RN3T, recalls over quality concern

By Helen Okechukwu

To prevent health complications and mortality, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has issued a warning against the consumption of Zovirax IV Infusion 250mg RN3T following a recall in Hong Kong.

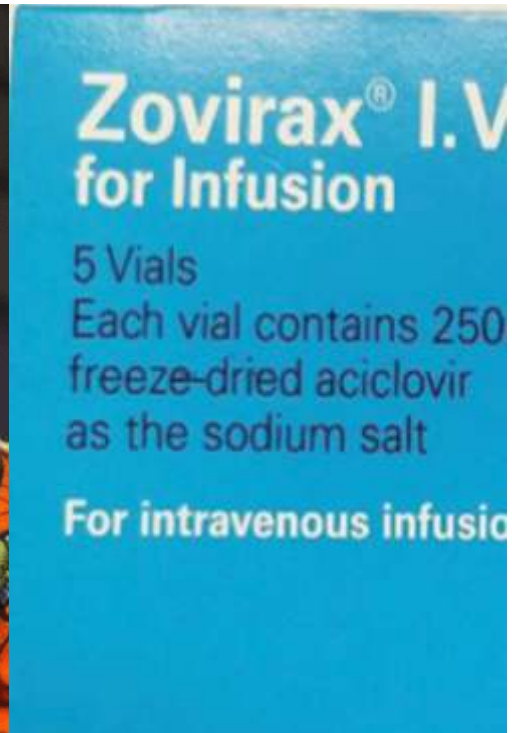
The manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Limited, made the notification voluntarily after receiving a complaint from its branch in Taiwan that batch RP8K contained glass-like particles.

This was made via Nigeria's anti-drug agency's verified X account on Tuesday, stating that although the product was not listed in the NAFDAC database, it urged importers, distributors, retailers, healthcare providers, and patients to remain vigilant.

"As a precautionary measure, GSK is voluntarily recalling the affected batches of product from the market."

"This is essential to prevent the importation, distribution, sale, administration, or use of recalled products. All medical products must be obtained from authorized/licensed suppliers. The products' authenticity and physical condition should be carefully checked," NAFDAC noted."

NAFDAC, however, following investigation, in its disclosure stated that the batch supplied to Hong Kong with batch number RN3T is



considered to have the same potential quality issue as that of RP8K, as both batches were manufactured using the same batch of intermediates.

Zovirax IV Infusion 250mg, which contains Acyclovir as the main ingredient, is an antiviral agent used in the treatment of viral infections such as genital herpes, shingles, chickenpox, encephalitis, and other related conditions caused by the herpes zoster virus and varicella-zoster.

The drug is used to treat newborns who contracted Herpes simplex infections, immunocompromised patients, and severe initial genital herpes in non-immunocompromised patients.

According to NAFDAC, it highlighted that particulate matter contamination in infusions can lead to complications

like phlebitis, thrombophlebitis, and granuloma formation, including pulmonary dysfunction and death.

The health agency urged medical professionals and the public to report any side effects, falsified or substandard medicine to the closest NAFDAC office, or dial 08001623322 or via email: sf.alert@nafdac.gov.ng.

"Similarly, healthcare professionals and patients are also encouraged to report adverse events or side effects related to the use of the affected product to the nearest NAFDAC office, or through the use of the E-reporting platforms available on the N A F D A C w e b s i t e www.nafdac.gov.ng or via the Med-safety application available for download on Android and iOS stores or via e-mail on pharmacovigilance@nafdac.gov.ng."

Metabolic syndrome tied to higher risk of early dementia, new study finds

By Helen Okechukwu



A large-scale study has uncovered a worrying link between metabolic syndrome — a cluster of health conditions like high blood pressure and high blood sugar — and an increased risk of developing young-onset dementia, a form of the disease that strikes before the age of 65.

Published Wednesday in the journal *Neurology*, the study tracked nearly 2 million Koreans aged 40 to 60 over an 11-year period through the country's National Health Insurance Service.

Researchers found that those with metabolic syndrome were 24% more likely to develop dementia than those without the condition.

Metabolic syndrome is diagnosed when a person has at least three of the following: high blood pressure,

elevated blood sugar, excess belly fat, or abnormal levels of cholesterol or triglycerides. In the study, about 25% of participants met this criteria.

While only 0.45% of all study participants developed young-onset dementia over the decade, the increased risk was significant — and more pronounced in certain groups.

Women with metabolic syndrome had a 34% higher chance of developing dementia, compared to a 15% increase in men. People in their 40s were also more vulnerable than those in their 50s.

“The key takeaway (of the study) is that metabolic syndrome significantly increases the risk of developing young-onset dementia,” which is dementia before age 65,” said lead study investigator Dr. Minwoo Lee.

Looking at dementia types, metabolic syndrome raised the risk of Alzheimer's by 12% and vascular dementia — which is linked to impaired blood flow in the brain — by 21%.

Dr. Richard Isaacson, a preventive neurologist and director of research at the Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases in Boca Raton, Florida who is one of the researchers, said, “Dementia is among our most feared diseases, and developing dementia at an early age is even more worrisome.”

Lee added that healthier lifestyle habits — such as regular exercise, enough sleep, balance diet and consistent medical care — could play a role in reducing the risk of developing dementia later in life.

Nigerian women date for survival, not romance, says Erigga

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian rapper Erigga has sparked a wave of reactions on social media after airing his views on Nigerian women and their approach to relationships.

In a post that quickly gained attention, the outspoken musician criticised what he described as a lack of emotional depth in romantic relationships in Nigeria.

Taking to his X (formerly Twitter) account, he wrote that many Nigerian women date for survival rather than love. He claimed that financial benefits are often the main focus in relationships, not emotional connection or genuine romance.

In his words, “Nigerian women are not deep. They date for survival, not romance. Thus, an intentional man means rich. Romance means a monetary gesture. Love means footing their bills. What you people are doing in Nigeria is not relationship.” He wrote.

