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Tinubu's reforms, only path to sustainable development – Shettima

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Vice-President, Kashim Shettima has said that ongoing efforts by the President Bola Tinubu-led Federal Government to confront the challenges of the federal system were the only path to sustainable development.

Shettima, who spoke during the 7th edition of Annual Leadership Conference and Awards, held at the State House Banquet Hall in Abuja, said, "This administration, under the leadership of Tinubu is confronting these challenges directly.

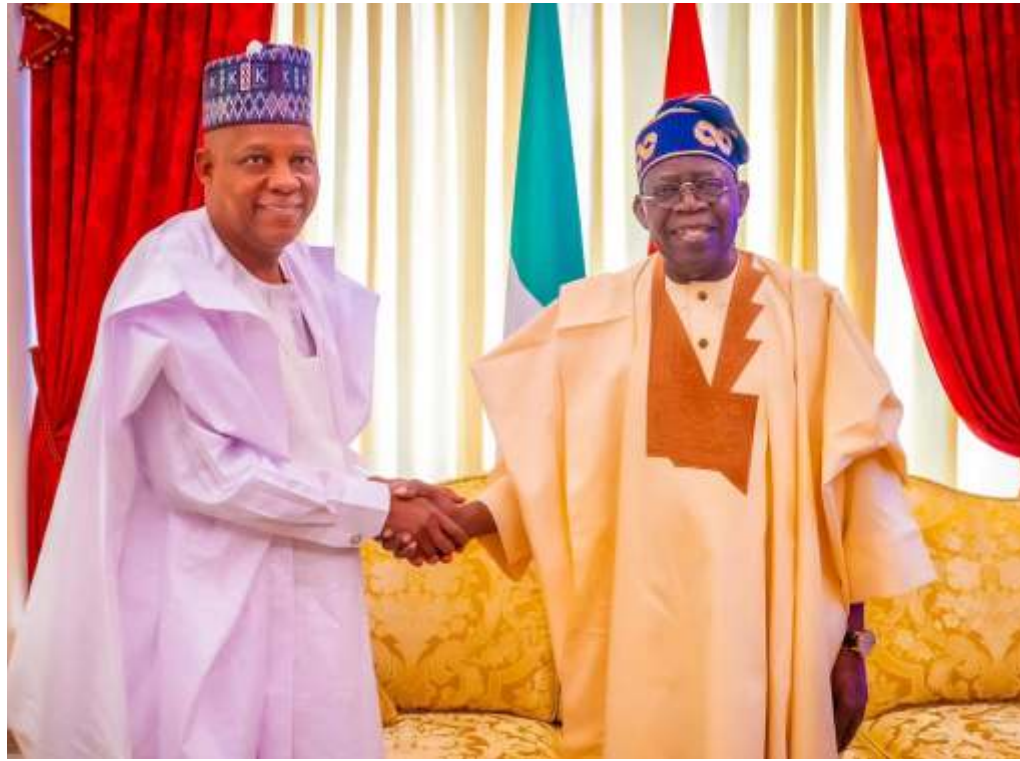
"We have chosen the path of reform. It is bold, often difficult, but necessary. One such step is our unflinching pursuit of local government autonomy—a vision we are realizing through the sanctity of due legal process."

Represented Dr Aliyu Modibbo, Special Adviser, General Duties to the President (Office of the Vice-President), Shettima stated, "The Supreme Court pronouncements in favour of local government autonomy underscored Tinubu's commitment to building a federal structure that works for the grassroots.

He added, "This is how we make the federation functional: by bringing governance closer to the people. The policy choices pursued by this administration—from the removal of fuel subsidies to the introduction of tax reform bills—are aimed at guaranteeing a fiscally responsible federation.

"It will also create a system that offers each state both increased allocations and the opportunity to participate in debates and reforms for long-term fiscal stability."

The vice-president commended the Leadership Media Group for creating the platform for dialogue and recognising excellence.



He called on the awardees to note that the honour was both a celebration and a call to duty, saying, "In you, we see the embodiment of the values we aspire to institutionalise integrity, innovation, and impact.

"The path to national renewal is long, but each of you has shown that it is walkable."

Shettima added that Nigeria needs patriots, including citizens, leaders and institutions, ready to be counted with a view to establishing a federation that serves the people.

He said the problems attributed to the current federal system often stem from the poor management of resources rather than from any inherent flaw in the country's constitutional architecture.

"And more in the deficit of our collective fiscal responsibility. To improve our federalism, we must not lose sight of the dysfunctions that have been allowed to fester under the current system.

"If we at the national level deliver on our promises, if our governors manage their allocations with prudence, if our local governments are truly autonomous and accountable. And if every kobo is deployed with the people's interest in mind, then the structure will serve us well."

The vice-president said, rather than mould Nigeria's federal system after the ones in Canada and parts of Europe, efforts and attention should be focused more on reforming to meet the country's unique realities.

Shettima urged, "We must resist the temptation to romanticise foreign systems or prescribe imported solutions that fail to account for our distinct social, ethnic, and demographic complexities.

"What we seek, therefore, is not a photocopy of another country's model, but a federal structure tailored to our aspirations."

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Peter Obi expresses concern over Nigeria's economic crisis

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Peter Obi, the presidential candidate for the Labour Party during the 2023 general election, has expressed deep concern over the worsening economic situation in Nigeria, warning that the country is on the brink of collapse. Obi made these comments during his address to party members at the ongoing National Executive Council (NEC) meeting in Abuja on Wednesday.



In his speech, Obi underscored the severity of the nation's challenges, pointing to alarming economic indicators that reflect a steady decline in the living standards of ordinary Nigerians.

“Do not fear anybody. Those who were afraid yesterday didn't do any better,” Obi said, urging the party and the citizens to speak out against the mounting hardships.

“We must speak out when things are going wrong. Nigeria is collapsing. The numbers are clear; the indices are clear—people are getting poorer every day,” he lamented.

Despite the grim situation in the country, Obi emphasised the importance of unity within the Labour Party, calling for

inclusiveness and cooperation among all party members.

He highlighted that the Labour Party must act as a “family,” where everyone is involved in decision-making, and no one is excluded.

“The Labour Party has chosen to be a family, and we must do everything as a family. It's not about Peter Obi's choice; it's everyone's choice. This family excludes no one. We want to build a party that is fair and just,” Obi declared.

Preparing for future elections Looking ahead to future elections, Obi made it clear that the Labour Party is preparing to put forward a strong, competent slate of candidates at all levels of government. He indicated that the

party's focus would be on offering the best possible candidates for the House of Representatives, the Senate, governorships, and the presidency.

“We want to go into the next election fully prepared, offering Nigerians the best and most competent candidates,” Obi said.

He also stressed the importance of party loyalty and competence in choosing aspirants, saying the party aims to correct past mistakes.

“We want to correct the mistakes we made in the past. Anyone seeking to contest under our party must be a committed member, not just someone passing through. They must be competent,” Obi affirmed.

Rivers emergency rule: 11 PDP govts tackle Tinubu at Supreme Court

By Dave Oludare Oso

Amid the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State, 11 governors elected on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have filed a suit to challenge President Bola Tinubu's powers to suspend democratically elected officials of a state at the Supreme Court.

The opposition governors also challenged the imposition of emergency rule in the oil-rich state in the suit.

The plaintiffs in the suit are; Adamawa, Enugu, Osun, Oyo, Bauchi, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Delta, Taraba, Zamfara, and Bayelsa states.

Though it had been previously widely reported that the suit had been filed before the Supreme Court, New Daily Prime gathered that the governors' suit was only filed before the apex court on Tuesday.

The Director of Information and Public Relations of the Supreme Court, Dr Festus Akande confirmed the development.

BACKGROUND

Following a seemingly intractable political and constitutional crisis, President Bola Tinubu had on March 18 declared a state of emergency in Rivers State and suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara, the state deputy governor, Mrs Ngozi Odu, and all elected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for an initial period of six months.

Thereafter, President Tinubu appointed retired Vice Admiral Ibok Ete Ibas as the sole administrator to oversee the affairs of the state during the suspension period.

While the National Assembly, on their part supported the President's decision to implement the suspension, the expectedly aggrieved PDP governors kicked against the axing of one of their own.

Hence, the 11 governors of the leading opposition party have approached the apex court to challenge the suspension, the declaration of emergency rule in Rivers State and the appointment of the sole administrator.

The governors, in the suit marked:



SC/CV/329/2025, predicated the summon on eight grounds.

The plaintiffs urged the Supreme Court to determine if the President had the powers to suspend a democratically elected structure of a state.

