

Naira-for-Crude still in effect —FG

The Federal Government has said that its naira-for-crude initiative with local refineries is not a temporary measure, but a “key policy directive designed to support sustainable local refining.”

The government also said that the initiative is still in effect and will continue immediately, overruling the decision of the NNPC under its former boss Mele Kyari which tenured the

initiative.

The Minister of Finance Wale Edun at a meeting with representatives of the Dangote Refinery said that the naira-for-crude is still in effect.

In a post on its official X handle on Wednesday, the Ministry of Finance said the Technical Sub-Committee on the Crude and Refined Product Sales in Naira initiative met on Tuesday to review progress and address on-

going implementation matters.

The meeting was attended by Edun, the Chairman of the Implementation Committee; the Chairman of the Technical Sub-Committee and Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Zacch Adedeji; the Chief Financial Officer of NNPC, Dapo Segun; the Coordinator of NNPC Refineries; Management of NNPC Trading; representatives of Dangote Petroleum Refinery

and Petrochemicals.

Others at the meeting include senior officials from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), representative of Afreximbank, as well as the Secretary of the Committee, Hauwa Ibrahim.

“The stakeholders reaffirmed the government’s continued commitment to the full implementation of this strategic initiative, as directed by the Federal Executive Council (FEC).

“Thus, the Crude and Refined Product Sales in Naira initiative is not a temporary or time-bound intervention, but a key policy directive designed to support sustainable local refining, bolster energy security, and reduce reli-

ance on foreign exchange in the domestic petroleum market.

“As with any major policy shift, the Committee acknowledges that implementation challenges may arise from time to time. However, such issues are being actively addressed through coordinated efforts among all parties.

“The initiative remains in effect and will continue for as

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...that the people may know

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2027: Okpebholo launches Tinubu's re-election campaign in Edo

RICHARD EWEKA

The Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo said he has kick-started the campaign for the re-election of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu in 2027.

The Governor disclosed this when he received Hon. Kaycee Osamwonyi another member

of the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), who defected to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) in the State.

Osamwonyi, a member of the House Committee on Budget and Appropriation, represents Uhumwonde Constituency in the Assembly.

He was received into APC earlier by the party Chairman

in the state, Jarrett Tenebe, who presented him to Governor Okpebholo at Government House, Binn City.

The Governor commended Hon. Osamwonyi and his colleagues who decided to join the APC and assured them that his administration would create a conducive atmosphere for them to operate and collab-

orate to develop the State.

He noted that his administration has embarked on developmental strides to develop all sectors of the Edo economy, promising to make life better for Edo people.

“We congratulate you for returning home. Your coming is a plus for the party as we have five of you who have joined, and you

have made our party stronger.

“A lot of people from other political parties are ready to join our party, and soon there will be a carnival. I seek your help to drive development, and together, we will develop the state and make life better for our people.

“Uhumwonde Local Government is very special to me, and together we can develop the area and open it for growth and development.

“The next election, especially the 2027 presidential election,

we are ready in Edo State. We have kick-started our own campaigns for the President in 2027.

“We have to mobilize the youths in our State, and you are part of the youth. I promise you that you will enjoy our party as you have chosen to join us,” he said.

Tenebe, who presented Hon. Osamwonyi to the Governor noted that the APC is in full control of the State Assembly,

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GOVERNOR MONDAY OKPEPHOLO OF EDO STATE:

Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo (right) welcoming Honourary Kaycee Osamwonyi, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Edo State House of Assembly member who defected to All Progressives Party (APC) during his visit to Government House, Benin City.

Nigeria is collapsing, Obi laments

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the 2023 general election, Mr. Peter Obi, has expressed worry over the untold hardship being faced by Nigerians, noting that the country is on the verge of collapse.

He made the remarks while addressing party members during the ongoing National Executive Council meeting in Abuja on Wednesday.

“Do not fear anybody. Those who were afraid yesterday didn’t do any better.

“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 said.

He emphasised the need for unity and inclusion within the

party, saying that, “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.”

Looking ahead to future elections, Obi stated: “We want to go into the next election fully prepared, offering Nigerians the best and most competent candidates for the House of Representatives, the Senate, Governorships, and the Presidency.”

He also stressed the importance of party loyalty and competence among aspirants: “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.”

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FG knocks Ndume over 'lopsided appointment' in NNPC remarks

The Presidency has criticised Senator Ali Ndume over allegations of lopsided political appointments under President Bola Tinubu's administration.