The post immediately stirred controversy online. Some users agreed with the rapper, saying his comments reflect the reality of modern relationships in the country. Others, however, slammed his remarks as disrespectful and one-sided.

Social media reactions: Divided opinions emerge

As the post spread across social platforms, thousands of users weighed in. Some defended his statement, pointing to the economic challenges in the country as a major reason women seek financial stability in relationships.

A user replied, “He’s just saying what most men already know. Life is hard, and people date for different reasons. It’s not just about feelings anymore.”

Another person commented, “What he said may sound harsh, but it’s true for a lot of people. Women want security, and in this economy, love alone can’t pay the bills.”

However, many others called out the rapper for generalising and making broad assumptions about Nigerian women.

One user fired back, “Not every Nigerian woman is like that. A lot of us work hard and want real love. Erigga should stop painting women as gold diggers.”



Another wrote, “This is exactly why women don’t open up to men. Instead of listening or building trust, you’re out here judging. Relationships are complex.”

Who Is Erigga? A voice from the streets Erigga, whose real name is Erhiga Agarivbie, is known for his bold opinions and gritty lyrics. Often called “Paperboi,” the rapper has built a strong following by speaking openly about social and economic issues affecting young Nigerians.

He frequently uses his platform to highlight topics like poverty, street life, and survival. His latest comments reflect that same raw style, though this time directed at modern relationships.

While some praised him for “speaking the truth,” others questioned his motive and timing.

An Instagram user wrote, “It’s funny how celebrities always have something to say about women, but don’t talk about how men also treat women like options or ATMs. Relationships go both ways.”

Changing times: Romance, money, and modern love

The rapper’s statement taps into a larger conversation happening in Nigeria and across the world. As economic hardship grows, many people, both men and women, see relationships through the lens of financial security.

In Nigeria, where youth unemployment remains high and inflation continues to rise, the idea of dating purely for love seems increasingly difficult. Many argue that the

harsh economic reality forces people to prioritise survival over emotions.

Relationship experts say that while love and romance are still valued, the expectations around dating have shifted. Gifts, financial support, and acts of service now carry greater meaning in modern relationships.

One relationship coach based in Lagos explained, “People often confuse love with financial support, especially in difficult times. It doesn’t mean romance is dead, but the way we express it has changed. Money has become part of the love language.”

Silence from the rapper: No clarification yet Despite the backlash, he has not responded to the criticisms. He has neither clarified his comments nor posted any follow-up remarks. His silence has only fueled more discussion, with fans and critics debating the line between honesty and offense.

Some believe the rapper is simply holding up a mirror to society. Others feel his message lacked empathy and failed to recognise the struggles of women navigating a tough economy.

The larger question: What does love mean today?

Whatever the intention, one thing is clear his words have reignited an old debate. Is modern love in Nigeria being replaced by transactions? Or is it just evolving in a challenging world?

As conversations continue, many hope this moment will lead to more open and honest dialogue about love, gender roles, and money in Nigerian society.

Iyanya denies taking sides in Wizkid, Davido feud

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian Afrobeats singer, Iyanya, has denied claims that he has taken sides in the ongoing feud between fellow superstars Wizkid and Davido.

The music star addressed the accusations on social media after a fan questioned his recent show of support for Davido's music.

Wizkid, Davido's longstanding rivalry
The tension between Wizkid and Davido has been a long-standing one. Last year, their rivalry escalated once again with a series of public jabs and messy exchanges on social media. Fans took sides. Some accused other artists of doing the same.

Iyanya accused of "switching sides"

Iyanya, who rose to fame with hits like Kukere, was drawn into the mix after he showed love to Davido's new music online. Some social media users saw this as a betrayal of Wizkid, with whom he once collaborated on the track Sexy Mama.

On Wednesday, a user on X (formerly Twitter) reignited the accusation. Responding to a post by Iyanya, the user with the handle @Akubasteeny commented, "I thought Wiz was your friend. I am just wondering why you switched sides and turned into Davido's boy."

Iyanya sets the record straight

Iyanya didn't hold back. He replied directly to the user, setting the record straight.

"I don't have an issue with any artiste," he wrote. "I played Wizkid's Made in Lagos and Morayo, the same way I play every other artiste's songs."

He explained that as a musician, it is part of his job to stay in touch with what others in the industry are doing. Listening to new music is essential, he said, not just for support, but to stay informed about changes in sound, style, and trends.

"Most artistes won't say this, but we are the first to listen to other artistes' projects when they drop. It's our job to know what's happening in the game," Iyanya added.

Support for emerging artists

He also pointed out that he had been listening



to emerging artists even before they became popular. He mentioned Fola, a rising act, saying he had been playing his songs long before his breakout moment. He credited talent manager Ubi Franklin for introducing him to new sounds and upcoming stars.

"Fireboy's Adedamola album, Joeboy's Viva Lavida album I play them all," he continued. "I don't have enemies. I support everyone."

Iyanya blames fans for stirring drama

The singer then turned his focus on fans, accusing them of stirring unnecessary drama. He said fans often try to create division where none exists.

"Stop this 'friend or no friend' talk," he said.

"I saw Burna Boy at a club three weeks ago. We vibed well. There's no problem."

According to Iyanya, the real issue is not between the artists themselves but with their fan bases, who sometimes push false narratives and fuel unnecessary conflict.

"Na una fans dey try dey push agenda wey no dey," he wrote in Nigerian Pidgin, meaning "You fans are the ones trying to create a problem that doesn't exist."

A call for unity in the music industry

Iyanya's message was clear: he is not choosing sides. He respects and supports all his colleagues in the industry. For him, music is a community, not a battleground.

The singer's response comes at a time when fan wars have become more common online. Social media platforms are often flooded with comparisons, criticisms, and conspiracies involving popular Nigerian artists. These online battles sometimes spill over into real-world tension, even though the artists themselves might have no personal issues.

Promoting peace over competition

Iyanya's attempt to calm things down is not new. In the past, other artists have also called for peace and unity in the industry. Burna Boy, Rema, and even Wizkid have, at different times, urged fans to stop fueling beef and focus on the music.