They also asked the apex court to determine if the way and manner the President pronounced the state of emergency declaration in Rivers State was not in contravention of the 1999 Constitution.

Amongst others, all 11 governors in the suit, filed through their state Attorney Generals, prayed the court to determine the following, "Whether upon a proper construction and interpretation of the provisions of Sections 1(2), 5(2), 176, 180, 188 and 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria can lawfully suspend or in any manner whatsoever interfere with the offices of a Governor and the Deputy Governor of any of the component 36 States of the Federation of Nigeria and replace same with his unelected nominee as a Sole Administrator, under the guise of, or pursuant to, a Proclamation of a State of Emergency in any of the State of the Federation, particularly in any of the Plaintiffs States?"

"Whether upon a proper construction and interpretation of the provisions of Sections 1(2), 4(6), 11(4) & (5), 90, 105 and 305 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria can lawfully suspend the House of Assembly of any of the component

36 States of the Federation of Nigeria, under the guise of, or pursuant to, a Proclamation of a State of Emergency in any of such States, particularly in any of the Plaintiffs States?"

"Whether the consequent threat by the first Defendant acting on

behalf of the President to the States of the Federation, including the Plaintiffs' States, to the effect that the offices of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the States can be suspended by the President by virtue of a Proclamation of a State of Emergency, is not in contravention of the provisions of Sections 1(2), 4(6), 5(2), 11(2) and (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and inconsistent with the principles of constitutional federalism?"

Meanwhile, the respondents in the suit are to within 14 days after the service of the summons on them, inclusive of the day of such service, cause an appearance to be entered for them.

The suit filed by the opposition governors ends weeks of speculation of what action they would take following reports that they had earlier approached the apex court to challenge the President's action.

Before Tuesday, seven PDP governors, specifically from Bauchi, Adamawa, Bayelsa, Enugu, Osun, Plateau and Zamfara states reportedly decided to challenge the President's action by filing a suit before the Supreme Court.

However, multiple Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice sources said they were yet to be served with the court papers.

Shettima flags off special agro-industrial processing zone in Kaduna

By Friday Omosola

Vice President Kashim Shettima has launched the construction of Phase 1 of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) in Kaduna State.

During the launch yesterday, he described the initiative as a “presidential priority project” aimed at transforming Nigeria’s agricultural sector and generating sustainable employment nationwide.

Performing the groundbreaking ceremony at Daki-Takwas, along the Kaduna-Abuja Expressway in Chikun Local Government Area, Shettima highlighted the project’s potential to tackle longstanding challenges in Nigeria’s agricultural value chain — including poor infrastructure, limited market access, and minimal value addition.

“This is more than laying bricks and mortar,” Shettima said. “It’s about empowering our farmers, energising our youth, and laying the groundwork for inclusive economic growth. We are building the infrastructure to feed our people and fulfil the promise of our nation.”

The SAPZ initiative, spearheaded by the federal government with support from international development partners such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), is being rolled out in eight pilot states — Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Cross River, Imo, Ogun, Oyo — and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Designed to integrate farmers with processors, reduce post-harvest losses, and boost rural economies, the SAPZ programme will create agro-industrial hubs that attract private sector investment and foster innovation in agricultural production and processing.

Emphasising the importance of youth



involvement in agriculture, Shettima noted, “The youth of Nigeria must not be spectators. They must be stakeholders and shapers of their own futures.”

He praised the Kaduna State Government for its agricultural leadership, calling the state a “model” for others due to its vast arable land and historical role in farming.

“Kaduna is not a stranger to agricultural leadership. What we are starting here today will become a model for other states to follow,” the Vice President said.

However, Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna described the SAPZ as a strategic investment that aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s commitment to economic transformation.

“The SAPZ is a huge investment that will position Kaduna as a major player in Nigeria’s industrial development,” the governor stated, revealing a significant increase in agricultural budgetary allocation — from ₦1.4 billion in 2023 to ₦74.2 billion in 2025.

Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the AfDB, commended the government’s resolve in bringing the long-anticipated project to fruition, noting that the SAPZ initiative has taken over a decade to realise.

“The fastest way to develop Kaduna is through agricultural industrialisation.

It’s taken us eleven years to get here, but I am thrilled we are finally breaking ground,” Adesina said, adding that AfDB has committed over \$934 million to SAPZ programmes across Africa, with another \$938 million raised from development partners.

Also speaking, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, hailed the SAPZ as a “game changer” that will attract private sector investment, enhance rural development, and drive value addition in the agricultural sector.

“This programme will strengthen Nigeria’s agricultural ecosystem and help us rise to the challenges of our time,” he said.

More so, the Emir of Zazzau, Ambassador Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli, expressed heartfelt appreciation on behalf of the people of the state, describing the project as a timely and welcome intervention.

The ceremony drew a high-profile gathering, including former Vice President Namadi Sambo; Kaduna Deputy Governor Dr Hadiza Balarabe; Minister of Environment Balarabe Lawal; Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment Senator John Enoh; members of the National and State Assemblies; and the National Project Coordinator of SAPZ, Dr Kabir Yusuf

Femi Falana pushes for legal aid in police stations across Nigeria

By **Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye**

Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Femi Falana, has begun efforts to ensure that Nigerians detained in police stations across the country receive prompt legal assistance and that their families are quickly informed of their whereabouts.

Speaking at a recent event in Kano, Falana revealed that he has initiated discussions with the Attorney General of the Federation to establish legal aid desks in all police stations across the country.

The announcement was made during the Capacity Building and Workshop on Training of Prosecutors on the Effective Administration of Criminal Justice, which was organised by Kurwa Hussaini in collaboration with the State Ministry of Justice.

Falana expressed his concerns about the widespread ignorance that leads to the suffering of ordinary Nigerians in police stations. He pointed out that when a person is arrested and taken to a police station, the police are legally obligated to inform the individual's family, preventing them from worrying that their loved one may have been abducted. He stressed the importance of ensuring that families are notified without unnecessary delays.

Falana said:

"If a Nigerian is arrested and taken to the police station, it is the duty of the police under the law to contact the family so they are aware of the whereabouts of their loved one. Unfortunately, many Nigerians remain in detention for days or even weeks without their families being



informed. This is no longer permissible under the law. If a detainee has no lawyer, they have the right to demand legal representation, and the police must contact the Legal Aid Council to provide one."

Falana also emphasised that the need for legal representation begins at the police station.

He explained that Nigerians are entitled to legal aid from the moment they are detained, and this should continue through to their trial.

"The rich can afford lawyers to defend them, but for the poor, there is no one to speak for them unless they take advantage of the provisions made by the government for legal aid," Falana remarked.

He encouraged poor Nigerians to make use of legal resources available to them and not to suffer in silence.

In his address, Falana praised the Kano State government for its proactive approach in adopting the Administration

of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) in 2019, making it a trailblazer in criminal justice reform.

According to Falana, Kano has led the way in the application of the ACJA and is the first state to abolish the prosecution of criminal cases by police officers. Instead, all criminal cases in Kano are now prosecuted by legal practitioners.

Falana called for the establishment of public defender offices in all 44 local governments in Kano, ensuring that the poor have access to justice at the grassroots level. He also highlighted the need to improve the training, equipment, and working conditions of prosecutors to help them carry out their duties effectively.

"For many Nigerians, filing a complaint at a police station can be problematic due to the financial demands of police officers for investigations. The government needs to empower the office of the public defender to help the poor who cannot afford to pay for legal representation," Falana added.

FULL LIST: Ibas appoints administrators for 23 Rivers LGAs

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Sole Administrator of Rivers State, retired Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas, has announced the appointment of administrators for the 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of the state.

He also approved the reconstitution of previously suspended boards of agencies, commissions, and parastatals.

The approval for the appointments, which take effect from Monday, April 7, 2025, was contained in a Special Government Announcement issued on Wednesday by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Ibibia Worika.

With a Federal High Court in Port Harcourt having earlier barred Ibas from making such appointments, this new development comes amid mounting legal and political tensions in the state.

In Suit No. FHC/PH/CS/46/2025, filed by PILEX Centre for Civic Education Initiative led by Courage Msirimovu, Justice Adamu Turaki Mohammed issued an interim injunction.

The order restrains the Sole Administrator and his agents from appointing sole administrators—under any designation—to oversee the LGAs. The court granted the motion ex parte filed on March 28, and has fixed April 14 for a substantive hearing.