Ndume had accused the Tinubu administration of violating the federal character principle in its appointments, warning that the trend could have far-reaching consequences if not corrected.

However, a statement by the special adviser on information and strategy to the president, Bayo Onanuga, accused the Borno South lawmaker of hypocrisy and misinformation.

Presidency dismissed Ndume's claims made during an interview as "selective percep-

tion" and "headline-chasing" noting that key appointments under the current administration include individuals from the senator's own region.

"Senator Ali Ndume's latest outburst about so-called 'lopsided appointments' by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu reeks of hypocrisy and selective perception."

Onanuga pointed out that two of Ndume's kinsmen were recently appointed to top positions in NNPC Limited by President Tinubu, including the Chairman who hails from Ndume's senatorial district.

"If Tinubu and his surrogates' choices are so 'tribal,' how did two of Ndume's kinsmen clinch NNPC's top roles?"

the statement queried.

Describing Ndume as a politician "allergic to facts and addicted to theatrics," the Presidency said his tendency to issue half-baked criticisms only to be contradicted by reality is proof that he is more focused on stirring public sentiment than offering constructive suggestions.

"His habit of firing half-baked criticisms—only to be contradicted by facts—proves

he's more interested in headline-chasing, rabble-rousing, stoking divisive narratives than offering constructive criticism."

Onanuga reiterated Tinubu's commitment to inclusive governance, stating that appointments are being made based on merit, national spread, and integrity—not ethnic sentiments.

"President Tinubu is deeply committed to fostering a government that embraces all

Nigerians, irrespective of their ethnic or regional affiliations. He aims to harness our nation's diverse strengths to achieve a common goal: building a prosperous Nigeria."

"The President's appointments are—and will continue to be—based on merit, integrity, geographical spread and a demonstrable capacity to serve the Nigerian people, not Ndume's cherry-picked tribal arithmetic."

The Presidency concluded by urging Senator Ndume to raise the level of national conversation, adding that misinformation and divisive rhetoric do not serve the country's interest.

"We urge Ndume to elevate public discourse and avoid misinformation and baseless criticism. This is a disservice to the nation and the behaviour least expected from a Nigerian Senator."

Edo HoS receives Leadership award

VIOLET OBAMWONYI

The Edo State Head of Service (HOS), Dr. Anthony Okungbowa, has been honoured with an award of excellence by the Student Union Government (SUG) of the University of Benin (UNIBEN), in recognition of his exemplary leadership and contributions to the transformation of the state's civil and public service.

The award presentation was part of engagements by the SUG during its courtesy visit to Dr Okungbowa in Benin City.

The SUG delegation was led by its Vice President, Comrade Omotuemen Osalumenese Favour.

Appreciating the award, Dr. Okungbowa advised young leaders to embody the change they wish to see in the nation, emphasizing the importance of initiating transformation at their current level of leadership.

He remarked, "Those of you who would be leaders of the future are already leaders today. If you do not begin to bring in the changes now, you cannot implement them in the larger society."

Dr. Okungbowa encouraged the students to remain optimistic about Nigeria's future, urging them not to succumb to despair or fear of the unknown; particularly as they are near the climax of their first-degree academic journey.

While stressing the need for students to commit their efforts to nation-building and personal development, the HOS advised them to take advantage of digital learning platforms and to pursue certifications in areas such as e-governance and cybersecurity to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving public service landscape.

Dr. Okungbowa urged the students to uphold integrity and dedication in their pursuits, reminding them that a functional system ultimately benefits them and that it is their responsibility to contribute to its success.

Comrade Osalumenese expressed gratitude to the HOS for his warm reception and inspirational messages, noting that the award was a testament to his dynamic, understanding of leadership and tireless efforts in driving positive reforms within the Edo State's Civil Service.



COURTESY VISIT:

Edo State Head of Service, Dr Anthony Okungbowa, receiving a certificate of award from the Vice President, Student Union Government, University of Benin, Comrade Omotuemen Osalumenese Favour, during a courtesy visit to Okungbowa in Government House, Benin City on Wednesday.

Nigeria signals economic growth, records \$6.83b payments balance of payment surplus in 2024 —CBN

The Nigerian economy shows signs of growth, as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced a Balance of Payments (BOP) surplus of \$6.83 billion for the 2024 financial year.

The development marks a decisive turnaround from deficits of \$3.34 billion in 2023 and \$3.32 billion in 2022.

A statement released by the apex bank on Wednesday said the improvement reflects the impact of wide-ranging macroeconomic reforms, stronger trade performance, and renewed investor confidence in Nigeria's economy.

