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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 VOL 04 NO. 091



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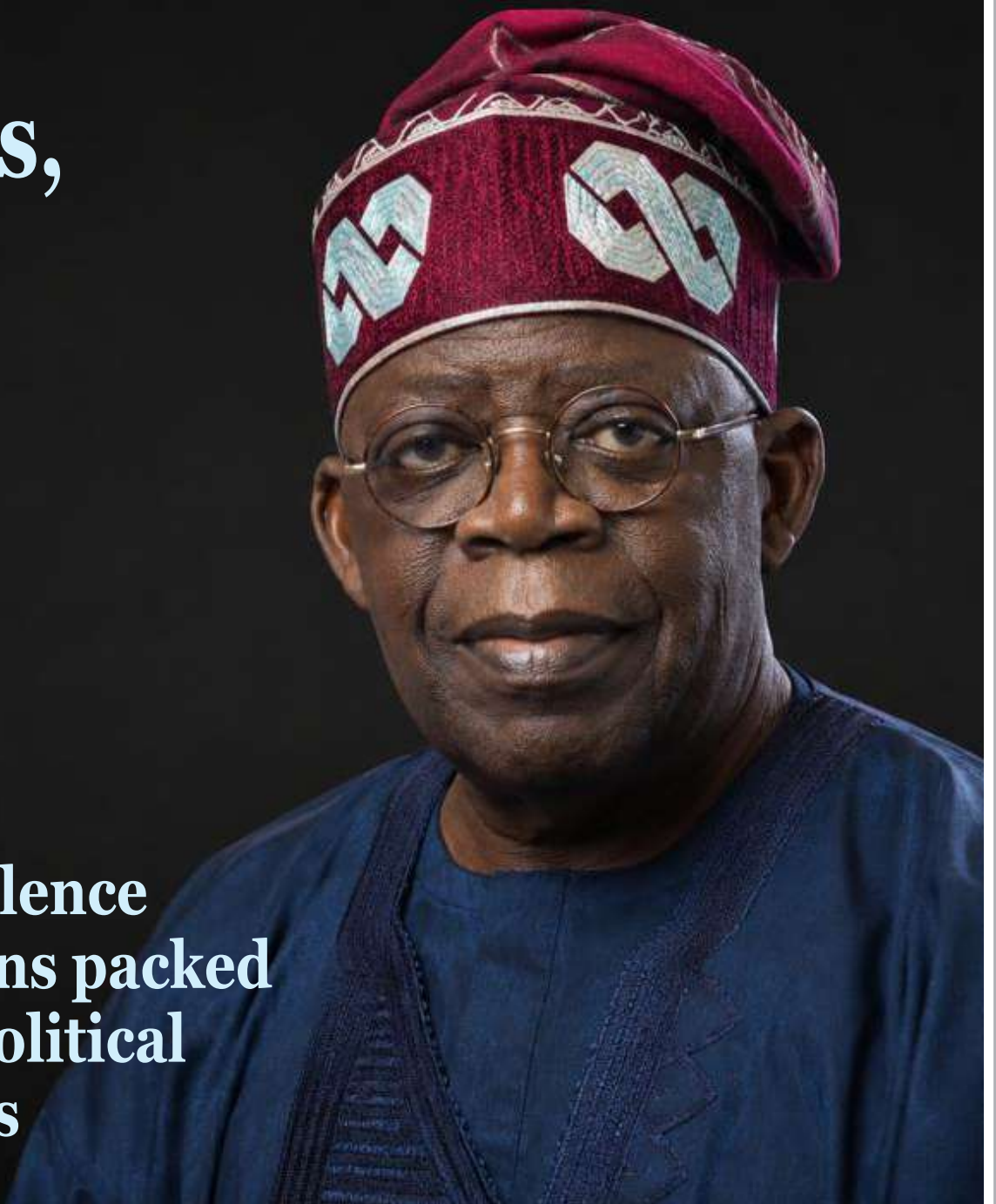
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Soft Sell

...with Uche Aghulor



Pastor Femi Lazarus has defended Apostle Arome Osayi following widespread criticism of the preacher over his recent comments about Nigeria's spiritual purpose.

The controversy followed a sermon in which Osayi argued that Nigerians should not compare the country's progress with nations such as China by focusing on industrial and technological achievements.

"The next time you hear somebody showing what the Chinese are doing, making engines and then showing what Nigerians are doing, we are praying. You don't understand that nations have callings," Osayi said.

"Our calling as a nation is revival. God wants to generate something from here that he will export to the

nations of the world," he added.

His comments have since attracted criticism from some Nigerians who questioned the emphasis on spiritual revival at a time when the country continues to face economic, technological and developmental challenges.

Responding to the backlash, Lazarus urged Christians to distinguish between disagreement and personal attacks, stressing that preachers can make mistakes and that context should be considered.

"We will not always agree. Preachers will not always be right. Context matters, and we must learn to extend grace always," Lazarus said.

He described Osayi as a valuable figure within the Christian community and condemned the mockery directed

at him over the sermon.

"Apostle Arome is ours. A gift to the body. That attack on him and mockery is unacceptable," he said.

Lazarus maintained that Christians should be able to disagree with one another without crossing ethical boundaries or resorting to personal attacks.

"We can disagree while maintaining ethical boundaries," he added.

He further suggested that the reaction to Osayi's comments reflects a wider problem within the Christian community, where disagreements can sometimes become personal.

"Unfortunately, this is what we get when we in the body ourselves tear each other down. Apostle Arome is a gift; we can disagree honourably," Lazarus concluded.



Nollywood actress Mary Remmy Njoku has called for accountability among public figures, arguing that people should take responsibility when their publicly expressed words or actions attract criticism or negative consequences.

In a post shared on her Instagram page, the actress said that when someone accurately recounts what another person said or did publicly, the focus should be on the original words or actions rather than the person telling the story.

“When someone gives an accurate account of what you said or did publicly, and it is causing you harm, brethren, the problem isn’t the storyteller. The problem is what you said or did,” she wrote.

Njoku urged people to own their words and actions, reflect on them and apologise where necessary rather than attacking

those who bring them to public attention.

“Take responsibility for it. Own your words. Own your actions. Reflect on them, apologise if necessary, explain yourself if there is context, and move on,” she said.

She acknowledged that nobody is perfect, stressing that everyone is human and capable of making mistakes.

“Nobody is perfect. We are all human,” she wrote.

The actress also addressed the biblical phrase, “Touch not my anointed”, arguing that it should not be used to silence legitimate criticism or accountability.

““Touch not my anointed’ applies when someone is falsely accusing you, lying against you, or deliberately trying to harm you,” she wrote.

“It doesn’t apply when you bring the consequences upon yourself through your own words or action.”

Njoku further warned against using scripture to shield people from legitimate scrutiny, suggesting that such an approach could ultimately work against them.

“Weaponising Scripture against the truth can backfire,” she said.