The appointments are the latest twist in a protracted political power tussle in Rivers State, which has intensified since the expiration of the tenure of local council chairmen originally elected under former Governor Nyesom Wike. Though their terms ended in June 2023, the chairmen secured what they described as a term extension from 27 defected lawmakers loyal to Wike.

Governor Siminalayi Fubara, who succeeded Wike, had dissolved the councils and appointed caretaker chairmen, triggering a fierce contest for control of the local government structures—widely regarded as critical to grassroots political dominance.

The Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC) went on to conduct local government elections on October 5,



2024. However, the Wike-aligned faction of the All Progressives Congress (APC), led by Tony Okocha, challenged the process in court. Despite the litigation, the elections proceeded.

Following a Supreme Court ruling on

February 28, 2025, which sided with the Wike-backed APC, Governor Fubara nullified the results and directed heads of local council administrations to assume control until fresh elections are held. This move further escalated the crisis, prompting legal threats and political backlash from the Wike camp.

Amid the chaos, Fubara's supporters have accused Ibas of attempting to sidestep constitutional provisions by appointing administrators to the LGAs without lawful backing—an action now under judicial scrutiny.

The unfolding crisis continues despite the declaration of a state of emergency in the state by President Bola Tinubu on March 18, aimed at restoring order.

With the court hearing scheduled for next week and political factions refusing to back down, the Rivers political drama appears far from over.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATORS

Serial	Name	LGA
(a)	(b)	(c)
1.	Mr Okroiyo Animate	Abua/Odual LGA
2.	Mr Goodluck M Iheanacho	Ahoada East LGA
3.	Mr Promise Jacob	Ahoada West LGA
4.	Dr Tamunotonye Peters	Akuku Toru LGA
5.	Surveyor Atajit Francis	Andoni LGA
6.	Barrister Ibiapuve Charles	Asari-Toru
7.	Mr Kingsley N Banigo	Bonny LGA
8.	Dr Sokari Ibifuro Francis	Degema LGA
9.	Dr Gloria Obo-Dibiah	Eleme LGA
10.	Barrister Franklin P Ajinwon	Emohua LGA
11.	Dr Onyenachi S Nwankwor	Etche LGA
12.	Professor Gospel G Kpee	Gokana LGA
13.	Mr Isaiah Christian Nobuawu	Ikwerre LGA
14.	Dr Barinedum Nwibere	Khana LGA
15.	Dr Clifford Ndu Walter	Obio/Akpor LGA
16.	Dr Chukwuma Aje	Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni LGA
17.	Eliel Owubokiri	Ogu/Bolo LGA
18.	Mr Thompson Isodiki	Okrika LGA
19.	Manager Ikechi Wala	Omuma LGA
20.	Mr Fred Apiafi	Opobo/Nkoro LGA
21.	Mr Eletuu Ihianacho	Oyigbo LGA
22.	Dr Sam Kalagbor	Port Harcourt LGA
23.	Mr Nuka O.S Gbipah	Tai LGA

NCC proposes 12-month period to reclaim unused airtime on deactivated lines

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

As part of efforts to develop solutions to protect customers' rights, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has proposed a 12-month window for subscribers to reclaim unused airtime on deactivated lines.

The NCC announced the proposal, titled 'Draft Guidance on Unutilised and Unclaimed Recharges,' during a virtual stakeholder engagement forum in Abuja on Tuesday, April 8.

The NCC's Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer (EVC/CEO), Dr Aminu Maida, said the initiative is part of efforts to ensure a balance between consumer rights and operational realities in the telecommunications sector.

Maida, represented by the Executive Commissioner for Stakeholder Management, Rimini Makama, noted that the prevalence of mobile services and the flexibility offered by prepaid plans have benefited millions of Nigerians.

Maida, however, noted that the evolving landscape has necessitated measures to address emerging challenges that could undermine consumer rights.

NCC's proposal to address unclaimed recharges for inactive accounts
Maida further noted that the proposed framework seeks to address the issue of unclaimed recharges when accounts become inactive.

He stated that the Quality-of-Service Business Rules 2024 stipulate that a prepaid line without a revenue-generating event for six months must be deactivated, and if the inactivity continues for another six months, the line may be recycled.

The NCC helmsman stated that under the new framework, telecoms subscribers whose lines have been churned would have a one-year window to claim their unused airtime, provided they can verify ownership.

"With the widespread reliance on mobile services, prepaid plans have provided



millions of Nigerians with flexibility and affordability.

"However, as the sector evolves, and in line with our commitment to ensuring quality of experience for telecom consumers, we must address emerging challenges, especially those that may compromise consumer rights.

"One of such is the fate of prepaid balances when accounts become inactive.

"Striking the right balance between safeguarding consumer rights, ensuring effective regulatory oversight, and maintaining industry sustainability requires a collective effort, and this forum presents an opportunity to explore practical solutions on this subject.

"The Quality-of-Service Business Rules 2024 stipulates that a prepaid line without a revenue-generating event for six months must be deactivated, and if inactivity persists for another six months, the line may be recycled.

"Subscribers have the right to reclaim their unused credit within one year, provided they can demonstrate ownership.

"It has become critical to ensure that consumer interests are not eroded through forfeiture of unused credit.

"The debate remains whether operators should be required to refund unused

airtime or whether the principle of 'use it or lose it' should prevail.

"Our goal is to establish a framework that protects consumers while ensuring the continued efficiency and competitiveness of the industry," he said.

NCC wants operators to conduct audits, offer alternative compensations
The Head of Legal and Regulatory Services at the NCC, Mrs Chizua Whyte, said the draft is critical to fulfilling the commission's mandate of developing regulatory instruments that foster a vibrant communications market.

She added that apart from the 12-month window, the draft provides that operators conduct comprehensive audits of all churned numbers and offer service-based alternatives to affected customers in lieu of unused airtimes.

Whyte said, "Firstly, establishing a 12-month window during which affected subscribers can claim unutilised recharges after their lines have been churned, provided they can verify ownership. This balances consumer rights with operational practicality.

"Secondly, operators are required to conduct comprehensive audits of all churned numbers and submit detailed documentation of all unclaimed and unutilised recharges, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process.

Burkina Faso junta conscripts 3 journalists into military, union kicks

By Dave Oludare Oso



The Congress of African Journalists (CAJ) has demanded the immediate release of three journalists detained and forcibly conscripted into the armed forces in Burkina Faso.

In a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja, CAJ President, Christopher Isiguzo, said the journalists include Guezouma Sanogo, President of the Association of Burkinabe Journalists (AJB); his deputy, Boukari Ouoba, and Luc Pagbelguem, a reporter in a private TV station, BFI.

According to reports, the journalists were allegedly arrested by intelligence officers of the National Security Council on March 24.

While Sanogo and Ouoba were detained after speaking out against increasing violations of press freedom during the AJB Congress, Pagbelguem was arrested for covering the congress.

A video surfaced online last week showing

the three journalists in military uniforms in an undisclosed location, flanked by armed men in Burkinabe army uniforms.

Isiguzo called on the Burkinabe authorities to immediately release the detained journalists and ensure journalists and media outlets operate freely.

He expressed deep concern over the growing crackdown on journalists and media outlets in Burkina Faso, warning that it would foster fear and self-censorship among journalists in the country.

According to him, this will undermine the fundamental right to freedom of expression and access to information.

Isiguzo also called for the release of three other journalists forcibly conscripted into the army in 2024.

These are Serge Oulon, Editor-in-Chief of L'Événement newspaper, Adama Bayala, and Kalifara Sere from BFI, a private TV

channel.

“These individuals went missing in June 2024, with the authorities confirming their conscription in October of that year.

“The fate of Alain Traore, a columnist with Omega Media, remains unknown, as he was seized by masked gunmen in July 2024, with the authorities refusing to comment on his whereabouts.

“As the repression intensifies, many journalists have fled the country fearing arrest and forced conscription,” he said.

Isiguzo said further that CAJ would continue to monitor the situation in the country closely.

He called on international bodies to advise the Burkinabe government to respect the rights of journalists and ensure their safe return.

LP holds crucial NEC meeting amid leadership dispute

By Friday Omosola



The Labour Party convened a high-level National Executive Council (NEC) meeting on Wednesday in Abuja, amidst ongoing tensions surrounding the party's leadership crisis.

The gathering, held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, was presided over by former Minister of Finance, Senator Nenadi Usman, who currently chairs the party's Caretaker Committee.

Among the notable figures present were the party's 2023 presidential flagbearer, Peter Obi, his running mate Datti Baba-Ahmed, and the Governor of Abia State, Alex Otti.