The current and capital account recorded a surplus of \$17.22 billion in 2024, underpinned by a goods trade surplus of \$13.17 billion. Petroleum imports declined by 23.2% to \$14.06 billion, while non-oil imports fell by 12.6% to \$25.74 billion.

On the export side, gas exports rose by 48.3% to \$8.66 billion, and non-oil exports increased by 24.6% to \$7.46 billion.

Remittance inflows remained resilient, with personal remittances rising by 8.9% to \$20.93 billion. International Money Transfer Operator (IMTO) inflows surged by 43.5% to \$4.73 billion, up from

\$3.30 billion in 2023, reflecting stronger engagement from the Nigerian diaspora.

Official development assistance also rose by 6.2% to \$3.37 billion.

Nigeria recorded a net acquisition of financial assets totalling \$12.12 billion. Portfolio investment inflows, more than doubled, increasing by 106.5% to \$13.35 billion, while resident foreign currency holdings grew by \$5.41 billion, indicating stronger confidence in domestic economic stability.

Although foreign direct investment fell by 42.3% to \$1.08 billion, the overall financial account posted notable gains.

The country's external reserves increased by \$6.0 billion to \$40.19 billion by year-end 2024, bolstering its external buffer.

Notably, net errors and omissions narrowed significantly by 79.5% to negative \$5.10 billion in 2024, down from \$24.90 billion in 2023, reflecting substantial improvements in data availability and capture.

This represents a major advance in data accuracy, transparency, and overall reporting integrity.

The 2024 BOP surplus highlights the effectiveness of Nigeria's ongoing reform agenda.

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long as it aligns with the public interest and supports national economic objectives," the statement read.

As part of moves to reduce the strain on the US dollars and guarantee price stability of petroleum products, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in July 2024 directed the NNPC to sell crude oil to Dangote Refinery and other local refineries in naira and not in United States' greenback.

However, in March 2025, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) said its Naira-denominated crude sales agreement with the Dangote Refinery was structured for six months, with March 2025 as the expiration date.

The Dangote Refinery was commissioned in May 2023.

Subsequently, the \$20bn Dangote Refinery temporarily halted the sale of petroleum products in Naira.

"This decision is necessary to avoid a mismatch between our sales proceeds and our crude oil purchase obligations, which are

currently denominated in US dollars," the company had said.

Immediately, the pump price of petrol jumped from around ₦860 to about ₦1,000, making consumers pay at least ₦70 more than what it used to cost them to buy a litre of the premium commodity days earlier.

The refinery, however, said it would resume the sale of its product to the local market in Naira as soon as it received crude cargoes from the NNPC in Naira.

Days later, President Bola Tinubu fired Kyari and the entire NNPC Board. In their stead, the president appointed a new 11-man board with Bashir Ojulari as the Group chief executive officer and Ahmadu Kida as non-executive chairman.

The resumption of Naira-denominated crude sales, experts believe, would reduce the strain on the US dollar and guarantee the price stability of petroleum products.

Nigerians are expected to experience some relief from high, dollar-denominated imported fuel with the resumption of the naira-for-crude initiative.

FUOYE clears VC of sexual harassment allegations

The Governing Council of Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, has exonerated the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Abayomi Fasina of the sexual harassment allegations levelled against him by a senior lecturer.

This was contained in a statement issued by the university Registrar and Secretary of the council, Mr Mufutau Ibrahim,

on Wednesday in Oye-Ekiti.

The council directed Mrs Folasade Adebayo, the accuser, to write a letter of apology to the council within seven days.

In February, the university council set up a committee to investigate the sexual harassment allegations levelled against the VC by Adebayo and which the Senior Staff Association of

Nigerian Universities, FUOYE chapter, constantly pushed for investigation.

"The council asked the vice chancellor to excuse himself from the meeting to ensure free and open deliberation on the findings of the committee set up to look into the case.

"The alleged audio recordings were listened to by all council

members with the assistance of a translator, and it was discussed exhaustively.

"Members held that there was no sexual harassment, which equally confirms the earlier investigation by the Nigerian police, where Adebayo made a statement that she was not sexually harassed," the council said.

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with the majority of the members in the house.

"Hon. Osamwonyi joined the party following the developmental strides your administration has achieved in the

few months you have led the State," he said.

Hon. Osamwonyi on his part, said his decision to join the party was a result of the disunity in his former party, the PDP, from the national to unit level, as well as the

achievements of Governor Okpebholo in a very short time in office.