She also maintained that men of God are human and should not be considered above mistakes or accountability simply because of their religious positions.

After all, men of God are still human. They are not above making mistakes or being held accountable. They deserve grace and understanding, just like everyone else,” she wrote.

She concluded by encouraging people to show themselves and others grace while taking responsibility when necessary.

“So cut yourself some slack, take responsibility when necessary, and allow others the same grace you would want for yourself,” Njoku added.

Soft Sell



Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo has recalled his teenage years, claiming he became involved in spiritual activities and began “casting out demons” when he was about 17 years old.

Okpebholo made the remarks during a church service at The Votage Church, where he spoke about his childhood experiences, spiritual background and the challenges of insecurity and cultism.

Addressing young worshippers, the governor

said seeing them in church reminded him of his own experiences as a teenager.

“When I see young ones standing in the presence of God, I remember at 17, 18, I had also started casting out demons,” Okpebholo said.

He said his experiences growing up had given him a personal understanding of some of the challenges confronting young people, particularly insecurity and cult-related activities.

“Fighting insecurity, especially cultism, is not a new thing to me. It is something that

has been happening,” he added.

The governor also spoke about the influence of the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa on his spiritual background, highlighting the role the renowned Nigerian preacher played in shaping his early religious experiences.

Okpebholo’s remarks have drawn attention to his account of becoming involved in spiritual activities at a young age, as well as his claim that those experiences have informed his understanding of issues affecting young people in Edo State.



**“THEN THEY WILL
SHOUT RIGGING”**

— PATRICK DOYLE
**CRITICISES OPPOSITION
PARTIES OVER LACK
OF FOCUS**

Veteran Nollywood actor Patrick Doyle has criticised the nature of Nigeria’s current election cycle, arguing that political debates continue to focus more on personal attacks and tribal rivalry than substantive issues affecting the country.

In a Facebook post, Doyle said discussions around the economy and political system had received limited attention, while candidates and their supporters remained focused on matters he described as less relevant to governance.

“This election cycle is no different from previous elections in that substantive issues around the economy and polity hardly get a mention in the debates. Rather, the buzz revolves around personal insults and tribal rivalry,” he wrote.

Doyle said the ruling party had not made radical promises to voters, but had instead pointed to its claimed

macroeconomic gains as evidence of competence and promised to consolidate them while working towards translating them into improvements at the microeconomic level.

He described the approach as a way of avoiding unrealistic promises and expectations.

According to Doyle, opposition parties had also failed to adequately challenge the ruling party’s economic claims or present what he considered a detailed blueprint for Nigeria’s development in the short and long term.

“The opposition have neither forensically debunked the ruling party’s macroeconomic claims nor have they articulated their blueprint to chart a course for Nigeria in the near or long term future,” he wrote.

He further criticised what he described as the opposition’s focus on controversies and social media

activity, rather than presenting policy alternatives to voters.

“When they are not chasing after FBI documents they are engaged in social media content creation,” Doyle stated.

The actor also commented on campaign preparations, claiming that the ruling party appeared to be the only party that had inaugurated a campaign council at the time of his post.

He questioned what he described as a recurring pattern in Nigerian politics, where political actors raise allegations of electoral malpractice after an election despite what he sees as inadequate preparation and engagement with substantive campaign issues.

“Then after the elections are held and the ruling party holds sway, these same derelict political masquerades will have the temerity to shout rigging. I just wonder,” he concluded.

Echoes of Trauma: When You No Longer Know What You Feel

By Lillian Okenwa

Someone asks how your day went. You open your mouth and realise you have nothing to say.

It was not a terrible day. Nothing dramatic happened. You went where you needed to go, did your work, returned calls, answered messages and dealt with the ordinary demands of life. You may even have laughed at something.

Still, when the question comes, you cannot find the answer.

You are not sure whether you are tired or unhappy. You cannot tell if you are disappointed about something or simply in need of rest. There may be a heaviness you cannot explain, but even that feels too vague to call sadness.

So you say, "I'm fine."

And perhaps you are.

Perhaps you are also not.

There are seasons when life asks so much of us that there is little time left to notice what it is taking in return. Something happens and you deal with it. Another problem comes and you deal with that too. There is always another phone call, another bill, another responsibility, another person who needs something from you.

You keep going.

That ability can carry you through difficult periods. It helps you show up when circumstances are demanding more than you think you have to give.

But there can come a point when functioning becomes almost automatic. You know how to get through a day. You are less certain about how you actually feel about the life you are living.

This can be particularly difficult for people who have spent years being dependable. They are often the ones others call when something goes wrong. They remember birthdays, meet deadlines, organise things, listen to problems and find solutions.

They know how to handle things.

They may not know what to do when they are the ones who are struggling.

Sometimes they do not even recognise it.

They become impatient over small things. They lose interest in things they once enjoyed. They sit in front of the television without following the programme. They scroll through their phones without really reading anything. They sleep, but wake up feeling as though they have been awake all night.

Then someone asks what is wrong.

"I don't know."

It can be an honest answer.

We sometimes imagine that emotional pain announces itself clearly. We expect tears, anger, sleepless nights or some unmistakable sign that something is wrong. But a person can be hurting and still be remarkably functional.

There are people who have carried disappointment for so long that they no longer experience it as a particular event. It has become part of the background.

There are people who have swallowed anger for so long that they only recognise it when something insignificant suddenly pushes them over the edge.

There are people who call themselves independent when what they really know is how to cope without asking anyone for help.

And there are people who have become so practised at saying, "It doesn't matter," that they have forgotten to ask themselves whether it actually does.



Lilian Okenwa

Not every change in mood means there is a hidden wound behind it. Sometimes a person really is tired. Sometimes a difficult day is simply a difficult day.

But there are times when the inability to say what we feel is worth paying attention to.

Especially when it lasts.

Maybe you have noticed that you are no longer excited about things that once mattered to you. Maybe you find yourself avoiding people without knowing why. Maybe you have become unusually detached from situations that should ordinarily move you.

Or perhaps everything seems to irritate you.

Sometimes the feeling is there. We have simply given it the wrong name.

We call grief tiredness.

We call resentment stress.

We call loneliness busyness.

We call fear caution.

We call emotional distance maturity.

Finding the right name does not solve everything. But it can make the feeling less mysterious.

Perhaps that is one of the gentlest ways back to ourselves: paying attention without immediately trying to fix what we find.

At the end of the day, it might be enough to admit one thing.

That conversation bothered me.

I am more disappointed than I thought.

I miss the person I used to be around them.

I am angry about what happened.

I have been pretending this does not hurt.

I really do need help.

There is no requirement to produce a profound explanation afterwards.

Sometimes we simply need to admit what is true.

This can be difficult for people who have spent years making room for everybody else's feelings. They can recognise distress in a child's face, hear the strain in a friend's voice and know when someone needs encouragement. Yet when their own emotions arrive, they have no vocabulary for them.