Also in attendance were several serving lawmakers from the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as the party's governorship

candidates for Edo and Imo States, Olumide Akpata and Athan Achonu respectively.

The meeting came shortly after the Supreme Court delivered a significant ruling that unsettled the leadership structure within the party.

The apex court unanimously ruled that the Court of Appeal in Abuja had overstepped its jurisdiction when it recognised Julius Abure as the party's National Chairman, stressing that leadership matters within political parties are internal and not for judicial interpretation.

The judgment further clarified that Abure's tenure had already lapsed.

Usman, in her remarks, announced that the party would undertake a review of its recently conducted

governorship primary in Anambra State.

The primary, held last Saturday in Awka, produced Chief George Moghalu—former head of the National Inland Waterways Authority—as the Labour Party's candidate for the upcoming gubernatorial election scheduled for 8 November 2025.

The Anambra primary marked the final major activity under the Abure-led National Working Committee before the Supreme Court's intervention reshaped the leadership narrative.

The court, siding with an appeal filed by Senator Esther Usman and another party member, dismissed a counter-appeal from Abure's faction as lacking merit.

Niger Republic dumps French, adopts Hausa as new national language

By Damilola Olufemi

Niger's military government has formally trashed French and adopted Hausa as the nation's new national language which is already the most spoken language across the country, particularly in the Zinder, Maradi and Tahoua regions.

This was made known in a special edition of the government's new charter which was released on March 31.

"The national language is Hausa and the working languages are English and French," the document partly reads.

The language change followed a national meeting held in February.

During that event, the military government received more support, and the junta leader, General Abdourahamane Tiani, was approved to stay in power for five more years.

Since taking over in a coup in July 2023, which removed the country's civilian president, Mohamed Bazoum, the junta has been cutting off ties with France.

These actions include removing



French troops from the country, ending diplomatic relations, and changing the names of roads and buildings that used to carry French names.

With close to 26 million people who understand and speak Hausa in Niger, only about three million people (13 per cent), can speak French.

Zarma-Songhay, Fula, Kanuri, Gourmanche, and Arabi were listed in the new charter "as the spoken languages of Niger."

Meanwhile, Niger had approached Nigeria to bail it out of a severe fuel scarcity crisis that has almost brought the country to a standstill.

It was gathered that Niger had

quietly sent a delegation to Abuja, appealing for an emergency fuel supply.

According to reports, Niger has been grappling with a crippling fuel shortage for weeks, leading to long queues at petrol stations, skyrocketing black-market prices, and widespread economic disruption.

A manager of a petrol station on the capital's outskirts, Mohammed said, "Our tanks have been dry for three days. No one can say when we'll be resupplied."

"You see that taxi over there? The driver went around town and finally ran out of fuel here," the manager, who did not want to give his full name told AFP.

Nigeria's remittance inflows rise to \$20.93bn in 2024, CBN reports surplus of \$6.83bn

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced a significant increase in personal remittance inflows, which rose to \$20.93 billion in 2024, reflecting an 8.9 per cent year-on-year growth.

This is part of the country's broader financial performance, as the CBN also reported a balance of payments surplus of \$6.83 billion for the 2024 financial year.

In a statement released on Wednesday, April 9, the CBN attributed the improvement to a combination of macroeconomic reforms, stronger trade performance, and renewed investor confidence.

The statement, signed by Mrs. Hakama Sidi-Ali, the CBN's Acting Director of Corporate Communications, highlighted the resilience of remittance inflows throughout the year, noting a 43.5 per cent increase in inflows via International Money Transfer Operators (IMTOs), which surged to \$4.73 billion from \$3.30 billion in 2023.

The growth in personal remittances was accompanied by a rise in official development assistance, which grew by 6.2 per cent to \$3.37 billion.

The CBN highlighted that the performance of the current and capital accounts, which posted a combined surplus of \$17.22 billion, was driven by a goods trade surplus of \$13.17 billion.



Notably, Nigeria's non-oil exports saw a robust increase of 24.6 per cent, reaching \$7.46 billion, while gas exports jumped by 48.3 per cent to \$8.66 billion. In contrast, the country's petroleum imports fell by 23.2 per cent to \$14.06 billion, and non-oil imports dropped by 12.6 per cent to \$25.74 billion.

On the financial account, Nigeria saw a net acquisition of financial assets amounting to \$12.12 billion. The CBN reported a remarkable growth in portfolio investment inflows, which more than doubled, rising by 106.5 per cent to \$13.35 billion. Meanwhile, resident foreign currency holdings grew by \$5.41 billion.

However, foreign direct investment (FDI) saw a decline of 42.3 per cent, dropping to \$1.08 billion.

The country's external reserves also showed a positive trend, growing by \$6 billion to \$40.19 billion by the end of 2024. This increase further strengthened Nigeria's foreign

exchange buffer.

In terms of data quality, the CBN reported significant improvements in reporting accuracy. Net errors and omissions dropped by 79.5 per cent, from \$24.90 billion in 2023 to negative \$5.10 billion in 2024. The bank attributed this decline to improved data capture and greater transparency.

In response to the figures, CBN Governor Olayemi Cardoso emphasised the significance of the country's improved external finances.

"The positive turnaround in our external finances is evidence of effective policy implementation and our unwavering commitment to macroeconomic stability. This surplus marks an important step forward for Nigeria's economy, benefiting investors, businesses, and everyday Nigerians alike," Cardoso said.

APC lacks collective leadership, says Bode George

By Friday Omosola

Bode George, a former Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has criticised the All Progressives Congress (APC).

He accused the party of being devoid of genuine political organisation and dominated by a single individual's influence.

Speaking during an interview on Channels Television's Morning Brief on Wednesday, the elder statesman questioned the sustainability of the ruling party's model, especially with growing talks around the possible emergence of a third force like the Social Democratic Party (SDP) ahead of the 2027 elections.

"In truth, the APC doesn't operate as a structured political party—it revolves entirely around one person," he said.

He stressed that any credible alternative must place national interest above personal ambition.

"The people must come first. Leadership should focus on managing national resources for the public good. Self-serving ambition



is a misguided and harmful approach," he said.

He called for a shift towards inclusive governance, grounded in public participation.

"Leadership must reflect the will and aspirations of the people. Power should flow from them, not be imposed upon them."

Turning to the PDP, George addressed the party's internal discord, expressing hope that matters would be resolved during the next National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting.

"What began as a minor issue has now spread like a malignant disease," he noted, attributing the crisis to unchecked ambition within the party ranks.

"This didn't just happen overnight—it stems from a failure to put the collective ahead of the individual."

Nonetheless, he maintained confidence in the PDP's mechanisms for conflict resolution.

"We have established processes. Once the NEC convenes, we'll argue, debate, and eventually reach a consensus. We must return to the principles laid down by the party's founding fathers."

He warned that ongoing instability if left unaddressed, could prove fatal to the PDP's future.

"Those who can't abide by the process are free to find their place elsewhere. But if we don't resolve this at the next NEC meeting, then we might as well call it quits."

Only president, vice-president deserve immunity – Gbenga Daniel

By Dave Oludare Oso

Senator representing Ogun East, Gbenga Daniel, has said only the president and the vice-president should be allowed to have absolute immunity so that they can concentrate on good governance.

Daniel, a former governor of Ogun State spoke during an appearance on Political Paradigm, a Channels Television programme aired on Tuesday.

The two-term governor advocated a constitutional amendment that would restrict immunity from prosecution strictly to the offices of the President and Vice-President.

While the current provision in Section 308 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution shields the president, vice-president, governors, and deputy governors from prosecution while in office, Daniel argued that this broad immunity has been misused, particularly at the state level.

Daniel reflected on the recent reversal by the House of Representatives on a bill aimed at withdrawing immunity from vice-presidents, governors, and their deputies.

He said, "Immunity has the good sides, but to a large extent, I think some of our elected governors appear to have abused it, in terms of some of



the things they do.

"Some of them virtually have turned the state into their personal fiefdom, and they think the property of the state belongs to them, and they can do it whichever way they want, without even recourse to the House of Assembly."

He stressed that in order to protect the sanctity and stability of the country's top leadership, full immunity should apply only to the President and Vice-President.

The former governor stressed, "I think that only the president and the vice-president should be allowed to have absolute immunity so that they can concentrate, and so that no one will be embarrassing the symbol of the country."

The senator, however, emphasised the need for a more refined approach to the immunity of governors and their deputies, suggesting that it should not be a blanket shield against all forms of accountability.

He added, "The governors and their deputies should have their immunity clarified. Probably, yes, they have immunity from what you call criminal prosecution, but there are other things that are not criminal.