Still, the noise continues.

But for Iyanya, the message is simple: he's here to make music, support talent, and enjoy good vibes regardless of who it's coming from.

"I no get enemy," he said again, using Pidgin English for emphasis. "I just love good music."

Room for everyone to shine

As the Afrobeats scene continues to grow globally, many fans hope for more unity among their favourite stars. And while competition is natural in the music business, artists like Iyanya are reminding everyone that there's room for everyone to shine.

I assisted you to bury your mother, Kwam1 slams Kollington over failure to reciprocate

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

Kwam1 criticises his former mentor, Ayinla Kollington, for not showing support after his mother's death, despite once standing by him during his loss.

Kwam1, also called K1 De Ultimate, lost his mother on January 18, 2025. She was buried the same day, in line with Islamic customs. But months later, the music icon says his grief has been made worse by what he sees as betrayal from someone he once looked up to as a father figure.

“I stood by him when he needed me”

In an emotional interview with radio host Bamidele Adeyanju on Agbaletu Radio, Kwam1 expressed his deep disappointment. He revealed that when Kollington lost his mother, he did far more than send condolences; he took over the entire funeral arrangement.

“I am very angry with Alhaji Kollington,” Kwam1 said. “He didn't call. He didn't visit. He didn't even send a condolence message when I lost my mother. That's painful, especially because I was there for him when he lost his own mother.”

Kwam1 said he organised the burial, brought high-profile guests including governors and dignitaries, and covered all the costs, out of love and respect for Kollington.

“He couldn't even try again?”

According to Kwam1, Kollington was in Nigeria and in good health when the news of his mother's death broke. But despite being physically present in the country, he didn't reach out.

“The only excuse he gave was that he called and I didn't pick up,” Kwam1 said. “Is that a real excuse? My mother



had just died. I was grieving. A missed call is not enough. He could have tried again. He could have sent someone. He could have come himself.”

A broken bond

Kwam1 said he had always respected Kollington as a mentor and treated him like family. Their relationship dated back decades, with Kwam1 often acknowledging Kollington's role in helping him rise in the Fuji music scene.

“This is not how to treat someone who has always shown you love and loyalty,” he said. “You don't repay kindness with silence, especially not at a time like this.”

A call for compassion in the fuji community

Kwam1 didn't just express personal disappointment, he also used the moment to speak directly to the Fuji music industry. He called on fellow musicians to show more love and support for one another, especially during times of loss.

“We need to be there for each other,” he said. “Life is short. No one knows tomorrow. When we lose someone close, that's when we truly know who our friends are. It's not about money or fame. It's about showing up.”

Still no response from Kollington

As of now, Ayinla Kollington has not made any public statement in response to Kwam1's claims. Meanwhile, fans have taken to social media to express their thoughts. Some have shown strong support for Kwam1, while others have called for calm and reconciliation between the two Fuji legends.

“I just needed support”

Kwam1 ended the interview with a heartfelt message. He made it clear that he wasn't looking for attention, praise, or even money. All he wanted was a simple gesture of care from someone he had once helped.

“When I give my all to someone,” he said, “I expect at least a little care in return. That's not too much to ask.”

Tony Allen didn't co-pioneer Afrobeat with Fela, Femi Kuti insists

By **Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi**

Femi Kuti denies claims that late drummer Tony Allen co-created Afrobeat with his father, Fela Kuti, calling the widely held belief false.

For years, both local and international media have described Allen as a co-founder of Afrobeat. As Fela's long-time drummer and musical director, Allen is often praised for helping shape the sound that became a global cultural force. But Femi Kuti says that story is false.

Femi Kuti speaks out

In a video message posted recently on his social media page, Femi firmly rejected the co-founder narrative. He stated that while Tony Allen was a talented drummer, he did not contribute creatively to Afrobeat's structure or identity. Instead, Femi credited his father with single-handedly developing the genre.

"My father was a multi-instrumentalist. He studied music seriously. He understood every part of every instrument he played," Femi said. "You've probably read somewhere that Fela once said, 'Without Tony Allen, there is no Afrobeat.' That's the biggest lie ever told about my father. It's absolute nonsense."

Fela created the patterns

The afrobeat icon's son explained that Fela developed all the rhythms and arrangements used in Afrobeat. He claimed that Allen simply played what Fela taught him, just like the other instrumentalists in the band.

"They tried to make Tony Allen into something bigger than he was by spreading lies," Femi said. "He was good at what he did. But Fela taught him. Fela created all the drum patterns. We saw it happen with our own eyes."

Femi said he witnessed this process from childhood through adulthood. As someone who grew up around his father's music, he said he was present during writing sessions and rehearsals.

The creative process was solo

He described Fela's creative method as deeply personal and intense. When



composing music, Fela often entered a trance-like state and demanded silence from everyone around him.

"Fela would go into a trance when writing music. Nobody was allowed to interrupt him," he said. "During those moments, everyone had to be quiet and wait for his instructions. Nobody, not even Tony Allen, could suggest changes."

Challenging the narrative

Femi challenged those who repeat the story of Tony Allen as a co-creator to provide evidence. "I keep asking, where did Fela say Tony Allen created Afrobeat with him? Show me the interview. Show me the article. Show me the video. There's nothing. Because it never happened," he said.

According to Femi, if Allen had played a role in creating the music, he would have been able to name specific songs or drum patterns. But Femi claims that no such information exists.

"Tony Allen never said which songs he created or what patterns were his. Because there were none," he said. "Fela never asked anyone to create drum patterns for him. It just didn't happen."

Respecting the legacy

Femi also stressed that his father had a clear vision for Afrobeat and never accepted input during the composition process. "Fela was a

perfectionist," he said. "He knew exactly what he wanted from each instrument, each note, each rhythm. Every band member followed his direction, not the other way around."

A global genre, a clear origin

Femi's remarks come at a time when Afrobeat is gaining renewed global attention. The genre has influenced artists across Africa, Europe, and the Americas. With its rising popularity, discussions about who deserves credit for its creation have resurfaced.