They have spent so much time attending to the outside world that their inner world has become unfamiliar.

Reconnecting with it does not have to be dramatic. It may mean sitting quietly long enough to realise that the irritation you have been carrying all week is actually hurt. It may mean admitting that you are disappointed rather than insisting that you do not care.

It may mean telling someone you trust, "I don't quite know what is happening with me at the moment."

That sentence leaves room for honesty without demanding an immediate solution.

We are capable of holding more than one truth at a time.

You can love someone and still be angry with them.

You can be grateful for your life and still wish some parts of it were different.

You can forgive someone and still remember what happened.

You can be proud of how far you have come and still mourn what you lost along the way.

The goal is not to understand every emotion perfectly. It is simply worth noticing when you have become so disconnected from yourself that "I don't know" is the only answer you have left.

If that has happened, be patient with yourself.

You do not have to explain everything at once.

Start by listening.

There may be sadness underneath the tiredness. There may be anger beneath the indifference. There may be fear beneath the need to control everything. There may also be joy that you have been too distracted to notice.

Give yourself enough room to find out.

A life can look perfectly ordinary from the outside while the person living it is slowly losing touch with what is happening within.

Sometimes the way back is very simple.

You stop.

You pay attention.

And when someone asks, "How are you?" you give yourself permission to find a more honest answer than "I'm fine."

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Published by Cicero Communications Ltd., 1142 Cadastral Zone, Off Ajose Adeogun Street, Utako, Abuja.
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Tinubu Returns: 'I'm Back, Healthy, Sound, Ready to Kick, Ready for Work'

By Jeremy Fregene

President Bola Tinubu returned to Nigeria on Tuesday after a four-week working vacation in Europe, declaring himself healthy, energised and ready to resume full-scale official duties.

"I'm back—ready to kick, ready for work. There's nothing wrong. Rumours will always emanate from politics. But the fact is that I'm here. Healthy, sound and ready to go," the President said on his arrival.

Tinubu's presidential aircraft touched down at the Presidential Wing of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, at about 6:22 p.m., bringing an end to weeks of speculation in some political circles

over his extended stay abroad.

The President's upbeat remarks appeared aimed at putting the rumours firmly behind him as he prepares for a busy period of official and political engagements.

Tinubu, who departed Abuja on August 30, spent about a week in London before proceeding to Paris, France, where the Presidency said he combined his vacation with official and investment-related engagements.

While in Paris, the President met French President Emmanuel Macron and held discussions with prominent business leaders, including Vincent Bolloré, whose business interests span logistics, media and entertainment.

The Presidency said Tinubu

also continued to attend to affairs of state while abroad, including engagements connected with efforts to attract major investments into Nigeria.

Last week, the President witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Ogun State Government and global ports and logistics operator DP World for the development of the Gateway Deep Seaport and Blue Marine Special Economic Zone in Ogun Waterside.

The Presidency said the projects could attract about \$7 billion in investment, further strengthening the administration's drive to position Nigeria as a major destination for international capital.

Tinubu is expected to remain in Lagos for activities marking Nigeria's 66th Independence Anniversary on October 1.

According to his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, the President chose Lagos as his first destination on his return partly to honour the memory of Chief MKO Abiola, widely regarded as a symbol of Nigeria's democratic struggle.

On Independence Day, Tinubu is expected to attend the premiere of a film honouring Abiola, winner of the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election, at the Wole Soyinka National Theatre, Iganmu.

The President is also expected to hold a series of strategic meetings with political leaders and associates in Lagos before returning to Abuja.

Akpabio: No Election Worth the Life of Any Nigerian

■ Urges peaceful campaigns, warns against AI manipulation as Obidients query INEC's plans to deploy AI tools

By Franklin Adole

Senate President Godswill Akpabio on Tuesday challenged politicians seeking elective offices in 2027 to take their programmes directly to Nigerians, make their case peacefully, and allow the electorate to freely decide who should govern them.

Akpabio, who declared that no political ambition or electoral victory was worth the life of a Nigerian, warned candidates and their supporters against violence, intimidation, misinformation, and campaigns capable of setting Nigerians against one another along ethnic, religious, or regional lines.

Speaking in Abuja as the Senate resumed plenary after its legislative recess, the Senate President acknowledged that the country had effectively entered another campaign season, with political parties already fielding candidates and Nigerians preparing to assess competing visions for the country.

"Let every candidate make a case and answer hard questions. Let every citizen be free to decide thereafter," Akpabio said.

He stressed that the coming contest must remain a battle of ideas rather than one of violence, intimidation, and division.

"No electoral prize is worth a Nigerian life. No victory deserves celebration if it leaves the nation wounded," he declared.

Akpabio urged political actors to recognise that disagreement and competition were legitimate elements of democracy but must never be allowed to threaten national unity.

He also sounded the alarm over the growing danger of misinformation, particularly the potential deployment of Artificial Intelligence to manipulate campaign materials, fabricate information, or mislead voters ahead of the 2027 elections.

The Senate President said politicians could campaign vigorously and disagree strongly without turning communities, faiths, or regions against one another.

He similarly urged senators not to allow electioneering to distract them from their constitutional responsibilities, insisting that lawmakers were elected to serve until the expiration of their mandates.

Akpabio also turned attention to insecurity, directing a strong appeal to security agencies to intensify efforts to rescue Nigerians being held captive and strengthen protection for vulnerable communities.

He said the Senate would use

its legislative, appropriation, and oversight powers to support measures capable of improving security and protecting lives.

On the economy, Akpabio acknowledged the pressures confronting Nigerians, including living costs, unemployment, and difficulties faced by small businesses, saying improving citizens' livelihoods must remain a priority.

He also called for better preparation against flooding and more effective relief for affected communities.

As Nigeria prepares to mark its 66th Independence Anniversary, Akpabio urged Nigerians to preserve national unity and democratic values despite the intensity of the emerging political contest.

Meanwhile, controversy over the use of Artificial Intelligence in the 2027 elections deepened on Tuesday as the Obidient Movement raised objections to plans by the Independent National Electoral Commission to deploy AI tools in its operations.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Joash Amupitan, had disclosed that the commission was deploying AI tools to detect discrepancies and administrative errors in election results while also strengthening

its defences against AI-generated disinformation, including fake result sheets, cloned voices, fabricated videos, and forged documents.

But National Coordinator of the Obidient Movement, Yunusa Tanko, said INEC must provide greater clarity about how the technology would operate and what safeguards would prevent abuse.

The movement demanded publication of INEC's comprehensive 2027 election plan, independent scrutiny of its electoral technology, and transparent, verifiable transmission of results.

It argued that technological innovation alone could not guarantee credible elections without transparency, accountability and public confidence in the electoral process.