"There is no reason why they should not be held accountable while in office."

Daniel's remarks contribute to the ongoing national conversation about reforming constitutional provisions to strengthen transparency and accountability across all levels of government.

Sanwo-Olu: Lagos to strengthen tech, cybersecurity ties with Sweden

By Friday Omosola

Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Sweden in the areas of information technology, cybersecurity, and infrastructure development for the benefit of Lagos residents.

The governor made this known yesterday during a courtesy visit by Her Royal Highness, Crown Princess Alice Désirée of Sweden and Duchess of Västergötland, to the Lagos House, Marina.

Governor Sanwo-Olu was represented at the event by his deputy, Obafemi Hamzat.

Highlighting Lagos as the heartbeat of Nigeria and a significant player on the African continent, the governor expressed optimism that the Crown Princess's engagement with the Lagos business community would foster mutually beneficial development opportunities.

"We need a lot of technology. We are laying about 6,800 kilometres of fibre optic cables across the state. We've completed the first phase—around 3,500 kilometres—to enhance bandwidth penetration.

"Excitingly, many companies are investing—Google is building a data centre, and three others are under construction in Lagos," he said.

He added that with a population of 22



million—double that of Sweden—Lagos offers vast opportunities for collaboration in IT and infrastructure.

However, Désirée commended the Lagos State Government for its role as Nigeria's economic powerhouse, noting the impressive scale of business activity in the state.

"We are excited to be here and to explore the growth potential of the Swedish-Nigerian partnership. There are vast opportunities for further cooperation, and we're pleased to support Swedish companies already operating in Nigeria," she said.

Additionally, Sweden's Minister of Infrastructure and Housing, Andreas Carlson, noted that the Crown Princess's visit was aimed at strengthening ties in green economy initiatives, digital innovation, and knowledge exchange.

He announced that Lagos would host Sweden's first-ever trade office in Nigeria, officially inaugurated later that day by the Crown Princess.

"Her Royal Highness the Crown Princess Victoria is here to emphasise the importance of deepening the strong relationship between Sweden and Nigeria.

"We see immense potential for collaboration in digital and green transitions. Lagos is clearly the ideal starting point," Carlson said.

Désirée and her delegation arrived in Lagos yesterday morning and were received at the Presidential Wing of the Murtala Mohammed International Airport by the Secretary to the State Government, Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin, Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs Bolaji Dada, and other top officials.

The Crown Princess was warmly welcomed with cultural performances by the Lagos State Cultural Troupe, and joined in the festivities, dancing to the delight of spectators.

It costs \$21,000 to train a doctor in Nigeria, says FG

By **Dave Oludare Oso**

Nigeria's Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Pate, has revealed that training a single doctor in the country costs over \$21,000.

He made this statement at the seventh annual capacity-building workshop of the Association of Medical Councils of Africa in Abuja, highlighting the significant financial loss incurred when healthcare professionals migrate without structured reintegration or ethical recruitment frameworks.

According to Pate, more than 16,000 Nigerian doctors have left the country in the last five to seven years, with nurses and midwives also emigrating in significant numbers. This mass migration has resulted in a dangerously low doctor-to-population ratio of 3.9 per 10,000 people, far below the global minimum.

"We are confronted with a paradox. It represents a fiscal loss, a systemic weakening, and a moral imperative. The cost of training a single doctor exceeds \$21,000. The country loses millions of dollars in human capital investment when professionals migrate without structured reintegration or ethical recruitment frameworks," he said.



To address these challenges, the minister unveiled Nigeria's National Policy on Health Workforce Migration, focusing on retaining and motivating health workers, promoting ethical recruitment practices, and expanding training capacity.

The policy also seeks to address geographical disparities in workforce distribution, with over 40 per cent of Nigerian doctors concentrated in Lagos and Abuja.

"We cannot force relocation, but we can incentivize it with housing, digital connectivity, and workplace dignity," Minister Pate emphasized. The policy aims to engage the diaspora, with Nigerian professionals abroad contributing to the country's health sector.

He cited examples of returned doctors establishing advanced medical facilities in cities like

Lagos and Maiduguri.

Pate called for a continental compact on workforce mobility, anchored on shared standards, ethical recruitment, investment in training, and strategic negotiation with destination countries. He said, "This is our moment, not for nostalgia, but for bold reform. From brain drain to brain gain, from loss to system strengthening, Africa must lead."

In his remarks, Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Hon. Dr Tanko Sununu, stressed the importance of self-reliance and sustainability in healthcare services, encouraging the development of a sustainable model that wouldn't depend heavily on external support.

Nigeria witnesses decline in Lassa fever as 14 new cases, 3 deaths reported

By Helen Okechukwu

Nigeria is recording a positive turn in its battle against Lassa Fever, with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) confirming only 14 new cases and three deaths in the 13 epidemiological week of 2025.

This marks a significant decline compared to previous weeks, where 41 infections were reported.

The latest cases were reported from five states—Ondo, Bauchi, Taraba, Ebonyi, and Nasarawa.

The affected individuals range in age from age 1 to 90, with the majority falling between age 21 and 30. Meanwhile, no new infections were reported among healthcare workers during the week.

In 2025, a total of 122 deaths have been recorded, translating to a Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 18.5 percent—slightly lower than the 18.7 percent CFR recorded at the same time in 2024

According to the agency, at least one confirmed case has been



reported in 18 states across 93 Local Government Areas this year.

Three states—Ondo (30%), Bauchi (25%), and Edo (16%)—account for 71 percent of all confirmed cases for week 13.

The NCDC also noted a male-to-female ratio of 1:0.8 among confirmed cases, and highlighted a drop in the number of suspected cases compared to last year.

To bolster the national response, the NCDC said the multi-partner, multi-sectoral Incident Management System (IMS) remains fully activated in coordinating activities to ensure

safety at all levels.

Despite the progress, several challenges persist, including late presentation of cases, poor health-seeking behavior due to the high cost of treatment, poor sanitation, and low awareness in high-risk communities.

To prevent spread and outbreak, the authorities charge Nigerians to adopt preventive measures such as proper hygiene, rodent control, and early reporting of symptoms.

According to the agency, early medical intervention remains key to reducing fatalities and containing the outbreak.

NACA calls for collaborative effort to tackle HIV prevalence rate in Taraba

By Helen Okechukwu

With a 2.9% HIV prevalence rate recorded in Taraba State, the Director General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), Dr. Temitope Ilori, has called for collaborative efforts from stakeholders, health workers, the public, and the state government.

Expressing concerns over the rate, Ilori, on Tuesday, while launching the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) and Paediatric HIV Acceleration Committee (PPAC), called for urgent action, targeting the 2030 deadline.

“We must work together to reduce this prevalence rate to zero,” she said. “The fight against HIV requires consistent, collective action.”

The director dispelled claims surrounding the shortage of antiretroviral drugs due to the withdrawal of USAID support, revealing that the medication is free and accessible nationwide.

While hailing the state government’s commitment to



the health sector, she expressed satisfaction with the administration’s prioritization of healthcare, followed by education.

Describing the inauguration as a historic moment, the Director General of the Taraba State AIDS Control Agency (TACA), Dr. Bako Ali Istifanus, emphasized the need to protect women and children, who are majorly affected by HIV/AIDS.

“This committee marks a significant milestone in our collective effort to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and ensure that no child is born with the virus in Taraba,” he said.

Despite the progress, Istifanus underscored challenges, especially in PMTCT and paediatric HIV services, describing PPAC as a strategic initiative to improve healthcare delivery within the state.

While commending the health agency for their efforts towards curtailing the spread, Istifanus reaffirmed the state’s commitment to the established committee, vowing support.

He reaffirmed Taraba State’s full commitment to the committee’s success, promising to support and protect mothers from dying from AIDS-related causes and to ensure children are born HIV-negative.

FG unveils SINCCAR to boost cancer research

By Helen Okechukwu

The Federal Government (FG) has launched a nationwide programme to train 120 young researchers under the SINCCAR programme aimed at closing critical gaps in cancer research and advanced evidence-based solutions in Nigeria.

The Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Cancer Research and Implementation (SINCCAR) project is designed to enhance the capacity of researchers and improve cancer outcomes through policy reforms, sustainable institutional resources, and collaborative networks.

At the opening ceremony held in Abuja on Wednesday, Prof. Usman Aliyu, Director-General of the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT), emphasised that the project was focused on empowering the next generation of cancer researchers.

Aliyu highlighted Nigeria's shortage of oncology researchers and the country's minimal contribution to global clinical trials, which are essential for developing new cancer therapies.