Tony Allen, who passed away in 2020, was widely respected in the global music community. His work beyond Fela's band earned him praise for innovation and skill. Despite their eventual split in the late 1970s, Allen often referred to Fela as a genius and visionary.

Setting the record straight

Still, Femi insists the story of joint creation does not match the facts. "Afrobeat was Fela's vision, Fela's work, and Fela's creation," he said. "That should be respected."

For Femi, protecting his father's legacy is not about taking away from Tony Allen's talent. It's about being truthful. "We must get the history right," he said. "My father gave everything to this music. He deserves full credit."

Naira Watch: Dollar Hits N1,607 despite reforms

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

The Dollar to Naira exchange rate remains a critical focus for businesses, investors and individuals in Nigeria as forex market fluctuations continue.

On 25th April 2025, the black-market exchange rate reflects ongoing economic trends, foreign exchange supply challenges, and the latest policies from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).



How Much is Dollar to Naira Today in Black Market?

The latest black-market Dollar to Naira exchange rate as of 25th April 2025 is:

Buying Rate: ₦1,600 per \$1
Selling Rate: ₦1,607 per \$1

How Much is Euro to Naira Today in Black Market?

The latest black-market Euro to Naira exchange rate as of 25th March 2025 is:

Buying Rate: ₦1775 per €1
Selling Rate: ₦2120 per €1

How Much is Pound to Naira Today in Black Market?

The latest black-market British pounds to Naira exchange rate as of 25th March 2025 is:

Buying Rate: ₦2095 per £1
Selling Rate: ₦2120 per £1

How Much is Chinese Yuan to Naira Today in Black Market?

The latest black-market Chinese Yuan to Naira exchange rate as of 25th

March 2025 is:

Buying Rate: ₦200 per ¥1
Selling Rate: ₦220 per ¥1

The Dollar to Naira black market rate is significantly influenced by forex demand and supply. Due to CBN forex restrictions, many businesses and individuals rely on parallel market operators (Bureau de Change traders) to obtain foreign currency for transactions.

For real-time exchange rate updates, Aboki Forex and CBN.

Why is the Black-Market Exchange Rate Different from the Official Rate?

Several factors contribute to the disparity between the black market and official exchange rates, including:

Limited Access to Official Foreign Exchange:

High Demand, Restricted Supply: Nigeria often faces a high demand for foreign currency, particularly the US dollar, driven by its import-dependent economy and the need for businesses and individuals to make international

payments.

Bureaucracy and Restrictions: Accessing foreign exchange at the official rate can involve bureaucratic processes, documentation, and restrictions on the amount and purpose of the transaction. These hurdles push individuals and businesses to seek quicker and less restrictive alternatives in the black market.

Distortions in the Official Exchange Rate:

Artificial Pegging or Management: Historically, the CBN has at times, maintained an official exchange rate that was perceived to be artificially high compared to the market's equilibrium. When the official rate doesn't accurately reflect the supply and demand dynamics, a parallel market emerges where the rate is determined more freely.

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Multiple Exchange Rate Windows (Historical): Nigeria has, in the past, operated multiple exchange rate windows with varying rates for different types of transactions. This complexity and the potential for arbitrage contributed to the divergence between the official and black-market rates. While the government has taken steps to unify these rates, the effects of past policies still influence market perceptions.

Economic Factors and Market Sentiment:

Supply and Demand Dynamics: The black-market rate is largely driven by the immediate forces of supply and demand. If there's high demand for foreign currency due to import needs, speculation, or a lack of confidence in the local currency, the black market rate will likely be higher than the official rate.

Inflation Differentials: Nigeria has historically experienced higher inflation rates compared to some of its major trading partners. This erodes the value of the Naira and can lead to a higher demand for more stable foreign currencies in the black market.

Economic Uncertainty and Risk: Periods of economic instability, policy uncertainty, or socio-political

risks can reduce confidence in the Naira, causing individuals and businesses to prefer holding foreign currencies, thus increasing demand and the exchange rate in the parallel market.

Speculation: Anticipations of Naira devaluation can fuel speculative activities in the black market, further widening the gap with the official rate.

Informal Nature and Lack of Regulation:

Willing Buyer, Willing Seller: The black market operates on a willing buyer, willing seller basis with minimal regulation. This allows for rates to fluctuate more freely based on immediate market conditions.

Circumventing Regulations: Some individuals and businesses may use the black market to bypass certain financial regulations, taxes, or restrictions associated with official channels.

Impact of Government Policies:

Monetary Policy: The CBN's monetary policies, including interest rates and money supply, can influence the demand for and supply of the Naira and, consequently, the exchange rates in both official and parallel markets.

Fiscal Policy: Government spending, borrowing, and fiscal deficits can also impact the economy and the value of the Naira, indirectly affecting the exchange rate.

Foreign Exchange Management: Policies related to the allocation and control of foreign exchange directly influence the availability of foreign currency through official channels and can either mitigate or exacerbate the divergence with the black market rate. Recent efforts to unify exchange rates and allow market forces to play a greater role aim to reduce this gap.

In early 2025, the Nigerian government and the Central Bank have introduced policies to unify the exchange rate and reduce the difference between the official and black market rates. These efforts include allowing the Naira to float more freely in the official Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market (NFEM) and increasing dollar supply. These measures have contributed to narrowing the gap, with the black market rate sometimes nearing the official rate. However, the underlying economic challenges and market dynamics continue to play a significant role in shaping the exchange rate landscape in Nigeria.

Next Pope to be chosen in secrecy, without campaigns

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

When a world leader dies, a wave of political jockeying often follows. But in the Vatican, where the Catholic Church now mourns the passing of Pope Francis, the path to leadership unfolds in utter silence — and absolute secrecy.

There are no speeches, no campaign trails, no political alliances. In fact, Cardinals are expressly forbidden from doing any of it.