"The division in my party, the PDP, made me join the APC. For me, it is homecoming as I was once in APC. Your developmental strides attract-

ed me back home as I want the best for my people.

"The several projects captured in the budget for Uhumwode people are impressive. I had no choice but to join the party for the development of my people," he said.

Police arrest Lagos urchin who assaulted female driver in viral video

The Lagos State Police Command has arrested a man named Friday Onu, after a video showing him attacking a female commercial driver, Yetunde Amole, on the Lekki-Epe Expressway went viral. Onu was reportedly trying to steal her car battery when the incident happened. This was disclosed in a statement by the command's spokesperson, CSP Benjamin Hundeyin, on Wednesday.

The incident took place on Monday, around the Oriental Hotel area.

Onu was caught trying to take Amole's car battery and when Amole stopped him, he then attacked her.

Hundeyin explained that Onu was quickly arrested by officers from the Maroko Division, but he later fell sick and had to be moved to Falomo Police Hospital.

His statement reads, "The Lagos State Police Command is

aware of a viral video circulating on social media, depicting the assault of one Yetunde Amole by a suspected thug near the Oriental Hotel area in Lagos.

The command condemns this act in the strongest terms and wishes to update the public on the actions already taken.

"The incident occurred on April 7, 2025, at about 2 p.m., when the suspect, identified as Friday Onu, was caught attempting to steal Amole's car

battery. Amole courageously intervened to prevent the theft, which resulted in the suspect assaulting her.

"Following a prompt response by officers of the Maroko Division, Friday Onu was arrested shortly after the incident and detained at the division. Preparations for his arraignment were underway when he suddenly took ill.

He was immediately transferred to Falomo Police Hospital, where he is currently re-

ceiving treatment under close supervision.

"The Lagos State Police Command assures the public that justice will be served. The suspect will be charged in a court of competent jurisdiction as soon as police medical professionals declare him fit to stand trial."

He added, "The command reiterates its commitment to

ensuring the safety and protection of all residents and urges the public to continue cooperating with law enforcement authorities.

"We also commend Ms. Amole for her bravery and assure her and all victims of crime that their cases will be thoroughly pursued to ensure justice is served in all cases."



MEETING BETWEEN LP & INEC:

R-L: Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti; Presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 General Elections, Mr Peter Obi; Chairman Labour Party Caretaker Committee, Sen. Nenadi Usman, and other LP leaders, during a meeting between the Party and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), when LP leaders visited INEC headquarters in Abuja on yesterday.

11 PDP govts challenge Fubara's suspension in S'Court

Eleven Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors have approached the Supreme Court challenging the powers of the president to suspend the democratically elected Governor of Rivers State, Siminalayi Fubara.

The suit filed by the governors also challenged the declaration of Emergency rule in Rivers State.

While the media previously reported that the suit had been filed before the Supreme Court, the governors' suit was only filed before the apex court on Tuesday.

The plaintiffs in the suit are - Adamawa, Enugu, Osun, Oyo,

Bauchi, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Delta, Taraba, Zamfara, and Bayelsa states.

The plaintiffs, who filed the suit through their state Attorney Generals, predicated the summons on eight grounds. They urged the apex court to determine if the president has the power to suspend a democratically elected structure of a state.

The plaintiffs also asked the court to determine if the way and manner President Bola Tinubu pronounced the state of emergency declaration in Rivers State is not in contravention of the 1999 constitution.

They further 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 own 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?"

Court adjourns hearing on Delta's missing corpse to April 17

Delta State High Court sitting in the Isiokolo Judicial Division has adjourned hearing till April 17, 2025, in a case of alleged mysterious disappearance of the corpse of a 78-year-old man, Joseph Ighorhiohwunu.

The suit, filed as a fundamental human rights application under Suit No. HCI/FR/32/2024 was brought before the court and filed in person by one of the children of the deceased, Ighorhiohwunu Aghogho, a human rights activist, who claimed to be acting on behalf of the deceased and in the public interest.

In the originating process, the applicant had claimed that "Jo-

seph Ighorhiohwunu died while receiving treatment at Group Christian Medical Centre, Effurun" without his knowledge and that he was only made aware of the deceased's death on November 21, 2024, the day he died.

The applicant further claimed that "the deceased was not diagnosed with a verifiable medical condition and was deposited at the Nigerian Navy Hospital, Effurun on November 21, 2024."