He said "The interventions range from prevention and the design of effective screening tools to identifying young Nigerians with early-stage cancer. Research is also critical in developing diagnostic tools and novel therapies tailored to the country's most common cancers."



The initiative will focus heavily on genomic studies, which are crucial for creating targeted treatments and precision medicine tailored to the types of cancer prevalent in Nigeria.

He explained that genomics would play an important role in improving both prevention and treatment strategies for Nigerian patients.

Dr. Nwamaka Lasebikan, Director of Research and Innovation, stressed the importance of turning research into actionable public health interventions.

"We want it to address local problems, contribute to the country's social enterprise, and unlock the value chain within the research ecosystem," she said.

Lasebikan revealed that 120 participants, selected from over 500 applicants, would receive immersive training in essential research methodologies and priority areas such

as genomics, health outcomes research, and implementation science.

The participants come from a diverse range of fields, including basic science research, medicine, laboratory science, and computational sciences, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach to tackling cancer.

After the training, the participants will develop research proposals aimed at addressing national cancer-related issues.

Successful candidates will also be involved in a year-long mentorship programme to implement their research and build on the knowledge gained.

Nana Lawal, a participant who is also an oncology nurse educator at the National Hospital, Abuja, expressed her excitement, aiming to improve nursing care through preventive research and symptom management.

Davido vows to stop cheating, says 'I have 5 kids with 4 women'

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Grammy-nominated singer, David Adeleke, popularly known as Davido has vowed to remain faithful to his wife, saying, there is nothing as good as having a peaceful home.

The artiste, who goes with the monicker 'Omo Baba Olowo' spoke about his experiences with women in a recent interview on the Breakfast Club.

Confessing that he has been "dealt" with by women, the 'Fall' crooner stressed that no matter how much money one makes, there is nothing as good as having a peaceful home.

The 32-year-old singer said he would "not cheat again," adding that he already has "five kids from four women."

He said, "I told them women have dealt with me in my career. I have been at the highest of highs, and I can tell you, the best time is when there are no problems at home. I do not care how much money someone has, I have made it all.

"But there is nothing like sleeping and waking up without



your heart racing to check your phone. That is real peace. I do not want any problems anymore. I am not cheating again. I have five kids from four women."

Making an analogy with his polygamous uncles, Davido lamented that despite all the money they have, they still have problems.

"In the eastern part of Nigeria, like among the Igbo and in the Niger Delta, I have seen situations where people have multiple wives. My uncle, who is a governor has two wives.

"I have another uncle whose wives all live with him, and they even play together and he is a Christian. Still, he has problems

despite all the money. I am not cheating again. I am not marrying another wife."

Davido proposed to Chioma in 2019, but their relationship faced challenges in 2021 amid cheating allegations against the singer.

The couple, however, tied the knot traditionally in June 2024.

In 2023, Davido was accused by three different women of impregnating them.

The singer's five children include twins with Chioma; Imade, who he had with Sophia Momodu; Hailey with Amanda, and Dawson with Larissa London.

Priscilla receives royal blessing from Ooni ahead of her traditional wedding

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

Nollywood actress Iyabo Ojo and her daughter, Priscilla have paid a visit to the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, to personally invite him to Priscilla's upcoming wedding to her fiancé, Juma Jux.

The visit, which was shared on Iyabo Ojo's Instagram page, shows Priscilla respectfully kneeling as she presents the monarch with an invitation.

The Ooni's endorsement of the wedding is seen as a significant blessing for the couple, with Iyabo Ojo expressing her gratitude and excitement.

She wrote,

"When the Revered Ooni of Ile Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja 11, @ooniadimulaife the Royal father of the day, lends his Royal Endorsement to your Wedding, know that your Marriage is truly Blessed! Long live our King ."

The couple's Yoruba traditional wedding is scheduled to take place on the 17th of this month, with preparations underway.

Priscilla and Juma Jux have been documenting their wedding preparations on social media,



describing themselves as "two hearts united as one soul," with a shared mission of "forever."

The royal visit and endorsement are seen as a positive sign for the couple's future together.

The couple previously tied the knot in an Islamic and civil wedding.

Reactions have trailed this visit, with many hailing Iyabo Ojo for being a supportive mother.

Fans react to Ooni of Ife's endorsement of Jp2025

@sheila-thompson wrote: "I wanna be this mother for my child, her mom is her biggest fan and supporter."

@debbytopaz wrote: "Thier union

will last forever inshallah Queen mother is just too extra Chioma is that big sis."

@africanflamingo wrote: "Happy married life to those desiring a life partner, May El Roi come through for you!"

@silverbirdcinemas wrote: "We sef don receive invite but we no wan loud am make una come watch LABAKE OLODODO & other beautiful movies this week oh!!! Abeg."

@facial_deluxe wrote: Have you seen the video (the one they were doing tiktok challenge) Priscilla called "baby"

So sweet, May God blessed their union."

Trump suddenly backs off major tariff plans, announces 90-day pause

By Dave Oludare Oso

President Donald Trump said Wednesday he was pausing higher targeted tariffs for 90 days for most countries, a stunning reversal in his trade war that has sent markets reeling.

In a post on X just before 1:30 p.m., Trump wrote that he came to the decision because more than 75 trading partners did not retaliate and have reached out to the U.S. to “discuss” some of the issues he had raised.

But the pause didn’t apply to China, which has retaliated — with 84% hikes. Trump instead raised duties for that country to 125%, effective immediately.

“Based on the lack of respect that China has shown to the World’s Markets, I am hereby raising the Tariff charged to China by the United States of America to 125%, effective immediately,” he wrote. “At some point, hopefully in the near future, China will realize that the days of ripping off the U.S.A., and other Countries, is no longer sustainable or acceptable.”

But the trade war isn’t exactly over, and the pause didn’t return the world back to the time before Trump touched off the global instability; a 10% across-the-board duty will remain in place — including for some products from Canada and Mexico.

It was not immediately clear which countries would be covered by the pause; the White House would not say. Earlier Wednesday the E.U. voted to impose fresh retaliatory duties, but those aren’t set to take effect until next week.

And separate tariffs on imported autos, steel and aluminum will remain in place, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent later said — while planned tariffs on items like lumber and pharmaceuticals are still on.

It’s not clear what prompted Trump to change his mind — he appeared to dig in just hours earlier, telling Americans “BE COOL” in a Truth Social post, and he suggested not that long ago the tariffs could be permanent.



“I did a 90 day pause for the people that didn’t retaliate, because I told them, ‘If you retaliate, we’re going to double it.’” Trump said Wednesday. “And that’s what I did with China, because they did retaliate. So we’ll see how it all works out. I think it’s going to work out amazing.”

But markets have been in stunning turmoil — major stock indexes shed trillions of dollars in value, while alarming signals from the bond market set Wall Street on edge.

When a false-at-the-time headline suggesting Trump would take a 90-day pause shot around the internet on Monday, markets briefly surged. And a growing chorus of business leaders and Trump’s allies have come out publicly against the tariffs, including Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

Markets soared on the surprising news Wednesday, with the S&P 500 climbing more than 9%, the tech-heavy Nasdaq closed up more than 12%, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average ended nearly 3,000 points higher. Among the big gainers: Tesla stock was up 22%.

Borrowing costs, which had surged early Wednesday as the tariffs took effect, also eased slightly, though not substantially as some investors may fear a lingering

fallout from the tariffs episode.

Borrowing costs — which had surged early Wednesday as the tariffs took effect — also eased slightly, though not substantially as some investors may fear a lingering fallout.

Trump has been talking about tariffs as the solution for U.S. economic problems since before he became president; he branded April 2 — when he unveiled the plan — “liberation day,” saying it would end decades of the U.S. being “looted, pillaged, raped and plundered” by other countries.

The global markets recoiled, and last week \$6.6 trillion alone was wiped out. Yet Trump and his allies had until Wednesday doubled down, arguing tariffs were necessary to return manufacturing to the U.S. and fill the nation’s coffers with trillions of dollars in revenue that could be used to pay down debt or offset tax cuts.

It’s not clear how the White House expects the policies to fuel big gains now. With the lower 10% tariff rate left in place there will be less incentive for companies to relocate production to the U.S. and less revenue being generated.

Russian drone attacks on 3 Ukrainian cities leave dozens wounded

By Fatimah Idera

Russian forces staged huge drone attacks on eastern Ukraine late on Tuesday, triggering fires and injuring at least 22 people, regional officials said.