Tanko also cited an analysis of polling-unit result records by Mundx Analytics in raising questions about the technology used during the 2023 presidential election. The analytics firm's findings, however, did not by themselves establish who owned particular devices, whether metadata had been altered or whether votes were changed.

The movement urged INEC to subject its proposed AI systems to independent testing and public scrutiny before the 2027 elections.

NNPCL Posts N7.2tn Profit as Revenue Drops 24% to N34.5tn

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has announced its audited results for the year ended December 31, 2025, reporting a 24 per cent decline in revenue.

NNPCL spokesperson, Andy Odeh, disclosed the figures in the company's 2025 Audited Financial Statements on Tuesday.

The results followed the company's Annual General Meeting and second Earnings Call with financial and business analysts.

The feat underlines the company's growing earnings capacity and operational momentum while providing a stronger platform for growth.

Profit After Tax rose by 33 per cent to N7.2 trillion from N5.4 trillion in 2024, while revenue stood at N34.5 trillion. Revenue declined by 24 per cent, principally reflecting lower crude oil prices and reduced white product volumes following market deregulation in 2024.

Key features of the financial results showed that EBITDA rose by 22 per cent to N18.0 trillion; Earnings Per Share increased by 32 per cent to N35.9; operating cash flow grew by 16 per cent to N12.8 trillion; Return on Equity improved by 200 basis points to 16 per cent; and the declared dividend increased by 35 per cent to N5.8 trillion.

Also, crude oil and condensate production averaged 1.77 million barrels per day, its highest level in five years. Natural gas output averaged 7.2 billion standard cubic feet per day, a three-year high.

Oil and condensate production totalled 565.8 million barrels, up 5 per cent, with NNPC Limited's equity share increasing by 11 per cent to 223.7 million barrels. Natural gas production reached 2,606.2 billion standard cubic feet, up 9 per cent, while its equity share rose by 11 per cent to 1,154.9 billion standard cubic feet.

Progress across the portfolio included the completion of the AKK River Niger crossing and full completion of the 40-inch-by-623-kilometre Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano mainline. NNPC Limited commissioned the ANOH-OB3 Custody Transfer Metering Station and advanced the 300 MMscfd ANOH Gas Processing Plant to start-up readiness. It also acquired 500 CNG-powered trucks and adopted a Technical Equity Partnership Model for its refinery reform.

"Our 2025 performance shows what disciplined execution and a capable workforce can deliver," said Engr. Bashir Bayo Ojulari, Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC Limited. "We are strengthening earnings, growing production and investing in the people and assets that will sustain value for our shareholders, communities and the Nigerian people."



L-R: Director of Surveillance, National Pension Commission (PenCom), Dr. Muhammad Abdulrahman Saleem Saleem; Executive Chairman, Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), Dr. Zacch Adedeji; Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso; Registrar-General, Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Hussaini Ishaq Magaji (SAN); Executive Commissioner (Operations), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Mr. Bola Ajomale, and Managing Director/Chief Executive, Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Mr. Thompson Oludare Sunday, after a meeting of the Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee (FSRCC) at the CBN Head Office yesterday in Abuja.

Recapitalisation, FX Reforms Strengthening Nigeria's Financial System – CBN

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said its foreign exchange reforms and banking sector recapitalisation have strengthened Nigeria's financial system.

CBN Deputy Governor, Corporate Services, Dr Muhammad Abdullahi, said this at the 38th Seminar for Finance Correspondents and Business Editors Association of Nigeria (FICAN) in Abuja on Tuesday.

Abdullahi said the reforms were introduced against the backdrop of significant economic challenges inherited by the current CBN leadership in 2023.

According to him, the reforms sought to restore stability, rebuild confidence and refocus the apex bank on its core mandate.

He commended financial journalists for scrutinising the reforms and explaining their implications to businesses, households and the wider public.

He said the theme of the seminar, "Towards a Robust and Resilient Financial System in the Banking Sector Recapitalisation Era," was timely.

The deputy governor said that Nigeria's foreign exchange market was heavily administered and fragmented in 2023, with multiple windows operating alongside a parallel market.

Abdullahi said that the gap between official and parallel market exchange rates averaged more than 60 per cent in 2022.

He said that the gap exceeded 100 per cent at certain periods, making pricing and business planning difficult.

"The World Bank estimated that the implicit subsidy from the exchange-rate regime cost Nigeria about three per cent of GDP in 2022."

"Net usable foreign reserves stood at 859 million dollars in the second quarter of 2023 after accounting for identified short-term obligations."

"The outstanding foreign exchange forward claims exceeded seven billion dollars, further increasing uncertainty for businesses and investors," he said.

The deputy governor said that the ways and means financing reached N26.6 trillion by 2023, while legacy development finance exposures exceeded N10 trillion.

He said that the resulting liquidity pressures made inflation difficult to contain and weakened the transmission of monetary policy.

"The CBN consequently consolidated existing foreign exchange windows in June 2023 and removed restrictions affecting 43 categories of imports."

"The bank also reviewed outstanding foreign exchange claims and settled valid claims worth more than five billion dollars."

"The CBN subsequently strengthened foreign exchange trading and reporting rules to make the market more transparent," he said.

He said that the apex bank also introduced an electronic foreign exchange matching system for interbank transactions and established the Nigeria FX Code.

He said the code provided clearer standards of conduct and discouraged speculative behaviour in the foreign exchange market.

The deputy governor said monetary policy was also tightened while liquidity management was strengthened and development finance interventions gradually reduced.

Abdullahi said that the banking sector recapitalisation, announced in 2024, addressed the need for stronger banks capable of supporting economic growth.

According to him, the reforms have contributed to greater stability in the foreign exchange market.

He said that the average gap between official and parallel market rates fell from 68.2 per cent between January and May 2023 to less than two per cent currently.

The deputy governor said that the foreign exchange inflows had also become more diversified, with autonomous sources accounting for 7.3 billion dollars of the 10.8 billion dollars recorded in July.

Abdullahi said that the remittances through international money transfer operators reached 950 million dollars in July.

He said that gross external reserves rose to 55.6 billion dollars as of Sept. 11.

The deputy governor said that inflation, which peaked at 34.8 per cent in December 2024, moderated to 15.43 per cent in July 2026.

He said real GDP grew by 4.43 per cent in the second quarter of 2026, driven largely by non-oil activities.

He, however, said the improvements did not mean pressures on households and businesses had disappeared.

Abdullahi said that the CBN's priority was to make the gains more durable while deepening investment and foreign exchange sources.

On recapitalisation, he said 33 banks had met the revised minimum capital requirements and raised N4.65 trillion by the end of the two-year programme.

He said stronger bank capital was necessary

to support Nigeria's aspiration of building a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2030.

According to him, well-capitalised banks would be better positioned to finance infrastructure, industrial expansion and international trade.

He said that stronger capital buffers would also enable banks to absorb losses during economic stress and invest in innovation and digital transformation.

The deputy governor said that banks must strengthen corporate governance, internal controls and risk management alongside increased capital.

