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Shettima: Institutional reforms will solve 80% of Nigeria's bureaucratic problems

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has declared that institutional reforms are critical to resolving the majority of Nigeria's public policy and bureaucratic challenges.

He stated that such reforms could address as much as 80 per cent of the issues plaguing the nation's governance systems.

Speaking on Monday at the official presentation of the draft National Public Policy Development and Management Framework, Shettima described the new initiative as a "long-overdue" move to overhaul Nigeria's approach to public policy.

"If we get our institutional frameworks right, we will solve 80% of our public policy challenges," the Vice President said.

He called for a national reset in the conception, communication, and implementation of government policies.

"The mitochondria of every government is a workable national public policy."

The draft framework was presented by the Special Adviser to the President on Policy and Coordination and Head of the Central Results Delivery and Coordination Unit (CDCU), Hajiya Bala Usman.

Shettima praised President Bola Tinubu for championing far-reaching reforms, citing his deep understanding of economic governance and willingness to make bold decisions.

"For the first time, we have a leader who understands the dynamics and speaks the language of economics," he said. "We cannot but commend President Tinubu for his very promising reforms across all sectors of the national economy."



He also emphasised the need for policy clarity and consistency, urging that reforms must be easily understood by the public and uniformly applied across all levels of government.

Highlighting the role of e-governance and digital systems, Shettima called for data-driven execution and real-time policy monitoring, with clear consequences for non-performance.

"There must be targets and deliverables. If people fail to perform, they should be made to pay the price. Implementation without accountability is another word for lunacy," he said.

Quoting former U.S. President Barack Obama, Shettima said: "What nations need is not strong characters or leaders, but strong institutions —institutions guided by strong, fair, and acceptable laws."

Meanwhile, Hajiya Bala Usman noted that the draft framework was developed in response to a major gap: the absence of a unifying document guiding policy conceptualisation at the federal level.

"It was baffling to realise that the federal government had no document to specify how policies should be developed," she said.

"MDAs have been operating in silos, often duplicating efforts and producing inconsistent or outdated policies."

She explained that this fragmentation had weakened public trust, discouraged investment, and undermined government effectiveness.

However, she expressed optimism that the new framework—a product of collaboration among the Office of the Vice President, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, NIPSS, FCDO UK, and the NESG, would restore coherence and provide clear guidance for future policy development.

The framework, she added, would promote transparency, improve coordination among MDAs, and strengthen investor confidence in Nigeria's governance processes.

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8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
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Unpaid ground rent: FCTA seals PDP national secretariat, FIRS office, Access bank

By Damilola Olufemi



Officials of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), acting on the directive of FCT Minister Nyesom Wike, have sealed the national secretariat of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Abuja.

The closure of the PDP headquarters, located at Wadata Plaza in Wuse Zone 5, occurred at exactly 2:06 p.m. when FCTA personnel arrived and locked the main entrance gate.

The FCTA also sealed an Access Bank branch, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and a Total petrol station located in Wuse, Abuja, due to the non-payment of ground of 34 years.

This development comes just a day after the FCTA issued a public notice regarding the enforcement of land revocations affecting 4,794 properties. The revocations, according to the administration, are due to the non-payment of ground rent, with some defaulters owing for periods ranging from 10 to 43 years.

The sealing of the PDP secretariat appears to be part of this broader effort to reclaim properties that have not met statutory obligations.

Recall that Wike last Tuesday revoked the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) national secretariat's land, housing the famous Wadata House in Abuja.

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

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

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

Abbas cancels mandatory voting bill after public criticism

By Friday Omosola



The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, has stepped back from a legislative proposal that sought to impose mandatory voting on Nigerians.

The withdrawal followed an outpouring of criticism from legal experts, rights groups, and the wider public.

Initially introduced by Abbas alongside Daniel Ago, the lawmaker representing Bassa/Jos North Federal Constituency in Plateau State, the bill aimed to revise the Electoral Act 2022 to compel eligible citizens to vote.

It passed second reading in the House on 15 May.

Supporters of the bill argued that compulsory voting would boost democratic participation, limit electoral fraud, and discourage vote trading.

Ago had maintained that making voting a legal obligation would promote a culture of civic responsibility and political awareness.

“Turning voting into a duty, not just a

right, would deepen democratic governance and reduce manipulation,” Ago had said during the bill’s debate.

The legislation proposed penalties for non-compliance, including a fine of ₦100,000 or a six-month prison sentence for voters who failed to participate in elections without valid reasons.

However, the bill quickly drew fire from multiple quarters. Civil society organisations and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) condemned the proposal as unconstitutional and authoritarian, warning that it infringed on personal freedoms.

In response to the growing backlash, Abbas on Monday announced the withdrawal of the bill.

His spokesperson, Musa Krishi, issued a statement noting that the Speaker reached the decision after wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders.

“The intention behind the bill was to enhance voter turnout and promote active citizenship,” the statement explained.

“While countries like Australia, Belgium, and Brazil have seen success with mandatory voting laws, Speaker Abbas recognises that Nigeria’s approach must reflect its unique constitutional and cultural realities.”

Abbas reaffirmed his commitment to democratic principles, noting that participation in elections should be encouraged, not enforced.

He pledged to pursue alternative strategies aimed at improving voter turnout, including public education campaigns, incentives, and reforms to reduce barriers to participation.

“The focus now shifts to developing policies that respect individual choice while making the voting process more appealing and accessible,” the statement added.

With the withdrawal of the bill, the House will take no further action on the proposal, marking a retreat from one of the most contentious electoral reforms introduced in recent sessions.

Panic in Abuja as explosion rocks area near Abacha barracks

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



Residents of Abuja were thrown into panic on Monday after a loud explosion occurred near the Abacha Barracks, along the busy Nyanya-Maraba Road, sparking fears of a possible terror-related incident.

The explosion, which happened at approximately 2:50 PM, caused confusion among commuters and passersby, with at least one person reportedly injured.

Although details remain unclear, security operatives have not ruled out the possibility of terrorism. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit (EOD) was swiftly deployed to the scene to investigate and secure the area.

“There was an explosion around our area today. I can’t categorically say it was a case of suicide bombing as some are suggesting, but what is certain is that there was an explosion,” said a local resident who spoke to New Daily Prime on condition of anonymity.

Area Cordon and Emergency

Response

Eyewitnesses described a rapid deployment of emergency services to the site shortly after the blast. According to a female resident who witnessed the aftermath, the affected area was immediately cordoned off to allow for bomb clearance and to prevent secondary hazards.

“One male victim was rescued and taken to the hospital. He is currently receiving medical attention,” she added.

No group has claimed responsibility for the incident as of the time of filing this report.

Police Investigating, Forensic Analysis Underway

Authorities have launched a comprehensive investigation, including forensic analysis, to determine the exact cause and nature of the explosion. While police have not officially classified the blast as a terrorist attack, the presence of bomb disposal units and the high-security

profile of the area have raised concerns.

Public Advised to Stay Vigilant

In a statement, the police urged Abuja residents to remain calm but vigilant, stressing that there is no immediate cause for alarm. They also appealed to the public to report any suspicious activity using the following emergency numbers: 08032003913 | 08028940883 | 07057337653.

“We are doing everything possible to ensure the safety of lives and property. Residents are encouraged to cooperate with law enforcement agencies and avoid spreading unverified information,” the police spokesperson said.

High Alert in Capital

The incident comes amid rising concerns about security in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). With Abuja housing key government institutions and military infrastructure, authorities are on heightened alert to prevent further threats.

Ganduje urges APC to resist internal sabotage, embrace unity

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and former Governor of Kano State, Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, has asserted that Nigeria's future hinges on the strength, stability, and progressive ideals of the ruling party. Speaking during the APC National Summit held Thursday at the Presidential Villa's Banquet Hall in Abuja, Ganduje reaffirmed the party's commitment to national unity, grassroots engagement, and sustainable governance.

Delivering a keynote speech at the summit themed "The Journey So Far", Ganduje stated that the APC must remain more than a political vehicle—it must serve as a transformative movement with deep roots in Nigeria's democratic and developmental aspirations.

"I urge all members to reject internal sabotage. Engage communities, listen to citizens, and build a political structure that lasts beyond elections," he said.

Reform, Unity, and Renewed Hope

Ganduje reflected on the evolution of the APC, which he described as a "movement of courage and conviction" that represents the interests and aspirations of more than 200 million Nigerians. He praised the party's efforts in institutional reform and national consolidation since its formation and called on party faithful to rally behind President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Renewed Hope Agenda. "Let us rally behind President Bola Tinubu, support our policies, and deliver the Renewed Hope Nigerians rightfully deserve," he declared.

The APC chairman noted that under his leadership, the party had undergone internal reforms, gained fresh energy, and expanded its national reach. He



emphasized the need for party members to move forward not just as politicians, but as "patriots and national stewards."

Vision Beyond Elections

Ganduje called for steadfast dedication to the principles that inspired the formation of the APC in 2013, including national unity, economic resilience, and good governance. Stressing that political strength must go hand-in-hand with purpose and vision, he urged members to prioritize the party's long-term mission over short-term politics.

"Our party's strength lies in unity. Nigeria needs every one of you. Let us remain committed to our purpose, unwavering in our resolve, and clear in our vision," Ganduje added.

He described the summit as an opportunity not only for dialogue but for deep introspection and reflection on the APC's journey, its challenges, and the responsibilities that lie ahead.

The Promise of Renewed Hope

Ganduje used the platform to highlight the achievements of the Tinubu administration, particularly under the

Renewed Hope Agenda. He credited the government with ushering in early signs of economic recovery, improvements in oil revenue, and growing interest from international investors.

"This is no mere slogan—it's a comprehensive strategy to restore governance, economic vitality, and national pride," he said.

The APC chairman affirmed that the Renewed Hope Agenda is already being translated into tangible outcomes across sectors. He encouraged members to become not just supporters but active promoters and defenders of the agenda. "Nearly two years on, this vision is becoming a lived reality," Ganduje stated.