The attack on the Ukrainian cities of Dnipro, Kharkiv, and Kramatorsk late on April 8 wounded more than two dozen people and damaged multiple residential buildings.

In the Donetsk region, the focal point of the 1,000-km (600-mile) front line in the more than three-year-old war, a residential area came under attack in the city of Kramatorsk and local officials said three people, including a child, were injured.

The Ukrainian air force said that it shot down 32 out of 55 drones launched by Russia overnight, and that another eight did not reach their targets, most likely because of electronic countermeasures.

Serhiy Lysak, governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, said that “Dnipro suffered the most” from the overnight Russian attack, which wounded at least 15 people, leaving almost all of them in serious condition and half of the injured were in hospital.

“People have cuts, shrapnel wounds, bruises, and head injuries. Some needed help due to severe stress,” Lysak said.

Lysak added that the attack damaged 15 private houses and nearly two dozen cars. According to him, several business facilities, administrative



buildings, and the city’s

Ukraine’s second largest city, Kharkiv, and the eastern city of Kramatorsk were also hit by the Russian drones.

Local authorities said more than 20 explosions were heard in Kharkiv, injuring at least two people.

Five others were injured in Kramatorsk, in the Donetsk region.

“An 11-year-old girl, her 34-year-old mother and a 55-year-old grandmother were wounded in the attack,” said the head of the Donetsk Regional Military Administration, Vadym Filashkin.

The Ukrainian Air Force said that it shot down 32 out of 55 drones launched by Russia overnight, with another eight “not reaching their targets.”

Russian Airports Closed

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a post on the Telegram that its air defense units destroyed 158 drones overnight, including 29 over the southern Rostov region.

Russia’s aviation authority, Rosaviatsia, said that several airports in Russia’s south were closed early on April 9 to ensure air safety.

On the ground, according to the latest report by the US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Russian forces are currently pursuing three different objectives in their attempt to capture the crucial city of Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region.

“The situation immediately south and southwest of Pokrovsk remains extremely dynamic amid intensified Russian offensive operations,” the report said.

With Russian forces spending the last 13 months trying to capture the city, the ISW further underlined that Ukrainian drone operations and localized counterattacks are continuing to complicate Moscow’s advances in the area.

According to him, Russia is preparing a new offensive, particularly in the Sumy and Kharkiv regions.

TRADE WAR: China hits back, raises tariff on US goods to 84%

By Dave Oludare Oso

China has said it will raise its tariff on US goods to 84%, retaliating to the hefty new tariffs on its imports that kicked in on Wednesday in the renewed trade war.

The move came after the Trump administration followed through on a threat to add a 50% tariff on Chinese goods, in addition to 34% reciprocal tariffs, raising the overall tariff rate on Chinese goods to 104%.

The steep new duties on China and 184 other US trading partners took effect at 12:01 a.m. ET on Wednesday.

Beijing's move marks further deterioration in US-China trade relations, after China vowed on Tuesday to "fight to the end" in the face of what it described as "blackmail" by the US.

A sour mood has once again gripped Wall Street after Tuesday's optimism faded, with the S&P 500 (^GSPC) on the verge of a bear market Wednesday.

Trump on Tuesday claimed that China, as well as other countries, are keen to negotiate. Those talks have reportedly begun with Japan and South Korea. But he



has remained defiant as members of his own party and Wall Street billionaires start to push back.

Trump's expanded tariffs come on top of the blanket 10% tariff on all goods coming into the US, which took effect April 5.

Various countries are still deciding how to respond (or not), and companies have begun adjusting to the new reality — largely by raising prices.

Some countries responded with new tariffs of their own: Canada has announced new duties on certain vehicles imported from the US, while the EU is preparing an initial set of countermeasures.

The tariff rate applied to the 27-nation bloc of EU countries under the policy is 20%, and

about 70% of the EU's exports to the US are covered.

China has pulled the trigger on its retaliation to Trump's trade war, announcing it will raise its tariff on imports from the US to 84%.

The move turns up the heat in the already escalating trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

The US on Wednesday implemented a stack of like-for-like and additional tariffs on Chinese goods that brought the total levies to 104%.

China's countermeasures will kick in on Thursday, the country's finance ministry announced, per media reports.

US revokes 40 international students visas

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



The United States has revoked 40 international student visas in the country over sundry offences, reports say.

According to experts and advocates, the Donald Trump administration's decision was taken over trifle issues like traffic offences, leaving people with the belief that it is part of a bigger plan by the US government to control immigration and how universities handle it.

Expectedly, the development has left many students as shocked and scared as they could, hurling them into a state of uncertainty and despair.

According to The Guardian UK, Madison Lisa, one of the affected students from the University of Wisconsin, said she was just a month away from graduation when she got an unexpected email.

"ISS is writing to inform you that your SEVIS record was terminated," the email said. SEVIS stands for the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, which is managed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Lisa said at first, she thought the email was fake but after checking online and reading student forums, she found out she was now "out of status," just like many other international students.

The reason? A minor traffic issue from the year before. She got two tickets and was fingerprinted when she went to court.

When a student's SEVIS record is terminated, they usually have only 15 days to leave the U.S. If they stay longer, they risk being deported or banned from coming back.

The Guardian UK reports that other

students in schools like Stanford, UCLA, UC San Diego, Ohio State, and the University of Oregon are also affected.

Many of them have similar stories. They got small traffic tickets, went to court, were fingerprinted, and had no idea their visa status would be affected.

Students made a spreadsheet online and shared stories from over 50 universities.

Even though many of the students did not commit any crimes—some charges were even dropped—they were still labeled as having "criminal records" in their SEVIS termination letters.

Most of the terminations happened on April 4, shortly after U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio made a public statement on March 27.

Trump issues order to block state climate change policies

By **Fatimah Idera**



U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order that aims to block the enforcement of state laws passed to reduce the use of fossil fuels and combat climate change.

The move is the latest in a string of efforts by Trump's administration to pump up domestic energy output and push back against largely Democratic-led policies to curb carbon emissions. It came just hours after Trump, a Republican, issued orders to increase coal production.

The order directed the U.S. attorney general to identify state laws that address climate change, ESG initiatives, environmental justice and carbon emissions, and to take action to block them.

"Many States have enacted, or are in the process of enacting, burdensome

and ideologically motivated 'climate change' or energy policies that threaten American energy dominance and our economic and national security," the order said.

Trump specifically cited laws in New York and Vermont that fined fossil fuel companies for their contribution to climate change, California's cap-and-trade policy, and lawsuits by states that have sought to hold energy companies accountable for their role in global warming.

The two Democratic governors who co-chair the U.S. Climate Alliance – Kathy Hochul of New York and Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico – said states could not be stripped of their authority and would not be deterred by the executive order.

"We will keep advancing solutions to the climate crisis that safeguard

Americans' fundamental right to clean air and water, create good-paying jobs, grow the clean energy economy, and make our future healthier and safer," they said in a joint statement.

The Alliance is a group of 24 governors dedicated to climate action.

The American Petroleum Institute, an oil and gas trade group, praised the order.

"We welcome President Trump's action to hold states like New York and California accountable for pursuing unconstitutional efforts that illegally penalize U.S. oil and natural gas producers for delivering the energy American consumers rely on every day," API Senior Vice President Ryan Meyers said in a statement

Indonesia offers shelter to Palestinian wounded and orphaned in Gaza

By Fatimah Idera



Indonesia President Prabowo Subianto said on Wednesday that his country is ready to temporarily shelter Palestinians hit by the war in Gaza, estimating there could be 1,000 in the first wave.

Prabowo said he has instructed his foreign minister to quickly discuss with the Palestinian side and other parties about how to evacuate impacted Palestinians to Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country.

“We are ready to evacuate the wounded, the traumatised, the orphans,” Prabowo said, adding the victims would be in Indonesia temporarily until they have fully recovered from their injuries and the situation in Gaza was safe for their

return.

Jakarta has been advocating a two-state solution and has sent humanitarian aid.

Recall that Israel’s war in Gaza was triggered in October 2023, when Hamas fighters killed 1,200 people in southern Israel, and took some 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Since then, more than 50,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel’s military campaign, Palestinian authorities have said.

Indonesia wants to increase its role in seeking a resolution to the conflict, Prabowo said, adding this plan is not easy.

“Indonesia’s commitment in supporting the safety of Palestinians and their independence has pushed our government to act more actively,” Prabowo said, as he was about to embark on an overseas trip which includes Turkey, Egypt and Qatar.