He urged boards and management teams to demonstrate integrity, accountability and transparency while protecting depositors, investors and other stakeholders.

He said that risk management should cover credit, market, liquidity and operational risks, as well as cybersecurity and third-party dependencies.

Abdullahi said that the CBN would continue to monitor governance, asset quality, liquidity and large exposures within the banking sector.

He said that banks would be expected to protect customer data, maintain reliable payment services and recover quickly from disruptions.

He said increased digital financial services required greater investment in cybersecurity, data protection, disaster recovery and business continuity.

The deputy governor said that the benefits of recapitalisation should extend beyond stronger balance sheets to improved services and productive lending.

He urged banks to provide appropriate financing for agriculture, manufacturing, services and infrastructure.

He also called for greater access to financial services for rural communities, women and young entrepreneurs.

According to him, consumer protection and financial inclusion remain integral to building a resilient financial system.

"Businesses should engage more closely with banks while improving transparency, governance and sustainability."

"The financial press has an important role in explaining reforms, identifying challenges and helping the public assess their impact."

"I commend financial correspondents and business editors for their contribution to public understanding of financial sector developments," he said.

Obi Vows to Unite Nigeria, Confront Insecurity Decisively; Rules Out Fake Election Promises

The Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has said that there will be no more fake promises to Nigerians ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Obi made this statement in a post on his verified X handle on Tuesday, a day after paying

a courtesy call on the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar.

Speaking on the Town Hall with the people of Sokoto, Obi said they had a very impressive engagement.

According to him, it was an opportunity to listen, answer questions, and speak honestly

about the Nigeria he and his running mate, Rabi'u Kwankwaso, want to build together.

He stated that the work ahead is enormous, but with courage, competence, compassion, character, and the collective determination of Nigerians, they could begin to change the story.

"Our message was equally

clear: there will be no fake promises. We must unite the country and confront insecurity decisively, while also addressing human insecurity. We must fight poverty, unemployment, hunger, and hopelessness if we are to reduce criminality and create a safer society.

"We discussed money politics

and its devastating consequences. When poverty becomes the instrument through which politicians buy votes, citizens are trapped in a cycle where the same system that impoverishes them is repeatedly rewarded. We must break this cycle of bad leadership driven by transactional politics," he wrote.



Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori (middle), congratulates the newly sworn-in member representing Udu Constituency in the Delta State House of Assembly, Hon. Ator Okolosi (right), during a courtesy visit to the Governor at Government House, Asaba, as the Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Emomotimi Guwor, looks on. PHOTO: Press Unit, DTSG

Delta By-election: Okolosi Sworn in as Udu Constituency Lawmaker

Mr Arthur Okolosi of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and winner of the Udu Constituency by-election held on Sept. 19, has been sworn in as a member of the Delta House of Assembly.

The Speaker of the assembly, Mr Dennis Guwor, administered the Oath of Allegiance and Oath of Membership to Okolosi during Tuesday's plenary in Asaba.

Okolosi won the by-election conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sept. 19.

The by-election followed the declaration of the constituency's seat vacant by the

assembly on June 30, after its former occupant, Mr Collins Egbetamah, defected from the APC to the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC).

Egbetamah had, in a letter dated June 19, notified the assembly of his resignation from the APC and subsequent decision to join the NDC.

The assembly, relying on relevant provisions of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, declared the seat vacant and directed its Clerk to notify INEC.

The assembly subsequently requested INEC to conduct a by-election to fill the vacant seat.

INEC later fixed Sept. 19 for the by-

election, alongside other legislative by-elections in the country.

Following the poll, Okolosi was declared the winner and subsequently inaugurated as the member representing Udu Constituency in the eighth Delta House of Assembly.

While welcoming the new lawmaker, Guwor congratulated Okolosi on his successful election and subsequent inauguration.

The speaker assured him of the cooperation of the assembly in the discharge of his legislative responsibilities.

The speaker urged Okolosi to work with his colleagues to advance legislation

and initiatives that would promote development and well-being in Udu Constituency.

Guwor also urged him to contribute meaningfully to the legislative activities of the assembly in the interest of his constituents.

Okolosi's inauguration brings the representation of Udu Constituency back into the assembly, following the vacancy created by the former lawmaker's defection.

He said the party remained focused on strengthening its grassroots structures and ensuring adequate preparation for the 2027 general elections.



Guinea-Bissau Stuns Super Eagles 3-0 in 2027 AFCON Qualifier

Guinea-Bissau on Tuesday handed Nigeria's Super Eagles a 3-0 defeat in their second Group L match of the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers in Bissau.

The defeat is coach Eric Chelle's first since taking charge of the Nigerian team.

Franculino Dju opened the scoring for Guinea-Bissau in the 15th minute, curling an effort into the far corner beyond Nigeria goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali.

Nigeria struggled to find a

response as the hosts maintained their advantage into the break.

Chelle made two changes at half-time, bringing on Moses Usor and Moses Simon for Frank Onyeka and Taiwo Awoniyi respectively as Nigeria looked to get back into the game.

But Guinea-Bissau doubled their lead through Mama Baldé in the 66th minute.

Nigeria had an opportunity to reduce the deficit late in the game, but Guinea-Bissau goalkeeper Djoco Embadje produced a close-range save

to deny George Ilenikhena in the 87th minute.

Álvaro Djaló then completed the victory for the hosts with a third goal in the fifth minute of stoppage time.

The result takes Guinea-Bissau to six points from two matches, having earlier beaten Tanzania 2-0, while Nigeria remain on three points after their 2-1 comeback win over Madagascar.

The defeat leaves the Super Eagles needing to recover quickly as the qualification campaign continues.

23 Schools, Clubs Set for Dolphin Swimming League Season 8

No fewer than 23 schools and swimming clubs are set to participate in Season 8 of the Dolphin Swimming League, beginning on Saturday.

Oluseyi Oyebode, Coordinator of the league, told journalists on Tuesday in Lagos that the competition would begin at Grange School, Ikeja.

Oyebode recalled that the league, Nigeria's premier inter-school swimming competition, started in 2018 with five schools.

He noted that it had since grown into a major platform for discovering and nurturing young swimming talents.

"We are excited that the league continues to grow. What we started with a few schools has now become

a major platform," he said.

The league has produced swimmers who later represented Nigeria at regional, continental and international competitions.

Oyebode listed the participating schools and clubs as Grange School, Lagos Preparatory Secondary School, Damswimm Club, Temple School and St. Saviour's School.

Others are Makosail Swimming Academy, Foreshore School Ikoyi, AQUA Sports World Academy, The Learning Place, Greensprings School Lagos and Lagoon School.

The list also includes Whitesands School, Boken Aquatics Club, Children International School, C-Tribe Club and Greenwood School Ikoyi.

Other participants are Swimfinity

Club Abuja, James Hope College, Meadow Hall, Corona Schools, Atlantic Hall, British International School, Riverbank School and Rugby School Nigeria.