In closing, Ganduje called for unity, discipline, and renewed focus across all levels of the party.

"As progressives, we must embrace courage, sacrifice, and sustained commitment to long-term change," he urged. The summit brought together key party stakeholders, including governors, legislators, and grassroots mobilizers, to evaluate the party's progress and chart a course toward 2027 and beyond.

PDP postpones 99th NEC meeting to allow Saraki-led reconciliation process

By **Damilola Olufemi**



The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has officially postponed its much-anticipated 99th National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting slated for May 27, 2025.

In a notice issued by the party's National Secretary, Senator Samuel Anyanwu, the postponement was attributed to the need to give ample time for the party's reconciliation committee, chaired by former Senate President Bukola Saraki, to complete its ongoing peace-building mission within the party.

"This is to formally inform leaders and members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of our great party that the proposed NEC meeting earlier announced to take place on May 27, 2025, has been postponed," the statement read.

According to the party, the decision aims to create a more conducive environment for discussions at the NEC level by addressing internal disagreements beforehand.

PDP speaks on Saraki committee

"The postponement is to allow the Sen. Bukola Saraki's Reconciliation Committee to complete its assignment of resolving some internal conflicts necessary for a peaceful NEC meeting," the notice added.

A new date for the NEC meeting will be communicated "in accordance with the PDP Constitution 2017 as amended and the Electoral Act, 2022," the party stated.

Senator Anyanwu also issued a strong warning against unauthorised announcements regarding the NEC meeting.

"Therefore, any notice of NEC meeting or publication signed by the Deputy National Secretary in the guise of Acting National Secretary is illegal, unauthorised, and should be disregarded," he said.

The party concluded the statement by apologising for any disruption caused by the postponement: "All inconveniences resulting from this change of date are regretted. Please accept the assurances of my esteemed regards."

The PDP has been navigating internal tensions in recent months, with efforts intensifying ahead of the 2027 general elections. The Saraki-led committee has been tasked with reconciling various factions within the party to ensure unity going forward.

Obi: Good governance faces resistance in Nigeria

By Friday Omosola

Labour Party (LP) 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi has lamented the challenges faced by principled leaders in navigating Nigeria's complex governance landscape.

Obi, who made the statement at a thanksgiving service hosted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Umuahia highlighted systemic obstacles and resistance to reform.

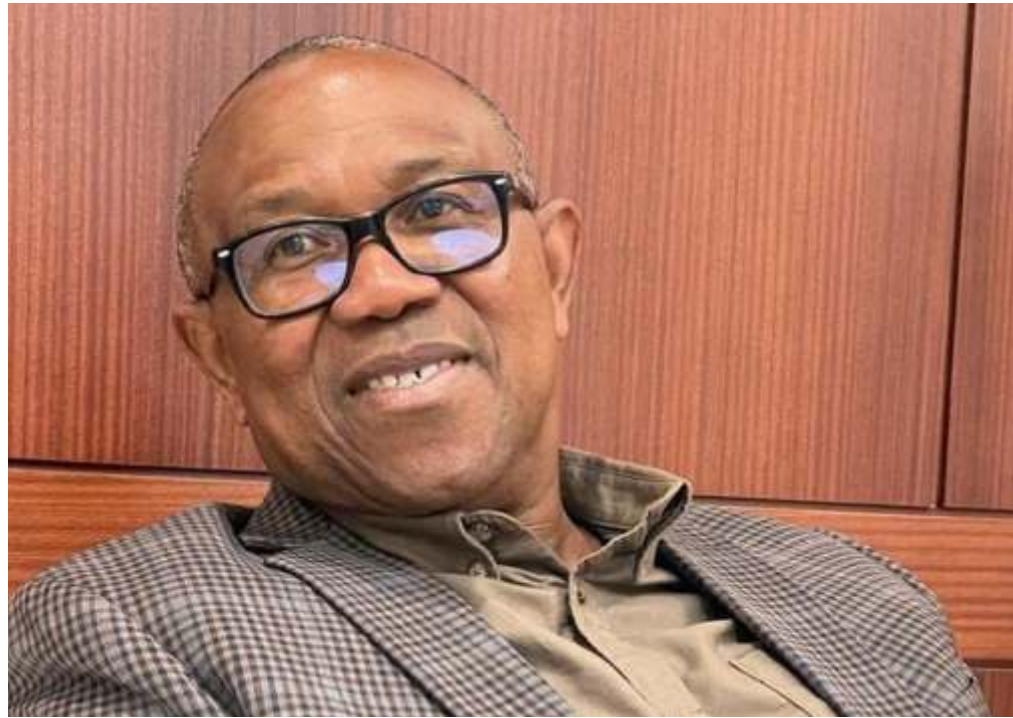
At the thanksgiving service, which commemorated Abia State Governor Alex Otti's second year in office, Obi urged political leaders to treat public funds as a sacred trust meant solely for the welfare of the populace.

"Governing this country is no small feat, especially if one is determined to uphold transparency and accountability," Obi said.

"Let us continue to lift up Governor Otti and his team in prayers, and do the same for Nigeria. Public funds are not personal property—they are entrusted to us for the collective good."

He praised Otti's leadership, describing it as a refreshing contrast to Nigeria's status quo and an inspiring model for others to follow.

"Today's gathering marks two years of purposeful governance. People often claim they need several years to create an impact, but I believe meaningful change



can happen even in a single day. The transformation in Abia is visible—it speaks for itself," Obi noted.

He reiterated his commitment to national development over personal ambition.

"I have no obsession with titles or power. What matters to me is a Nigeria that functions, and I believe Governor Otti exemplifies the kind of leadership we need moving forward."

Reacting, Otti attributed the strides made by his administration to divine favour, teamwork, and institutional support.

Referencing 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, Otti said, "Though we have worked diligently, it is God who has granted us success. That's why we return all glory to Him."

He also acknowledged the backing of the legislature, judiciary, and cabinet in advancing what he

described as the New Abia vision.

The governor expressed gratitude to Obi for his encouragement and mentorship, hailing him as a symbol of ethical leadership.

Delivering the sermon, Pastor Enyinnaya Uguru, former President of the Abia North Conference of the church, urged leaders not to be blinded by present accomplishments, reminding them to stay focused on long-term goals.

He pointed out that Otti's eventual emergence in 2023, after multiple attempts, was a testament to divine timing.

"Delays are often seasons of preparation," he said.

Commending the governor's progress, Uguru added, "Your work speaks for itself—I say this with conviction and evidence."

Tinubu's second year: Oil magnate Eze hails president's unity, reform agenda

By Friday Omosola



Prominent businessman and oil magnate, Arthur Eze, has described President Bola Tinubu as 'God's gift to Nigeria', commending his leadership style, inclusive governance, and commitment to national unity.

Eze made the remarks in a State House documentary set to mark Tinubu's second year in office.

According to him, Tinubu embodies the bold and purposeful leadership Nigeria requires at this crucial time.

"God doesn't make mistakes. That man, Tinubu, was created for a purpose. God gave him the power to change lives," Eze stated.

"Tinubu has no enemies. He is a unifier. He speaks with humility and honesty; that's why we admire him."

Reflecting on his experiences during the Nigerian civil war and his longstanding ties to the Southeast, the Atlas Oronto Petroleum Chairman said Tinubu had demonstrated unmatched dedication to the region's development.

"What Tinubu has done for the Southeast, nobody else has," he noted.

"He gave us the Minister of Works, the Minister of Science and Technology, and the Southeast Development Commission. This is an opportunity for the Igbo to unite with the rest of Nigeria."

Eze, 76, also lauded the President's economic reforms under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

He said Tinubu assumed office at a time of national fragility but had

shown wisdom and determination in navigating the country toward recovery and growth.

"God has given him the wisdom to change Nigeria for the good of the present and future generations," Eze affirmed.

He urged Nigerians to support the President's vision for peace, development, and unity.

"He's not a man of division — whether Christian or Muslim, he respects all. All he asks is that we pray to God and work together."

The elder statesman added, "May God guide Nigeria and Tinubu. He gave him this power and will help him complete the job."

Coalition calls gather momentum as defections rock key opposition parties to APC

By Friday Omosola

In Nigeria, the idea of political coalitions has never been taken lightly by key figures advocating their necessity. Rather than diminishing, the coalition movement continues to grow stronger by the day, even amid high-profile defections.

Instead of weakening alliances or dampening the resolve of their proponents, defections often lead to renewed strategic engagement, tighter coordination, and fresh alignments that strengthen the resilience and influence of these coalitions.

Before Nigeria's return to democratic rule, the country had already witnessed a notable coalition between the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). This alliance governed the nation up until independence in 1960.

Aside from the NCNC, which itself emerged from a coalition, Nigeria has witnessed several other coalition attempts—some successful, others not. Yet, these outcomes have not discouraged political actors, many of whom still believe that dominant parties holding key decision-making positions can be unseated through well-structured alliances.

In the early days of the Fourth Republic, the 1999 elections saw an alliance between the All People's Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD), aimed at boosting their chances at the polls—especially in the presidential race. However, the coalition failed to yield the desired outcome, as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) remained dominant.

To challenge the PDP's 16-year hold on power, several major parties—including the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), merged to form the All Progressives Congress (APC). This coalition ultimately succeeded in



unseating the PDP.

Although APC's emergence was largely driven by the desire to wrest power from the PDP, one key factor in its success was the deteriorating security situation in the North, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency.

By capitalising on national issues such as insecurity, economic hardship, and public dissatisfaction, the APC's merger bore significant political fruits. The party went on to win the 2015 presidential election and secured 19 out of the 28 governorship seats. It also claimed a majority in the 8th National Assembly.

This alignment solidified the APC's status as Nigeria's ruling party, relegating the PDP to the opposition.

Nearly twelve years later, discussions of a new coalition are underway—this time aimed at unseating the APC. These talks follow internal crises within both the Labour Party and the PDP, with prominent figures such as former PDP presidential candidate Atiku Abubakar and former Kaduna State governor Nasir El-Rufai reportedly at the centre of the movement.