According to the Apostolic Constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis* — the document that governs papal elections — Cardinals must not lobby, campaign, or promote themselves or others in any form. The rules, revised by Pope Benedict XVI in 2013, strictly prohibit:

Making promises or political deals

Forming alliances

Exchanging votes

Any form of campaigning

Violating these guidelines can render the election null and void. “Cardinals must enter the process in prayer and discernment, not ambition,” the Constitution affirms. Their role is to listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not the whispers of power.

Locked in Secrecy

The election of a new Pope, called a conclave, is one of the most secretive events in the modern world.

Only Cardinals under the age of 80 are eligible to vote — a group capped at 120. These electors are sealed inside Vatican City, staying at the *Domus Sanctae Marthae* and casting their ballots in the Sistine Chapel beneath



Michelangelo’s Last Judgment.

All communication with the outside world is cut off. No phones, no media, no messages. Voting happens up to four times per day, and after each round, ballots are burned — black smoke signals no decision, white smoke reveals that a new Pope has been chosen.

The process may take days, sometimes weeks, depending on how quickly consensus is reached. A successful candidate must secure a two-thirds majority to be elected.

Spiritual Discernment, Not Politics

The current rules were shaped to safeguard the Church’s spiritual integrity in a globalized, hyper-connected world. The *Universi Dominici Gregis* makes it clear: the election must reflect spiritual readiness, not political maneuvering.

Campaigning of any sort — even quiet “kingmaking” behind the scenes — is banned. Breaking secrecy is so serious it results in automatic excommunication.

The next Pope will be someone chosen through silent votes, not vocal endorsements. And that person may not even come from the expected frontrunners.

The Death of Pope Francis

The conclave follows the death of Pope Francis, who passed away on Easter Monday at age 88. His body lies in state at St. Peter’s Basilica, drawing crowds of mourners from around the world. His funeral, scheduled for Saturday, will be attended by global leaders including the Prince of Wales and UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.

Francis, known for his humility and global outreach, leaves behind a complex legacy — one that the next Pope will inherit and redefine.

As Catholics around the world turn their eyes toward the chimney atop the Sistine Chapel, one thing is certain: the next Pope will not have campaigned for the job. He will be chosen in silence, by men bound by secrecy and guided — if tradition holds — by something greater than politics.

Rocky start for U.S. anti-migration campaign as Mexico pushes back

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

A new Trump administration campaign designed to discourage illegal migration is drawing sharp criticism abroad and stirring controversy at home, as Mexico moves to ban what it calls foreign “propaganda” from its airwaves.

Launched under the leadership of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi L. Noem, the multimillion-dollar initiative is aimed at convincing undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to self-deport, while dissuading others from attempting illegal entry. Funded by U.S. taxpayers, the campaign’s estimated \$200 million price tag over two years has sparked heated debate.

Read also: Trump slams Zelensky for refusing to recognize Russian control of Crimea

The ads marked by their stark tone and political messaging are already airing on television and radio across Latin America, including Mexico. But their reception south of the border has been anything but warm.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, a leftist who has until recently aligned with many of President Donald Trump’s demands on curbing migration and the fentanyl trade, has come out strongly against the ads.



Denouncing them as a breach of Mexico’s sovereignty, Sheinbaum is pushing for swift legislative action to outlaw such broadcasts.

“Mexico stands for diversity, inclusion and rights,” Sheinbaum declared at a press briefing this week. “Our sovereignty must be respected.”

In a rare show of political unity, lawmakers across Mexico’s ideological spectrum are backing the move. The proposed legislation would prohibit the transmission of foreign government-funded messaging, particularly from the United States, on national TV and radio stations.

The backlash comes amid broader tensions surrounding immigration policy and U.S.-Mexico relations. Despite Sheinbaum’s earlier cooperation with Trump, including

tariff negotiations and stepped-up border enforcement, the ad campaign appears to have struck a nerve.

Back in the United States, critics are also questioning the campaign’s political overtones and the decision to allocate massive funding to a media blitz while government agencies face budget cuts. Elon Musk’s recently created Department of Government Efficiency (U.S. DOGE) has been implementing widespread job reductions across federal departments.

The Noem-led campaign’s effectiveness remains to be seen. But with rising diplomatic tensions and mounting scrutiny, its early days have proven anything but efficient.

Trump slams Zelensky for refusing to recognize Russian control of Crimea

By **Fatimah Idera**

President Donald Trump slammed Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday for his comments that Ukraine wouldn't recognize Russian control of Crimea, calling the remarks very harmful to the Peace Negotiations with Russia.

In his post on Truth Social which reads; It's inflammatory statements like Zelensky's that makes it so difficult to settle this War. He has nothing to boast about! The situation for Ukraine is dire. He can have Peace or, he can fight for another three years before losing the whole Country,"

Any move to recognize Russia's control of Crimea would reverse a decade of US policy and could upset the widely held post-World War Two consensus that international borders should not be changed by force.

Russian missiles struck Ukraine's capital city Kyiv and the country's second largest city Kharkiv hours after Trump's post, Ukrainian authorities said, with at least two people killed and some 50 wounded in the latest attacks.

Trump's comments came after a meeting in London aimed at bringing about an end to Russia's war in Ukraine had been downgraded after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he wouldn't attend.

Rubio had been expected to take part in the discussions with Ukrainian, UK and European officials, but State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said Tuesday that he would no longer attend due to logistical issues.

Although a US official and two European diplomats familiar with the matter said the top US diplomat didn't go because the administration did not feel that they were at a decisive point in the ongoing talks and



Rubio didn't feel attending would be the best use of his time.

"It was better to let talks play out than create the illusion that a breakthrough was imminent," said one of the European diplomats.

"Emotions have run high today," Zelensky said on X after the talks.

In what seemed to be an indirect response to Trump's criticism of Zelensky being unwilling to recognize Russian control of Crimea, Zelensky vowed Kyiv would abide by its constitution: "Ukraine will always act in accordance with its Constitution, and we are absolutely sure that our partners – in particular the USA – will act in line with its strong decisions."

Zelensky shared a screenshot of former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's 2018 Crimea Declaration which rejected Russia's occupation of the peninsula.