Oyebode said the league was organised by Dynaspro Promotions Ltd. in collaboration with Advanta Interactive Ltd.

He said the competition was sanctioned by the Nigeria Aquatic Federation, Nigeria Olympic Committee and Lagos State Swimming Association.

According to him, Season 8 will feature a team from Abuja for the first time.

"This is another important step for us because we want the league to continue expanding beyond Lagos," he said.

Oyebode said 19 participants were from elementary schools, 18 were from secondary schools, while six were from clubs in Lagos and Abuja.

He said the organisers had separated the elementary division from the secondary category to ensure fair competition.

Oyebode said the opening weekend would be dedicated to elementary swimmers, who would compete in more than 30 events.

"We believe separating the elementary and secondary competitions will improve organisation and allow the swimmers to perform at their best," he said.

He said the organisers had introduced measures to improve technical standards and protect the integrity of the competition.

Recall that an orientation clinic was held at Rowe Park, Yaba, for coaches, officials and other stakeholders.



Bendel Insurance Deserve Loss to Abia Warriors – Boboye

The Technical Adviser of Bendel Insurance, Kennedy Boboye, has admitted that his side were punished for their poor first-half performance in the clash against Abia Warriors.

The Benin Arsenal suffered a 3-0 loss to Abia Warriors at the Umuahia Township Stadium on Sunday.

Chukwuemeka Obioma grabbed a brace for the Umuahia-based club, while Etta Ikoi added the third.

Boboye said his team failed to perform to expectations.

"We played badly in the first half and were punished," Boboye was quoted by Complete Sports.

"That's football for you. When you don't meet the standard, your opponent punishes you."

Bendel Insurance are winless in their three away fixtures in this campaign.



Eguavoen Invites 28 Super Falcons Players for Olympic Qualifier Against Comoros

Super Falcons interim head coach Augustine Eguavoen has selected 28 players for the team's 2028 Olympic Games qualifying fixtures against Comoros.

Captain Rasheedat Ajibade headlines the squad alongside regulars like Chiamaka Nnadozie, Asisat Oshoala, Oluwatosin Demehin, Jennifer Echegini and Michelle Alozie.

Versatile defender Ashleigh Plumtre is making a return to the team after missing the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations due to injury.

There are also youngsters like Christiana Uzoma, Farida Abdulwahab, Tumininu Adeshina, Favour Nkwocha, Shakirat Moshood, Oluwakemi Adegbuyi, and Janet Akekoromewei.

The players have been instructed to report at the AM2PM Hotel, Ijebu-Ode, on Saturday, 3rd October.

Both matches will be played at the Remo Stars Sports Stadium, Ikenne-Remo, as Comoros does not have a CAF-approved venue for international games.

The first leg is slated for Friday, 9 October, while the return is scheduled for Tuesday, 13 October.

FULL LIST:

Goalkeepers: Chiamaka Nnadozie (Brighton & Hove Albion, England); Comfort Erhabor (Portsmouth Ladies, England); Christiana Uzoma (Edo Queens).

Defenders: Michelle Alozie (Chicago Stars, USA); Shukurat Oladipo (AS Roma, Italy); Farida Abdulwahab (Nasarawa Amazons); Glory Ogbonna (Besiktas JK, Turkey); Oluwatosin Demehin (SL Benfica, Portugal); Glory Edet (Bayelsa Queens); Ashley Plumtre (Al-Ittihad Ladies, Saudi Arabia); Tumininu Adeshina (Edo Queens).

Midfielders: Christy Ucheibe (Al-Hilal, Saudi Arabia); Joy Igbokwe (Nasarawa Amazons); Favour Nkwocha (FC Robo Queens); Fatimoh Solaty (Nasarawa Amazons); Suliat Abideen (Fenerbahce Ladies, Turkey); Toni Payne (Inter Milan, Italy); Jennifer Echegini (Paris Saint-Germain, France).

Forwards: Rasheedat Ajibade (Paris Saint-Germain, France); Asisat Oshoala (Al-Hilal, Saudi Arabia); Flourish Sabastine (SL Benfica, Portugal); Shakirat Moshood (SCU Torrence, Portugal); Gift Monday (Washington Spirit, USA); Joy Omewa (BK Hacken, Sweden); Blessing Nkor (Dynamo Brest, Belarus); Oluwakemi Adegbuyi (Edo Queens); Janet Akekoromewei (SL Benfica, Portugal); Uchenna Kanu (Cruz Azul Femenil, Mexico).



Medvedev Downs Rublev to Seal Hangzhou Open Title

Former world No. 1 Daniil Medvedev sealed his third title of the year on Tuesday, downing Andrey Rublev 7-5, 6-4 in the Hangzhou Open final.

The all-Russian affair in eastern China was a battle of the two favourites, with top-seeded Medvedev – now the world No. 6 – edging out his compatriot.

The first set followed serve until Rublev slipped up at 5-5,

handing the initiative to his opponent.

The rattled world number 24 then lost serve again in the first game of the second set and was playing catch-up from then on.

The win rewarded a consistent performance from Medvedev, who savoured his first title since Dubai in February.

It was the 24th of his career on the tour.



● Medvedev

'I Still Feel as Fast as Anybody' - Alonso on Why He's Staying in F1

Fernando Alonso has committed to staying in Formula 1 with Aston Martin for at least one more year - and says the biggest single reason for his decision is because he "still feels fast".

The 45-year-old Spaniard has been weighing up his future all year. And while, like Max Verstappen, he has been outspoken in his criticism of the new hybrid engines introduced in 2026, his love for the sport has won out.

"First, this is my life," Alonso said in his only English-language interview about his decision, which was announced on Tuesday.

"I have this in my blood, and I keep racing, and I keep enjoying, and this is a way of life, in a way.

"Probably for me the biggest, or the clearest thing to keep racing is I still feel self-confidence that I have something extra.

"And when I think about stepping down or taking a different role in the team or not driving the car or whatever, in a way I feel it should not be like that because I still feel as fast as anybody. So let's have another go."

His own personal performance was only one factor at play in Alonso's decision, he explained in an extensive and open conversation.

Alonso also considered the new rules and the competitiveness of his team, which has been close to rock bottom for most of this season.



● Alonso



Man City Guilty of 'Sham' Contracts, Misleading Accounts as Rooney Says Utd Don't Deserve City Titles

The Premier League has confirmed that Manchester City have been found guilty of all charges related to breaches of Premier League financial rules between 2009-10 and 2017-18.

An independent Commission found that during that time period, the club arranged "sham contracts" with a number of its commercial partners, as well as "relying on sham agreements to artificially inflate the club's revenues and reduce its costs".

The statement also said that City were guilty of the majority of charges in relation to its failure to co-operate.

The Premier League published a redacted version of the commission's report, which said the charges "concerned well over 100 alleged individual breaches of Premier League Rules across four broad charge categories".