The applicant accused several members of the deceased's family - namely Mr. Michael Igho-Amaka, Mr. Onajite Ighorhiohwunu, Mr. Felix Ighorhiohwunu, Mrs. Ese Ighorhiohwunu, Mr. Duke Ighorhiohwunu and Mr. Sunday

Ighorhiohwunu - of colluding to unlawfully remove the corpse from the Nigerian Navy Hospital Effurun and allegedly using the family compound at No.127 Urhu-Egbe Street, Okpara-Inland as an illegal cemetery.

The applicant claims that the family has secretly made burial arrangements and constructed a tomb for the deceased at that location during the pendency of this case and police investigation.

The applicant urged the court to compel all eleven respondents to disclose the whereabouts of the missing corpse, alleging that the body may have been diverted for spiritual or ritual purposes.

At the resumed hearing

of the case on April 7, 2025, counsel for the applicant, Andrew Elekeokwuri, informed the court that the applicant had filed a "further and better affidavit" concerning the allegedly missing corpse of the deceased.

In response, the counsel for the 1st to 8th respondents, A.O. Aderere and the 11th respondent, His Greatness Agadaigbo, who were present in court, raised objections on the grounds that they had not been served with the said processes.

The trial Judge, Justice O. Aforkeya, consequently directed the court Bailiff to serve relevant court processes on the respective respondents' counsel present in court.

Amb. Ehimuan hails Okpebholo as visionary leader of integrity

ESE AMADASUN

A South Africa based Nigerian humanitarian and entertainment entrepreneur, Ambassador Frankie Ehimuan Aire, has commended the Governor of Edo State, His Senator Monday Okpebholo, describing him as a man of integrity, discipline, and forward-thinking leader.

Speaking to journalists at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, Ambassador Ehimuan offered his full support to the Governor following his recent triumph at the election petition tribunal.

He remarked that Governor Okpebholo exemplifies the kind of leadership Edo State has long awaited.

Fresh from attending the Poverty Eradication Conference in Manchester, United Kingdom where he represented the Edo State diaspora, Ehimuan explained that he typically avoids public interviews due to past misinterpretations.

However, he felt it necessary to voice his support on this occasion.

"I'm not one for media hype or empty praises that end in disappointment," Ehimuan said. "But Governor Okpebholo stands out. His actions are proving everything I've said about him in the past. The evidence is now plain for everyone to see."

Another PDP lawmaker defects to APC in Edo

IDAHOUSA MUSA

Less than 24 hours after assuming the position of the majority party in the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA), the All Progressives Congress (APC) has again received a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lawmaker Hon. KayCee Osamwonyi, into its fold.

Hom. Osamwonyi who represents Uhumwode Constituency in his address, stated that his defection was prompted by alleged irreconcilable differences within the PDP.

He said that he joined the ruling APC to collaborate with the state government in the development of the state.

Expressing his satisfaction at returning to the party, Osamwonyi noted that he ventured into politics to deliver the dividends of democracy to the people of

Ehimuan, founder of the Governor Monday Okpebholo Team in South Africa, used the analogies to describe the Governor, calling him "a Ferrari in performance, garri in accessibility, and a Thomas Sankara in leadership."

Reflecting on their shared roots, he added, "We both grew up in Udomi, Irrua. He was always honest, even as a child, he never stole from his mother's pot. That same discipline defines how he leads today."

The ambassador praised the Governor as a relentless worker and principled leader who is not swayed by wealth or political pressure.

He noted that Governor Okpebholo governs with quiet strength and a focus on tangible outcomes.

"He is the answer to our security challenges and a driver of Edo's development," Ehimuan asserted.

"I encourage every Edo citizen to look beyond politics and support him. Leaders like him are rare."

Ehimuan also pointed to the Governor's longstanding commitment to humanitarian work, saying his achievements in office would soon speak volumes.

"Check his history, he's always been for the people. If you care about good governance, you'll recognise and support what he's doing now, and what is still to come," he concluded.

Uhumwode Constituency.

With Governor Okpebholo's development blueprint, he said, his constituents would not be left out of all-round progress.

Receiving the new member, the Edo State APC Chairman, Jarrett Tenebe, described Osamwonyi's defection as a demonstration of his commitment to the development agenda championed by Governor Monday Okpebholo.

Tenebe reaffirmed the APC's dedication to supporting the Governor in the full implementation of his five-point agenda and campaign promises, while warmly welcoming the lawmaker into the APC fold.

He also praised Governor Okpebholo for what he termed "unprecedented development" within less than a year in office, a progress, he claimed, that has pushed opposition parties into political obscurity.