Given President Bola Tinubu's extensive political experience, dislodging him may prove challenging. Whether possible or not, any attempt to do so will likely require a multifaceted and highly

strategic approach from the opposition.

While opposition coalitions may seek to leverage pressing national issues like insecurity, economic hardship, and widespread hunger, success will not come solely from public discontent. A unified front, strong leadership, empathy, relatability, renewed hope, effective mobilisation, and grassroots engagement will be crucial.

Weighing in on the matter, a political analyst, Emmanuel Jimo did not rule out the possibility of a coalition unseating a president or party.

Jimo, however, stated that the coalition reportedly being formed is unlikely to unseat Tinubu or the APC in 2027, as he described it as a frivolous alliance.

He said, "Ordinarily, coalition ought to be an instrument, a formidable instrument to combat a ruling party that is believed to not be doing well enough for the aspiration of the people. But from the coalition that I see today, it is just done by largely usually malicious politicians. I see a lot of times abuse of coalition. So, in short, I do not consider it getting better. I think at best, it is still the same old game."

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‘Yes, a coalition can, but I say that again, it is not a careless one. It is not a haphazard one. It is not a frivolous one. It must be planned and carefully executed. Otherwise, you can be sure that Tinibu will have a second term, come 2027. You will say that I said so.’

He added that the purported coalition being championed by El-Rufai and Atiku was unlikely to succeed, stressing that individuals nursing personal grudges or discontent with their political parties

could not form a cohesive, coherent, and effective alliance with others.

Jimo stated that Peter Obi stood a strong chance if included in the coalition, but emphasised that the participating parties must ensure they have a solid and well-established membership base.

‘That’s a key factor, and even if they are going to rig elections, the membership base is still very, very important, and secondly, their opposition activities must

be deliberate, carefully planned. It’s not something; I mean, a coalition cannot be formed, the third force cannot be formed with bickering and so on and so forth.

‘In other words, they must be deliberate about their actions. Otherwise, I repeat, it is easier for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle for a frivolous political party coalition to unseat Bola Tinubu in 2027 own election.’

FIRS slams FCTA over office closure, denies 25-year ground rent debt

By **Damilola Olufemi**

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has pushed back against the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) following the closure of its Abuja office over claims of unpaid ground rent.

Officials from the FCTA sealed multiple locations earlier today, including the FIRS office in Zone 5, a Total filling station, and Access Bank at Wuse Market, citing long-standing default on rent payments. However, FIRS called the action ‘unprofessional’ and accused the FCTA of spreading falsehoods.

Reacting to the development, Aderonke Atoyebi, the Technical Assistant on Broadcast Media to the Executive Chairman of FIRS, rejected the allegations, insisting that the tax agency had cleared its dues up to 2023 and even requested a receipt for subsequent payments.

‘The FCTA is getting it all wrong. It’s a falsehood to claim that FIRS is owing ground rent for 25 years,’ Atoyebi posted on X.

‘Documents available show that we have paid all the dues until 2023. We have requested a receipt from February 19th, 2024, to no avail. This is wrong, and untrue.’

She condemned the move by the FCTA, led by Minister Nyesom Wike, as not only baseless but also harmful to the agency’s work.

‘It’s so unprofessional that Wike-led FCTA



closed our office, distracting staff from going about their duties when we did nothing wrong. Especially in a crucial week like this when we are looking forward to signing the Tax Reform Bills,’ Atoyebi stated. ‘FCTA, you goofed big time, FIRS isn’t owing you.’

She also accused the administration of attempting to make FIRS a scapegoat in its wider clampdown on defaulters.

‘If you are looking for a fall guy, please move further. We shouldn’t be your scapegoat when you know well that the lies you spread in the media and your malicious/illegal actions will hurt our operations.’

‘There was no prior notice before the administrative rascality. We demand an apology,’ she added.

The FCTA has been carrying out a sweeping enforcement initiative aimed at recovering billions in outstanding ground rent. According to reports, over 8,300 property owners owe nearly N7 billion in back payments, with some debts stretching over four decades.

As part of this campaign, the FCTA recently revoked 4,794 land titles across high-value districts such as Wuse, Maitama, Asokoro, and Garki. In March, the national secretariat of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was also affected, having allegedly failed to settle rent arrears for 19 years.

While the FCTA has said affected owners can appeal for reinstatement, tensions continue to rise over what critics say is an aggressive and poorly executed approach.

Emergency rule: Women group backs Fubara's return despite APC defection rumour

By Helen Okechukwu

Some reputable women in Rivers state have reiterated their support for the embattled Governor of Rivers state, Siminalayi Fubara.

According to them, they want the federal government to reinstate the governor as soon as possible.

However, there has been allegations that the governor could join the APC in order to get reinstated.

Ever since the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State, there have been mixed reactions between the pro-Fubara and pro-Wike camps. This division has led to various women leading protests, some calling for the reinstatement of suspended elected officials, while others support the continuation of the state of emergency.

Following a series of political dramas and heightened tensions between both camps, including street walks, protests, and prayer rallies—reconciliation appears to be on the horizon, as suspended Governor of Rivers State, Siminalayi Fubara, and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, have reportedly met for the sake of the state's interest.

After numerous protests conducted by some group of women, urging for the reinstatement of suspended Governor Fubara and the end of the emergency declaration, a recently aired video showed members of the group commending and rejoicing over President Bola Tinubu's directive to initiate peace between both parties.

New Daily Prime conducted interviews with key women stakeholders to understand their perspectives on the current situation



and to gauge their stance on the cancellation of the emergency rule.

Speaking with the New Daily Prime, one of the members of Rivers Women Unite for Sim (RWUS), Mrs. Nwuuke Ibe, a resident and indigene of Etche Local Government Area (LGA), said the emergency declaration, which was meant to halt anarchy, has instead sparked fear, uncertainty, and economic decline, particularly affecting nightlife and the broader economy.

“Our economy is suffering. When will you say our internally generated revenue was at an all-time high?” Ibe declared.

“If you go to the ministries, nothing is happening because they will say the sole administrator has put everything on standstill. The only thing working in this state is salaries being paid. He needed to be dragged before even people who, you know, in the streets of Port Harcourt were mobilized, of which it is not the same garden city we used to have.”

She further expressed discontent over the appointment of an external sole administrator, implying a disconnect from the state's unique identity and

culture.

Reacting to the commendation given to President Tinubu by some groups of women toward the peace directive, she stated that individuals have the right to react in any lawful manner. She referenced a biblical analogy to emphasize public inconsistency in support.

Demands for Presidential Intervention

Continuing, she alleged that the sole administrator of Rivers State, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas, has neglected the state's pressing needs and called for urgent intervention from President Tinubu.

“Companies are leaving Rivers State daily. Who is there to approve things that on a normal day would have been approved? Ibas is not doing that. Everything is at a standstill. So as a daughter, as a son, of course, we want an urgent intervention—even right now,” she affirmed.

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Democracy Breached

While highlighting the consequences of the state of emergency, she questioned how the upcoming Democracy Day, marked every 12 June, could be celebrated in a state currently under sole administrative rule, which she believes contradicts democratic principles.

“What do you think we’ll be celebrating here in Rivers State? Is there justice? Is this democracy? And then, Democracy Day—is it not about celebrating the Nigerian Constitution? What is there to celebrate when it was unconstitutionally removed? Bring back our governor. We are not asking for too much.”

She emphasized that the removal of Governor Fubara was unconstitutional and central to the grievances of the pro-Fubara movement.

Fubara’s Command Remains Paramount

Despite challenges and protests, she reaffirmed unwavering support for Governor Fubara, expressing full confidence in his leadership and awaiting further directives as negotiations continue.

According to Ibe, “No more protests. We trust him enough because this is the man whose mantra was written. He is still my newly elected governor. It’s Rivers first. He puts us first, not only in words but in action.”

Kate Sambo, former chairlady of Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWAJOJ)—the female arm of the Nigeria Union of Journalists—also spoke with New Daily Prime, expressing her deep disappointment over the ongoing emergency rule.

In her remarks, she urged President Tinubu to allow Rivers women to breathe and stop suffocating the state with his declaration.

She explained the implications of the emergency rule, noting that had Governor Fubara remained in power, several projects would have been

completed and commissioned.

“There’s no progress. Everything just stands still. Apart from the Governor’s House, nothing is happening. Even the Governor’s House—I don’t know whatever is happening there that is coming up to the people. The people now are stranded. I’m very, very sad about it.”

When asked about the women praising the president, she described their actions as ignorant and unfortunate, stating that many of those celebrating are themselves affected by the situation.

Pension Delays

Sambo, a pensioner, highlighted how since Vice Admiral Ibas assumed office, pensions have been delayed. She cited a broader breakdown in governance, with appointments revoked and unemployment on the rise.

“Money is not coming from anywhere. I’m a pensioner also. And our pension allowance used to be paid maybe by the 27th of the month. Now it’s not being paid. The month before last, I didn’t get my money until the second week of last month. Hunger is just biting. Then you come and talk about fuel scarcity,” she emphasized.

On the question of extending the emergency rule, she urged President Tinubu to lift it due to its devastating

implications for all residents of the state, both indigenous and non-indigenes.

“Let’s breathe, because we are not breathing. We are suffocating right now,” she said, while criticizing the President’s decision to override the state’s budget, questioning whether he now acts as the governor of Rivers State—an act she deemed unconstitutional.

“If two people are quarreling, why should we suffer like this? And they are quarreling privately, not officially.”

When asked about the role of women in maintaining peace and order, she emphasized that women are naturally peacemakers, pointing to their peaceful protests as a demonstration of their constructive engagement.

“Well, we cannot play mother and daughter, because actually, we are not in power. We are not in a position to determine what anyone can do. We cannot do anything more than plead, which is what we are doing—peacefully,” she concluded.

Recall that on 18 March, President Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, leading to the suspension of Governor Fubara, his deputy Prof. Ngozi Udu, and other elected officials, supported by a voice vote in both the Senate and House of Representatives.