They also found the club guilty of all charges except one relating to non-cooperation with the Premier League

investigation.

The sham commercial deals were described as being part of a "disguised funding scheme" to the scale of £830.69m.

"The relevant sponsorship agreements were found to be shams, or at minimum did not reflect their economic substance," the commission said.

It also describes "deliberate or reckless conduct intended to circumvent the Premier League rules" and that the "sham" scheme devised by City allowed the club "to avoid recording what would otherwise have been the largest single-season loss in Premier League history in 2009-10".

Richard Masters, chief executive of the Premier League, said: "The core decision establishes the facts of what happened at Manchester City during this period. It details how the club systematically broke Premier League Rules for nearly a decade.

Meanwhile, a City statement said the club was "both disappointed and surprised by the opinion of the Premier League Commission".

"The Club is innocent of the accusations made by the Premier League and a comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence exists in support of all of its positions, relating to this case," the statement said.

In his reaction, former Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney said that his former club Manchester United do not deserve to be awarded Premier League titles if rivals Manchester City are stripped of them for breaching financial rules.

City have been found guilty of the majority of the 115 charges brought against them by the Premier League.

The financial charges relate to the period from 2009-10 to 2017-18, while they were also accused of a failure to co-operate with Premier League investigations between December 2018

Nottinghamshire Sign Sussex Wicketkeeper Simpson

Nottinghamshire have signed veteran wicketkeeper John Simpson from Sussex on a deal that will keep him at Trent Bridge beyond his 40th birthday.

Simpson joins the East Midlands side on a two-year deal encompassing both the County Championship and One-Day Cup formats.

The 38-year-old has amassed more than 14,000 runs across first-class and List A competitions during a 17-year professional career in which he spent more than a decade at Middlesex - where he won the 2016 Division One title - before he went on to join Sussex in 2024.

He captained Sussex to promotion from Division Two of the County Championship and helped them reach T20 Blast Finals Day in his first year with the club.

Simpson, who earned three One-Day International caps for England in 2021, scored 581 County Championship runs in the 2026 season - the first time he fell under the 1,000-run mark in his three years at Hove - as Sussex finished third in the table and just



● Simpson

ahead of Notts.

He described his years with Sussex as "some of the most enjoyable and rewarding of my career" but went on to say he was "excited" by the "new challenge" at Nottinghamshire.

His move to Trent Bridge brings an end to Kyle Verreynne's time with the East Midlands side, the South African having helped

the club to the 2025 County Championship title during his three-year tenure.

Verreynne's time at Trent Bridge was cut short in September when called up by Cricket South Africa, forcing Notts to pick up New Zealand's Mitchell Hay on a short-term deal to see out their ultimately failed attempt to retain the title.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu being welcomed by Speaker, House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; Deputy Senate President, Jubrin Barau; Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, and Lagos State Governor, Babatunde Fashola, after his working leave in France, at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport yesterday in Lagos.

Senate Extends 2025 Budget Implementation to 31st Dec 2026

The Senate has approved yet another extension of the implementation of the capital component of the 2025 budget from 30th September, 2026 to 31st December, 2026.

The Upper Chamber passed the bill, extending the 2025 budget capital component implementation to December after a clause-by-clause consideration.

The approval on Tuesday was a sequel to a bill for an Act to Amend the 2025 Appropriation Act to further extend the capital components of the Act from 30th September, 2026 to 31st December, 2026, by the Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, APC, Ekiti Central.

In his lead debate on the general principles of the bill, Bamidele, who noted that the rationale for the amendment was both compelling and

pragmatic, said that the execution of capital projects under the 2025 Appropriation Act had not reached optimal levels, despite the release of approximately the allocated funds to MDAs.

In his presentation, Bamidele said he is forwarding "A Bill for an Act to Amend the Appropriations (Repeal & Enactment) Act 2025 to Extend the Implementation of the Capital Aspect of the Appropriations (Repeal

& Enactment) Act 2025 from 30th September, 2026 to 31st December, 2026 and for other Related Matters, 2026 (SB. 1067).

"A Bill for an Act to Amend the Appropriations (Repeal & Enactment) Act 2025 to Extend the Implementation of the Capital Aspect of the Appropriations (Repeal & Enactment) Act 2025 from 30th September, 2026 to 31st December, 2026 (SB. 1067)."

Africa'll Be Mostly Self-sufficient in Fuel By 2030 — Dangote

President of the Dangote Group, Aliko Dangote, said on Tuesday that Africa would largely supply its own refined fuel needs by 2030 as he prepared to launch a \$16 billion refinery on the Kenyan coast.

Dangote will break ground on the East African oil refinery, with a planned capacity of 700,000 barrels per day, on Wednesday. It is expected to take around 30 months to build.

Speaking to reporters in Nairobi, Africa's richest man said he saw it as part of efforts

to stop the continent exporting raw materials and start selling finished products.

"By 2030, the majority of African countries will be self-sufficient. It does not matter where it is refined, but it should be on the African continent, on the soil of Africa," he said in response to a question from AFP on when Africa would no longer need to import fuel from elsewhere.

He dismissed concerns about the Kenyan project, which is being built at Lamu on the

picturesque Indian Ocean coast, and already faces a land rights court case and opposition from Greenpeace and others over its environmental impact.

"There's actually no problem with these sorts of cases," Dangote said. "There are people who don't want the development of Africa."

On where the new refinery will source the crude oil to refine, given that East African countries are only just starting to find and exploit significant reserves, Dangote said it would source

crude from multiple places, including the Middle East, the United States, and others — and would be ready as countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique start producing more.

"Are we going to wait until (Africa has) one quarter of the world's population before we start thinking of what to do? We have to start addressing that issue today," he said, highlighting US President Donald Trump's threats to stop exporting diesel.

He insisted the Kenyan refinery would be just a small part of meeting the demand that Africa will create as its economy grows.

"When you talk about 700,000 barrels per day, it's actually small. For the region, it's a big refinery, it's a big investment, but it is a start-up," he said.

"This refinery is not all we are going to do there. It's just the start... You will see the number of industries that will come around the refinery," Dangote added.

Dangote Refinery Hits 105% Capacity as Billionaire Dismisses Fears Over \$16bn Kenya Project

By Alhassan Kpaki

Dangote Petroleum Refinery has crossed a major production milestone in Nigeria, operating above its installed capacity in August, as the Dangote Group declared that a legal challenge over land would not derail its planned \$15 billion-\$16 billion refinery in Kenya.

Latest figures from the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) showed that the 700,000-barrel-per-day Lagos refinery recorded an average capacity utilisation of 105.21 per cent in August 2026.

The refinery processed an average of 736,470 barrels of crude oil daily during the month, up sharply from about 497,000 barrels per day in July, when utilisation stood at 71 per cent.