Britain's Foreign Office had confirmed earlier on Wednesday that the meeting would take place at a lower level. "Official level talks will continue but these are closed to the media," the department said in a message to journalists.

The developments throw new uncertainty

over the diplomatic efforts to end Russia's war. The United States has become increasingly steadfast in its push to force Kyiv to an agreement, but Ukraine is adamant that it will not give up Crimea, which has been occupied by Russia since 2014, or parts of eastern Ukraine that were captured following Moscow's full-scale invasion in 2022.

US Vice President JD Vance threatened to abandon negotiations on Wednesday, telling reporters during a visit to India: "We've issued a very explicit proposal to both the Russians and Ukrainians, and it's time for them to either say yes or for the US to walk away from this process. We've engaged in an extraordinary amount of diplomacy, of on the groundwork."

But Ukraine's European allies, particularly Britain and France, have been hoping to bridge the divide. Wednesday's talks were due to follow a meeting in Paris last week in which officials from the US, the United Kingdom, France and Germany discussed the American framework for a ceasefire.

After Rubio reversed plans to attend the latest talks, Bruce said President Donald Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, Keith Kellogg, would represent the US in London instead.

Tension as Swedish NATO jets intercept Russian aircraft over Baltic Sea

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two Swedish fighter jets operating under NATO command were scrambled Thursday to intercept a Russian reconnaissance aircraft nearing Polish airspace, in a move that underscores the escalating aerial tensions over the Baltic Sea.

According to Sweden's Armed Forces, the jets, deployed from the NATO airbase in Malbork, Poland, were sent to confront and escort away a Russian IL-20 "Coot" reconnaissance plane detected approaching the Polish border.

"The plane was close to Polish airspace, so we went up to signal our presence, make a visual identification, and escort it out of the area," Swedish Air Force spokeswoman Therese Åkerstedt told AFP.

The interception occurred in international airspace and marks the third such incident involving Russian aircraft in the region within a week. NATO Air Command later released images of the encounter on social



media, showcasing the Swedish jets shadowing the Russian plane.

This latest incident comes on the heels of similar operations by the British Royal Air Force. Last week, Britain dispatched Typhoon fighter jets to intercept a Russian IL-20 over the Baltic. Just two days later, the same jets were launched to track an unidentified aircraft departing from Kaliningrad airspace.

British Minister for the Armed Forces,

Luke Pollard, emphasized NATO's commitment to collective defense: "With Russian aggression growing and security threats on the rise, we are stepping up to reassure our Allies, deter adversaries and protect our national security."

Tensions in the region have steadily intensified since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Sweden, a traditionally neutral country, joined NATO in March 2024, further altering the security dynamics of Northern Europe.

Analysts warn that these repeated airspace provocations could raise the risk of miscalculation between NATO and Russian forces, especially as the Baltic region becomes an increasingly contested zone.

As NATO continues its vigilance, the alliance has reiterated its stance: while prepared to respond to threats, it remains committed to maintaining peace and stability across Europe.

UK fraud office encourages firms to self-report wrongdoing

By Fatimah Idera

UK Firms are encouraged to self-report suspected wrongdoing to Britain's Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and cooperate with investigators as they get a chance to avoid prosecution, according to guidance published by the SFO on Thursday.

The SFO, which has a remit covering complex financial crimes, fraud and corruption, said companies that flag potential breaches would be offered the chance to negotiate a Deferred Prosecution Agreement (DPA), except in exceptional circumstances.

Such agreements typically allow the accused to avoid prosecution unless they reoffend or violate other terms during the term of the agreement.



Prosecutors agree to suspend legal proceedings in exchange for the company agreeing to conditions such as fines, compensation payments, and corporate compliance programs

The SFO Director, Nick Ephgrave, said, "If you have knowledge of wrongdoing, the gamble of keeping this to yourself has

never been riskier,"

The guidance details what the SFO will consider to be genuine cooperation, including the preservation of digital and hard copy records and early engagement with authorities.

Law firms gave the revised guidance a mixed reception, with some suggesting company boards will continue to grapple with the dilemma of self-reporting or waiting for the SFO to uncover fault.

"Mr Ephgrave warns companies against trying to bury their skeletons. But in the unlikely event those skeletons are discovered by the SFO, simply pleading guilty can be a more attractive outcome than an earlier self-report," said Andrew Smith, a partner at Corker Binning.

Massive Russian missile strike hits Kyiv amid stalled peace talks

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is cutting short an official trip to South Africa following a deadly Russian missile strike on Kyiv early Thursday that killed at least ten people and injured more than 70 others.

Zelenskyy, who had been meeting with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to seek broader support for Ukraine's war effort, announced his immediate return to Kyiv via a Telegram post. "I am returning to Ukraine after our meeting in South Africa. The situation in Kyiv demands my presence," he wrote.

The attack on Ukraine's capital, which targeted multiple residential areas, came just hours after peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia appeared to collapse. President Donald Trump criticized Zelenskyy during a Wednesday address, accusing the Ukrainian leader of prolonging the war by refusing to consider territorial concessions — specifically, the cession of Crimea to Russia.

"It's been harder to deal with Zelenskyy than with Russia," Trump said later that day.

Zelenskyy, however, has consistently drawn a firm red line against recognizing any Russian-occupied territory, including Crimea. In his remarks on Thursday, he reiterated that Ukraine had accepted a U.S.-backed ceasefire



proposal 44 days earlier, but that Russian aggression had only escalated since.

"Putin shows through his actions that he does not respect peace talks," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha posted on X (formerly Twitter). "Only strength and pressure will stop his terror."

Russia's latest assault involved 66 ballistic and cruise missiles, four air-launched missiles, and 145 Shahed drones, targeting Kyiv and four other regions, according to the Ukrainian Air Force. In Kyiv, emergency workers continue to search for bodies under the rubble of an apartment complex hit in the early morning hours.

Mayor Vitali Klitschko confirmed ten deaths in the capital, though earlier reports had cited nine. Ukraine's State Emergency Service said at least 42 people have been hospitalized.