Why Does NEPA still take light in 2025?

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

In Nigeria, few phrases are more universally understood—or more frustrating—than “NEPA has taken the light.” Despite decades of reform, billions in investment, and a complete restructuring of the power sector, blackouts remain a daily reality for millions. Whether it’s during a thunderstorm, in the middle of a business day, or just as dinner is being prepared, the national grid’s failure is as predictable as it is disruptive.

It is more than a joke, “NEPA” has become a symbol of Nigeria’s enduring electricity crisis—a crisis that has outlived multiple governments, resisted policy shifts, and grown worse for many, even in 2025. The National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) was replaced by PHCN and then unbundled into the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Generation Companies (GenCos), and Distribution Companies (DisCos). Yet, “NEPA” remains a national symbol of disappointment, shorthand for a system that fails with spectacular consistency.

Population exceeding capacity

Nigeria, with a population exceeding 220 million, generates only 4,000–5,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity on average. For context, New York City alone consumes more than 11,000 MW daily. South Africa, with about one-third of Nigeria’s population, generates more than 40,000 MW, even amidst its own energy woes.

The World Bank estimates that 85 million Nigerians — nearly 40% — have no access to electricity. Those who do face frequent outages and surging costs.

“It’s almost impossible to run a modern business in Nigeria without a generator,” says Dayo Omotosho, a fashion entrepreneur in Ibadan. “Our electricity grid is broken. Generators are not a luxury — they’re essential.”



Aging Infrastructure Meets Growing Demand

Nigeria’s power infrastructure dates largely to the 1970s and 80s — a skeleton grid built for a much smaller population and economy. Over the decades, investment has lagged behind the explosion in demand.

“One lightning strike in a substation in Kaduna can take out power in five states,” says Laide Adedeji, an energy systems engineer. “There’s no redundancy. The grid is fragile by design.”

Beyond central fragility, transformers leak, wires sag, and equipment is outdated. In the rainy season, water intrusion worsens short-circuits and tripping faults. Some distribution lines, especially 11kV feeders, are fitted with low-rated circuit breakers that trip at the slightest fault. In some cases, rain alone is enough to cut power.

“To avoid explosions or electrocution, we sometimes preemptively shut off power when it rains,” admitted a former PHCN technician. “It’s crude, but it’s safer than letting wet infrastructure spark out.”

Ineffective Reforms

In 2013, the Nigerian government privatized its power sector, breaking up the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) into several DisCos and GenCos. The goal was to bring efficiency,

investment, and accountability.

But the outcome has been fragmentation and finger-pointing.

- DisCos blame TCN for poor transmission.
- GenCos claim they’re not paid for generated power.
- Consumers, meanwhile, pay for power they rarely receive.

“The system is broken at every level,” says Mark Schneider, an energy economist at the World Bank. “And there’s no unified command.”

Weather

As rainy season intensifies, many Nigerians notice a familiar pattern: the lights go out as soon as it starts raining. Why?

- Safety shutdowns to prevent electrocution from fallen wires.
- Low-rated circuit breakers tripping due to line resistance changes.
- Sagging conductors caused by wind and moisture.
- Overloaded transformers failing under additional stress.

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Insiders also blame poor grid segmentation and lack of smart sensors to isolate faults.

“In some areas, one minor storm can take down an entire region’s power,” one retired NEPA engineer said. “Meanwhile, rural feeders with higher spacing on 33kV lines may stay on. It depends on luck and line quality.”

Global Comparisons, Local Failures

Nations like Vietnam and India have made remarkable progress in electrification. Vietnam added 30,000 MW in a single decade with clear policies and investment frameworks.

Nigeria, in comparison, has been hamstrung by:

- Foreign exchange instability
- Fuel subsidy mismanagement
- Pipeline vandalism disrupting gas supply
- Chronic underfunding

Despite being a major gas producer, Nigeria suffers frequent gas shortages at power plants — the very heart of its

electricity system.

Hidden Cost: Health, Economy, and Human Dignity

The consequences of electricity failure are not just inconvenience — they are economic, educational, and existential.

-Students study by candlelight or local lantern

-Hospitals run surgeries on diesel backup.

-Tech startups relocate to Ghana or Kenya

“We breathe generator fumes all day,” says Dr. Samuel Ibeji, a pulmonologist in Port Harcourt. “Respiratory illness is rising. It’s no coincidence.”

A 2023 study found that Nigeria may have the highest per capita generator use in the world, resulting in soot pollution and excessive noise levels, particularly in urban areas.

What can be done?

Experts and stakeholders have emphasize the need for urgent reforms that go beyond surface-level fixes. A key priority is significantly increasing investment in

off-grid renewable energy solutions, particularly solar mini-grids, to serve rural communities that remain disconnected from the national grid. At the same time, there is a growing call to re-evaluate the country’s electricity privatization framework by conducting thorough performance reviews of the Distribution Companies (DisCos), many of which have struggled to meet service expectations.

Infrastructure upgrades are also essential—transformers and circuit breakers, especially those on overloaded urban 11kV lines, require urgent replacement or reinforcement. In addition, the adoption of smart grid technologies, such as real-time monitoring systems, fault detectors, and predictive maintenance tools, could help modernize the aging grid and improve reliability.

Lastly, long-term progress will depend on building a regulatory environment that is transparent, ensures consumer protection, and enforces real accountability at every level of the power sector.



Futility of selfish coalitions: When disgruntled politicians gang up against progress

By Adeniyi Yusuf

It was amusing to see the gathering of strange bedfellows yesterday. I saw Rotimi Amaechi sitting in the front row — this is a man who has held one political office or another since 1999, when he emerged as Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

Immediately after that, he became Governor of Rivers State, serving two terms (8 years), and right after that, he served under former President Buhari as Minister of Transport for another 8 years.

Since 1999 — a span of 26 years — this is the first time Rotimi Amaechi is not occupying either an elective or appointed position in government. Yet, he's apparently angry that President Tinubu did not deem it fit to give him a role in his administration.

Or what exactly could be his grievance? Wonders, they say, shall never end.

In times of genuine reform, when a nation is trying to set itself on a new path of growth, it is not unusual for those who benefit from the old order to push back. What is unusual — and dangerous — is when the pushback comes not only from opponents but also from disgruntled former allies, who now align with old political adversaries to destabilise the very government they once helped bring to power.

This is the reality facing Nigeria today. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, elected in 2023, has embarked on bold, necessary — though painful — reforms aimed at resetting Nigeria's fragile economy, fixing decades of fiscal indiscipline, and restoring the country's international standing. While these decisions are unpopular in the short term, there is broad consensus that they are essential for long-term national revival.

Yet rather than support these reforms or offer constructive criticism, a coalition of bitter politicians — led by the ever-aspiring Atiku Abubakar, joined by Nasir El-Rufai and Peter Obi — have formed what they now call a "coalition to rescue Nigeria." But a closer look reveals it is not a coalition for the people — it is a



coalition of the disappointed and the self-interested.

At the centre of this movement is Atiku Abubakar, who has contested for Nigeria's presidency since 1992 — a staggering 30-year personal ambition that seems to have become more important than the party or the people. In the run-up to the 2023 elections, Atiku brazenly flouted the PDP's power rotation principle, which stipulates a balance between the North and South in the presidency.

After President Buhari, a northerner, had completed two terms (eight years), all major political parties — including the APC — respected the spirit of rotation and fielded southern candidates. But Atiku, putting personal ambition above national unity, forced his way to the PDP ticket. This act of political entitlement led to a revolt within the party. Five influential governors from the South (the

G5) refused to back him and instead tilted their support toward the eventual winner, President Tinubu.

Now, after his defeat, Atiku is attempting to stitch together a coalition — not to improve governance, but to avenge a political loss and restore himself to national relevance.

The hypocrisy does not end there. Former Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, a man who passionately advocated for zoning to the South in the last election, has now aligned with Atiku — the very person who defied zoning. El-Rufai had publicly stated that for equity, justice, and unity, it was only fair for a Southerner to succeed Buhari.

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Obi was the only presidential candidate to win all five states in his South-East home region, a clear indicator that his appeal was deeply regional and ethnic. This pattern reinforced perceptions that his candidacy — rather than offering a broad national vision — rode on the waves of tribal identity and emotional populism.

Furthermore, he often remained silent when religious and ethnic rhetoric were used in his favour, failing to condemn the dangerous narratives that threatened Nigeria's fragile unity especially the notorious IPOB and UGM ravaging his South East home region. His presence in this coalition is not out of ideological alignment with Atiku or El-Rufai — whom he previously opposed — but simply because he also lost and sees an opening for relevance.

What unites Atiku, El-Rufai, Amaechi and Obi is not a shared vision or a plan to lift Nigeria forward. What unites them is bitterness, disappointment, and the craving to remain politically relevant. Their coalition is an alliance of convenience, not conviction.

History is full of examples that show the futility of such opportunistic coalitions: In Kenya, coalitions built to unseat incumbents often collapse into chaos and infighting.

In Italy, governments formed by ideologically incompatible partners frequently end in paralysis.

In South Africa, internal ANC factions have crippled governance, turning power struggles into national crises. Nigeria cannot afford this.

Let us be clear: this is not about defending a particular party or individual. President Tinubu must be held accountable by the people and by institutions — but not by politicians who are angry because they were not invited to “come and chop.”

The public must ask:

What moral authority does Atiku have after defying zoning and dividing his party?

What happened to El-Rufai's principle

of zoning and equity?

And how can Obi claim national unity while campaigning almost exclusively on ethnic and religious sentiment?

What did Amaechi lost that he's frantically looking for after an unbroken 26 years in the corridors of power. If he were an academic, is he not entitled to a sabbatical leave after all these years?

The answer is obvious: these men are not forming a coalition to save Nigeria. They are forming a coalition to save themselves.

Nigerians must not be deceived. Our democracy must not be hijacked by wounded political godfathers and ethnic champions masquerading as reformers. True reform takes time, sacrifice, and stability. We must reject the politics of bitterness, and support policies — not personalities — that serve the national interest.