Prabowo’s proposal comes two months after Indonesia’s foreign ministry said it “strongly rejects any attempt to forcibly displaced Palestinians” as US President Donald Trump suggested permanently moving Palestinians out of Gaza.

Indonesia was willing to send peacekeeping troops to Gaza if needed, Prabowo said last year before he officially assumed the presidency

Trump administration mulls attacking Mexican cartels with drones

By Dave Oludare Oso

The Trump administration is considering launching drone strikes on drug cartels in Mexico as part of an ambitious effort to combat criminal gangs trafficking narcotics across the southern border, according to six current and former U.S. military, law enforcement and intelligence officials with knowledge of the matter.

Discussions among White House, Defence Department and intelligence officials, which are still at an early stage, have included possible drone strikes against cartel figures and their logistical networks in Mexico with the cooperation of Mexico's government, the sources said.

Still, the administration has made no final decision and reached no definitive agreement about countering the cartels. And unilateral covert action, without Mexico's consent, has not been ruled out and could be an option of last resort, the sources said.

It is unclear whether American officials have floated the possibility of drone strikes to the Mexican government.

If Mexico and the United States proceed together with drone strikes or other action, it would not be the first time they have launched a joint effort to take on the cartels, nor would it be the first time that American military and intelligence worked in concert with Mexico's law enforcement and army.

But what the Trump administration is contemplating could be unprecedented both in the number of U.S. personnel involved and in the use of American unmanned aircraft to bomb cartel personnel and assets.

Administration officials and nominees have repeatedly refused to rule out drone strikes in public statements.

The U.S. military and the CIA have dramatically stepped up surveillance flights over Mexico to collect intelligence in advance of what is likely to be a major campaign against the cartels, which the



White House has labeled a threat to national security, the six sources said.

The flights are being carried out with Mexico's approval, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has said.

"They're looking to build a target deck," one of the former officials, who is familiar with the administration's plans, said of the surveillance flights. The potential target list most likely could include cartel operatives, vehicles, warehouses and other parts of the gangs' network, the sources said.

The White House National Security Council did not respond to a request for comment.

Sheinbaum addresses question of U.S. drone strikes at a news conference.

"We reject any form of intervention or interference. That's been very clear, Mexico coordinates and collaborates, but does not subordinate itself. There is no interference, nor will there be," she said, according to a translation provided by the Mexican Embassy to the United States.

"While this idea hasn't been formally proposed, we've made it clear that it wouldn't address the root of the issue. What truly works is ongoing attention to

root causes, arrests driven by intelligence and investigation, coordination, and zero tolerance for impunity. We categorically reject any such actions, and we don't believe they will happen. There is a strong, ongoing dialogue on security and many other matters."

The administration has already been shifting military, intelligence and law enforcement resources toward combating the cartels, current and former officials said.

President Donald Trump's nominee for ambassador to Mexico, Ronald Johnson, refused to rule out unilateral U.S. military action inside Mexico.

Defence Secretary, Pete Hegseth reportedly warned Mexican officials in private about possible unilateral U.S. action. Both have said variations of "all cards are on the table" when it comes to tackling the cartels.

According to a memoir by Mark Esper, who was defense secretary during Trump's first term, Trump asked him in 2020 whether the military could fire missiles into Mexico to destroy drug labs and then deny the United States had conducted the strike. Trump and his aides have rejected Esper's account as false.

Matic: Onana “one of Man Utd’s worst ever goalkeepers”

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Tensions have flared ahead of Manchester United’s Europa League clash with Lyon, as former Red Devils midfielder Nemanja Matic branded current United goalkeeper Andre Onana as “one of the worst in the club’s history.”

Matic, now at French side Lyon, responded strongly to comments Onana made earlier in the week, where the Cameroon international suggested United were “way better” than Lyon. The 36-year-old Serbian, who made 128 appearances for United between 2017 and 2022, didn’t hold back.

“If you are one of the worst goalkeepers in Man United’s history, you need to take care what you’re talking about,” Matic said at a press conference on Wednesday. “If Van der Sar, Schmeichel or De Gea said that,

I’d question myself. But you need cover to say something like that.”

Onana, signed for £47.2m from Inter Milan in 2023, hit back on social media, denying any disrespect toward Lyon. “We know it’ll be a tough game. I would never be disrespectful to another club,” he said. “At least I’ve lifted trophies with the greatest club in the world. Some can’t say the same.”

United boss Ruben Amorim has since downplayed the war of words. “It’s just a misunderstanding,” he said. “If you see the full quote from Andre, he speaks highly of Lyon. It’s about showing belief in the team.”

Onana, who replaced David de Gea at Old Trafford, has kept 23 clean sheets in 93 appearances and won the FA Cup last season. However, his performances have drawn criticism, and Matic’s remarks have intensified

ongoing debates over whether the Cameroonian has lived up to expectations.

By contrast, United legends like Peter Schmeichel, Edwin van der Sar, and De Gea — all serial trophy winners — have left massive gloves to fill. Schmeichel won five league titles and a Champions League, Van der Sar lifted four Premier League trophies, and De Gea kept 190 clean sheets in 545 games.

While Amorim insists the spat won’t impact Thursday’s quarter-final first leg in Lyon, the pre-match handshake between Onana and Matic could be one of the more awkward moments of the evening.

Kick-off at the Groupama Stadium is scheduled for 20:00 BST.

Aiyedatiwa dissolves ODSFA, appoints caretaker committee for Sunshine Stars

By Friday Omosola



Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, has approved the immediate dissolution of the management board of the Ondo State Football Agency (ODSFA).

He relieved the Chairman, Dele Ologun, and other board members of their duties, and directed them to hand over all government property in their possession to the agency's accounting officer.

Aiyedatiwa in a statement by

his Chief Press Secretary, Ebenezer Adeniyen said the move was to reposition Sunshine Stars Football Club.

The governor also approved the appointment of a caretaker committee to oversee the club's affairs, with Tokunbo Akinyelure serving as Team Manager and Welfare Officer, alongside other members.

Morris Kwaghzever (Special Duties), Abdul Wahab (Kits Manager), Elias Michael (Masseur), Adetula Olumide

(Physiotherapist), Ayodeji Abe (Camp Commandant), Ademola Ayodeji (Assistant Kits Manager 1), Oria Sola (Assistant Kits Manager 2), Imisi Ayodele (Curator), and Isaac Afolabi (Media Officer).

The caretaker team is to report directly to the office of the governor, while Aiyedatiwa charged them to work diligently towards turning around the fortunes of Sunshine Stars Football Club.

Barcelona dismantle Dortmund in Champions League clash

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Robert Lewandowski hit a brace to help Barcelona dismantle Borussia Dortmund by 4 goals to nil in a one-sided Champions League quarter-final first leg on Wednesday.

The five-time winners took the lead against last year's runners-up through red-hot winger Raphinha before Lewandowski reached 40 goals for the season with his double.

Teenager Lamine Yamal was an unstoppable force throughout and deftly prodded home Barcelona's fourth as Dortmund collapsed.

Barca, which last lifted the trophy in 2015, will visit Germany next Tuesday and aim to seal a final-four clash against Inter Milan or Bayern Munich.

"I think we played very well but we have one more game to go... we always want to play our football and we want to play it there and we will win," Lewandowski told Movistar.

"If you have 4-0 in the first half (of the tie), in the second half in Dortmund you have to play the same or better.

"In the end it's the Champions League, and we always want to play



at our level."

Flick selected his typical side, with only one decision to make — he opted for Fermin Lopez over Gavi in attacking midfield to support the dynamic forward trio.

La Liga leaders Barcelona seized control from the start, with Gregor Kobel saving well from Yamal and Lewandowski.

Spain starlet Yamal, 17, fired across the face of goal and then over as he ran riot, Dortmund unable to slow him down.

Barcelona took the lead after Karim Adeyemi needlessly gave away a free-kick in a dangerous area, pulling Jules Kounde back by his dreadlocks while trying to burst forward on the counter.

Lopez whipped it to the back post, with Inigo Martinez nodding the ball

towards Pau Cubarsi, who turned it towards goal.

The young defender's effort beat Kobel and was heading over the line before the tournament's top scorer Raphinha slid in to make sure, claiming his 12th goal.

The Brazilian winger faced a nervous wait while VAR worked to confirm his 25th-minute strike was onside.

Yamal and Raphinha zipped forward in search of a second but could not get the final ball right, before Serhou Guirassy spurned a huge chance for the visitors to level.

With Dortmund's first slick attacking move of the game, the forward, who has 10 goals in the competition, was played in but snatched badly at a bouncing ball with just Wojciech Szczesny to beat.