The most recent attack adds to a grim toll since Russia's full-scale invasion

began February 2022. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal reported that more than 13,000 civilians have died, including 618 children.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials have raised concerns that the Trump administration may soon scale back its involvement in brokering peace if neither side compromises. Despite ongoing diplomatic efforts, Russia has continued its attacks in several cities — most notably, a strike in Sumy that killed over 30 civilians celebrating Palm Sunday, drone assaults in Odesa, and glide bomb attacks in Zaporizhzhia.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused Zelenskyy of refusing to negotiate, claiming he insists on ceasefire terms that only serve Ukraine's interests.

As Ukraine reels from the latest wave of violence, international calls for a stronger global response continue to mount, though hope for meaningful dialogue appears increasingly faint.

Two U.S. Marines under investigation for rape in Okinawa

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Two U.S. Marines stationed in Okinawa are under investigation for separate rape allegations, Japanese police confirmed on Thursday, in a development likely to inflame already sensitive relations between the local community and American military forces.

A local police official reported that the first Marine, in his 20s, is suspected of raping a Japanese woman within an American military base in March. He is also under suspicion for injuring a second woman who attempted to intervene during the alleged assault. The second Marine, also in his 20s, is accused of raping a Japanese woman on a U.S. base in January. Both cases have been formally referred to prosecutors.

These allegations mark the latest in a troubling pattern of incidents involving American servicemen in Okinawa. The island, which houses more than half of the approximately 54,000 U.S. military personnel stationed in Japan, has long been a flashpoint for controversy due to the disproportionate presence of foreign troops and associated crimes.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan George Glass issued a statement pledging full cooperation with the investigations. "We deeply value the ties of trust and friendship we have built over many decades with our Japanese hosts," he said. "I am committed to doing everything I can



to prevent actions that may jeopardize these bonds."

In an effort to restore public confidence, U.S. military personnel recently joined Japanese officials and local residents in a rare joint nighttime patrol in a popular nightlife district in Okinawa. The operation, the first of its kind since 1973, came in response to previous sexual assault cases involving American troops.

The latest reports follow a series of similar incidents. In June last year, a 21-year-old Marine was charged with rape, while earlier in the year, a 25-year-old U.S. soldier was accused of sexually assaulting a girl under 16.

Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki condemned the new cases as "deplorable" and vowed to press U.S. military authorities for preventive measures, according to Japanese media. At a regular press briefing, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi refrained from

discussing the cases in detail but reaffirmed Japan's position that crimes by U.S. troops are "unacceptable."

Media reports, citing police sources, revealed that the March assault allegedly took place in a restroom, and that the injured woman had tried to stop the attack.

Tensions surrounding the U.S. military presence in Okinawa date back decades. In 1995, the gang rape of a 12-year-old girl by three American servicemen sparked mass protests and led to calls for revisiting the 1960 U.S.-Japan security pact. Last year alone, 80 people affiliated with the U.S. military were charged with crimes in Okinawa, according to police data.

As investigations proceed, residents and officials alike continue to question the ongoing impact of the American military footprint on the island and its implications for public safety.

Funding cuts disrupt global childhood vaccines

By **Fatimah Idera**

Global aid funding cuts, led by the United States, are disrupting efforts to vaccinate children against deadly diseases almost as much as the COVID-19 pandemic did, the United Nations said on Thursday.

Outbreaks of infectious diseases, including measles, meningitis, and yellow fever, have been increasing globally.

According to reports from World Health Organization offices in 108 largely low and lower-middle income countries, Emergency and routine vaccinations meanwhile were significantly affected in nearly half of countries at the start of April due to the funding cuts.

Cuts to funding also reduced vaccine supplies and hampered disease surveillance, the WHO and UNICEF said in a joint release with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

The UNICEF executive director, Catherine Russell, said, “Setbacks (are) at a similar level to what we saw during COVID-19. We cannot afford to lose ground in the fight against preventable disease,” said

COVID-19 caused what was called the largest backslide in childhood vaccination in a generation and aid funding cuts, led by the U.S. – formerly the world’s largest donor – risked the same outcome, the joint release said.

They called for funding for childhood immunisation to be maintained ahead of Gavi’s funding round, which will be launched in June. The group is seeking \$9 billion for its work from 2026-2030.



Sania Nishtar, Gavi’s chief executive officer, said it was possible to fight the rise of infectious diseases but only if the group was fully funded.

Measles cases have increased year-on-year since 2021, while meningitis surged in Africa last year and yellow fever cases also rose after declines in the last decade, the agencies said.

Last month, an internal U.S. government document showed it would follow its cuts to UNICEF and the WHO, part of wider plans to streamline and focus foreign aid to align with the “America First” policy, by cancelling its contribution of around \$300 million annually to Gavi.

Last week, the U.S. State Department told Reuters it had nominated Mark Lloyd, assistant administrator for global health, to Gavi’s 28-person board. The U.S. seat had previously been vacant.

Both the U.S. State Department and Gavi declined to comment about what this could mean for the U.S. funding.

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, funds global stockpiles of vaccines against cholera, Ebola, meningitis, and yellow fever, and they are accessible to all countries as it supports outcampaings lower-income nations.

The use of the stockpiles for outbreak response is managed by the International Coordinating Group on Vaccine Provision, and doses are delivered to countries by UNICEF.

Gavi has helped vaccinate nearly 400 million children and young adults against meningitis A, effectively eliminating the disease in Africa since 2017. The WHO-approved Men5CV vaccine, introduced in 2023, protects against five major serogroups of meningococcus bacteria, representing a significant advancement for high-risk regions.

Since 2024, Gavi has supported Men5CV deployment for outbreak response, routine immunization, and preventive mass campaigns in the meningitis belt.

Federal judge blocks Trump push to cut funding to public schools

By **Fatimah Idera**

A federal judge in New Hampshire on Thursday restricted the ability of Republican President Donald Trump's administration to cut off funding to public schools that engage in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

U.S. District Judge Landya McCafferty in Concord issued a preliminary injunction preventing the U.S. Department of Education from enforcing its policy against members of three groups including the National Education Association, the largest U.S. teacher's union.