Kayode Adebisi is a UK based Communication Specialist.



Mpox cases rise in Malawi amid healthcare crisis

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Malawi's Ministry of Health has confirmed three new cases of mpox in the capital city, bringing the national total to 11 since the country's first reported case in April. Health officials say the outbreak is compounding already dire challenges in the nation's fragile healthcare system, which has been rocked by recent cuts to U.S. government aid.

The Public Health Institute of Malawi stated the new patients, aged between 17 and 41, are currently under investigation to determine the source of infection and to trace contacts. The news comes as Malawi joins 15 other African nations battling mpox outbreaks amidst global vaccine shortages and strained medical infrastructure.

Health officials say the spread of the virus is being intensified by Malawi's ongoing HIV crisis, which has worsened due to severe shortages of antiretroviral therapy (ART) caused by funding cuts. "A commonality about these cases is that some were immunocompromised," said Richard Mvula, spokesperson for the Lilongwe district health office. Many patients have reportedly been forced to stop their HIV treatment due to depleted medication supplies.

Mpox can cause more severe symptoms in people living with HIV, especially those with uncontrolled viral loads. Experts warn that the interruption of HIV treatment is fueling a dangerous overlap of health crises in one of the world's poorest nations.

Malawi has been on high alert since mpox outbreaks first surged in parts of Africa in 2022. While most of the country's cases have been confined to Lilongwe, a two year old child was recently diagnosed in Mangochi district, more than 240 kilometers from the capital.

The continent-wide situation remains alarming. According to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), more than 52,000 mpox cases and over 1,770 deaths have been



recorded across Africa since January 2025. The organization estimates that 6.4 million vaccine doses are needed to curb the spread, yet only 1.3 million doses have been received so far.

Africa CDC officials also noted different viral clades circulating in different countries. While clade IIb is driving exponential case growth in Sierra Leone, clades Ia and Ib are dominant in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and surrounding nations.

Malawi's health system has long struggled with underfunding, poor infrastructure, and shortages of trained staff and medical supplies. These challenges have worsened since the U.S. government slashed over \$350 million in annual healthcare aid, affecting key programmes such as HIV prevention and treatment. In March, the Joint UN Programme on HIV and Aids warned that thousands of doses of HIV prevention medication were expiring unused, and that distribution of injectable PrEP had been limited to pregnant and lactating women only.

Knowledge about mpox among the general population remains low. In central Lilongwe, taxi driver Steven

Banda admitted he only recently learned about the disease from a health official. "We don't know much about it," he said.

Medical professionals are calling for heightened awareness and preventive practices. Dr. Victor Mithi, president of the Society of Medical Doctors in Malawi, urged frontline workers to remain vigilant during clinical procedures. "It is a big concern," he said, noting that the country's communal culture, characterized by physical greetings and crowded housing, increases the risk of transmission.

Still, Mithi expressed cautious optimism. "With the lessons drawn from Covid-19 and other infectious diseases, we have the capacity to manage mpox at both clinical and community levels," he said. "But the withdrawal of U.S. aid has left our healthcare system shaken. We did not build the internal capacity to sustain ourselves."

As mpox continues to spread and vital funding remains uncertain, Malawi faces the uphill task of fighting a growing epidemic with limited tools and a system stretched to its breaking point.

TikTok star Peller threatens lawsuit against Pastor Kesiena Esiri over morality claims

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian TikTok influencer, Peller, has vowed to take legal action against Pastor Kesiena Esiri of the Remnant Christian Network.

The threat came after a viral video surfaced showing the pastor publicly accusing Peller and his girlfriend, Jarvis, of corrupting Nigerian youth through social media.

Pastor Esiri, in a sermon that has since made the rounds online, linked Peller's content to the widespread failure recorded in the 2025 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). He claimed that the influencer is a bad role model and a distraction to teenagers.

"Peller is distracting our teens" — Pastor Esiri

In his sermon, Pastor Esiri expressed concern about the increasing influence of social media creators like Peller on the minds of young Nigerians. He criticized the type of content being shared, arguing that it promotes a lifestyle that encourages laziness, immorality, and academic failure.

"It's now common to see these things in public like they're normal," Esiri said. "Do you know who is mentoring your children now? It's one guy who calls himself Peller."

He continued, "These young people sit on his page all day. He moves around with a girl he's not married to, doing all sorts of things. And now teenagers think it's normal. Can they pass JAMB like that? No, they can't."

The pastor's remarks immediately sparked reactions across social media, with many defending the influencer while others supported the cleric's concerns about the moral direction of today's youth.

Peller reacts: "we will sue the Pastor"



In response, Peller strongly denied the pastor's claims. During a TikTok live session, the 20-year-old influencer said he would not let the accusations slide. He accused the pastor of using his name and that of his girlfriend to stir up emotions and increase church offerings.

"One pastor went to church and started preaching about Peller and Jarvis," he said. "He said it's because of us that his children failed JAMB. But who forced anyone to watch our videos? Nobody."

Peller went on to accuse Pastor Esiri of trying to use the controversy to manipulate his congregation for money.

"We will sue you, Mr. Prophet," he said. "You are using our names to collect offerings in your church. That day, all the Gen Zs probably loved you more, and they gave bigger offerings. They thought the pastor was now following Peller too."

A growing debate on influence and responsibility

This incident has stirred a wider conversation about the role of influencers in society, especially regarding their impact on young people. Some social media users believe Pastor Esiri made a valid point about the dangers of digital distraction and unhealthy online role models.

Others argue that influencers like Peller are not responsible for academic failures, as young people still have the freedom to choose what they consume online. Many of Peller's followers pointed out that the real problem lies in Nigeria's education system, not in social media entertainment.

Legal action looms

While Peller did not specify the exact legal steps he intends to take, his declaration of intent to sue has added more fuel to the controversy. Legal experts have since weighed in, saying defamation lawsuits involving public figures can be complex and require solid evidence.

Still, Peller appears determined to defend his reputation. "We didn't ask to be mentioned in any sermon," he said. "We're just creating content. That's our job."

Final thoughts

As the drama continues to unfold online, the situation reflects a broader cultural clash between traditional moral values and the fast-paced, often controversial world of digital influence. Whether the matter ends up in court or fades with time, it has already ignited a national conversation about youth, education, and the power of social media.

Fuji legend Pasuma reacts to thugs attack in Osun

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Fuji musician, Wasiu Alabi Pasuma, has finally spoken out after thugs attacked him and his team during a recent visit to Ikirè, Osun State.

The incident, which quickly went viral on social media, occurred in Ikire, a major town in the Irewole Local Government Area.

Violence erupts during Pasuma's visit
Pasuma was in Ikire last Sunday for a scheduled performance. As his convoy made its way through the town, a group of unidentified thugs launched an attack, damaging several vehicles in his entourage.

A video from the scene circulated widely online. In the clip, a distressed voice could be heard saying, "We have been attacked in Ikire. They carry guns and shoot us. See Pasuma's car. But God dey."

The footage showed visible damage to two of the singer's vehicles, including a Toyota Hilux and a Hummer bus. The windshields of both vehicles appeared shattered.

Pasuma speaks out at a live show
Amid growing concerns and speculation, Pasuma addressed the incident during a live performance this week. Speaking directly to his fans, he offered clarity on what actually happened.

"I have many loyal fans in Ikire," he said. "But no town is without its troublemakers."

He explained that the attack did not involve gunfire, as some reports had claimed. According to him, the situation escalated when the crowd grew larger than expected.

Pasuma, Taye Currency reconcile in Mecca

Overwhelming crowd sparks tension

Pasuma shared that he had been invited to perform at a local event hall in Ikire. However, the turnout was far more than the organisers had anticipated.

"Almost half of the town came out to see me," he said. "Because the hall could not contain the crowd, the organisers set up a



large screen outside for people to watch."

Despite the effort to manage the crowd, tensions rose when many fans insisted on entering the hall. Security personnel were forced to restrict entry, which did not sit well with some individuals.

"When they couldn't get in, some bad boys among them started throwing stones," Pasuma explained. "That's how the windshields of my Hilux and Hummer bus got smashed."

He emphasised that there was no gun attack, debunking rumours that armed thugs had opened fire on his convoy.

Security lapses and public reaction

The incident has raised concerns about the safety of performers during public events in smaller towns. Many fans expressed anger over the lack of proper crowd control and security measures.

Local sources in Ikire said the performance had been heavily publicised, which might have contributed to the massive turnout.

Some eyewitnesses claimed that security officers were overwhelmed by the crowd, leaving space for mischief-makers to act unchecked.

Fans show support for Pasuma

Following his statement, many fans have taken to social media to show support for the Fuji icon. Some praised his calm handling of the situation, while others criticised the organisers for not preparing

for such a large event.

Pasuma, known for his energetic performances and long-standing connection with fans across Nigeria, thanked his supporters for their concern.

"I appreciate everyone who checked on me," he said. "It was a moment of chaos, but I'm safe and grateful."

No police statement yet

As of the time of this report, police authorities in Osun State have not issued an official statement regarding the incident. It is still unclear if any arrests have been made or if investigations are ongoing.

Meanwhile, fans in Ikire and beyond are calling for better security planning at future shows to avoid similar incidents.

Pasuma returns to stage unshaken

Despite the scare, Pasuma has continued with his scheduled performances. His resilience has only deepened the admiration of his fans.

"This won't stop me," he said. "Music is my life, and nothing will stop me from doing what I love."

With over three decades in the music industry, Pasuma remains one of the most respected figures in Fuji music. His ability to connect with fans even in moments of tension continues to set him apart.

Trump's policies trigger 12% spike in U.S. citizenship applications to UK

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

A record-breaking number of Americans are seeking to leave the United States and start a new life in the United Kingdom, as immigration figures reveal a surge in British citizenship and visa applications since the start of Donald Trump's second term as U.S. President.

Data released by the UK Home Office this week shows that an average of 2,000 U.S. nationals applied for British citizenship in the first quarter of 2025 alone—a 12% year-on-year increase, and the highest figure ever recorded for a single quarter.