Read also: Harvard may lose ability to enrol foreign students, Trump threatens

The NEA, its local New Hampshire affiliate and the Center for Black Educator Development sued after the Education Department in February threatened funding cuts for education institutions that engaged in DEI efforts.

In a letter, it said federal law prevented schools from considering race as a factor in areas such as admissions, hiring and promotion, pay, financial aid, scholarships and prizes, housing and graduation ceremonies.

McCafferty, an appointee of



Democratic President Barack Obama, declined to issue an injunction blocking enforcement of the policy nationwide, but she said an order was warranted preventing it from being implemented with the plaintiffs, their members or any entity that employs or contracts their members. District Judge Landya McCafferty in Concord issued a preliminary injunction preventing the U.S. Department of Education from enforcing its policy against members of three groups including the National Education Association, the largest U.S. teacher's union.

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Eddie Howe returns to Newcastle dugout after hospital stay

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Newcastle United manager Eddie Howe has made a welcome return to work following a brief hospital stay due to pneumonia. The 47-year-old tactician had been absent from the touchline since mid-April, with assistant manager Jason Tindall and first-team coach Graeme Jones taking over managerial duties during his recovery.

The club confirmed Howe's return to training this week, stating that he is "back overseeing matters at the training ground" and preparing his side for their upcoming Premier League clash against Ipswich Town at St James' Park on Saturday.

Howe's illness came to light on April 11 when Tindall stood in for him during a pre-match press conference, prompting concerns over the manager's health. Later that evening, he was admitted to hospital, where he was diagnosed with pneumonia after feeling unwell for several days.

Newcastle United released a statement on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), thanking fans for their "warm wishes and support" during what they described as a "challenging period" for their head coach. The club's message was met with an outpouring of well-wishes from supporters and figures across the football world, highlighting Howe's popularity and the high regard in which he is held.

Despite his absence, Newcastle's performances on the pitch were nothing short of impressive. Under the temporary stewardship of Tindall and Jones, the Magpies secured convincing victories over Manchester United and



Crystal Palace, winning 4-1 and 5-0 respectively. However, their momentum was checked by a 4-1 defeat away to Aston Villa, a result that served as a reminder of the league's unpredictability.

Newcastle currently sit fifth in the Premier League, occupying the final Champions League qualification spot. With just a handful of games remaining in the season, Howe's return comes at a crucial time as the team looks to secure a place among Europe's elite for next season.

Club insiders report that Howe's recovery has gone well and that he is eager to get back to full duties, though medical staff will continue to monitor his workload closely. His return has lifted spirits at the training ground, with several players reportedly expressing their delight at seeing their manager back in good health.

Howe, who took charge of Newcastle in November 2021, has overseen a remarkable transformation at the club. From relegation battlers to top-four contenders, his tenure has been marked by tactical discipline, smart recruitment, and a clear vision for the

club's long-term future. Under his guidance, players such as Bruno Guimarães, Alexander Isak, and Sven Botman have flourished, while the team as a whole has shown greater resilience and attacking flair.

Fans at St James' Park are expected to give Howe a rousing reception when he reappears on the touchline this weekend. His presence will undoubtedly be a boost as Newcastle continue their push for European qualification, with key fixtures still to come in the closing weeks of the season.

The match against Ipswich, who themselves are fighting to avoid relegation, is expected to be a test of Newcastle's focus and resolve. With Howe back at the helm, supporters will be hopeful that the club can finish the season strongly and secure a spot in next year's UEFA Champions League.

As the Magpies prepare for a decisive end to their campaign, the return of their leader provides a sense of stability and renewed optimism. Howe's comeback is more than symbolic—it's a timely reinforcement for a club with big ambitions and plenty left to play for.

Jamie Vardy to leave Leicester City at end of season

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Leicester City's legendary striker Jamie Vardy has announced he will depart the club at the end of the season, bringing to a close a remarkable 13-year journey that saw him rise from non-league football to Premier League champion and club icon.

Vardy, 38, joined the Foxes in 2012 from Fleetwood Town and went on to become Leicester's all-time leading Premier League goalscorer with 143 goals. In total, he has netted 198 times in 498 appearances — an extraordinary tally that has left an indelible mark on the club's history.

Announcing the news on Thursday, Leicester paid tribute to their long-serving captain, calling him “our greatest ever player.”

The striker's career is one of football's most inspiring tales. From his pivotal role in Leicester's incredible 2015-16 title-winning season — where he scored 24 goals — to lifting the FA Cup in 2021, Vardy's name is etched into football folklore. Notably, his record-breaking streak of scoring in 11 consecutive Premier League games in 2015 still stands.

Reflecting on his time at the club in an emotional video, Vardy said, “To the fans of Leicester, I'm



gutted that this day is coming, but I knew it was going to come eventually. I've spent 13 unbelievable years at this club, with lots of success, and some downs, but the majority have all been highs.”

“This isn't retirement,” he clarified. “I want to keep on playing and doing what I enjoy most — scoring goals. I may be 38 but I still have the desire and ambition to achieve so much more.”

Vardy's influence extended beyond the pitch. Leicester boss Ruud van Nistelrooy, who took over during a turbulent season that saw the Foxes relegated, praised Vardy's loyalty and character. “He stuck with the club through thick and thin. He has achieved everything and now can go and enjoy these last years with his family,” Van Nistelrooy said.

Despite a difficult season that Vardy described as “miserable” and a “total embarrassment,” the striker's commitment never wavered. He scored seven goals in 31 appearances in the current campaign and continued to serve as club captain.

His final match at the King Power Stadium is set for May 18, when Leicester host Ipswich. It promises to be an emotional farewell for a player who defied the odds and helped redefine what was possible in modern football.

As Vardy prepares to leave, the football world watches with admiration. Whether it was the 5,000-1 title triumph, his Golden Boot-winning season in 2019-20, or his underdog spirit, Jamie Vardy's legacy at Leicester City is secure — and legendary.