Which Immigration Routes Are Americans Using?

Home Office records indicate that while many successful UK settlement applicants had family ties, others are using professional and talent-based visas. Popular UK immigration pathways for Americans include:

Skilled Worker Visa

- For professionals with UK job offers from licensed sponsors.
- Renewable and can lead to permanent residency.

Global Talent Visa

- For experts in science, arts, or tech.
- No job offer needed—endorsement by a recognized UK body is required.

Health and Care Worker Visa

- For doctors, nurses, and social care professionals.
- Fast-track, lower fees, and work permit included.

UK Ancestry Visa

- For Americans with UK-born grandparents.
- Offers 5-year stay with work rights and a path to settlement.



Spouse or Partner Visa

- For those married to UK citizens or residents.
- Work permitted with route to Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

Start-up and Innovator Visas

- For entrepreneurs with a scalable business idea and approved endorsements.

Legal experts have also warned that the current influx may accelerate further in response to proposed UK immigration reforms.

Michael, a senior immigration lawyer based in London, told New Daily Prime that Prime Minister Keir Starmer's planned tightening of immigration rules—including longer qualification periods for settlement—could push more Americans to act now.

"People are concerned about what may lie ahead. They want to take advantage of the current system before thresholds change," he said.

Meanwhile, UK Net Migration Has Fallen Sharply

The surge in American interest comes even as overall net migration to the UK nearly halved in 2024, according to the Office for National Statistics. The decline was driven largely by reduced international student inflows and a rise in emigration—especially among people who had come to the UK on study visas after pandemic-era travel restrictions were lifted.

"The fall was due to changes in visa policy, particularly around student dependents," said Mary Gregory, ONS Director of Population Statistics.

As the U.S. faces rising political volatility, a growing number of Americans are reassessing their global mobility options. For many, the UK—with its shared language, legal familiarity, and strong institutions—remains a preferred destination for a new chapter abroad.

Japan to Texas flight diverted after unruly passenger incident

By **Fatimah Idera**

A Japanese plane headed from Tokyo to Texas made an emergency landing after a passenger attempted to open one of its doors during the flight.

All Nippon Airways Flight 114 was diverted to Seattle due to an unruly passenger.

According to the Port of Seattle police, they received reports of a man trying to open the exit doors mid-flight. The individual, who hasn't been identified, experienced a medical crisis and was restrained by fellow passengers and the flight crew. He was taken to a hospital after landing, and it's unclear if charges will be filed.

"The safety of our passengers and crew is our top priority," ANA stated, appreciating local law enforcement's support. During the plane's wait on the tarmac at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, another passenger was removed



for unruly behaviour.

Flight data indicates the plane reached George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston behind schedule.

Also in April, a Jetstar flight from Bali to Melbourne diverted after a door-opening attempt.

In November, an American Airlines passenger was restrained with duct tape after trying to open a door.

An Asiana Airlines flight incident in November 2023, where a man opened an emergency exit door, causing breathing difficulties for nine passengers before landing in South Korea.

Man arrested for attempted firebombing of former U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv

By **Elizabeth Jenrola Oso**

Federal authorities have arrested a dual U.S.-German citizen accused of attempting to firebomb the former U.S. embassy branch office in Tel Aviv, Israel. The Justice Department announced Sunday that 28 year old Joseph Neumayer was taken into custody at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York after being deported by Israeli officials.

According to a Justice Department press release, Neumayer traveled to Israel in April and allegedly approached the U.S. embassy's former Tel Aviv location last week carrying a backpack. He is accused of spitting on an embassy guard and fleeing the scene, leaving the backpack behind. Authorities say the bag contained three Molotov cocktails.

Israeli officials reportedly tracked Neumayer to his hotel and arrested him. He was then deported to the U.S., where FBI agents took him into custody upon



arrival.

The Justice Department also claims Neumayer used a social media account to promote violent anti-American rhetoric. One post allegedly read: "Join me as I burn down the embassy in Tel Aviv. Death to America, death to Americans, and f** the West."* He is also accused of posting

threats to assassinate President Donald Trump.

FBI Director Kash Patel condemned Neumayer's actions in a statement: "This despicable and violent behavior will not be tolerated at home or abroad, and the FBI, working with our partners, will bring him to face justice for his dangerous actions."

Neumayer appeared before a judge on Sunday and was ordered held without bond. As of Sunday afternoon, the criminal complaint had not been made publicly available, and the Department of Justice did not respond to media requests for further details.

The Tel Aviv location served as the U.S. embassy until 2018, when it was officially moved to Jerusalem during the Trump administration.

Putin snubs Trump's peace deal, Kremlin says talks dying slowly

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

Tensions between Russia and the West escalated further this week, as Russian President Vladimir Putin appeared to reject U.S. President Donald Trump's proposed peace initiative aimed at ending the protracted war in Ukraine.

Russian state media and top Kremlin allies have openly mocked the ceasefire framework, calling it ineffective and declaring it to be "in its death throes."

In a stark editorial published Monday, the Moscow-based daily *Moskovskij Komsomolets* said Trump's once-promising diplomatic momentum was now faltering.

The publication noted while Trump's involvement initially pressured both Moscow and Kyiv to return to the negotiating table, the momentum has since dissipated.

"The Trump factor was significant and strong enough to get Moscow and Kyiv to the negotiating table," the editorial read, "but judging by the current picture, it feels like Trump's peace plan is dying a slow, but necessarily painful death."

The sentiment was echoed in a report by BBC Russia Editor Steve Rosenberg, who observed that the Kremlin's tone toward the American peace overture had turned sharply pessimistic. The editorial accused Trump of losing the energy he once brought to the peace process, stating: "The President's energy charge has gone flat... It will soon become obvious even to Mr. Trump that any deal is in its death throes."

Kremlin Prioritizes "Victory in Ukraine" Over Trump Relations

While the newspaper stressed that Russia does not wish to alienate Trump, it insisted that military success in Ukraine now takes precedence over diplomatic tact. "Not alienating Trump is desirable," the editorial said, "but not at the expense of achieving victory in Ukraine." This stance was reinforced by a provocative social media post from former Russian President Dmitry



Medvedev, a key Putin ally. Medvedev shared a map on X (formerly Twitter) showing almost all of Ukraine as part of a Russian-controlled buffer zone, leaving only a small region next to Poland under Ukrainian control.

The map posted by a Russian official

"If military aid to the Banderite regime continues," Medvedev warned, "the buffer zone could look like this."

Medvedev's post was seen as a direct rebuke to proposals from the UK, France, and a 30-nation coalition, which had floated the idea of enforcing a Western-supervised buffer zone between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

Trump vs. Putin: From Allies to Adversaries?

Despite a history of cordial relations, Trump has recently expressed increasing frustration with Putin's military aggression. Speaking from New Jersey over the weekend, the U.S. President said:

"I've known Putin a long time and always gotten along with him, but he's sending rockets into cities and killing people. I don't like it at all."

On Truth Social, Trump went further, writing: "Putin has gone absolutely crazy... I've always said he wants all of

Ukraine, not just a piece of it. If he does, it will lead to the downfall of Russia!" These comments mark a dramatic shift in tone from Trump, who has long been criticized for being soft on Moscow. The U.S. administration has yet to confirm whether it will impose further sanctions, but key allies in Europe and the UK are reportedly preparing new economic penalties targeting Russia's energy and defense sectors.

Kremlin Response: 'Emotional Overload'

Responding to Trump's accusations, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov downplayed the U.S. President's remarks, describing them as reflective of "emotional overload."

"President Putin is making decisions necessary for the security of Russia," Peskov said, suggesting Moscow will not shift course under external pressure.

As Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to push for a 30-day ceasefire, with only low-ranking Russian officials attending talks in Turkey, the hope for a breakthrough remains dim. Without direct engagement from Putin, and with growing mockery from Kremlin insiders, Trump's peace initiative may be losing traction fast.

Israeli airstrike kills 9 children of doctor in Gaza

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In one of the most harrowing tragedies to emerge from the ongoing Israeli offensive in Gaza, an airstrike has killed nine of the ten children of Dr. Alaa al-Najjar, a pediatric specialist at al-Tahrir Hospital in the Nasser Medical Complex. The strike, which hit her home in Khan Younis on Friday, occurred while she was treating victims of similar attacks.

Dr. Najjar, who has dedicated her career to saving the lives of children, was working at the hospital when she received the charred bodies of her own children. The eldest was just 12 years old. Her husband and one surviving child, 11 year old Adam, were critically injured.

British volunteer surgeon Graeme Groom, working alongside Najjar at the hospital, performed surgery on Adam. "His injuries were bad enough, but the background was worse," Groom said. "Nine of his brothers and sisters were killed."

Groom confirmed that both Dr. Najjar and her husband, also a physician at Nasser Hospital, had no political or military affiliations. "It is unimaginable," he said.

Footage verified by the BBC and circulated by Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry shows the bodies of the children being pulled from the rubble near a petrol station. Eyewitnesses at the scene described the destruction as apocalyptic.

"This heinous crime clearly expresses the sadistic nature of the occupation," Hamas said in a statement, calling the attack a "horrific massacre."

The IDF responded on Saturday, stating that it had targeted "a number



of suspects" operating near its troops in Khan Younis. "Before beginning operations there, the IDF evacuated civilians from this area for their own safety," the statement read. "The claim regarding harm to uninvolved civilians is under review."

International outrage is mounting. Francesca Albanese, the UN's special rapporteur for the occupied Palestinian territories, condemned the airstrike as part of a "sadistic pattern of the new phase of the genocide."

The past 24 hours have seen intensified strikes across Gaza, with more than 100 sites targeted, according to the IDF. The territory's health ministry reported at least 79 deaths within a single day, with that number expected to rise.

Among the dead were 30 members of the Dardouna family, including a baby girl pulled from the rubble still wearing her pajamas, in an image shared by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mosab Abu Toha.

As the humanitarian crisis deepens, Israel faces growing pressure to allow more aid into Gaza. A recent letter obtained by the Associated Press suggests Israel may soon permit aid organizations to manage non-food relief through the newly proposed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, backed by the U.S. and Israel. The foundation is not yet operational.

For now, fuel, medicine, and most food supplies remain restricted, exacerbating the plight of 2.3 million Palestinians caught in a territory on the brink of famine.

In the corridors of Nasser Hospital, where Dr. Alaa al-Najjar once worked to heal children, grief now hangs heavy. As colleague Mohammed Saqer described, "She watched with her own eyes as the charred bodies of her children were pulled from the rubble while she was still on duty, saving others."

US weighs in on Lucy Connolly case, pressures Starmer

By Fatimah Idera

The White House has said it is monitoring the case of Lucy Connolly in an escalation of free speech tensions with Sir Keir Starmer.

State department officials are examining the treatment of Connolly, the wife of a Conservative councillor, who was jailed for 31 months over a social media post about the Southport attacks.

Judges threw out an appeal brought by the 42-year-old last week, meaning she will not be released before August.

Campaigners raised her case with Marco Rubio, the US secretary of state, as part of a wider effort to challenge what they regard as draconian hate speech laws across Europe.

A spokesman for the state department said: "We can confirm that we are monitoring this matter. "The United States supports freedom of expression at home and abroad, and remains concerned about infringements on freedom of expression."

It is the latest sign of Donald Trump's willingness to intervene in domestic British affairs amid a growing transatlantic rift over the protection of freedom of speech.

Recall that Trump sent US officials to meet five British pro-life activists over censorship concerns. The diplomats from the US bureau of democracy, human rights and labor (DRL) travelled to London in March in an effort to "affirm the importance of freedom of expression in the UK and across Europe". They met with officials from the Foreign Office and challenged Ofcom on the Online Safety Act, which is thought to be a point of contention in the White House.

Since then, Connolly's case has raised eyebrows of Trump administration officials who question her conviction and the length of her sentence. British politicians who have criticised her



sentence praised the White House for its intervention.

Suella Braverman, the former home secretary, said: "Lucy Connolly is effectively a political prisoner and should be freed immediately. She made an ill-judged tweet, soon deleted. "That the US is investigating this case is a sad indictment of the dire state of free speech under Two-Tier Keir. Free speech is in crisis under Labour."

Connolly expressed her outrage on social media platform X hours after Axel Rudakubana murdered three girls at a Taylor Swift-themed holiday club in Southport. She posted: "Mass deportation now, set fire to all the f—ing hotels full of the b—s for all I care, while you're at it, take the treacherous government politicians with them. I feel physically sick knowing what these [Southport] families will now have to endure. If that makes me racist, so be it." Connolly deleted the post less than four hours later, but by then it had been viewed 310,000 times. She was arrested on Aug 6 following widespread riots across the country over the stabbing attack, and later jailed for 31 months.

Connolly, who has no previous convictions, also sent another tweet commenting on a sword attack, which

read: "I bet my house it was one of these boat invaders." Last week, the Court of Appeal judges said they did not accept that the original sentence for inciting racial hatred was manifestly excessive. The judges also said they did not accept that Connolly had entered her guilty plea without fully understanding what it entailed.

Robert Jenrick, the shadow justice secretary, said: "In recent months, shoplifters with hundreds of prior convictions have avoided prison. A domestic abuser with 52 prior offenses got off with just a suspended sentence, as did a paedophile with 110,000 indecent images of children.

"And yet Lucy Connolly has received a 31-month prison sentence for an appalling – albeit hastily deleted – message on social media. How on earth can you spend longer in prison for a tweet than violent crime? This crazy disparity will only fuel the perception that we have a two-tier justice system where the law is enforced selectively."

Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader and an ally of Mr Trump, said: "Our American Republican friends seem to care more about free speech in the United Kingdom than our own government."

Pakistani national shot dead by Indian troops at border

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



A Pakistani man was shot dead by Indian border forces on Friday evening after allegedly crossing the international frontier and ignoring calls to stop, according to a statement by India's Border Security Force (BSF). The incident occurred in Gujarat state's Banaskantha district, near the border with Pakistan's Sindh province.

The shooting comes just two weeks after a deadly flare-up between the nuclear-armed neighbours left over 70 people dead and sparked fears of a wider conflict. A ceasefire was eventually reached after four days of missile exchanges and cross-border fire.

BSF officials said the individual was seen "advancing suspiciously towards the border fence," which is located beyond the formal international boundary line. "He was challenged by the troops but continued to move forward. The intruder was neutralised on the spot," the BSF said in a statement released

Saturday.

India has not yet disclosed the identity of the deceased man. Pakistani officials, meanwhile, have described the BSF statement as "vague" and questioned how the individual managed to travel so deep into Indian territory without being detected earlier. "We are investigating both the identity and circumstances surrounding the killing," a Pakistani official said on condition of anonymity.

The border areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan, which adjoin Pakistan's Sindh province, are notorious for drug smuggling activities. Numerous Pakistani nationals have been arrested or killed in the region over the years, and authorities on both sides have seized narcotics worth millions of dollars, particularly along the Arabian Sea coast.

The latest border incident follows renewed hostilities between India and Pakistan. Tensions escalated last

month when New Delhi accused Islamabad of supporting a militant group responsible for an attack in Indian-administered Kashmir that claimed 26 lives. India retaliated with missile strikes aimed at alleged terrorist infrastructure inside Pakistan. Islamabad responded with strikes targeting Indian military positions, escalating the standoff until a ceasefire was brokered.

India has since warned that any future terrorist attack on its soil would be interpreted as an act of war. Pakistan, on the other hand, has denied involvement in the Kashmir attack and has pointed to a spike in militant violence within its borders, particularly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, blaming India for backing insurgent groups, a claim India has firmly rejected.

As both nations continue to trade accusations, Friday's shooting raises fresh concerns about the fragility of peace along one of the world's most volatile borders.

Trump defends move to block Harvard from admitting foreign students

By Damilola Olufemi



U.S. President Donald Trump has defended his administration's attempt to stop Harvard University from enrolling international students, after a federal court put a temporary hold on the decision.

In a post shared on his Truth Social account on Sunday, Trump took aim at the varsity, criticising the school for having nearly 31 per cent of its students come from abroad, while offering little financial transparency.

“We want to know who those foreign students are, a reasonable request since we give Harvard billions of dollars, but Harvard isn’t exactly forthcoming,” Trump wrote.

The controversy stems from a recent move by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who revoked

the university’s authority to admit international students. She had accused the institution of failing to disclose details about student visa holders allegedly connected to unlawful or violent behaviour. Noem had warned that failure to comply would bring consequences.

Harvard respond

In response, the school filed a lawsuit, calling the government’s actions “arbitrary, capricious, unlawful, and unconstitutional.” A federal judge responded by suspending the administration’s directive, allowing Harvard to continue admitting international students for now.

The situation is part of a larger crackdown by the Trump administration on higher education institutions. Officials have cited rising concerns over anti-Semitism

and what they describe as overreliance on diversity initiatives. Authorities have also moved to revoke visas and deport foreign students who have participated in pro-Palestinian demonstrations, alleging ties to Hamas.

The dispute has been further intensified by the administration’s recent financial actions. Last month, \$2.2 billion in federal funds allocated to the school were frozen, and the Department of Education has since threatened to halt all research grants to the university.

As the legal standoff continues, it has drawn widespread debate over academic independence, national security, and the role of foreign students in American higher education.

Mbappe wins first European golden shoe after steller season

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Kylilian Mbappe has secured the European Golden Shoe for the 2024–25 season, capping a remarkable debut campaign in Spain with 31 La Liga goals for Real Madrid. The French superstar struck twice in Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Real Sociedad on Saturday, ensuring he topped the continent's scoring charts and clinched the award for the first time in his illustrious career.

Despite Real Madrid finishing the season without any silverware, Mbappe's individual brilliance stood out. His 31 goals not only earned him La Liga's Pichichi Trophy for top scorer but also saw him edge out Sporting CP's Victor Gyokeres and Liverpool's Mohamed Salah in the Golden Shoe standings.

Though Gyokeres scored 39 league goals—eight more than Mbappe—the European Golden Shoe is calculated using a weighted points system. Goals scored in Europe's top five leagues—Premier League, La Liga, Bundesliga, Serie A, and Ligue 1—are worth two points each. In contrast, goals from leagues ranked sixth to 22nd in UEFA's coefficient rankings, such as Portugal's Primeira Liga, are weighted at 1.5 points per goal.

As a result, Mbappe's 31 goals in La Liga earned him 62 points. Gyokeres, despite his higher goal tally in the Portuguese league, accumulated 58.5 points. Salah finished third with 58 points, having scored 29 goals in the English Premier League.

Mbappe's final-day brace put the award beyond the reach of his competitors. Salah, the only player with a realistic chance of catching him, needed a hat-trick in Liverpool's final match of the season against Crystal Palace to draw level. However, the Egyptian forward could only find the net once in a 1-1 draw at



Anfield, leaving him narrowly short.

This Golden Shoe triumph makes Mbappe only the third Real Madrid player in history to receive the honour. He joins an elite list that includes Hugo Sanchez, who won it in the 1989–90 season, and Cristiano Ronaldo, who claimed the award three times during his time at the Bernabéu (2010–11, 2013–14, and 2014–15).

Speaking after the final match of the season, Mbappe reflected on a bittersweet campaign. "It's an honour to win the Golden Shoe, especially in my first season here. Of course, we wanted trophies as a team, but I've grown a lot this year and feel proud of what I've accomplished. This is just the beginning."

Victor Gyokeres, meanwhile, finished the season with an astonishing 53 goals in all competitions for Sporting, including a goal in their 3-1 Portuguese Cup final victory over arch-rivals Benfica on Sunday. However, his last league appearance was the previous weekend, meaning he had no further opportunities to add to his league goal total for the Golden Shoe tally.

Gyokeres's performances have

reportedly attracted strong interest from top European clubs, with Arsenal said to be leading the chase for the Swedish striker this summer.

The final top five standings for the 2024–25 European Golden Shoe were:

Kylian Mbappe (Real Madrid) – 31 goals, 62 points

Victor Gyokeres (Sporting CP) – 39 goals, 58.5 points

Mohamed Salah (Liverpool) – 29 goals, 58 points

Robert Lewandowski (Barcelona) – 27 goals, 54 points

Harry Kane (Bayern Munich) – 26 goals, 52 points

Mbappe's triumph further cements his place among Europe's elite and serves as a personal milestone in a season that, while disappointing for Real Madrid overall, showcased his unmatched talent. As the 2025–26 campaign approaches, the 26-year-old will be aiming not only to defend his scoring crown but to bring major trophies back to the Bernabéu.

Ancelotti honoured to lead Brazil toward 2026 glory

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Carlo Ancelotti has officially begun his tenure as Brazil's head coach, describing his appointment as a "great honour" and pledging to restore the Selecao to their former global dominance, with the 2026 World Cup firmly in his sights.

Unveiled at the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) headquarters on Monday, the 65-year-old Italian coach appeared alongside CBF president Samir Xaud and received a symbolic national team shirt. Ancelotti, who left Real Madrid after four highly successful years, now takes on what may be the most ambitious and scrutinised job of his career.

"I have a big job ahead of me," said Ancelotti during his first press conference in charge. "I'm delighted, the challenge is great. I've always had a special connection with this team. We're going to work to make Brazil champions again. I'm honoured and proud to lead the best team in the world."

Ancelotti brings a glittering managerial resume to Brazil. Across a remarkable career, he has won the Champions League four times — twice with AC Milan and twice with Real Madrid — alongside domestic league titles in Italy, England, France, Germany, and Spain. His tactical intelligence and ability to manage elite talents have earned him global respect.

He replaces Dorival Junior, who was dismissed in March after a string of poor results culminated in a 4–1 defeat to Argentina. That loss, described by Brazilian media as "humiliating," prompted the CBF to expedite Ancelotti's arrival.

Brazil, currently fourth in South American World Cup qualifying with four matches remaining, are still well-positioned to qualify directly for the 2026 tournament in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, with the top six teams securing automatic spots.



However, performances have been inconsistent since their quarter-final exit at the 2022 World Cup, where they were beaten on penalties by Croatia.

Since that loss, the Selecao have endured five defeats in their last 14 matches, conceding 16 goals. Ancelotti's immediate task is to steady the ship, starting with upcoming qualifiers against Ecuador (5 June, away) and Paraguay (10 June, home in São Paulo).

The new boss was welcomed warmly by former Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, who famously led the nation to their fifth World Cup triumph in 2002. Scolari's presence underscored the significance of Ancelotti's appointment and the weight of national expectation.

In his first squad announcement, Ancelotti made several notable inclusions and recalls. Manchester United midfielder Casemiro and Tottenham forward Richarlison return to the national setup after missing out since October 2023's 2-0 defeat to Uruguay. Both players bring experience and leadership to a side in need of direction.

Liverpool's Alisson, Newcastle's Bruno Guimaraes, Fulham's Andreas

Pereira, and Arsenal's Gabriel Martinelli also feature. Wolves striker Matheus Cunha — expected to seal a move to Manchester United — earns a place after a stellar Premier League season. Youngsters Estevao (Palmeiras) and Andrey Santos (Strasbourg) offer fresh energy, while Real Madrid star Vinicius Jr is likely to spearhead the attack.

Real Betis winger Antony, on loan from Manchester United, has also been called up and is expected to play in the UEFA Conference League final against Chelsea before linking up with the national team.

Star forward Neymar, who is still recovering from a thigh injury sustained in April, has been ruled out. However, he made a cameo return for Santos in their recent 1-0 win over Vitoria in the Brazilian Serie A, hinting at progress in his recovery.

Ancelotti's appointment signals a new era for Brazil, one rooted in experience, tactical discipline, and ambition. As he prepares to lead the most decorated nation in World Cup history, expectations will be immense. But if anyone is equipped to shoulder them, it is the calm, commanding figure of Carlo Ancelotti.

Chaos in Liverpool: Man drives into premier league celebration crowd

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



What began as a jubilant celebration of Liverpool FC's Premier League title victory turned into a scene of terror and panic today evening, as a 53-year-old man drove a car into a large crowd of football supporters gathered in central Liverpool.

The incident, which occurred at approximately 6:00 PM on Water Street, left several injured and caused widespread fear among the thousands who had lined the streets for the club's victory parade. The suspect, a white British man from Liverpool, has been arrested. Authorities have not ruled out terrorism, and counter-terror police are now supporting the investigation.

Scene of Panic and Heroism

Eyewitnesses described the horrific moment the dark blue car ploughed through the tightly packed crowd.

"There were screams ahead of us and suddenly this dark blue car just came through the crowd," said Matt Cole, a BBC journalist who was attending the parade with his family.

"It missed my family by inches. We dove out of the way. People were chasing it, trying to smash the windows. It just wouldn't stop."

Cole described a chaotic scene with armed police, ambulances, and medics rushing to the scene within minutes. "Once I knew my family was safe, I turned around and saw people sitting on the ground surrounded by others," he added. 'We Could Just Hear Screams'

Natasha Rinaldi, another witness watching from a nearby flat, recounted the chilling aftermath.

"People sounded desperate. We looked out the window and saw the car had run over people," she told Sky News. "There were screams and screams. Some of my friends were down there—nobody was expecting it."

She said people began chasing and surrounding the car, attempting to speak to the driver before police moved in to secure the scene. 'We Were Like Sardines'

Chelsea Yuen, a supporter celebrating the title win, had a close call with the vehicle while walking with her friend and a child.

"We were literally like sardines walking up the street... then we heard beeping and screaming," she recalled. "A black people carrier was driving straight at us. We jumped out of the way and pulled the little girl to safety."

Merseyside Police confirmed they had arrested a 53-year-old local man and were carrying out "extensive enquiries" to determine the motive. Counter Terrorism Policing North West is assisting the probe, although no official designation of the event as a terror attack has been made yet.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned the attack, calling the scenes "appalling" and praising the emergency response teams.

"My thoughts are with the injured and their families," he said in a brief statement Sunday night.

Man Utd embark on post-season Asia tour amid mixed reactions

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Manchester United's season may be over in terms of competitive fixtures, but the players are far from finished as they prepare for a two-match post-season tour in Asia.

Following their final Premier League game, a 2-0 victory over Aston Villa on Sunday at Old Trafford, United's squad immediately boarded a flight to Malaysia. The tour includes a high-profile friendly against ASEAN All Stars in Kuala Lumpur on 28 May, before concluding with a match against the Hong Kong national team on 30 May.

Manager Ruben Amorim has taken a large party of 32 players on the trip, including captain Bruno Fernandes, veteran midfielder Casemiro, and promising winger Alejandro Garnacho. The 20-year-old Garnacho, who did not feature against Villa and is reportedly being encouraged to find a new club this summer, joins a squad filled with both experienced campaigners and youth prospects.

This season was a difficult one for Manchester United, who finished 15th in the Premier League with just 42 points—only their 11th league win in 38 games. It was widely regarded as the club's worst campaign since their relegation season of 1973-74. The team also suffered disappointment in Europe, losing the Europa League final 1-0 to Tottenham Hotspur in Bilbao and missing out on qualification for the Champions League next season.

The Asia trip is expected to generate around \$10 million (£7.8 million) for the club—a vital sum given United's precarious financial situation. The club has played a grueling 60 games across all competitions this season, and while the tour promises financial benefits, many players have expressed mixed feelings about the additional workload after such an exhausting campaign.

Among the traveling squad are key players like defender Matthijs de Ligt, who has been sidelined since early May with an injury, and Joshua Zirkzee, recently returned from a lengthy hamstring layoff. Goalkeeper Andre



Onana and full-back Luke Shaw, who missed the Villa game, are also included, along with veteran defender Jonny Evans, who will leave the club at the end of the season.

Several players confirmed to be departing—Victor Lindelof and Christian Eriksen—have not joined the tour, citing personal reasons. Injured players Lisandro Martinez (ACL), Noussair Mazraoui, and Leny Yoro are also absent.

Amorim is using the tour to evaluate promising young talent, with several academy standouts included: Jaydan Kamason, Godwill Kukonki, Tyler Fletcher, Sekou Kone, and Jack Moorhouse. The likes of Ayden Heaven and Chido Obi are expected to be integrated into the first team next season.

The Red Devils' sponsor, Apollo Tyres, is hosting a meet and greet in Mumbai, India, on 29 May, featuring Onana, Harry Maguire, and Diogo Dalot, highlighting the club's global commercial ambitions.

The tour precedes international duties for United's players, with Fernandes and Dalot likely involved in Portugal's Nations League semi-final against Germany on 4 June.

Manchester United's pre-season begins on 19 July with a friendly in Sweden against Leeds United, followed by a Premier League tournament in the US from 26 July to 3 August. The club then

hosts Fiorentina at Old Trafford on 9 August.

Amorim defended the decision to undertake the post-season trip, calling it a "small sacrifice" that helps the club maintain connections with its worldwide fanbase.

Defender Harry Maguire accepted the club's decision, stating, "It is the club's decision and we don't have any right to argue against it after the performances we have put on. As players, we have to take responsibility for the position in the Premier League and the money we have generated this season through that finish, which is nowhere near good enough."

Financially, the club is under strain. This will be only the second season since 1990 that United will miss out on European football, causing a significant revenue shortfall estimated at around £100 million. Recently, United announced redundancies at their Carrington training ground, part of ongoing cost-cutting since new investor Sir Jim Ratcliffe's involvement last year. Over the past five years, the club has lost more than £370 million.

The post-season tour follows a trend among Premier League clubs, with Tottenham and Newcastle having traveled to Australia last year for similar friendlies—a move criticized by pundits including Alan Shearer as "madness."