The surge came as domestic crude supply to the facility increased by 16.75 per cent to 683,000 barrels per day.

Production of petrol, diesel, and aviation fuel consequently averaged 84.43 million litres

daily, strengthening the refinery's position in Nigeria's domestic market while generating substantial volumes for export.

Petrol deliveries to the domestic market jumped 39 per cent month-on-month to 35.87 million litres per day, representing about 71 per cent of national domestic PMS supply.

At the same time, petrol imports declined by 26 per cent to 14.60 million litres daily.

The impact was even more pronounced in diesel, where the refinery supplied an average 12.37 million litres daily to the domestic market, while national imports plunged from 7.90 million litres per day in July to just 1.30 million litres in August.

Beyond supplying Nigeria, the refinery exported an average 9.73 million litres of petrol, 8.75 million litres of diesel, and 21.30 million litres of aviation fuel daily during the month.

The performance marks a dramatic shift for a country that for decades depended heavily on imported refined petroleum products despite being Africa's leading crude producer. Dangote Group said the figures underscored

the refinery's contribution to energy security, foreign exchange conservation, industrial development, and Nigeria's growing refined-products export capacity.

Buoyed by the Lagos refinery's performance, Africa's richest industrial group is now pushing ahead with another 700,000-barrel-per-day refinery in Lamu, Kenya, estimated to cost between \$15 billion and \$16 billion.

The company said the Kenyan project remains on course despite a land ownership dispute now before the Malindi Environment and Land Court.

The court ordered the status quo to be maintained on the disputed land pending an October 14 hearing following a suit filed by 133 Chandavai residents who claim the proposed refinery site forms part of their ancestral land.

Dangote Group said the order did not prevent the project's groundbreaking ceremony, although activities on the disputed land would have to comply with the court's directive while the case is pending.

Speaking at an investor forum in Nairobi, Dangote Group President Aliko Dangote maintained that the legal challenge would not derail the company's plans.

He said land disputes were not unusual in the development of large infrastructure projects across Africa and expressed confidence that the issues would be addressed through the appropriate legal processes.

The proposed Lamu refinery, scheduled for completion by 2030, is intended to replicate the scale of the Lagos facility and serve Kenya and the wider East African market.

Although Kenya currently produces no commercial quantities of crude oil, the project is expected to process imported crude and provide refined products for the regional market, potentially reducing East Africa's dependence on imported finished petroleum products.

The ambitious Kenyan expansion comes as Dangote Refinery pursues its public offering, extending the group's drive to build an integrated African refining and industrial platform.



Former Governor of Gombe State, Sen. Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo (3rd R), jointly with other members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), presenting Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami as the winner of the PDP governorship primary held yesterday in Gombe.

Reps Call for Rescue of 116 Abducted Schoolchildren, Others in Borno

Members of the House of Representatives on Tuesday called for intensified and coordinated security operations to secure the immediate and safe release of 116 schoolchildren abducted in different communities in Borno State, alongside other victims still in captivity.

The call followed a motion of urgent public importance moved by Rep. Midala Balami on the floor of the House.

The motion drew attention to the prolonged captivity of the victims abducted in Mussa, Lassa and along the Buratai-Maiduguri Road.

Balami recalled that 44 schoolchildren were abducted from Mussa on May 15, 2026, alongside 36 other persons in Mussa and along the Buratai-Maiduguri Road.

He further recalled the subsequent abduction of 36 students and two teachers in Lassa Ward, Askira-Uba Local Government

Area.

According to him, the 44 schoolchildren abducted from Mussa had spent more than 138 days in captivity as of the date of the motion, while the 36 schoolchildren abducted from Lassa had spent more than 70 days in captivity.

He added that other persons abducted along the Buratai-Maiduguri Road had remained in captivity for more than 160 days.

Balami said the prolonged captivity had subjected the victims' families and affected communities to "unbearable emotional distress, uncertainty and fear," stressing the need for urgent and decisive action to secure their release.

He said the continued captivity posed a serious threat to the lives, safety, education and fundamental rights of the victims, while the affected communities remained vulnerable to further attacks and abductions.

The lawmaker acknowledged the efforts of security agencies, local authorities, traditional institutions and community members involved in the search-and-rescue operations, but called for such efforts to be "substantially intensified, better coordinated and sustained" until all the victims are rescued.

The House consequently urged relevant security agencies to intensify and sustain search-and-rescue operations aimed at securing the immediate and safe release of the 116 abducted schoolchildren and all other persons being held captive.

It also called for enhanced intelligence gathering, information sharing and inter-agency coordination among the Armed Forces, Nigeria Police Force, intelligence services and other relevant agencies to locate the victims and apprehend those responsible for the abductions.

The lawmakers further urged security

agencies to strengthen security along the Buratai-Maiduguri Road, Mussa, Lassa and other identified vulnerable communities and routes through increased patrols, intelligence-led operations and appropriate security checkpoints.

The House also urged the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the North East Development Commission (NEDC) to deploy relief materials as well as medical and psychological support to affected families and community members.

The motion followed an earlier resolution of the House on May 15 calling for urgent action towards the rescue of the 44 schoolchildren abducted from Mussa.

Balami warned that any further delay in securing the victims' release could expose them to additional danger and deepen the trauma already suffered by their families and communities.



Chairman, Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Dr Musa Aliyu (M), presenting a souvenir to the Minister-Counsellor of the Russian Embassy in Nigeria, Mr Igor Ivannikov (L), during the Fourth International Diplomatic Dialogue organised by ICPC in collaboration with the Anti-Corruption Academy of Nigeria (ACAN) in Abuja. With them is the ACAN Provost, Prof. Sheriff Ibrahim.

Court Sentences Four to Death Over Kidnapping in Edo

The Edo State Special Criminal Court has sentenced four persons to death for their involvement in the kidnapping of a woman in the popular Vegetable Market, off Airport Road in Benin City.

Justice Aigbona Momodu gave the judgment bordering on 11-count charges of kidnapping, conspiracy, armed robbery, cultism and unlawful possession of firearms, Channels TV reports Tuesday.

The court, established under the

directive of Edo State Governor Monday Okpebholo, is mandated to handle kidnapping and cultism-related cases, according to the report.

The four sentenced persons – three males and one female – are Marvelous Isaac, 32; Wisdom Michael, 36; Rufus Michael, 30; and Gift Raphael, 27.

According to the court's verdict, the exhibits recovered from the four sentenced persons – a pump-action rifle, two unexpended cartridges and two expended cartridges – were ordered to

be handed over to the State Criminal Investigation Department of the Edo State Police Command.

The woman (name undisclosed) was at the market with her children and husband when gunmen reportedly came to the scene and whisked her away.

In a video online, a woman who claimed to have witnessed the incident described it as kidnapping, stressing, "Today, for the first time, I witnessed someone being kidnapped."

She continued, "Who said kidnapping

is not in Benin? A kidnapping happened in my presence right at Airport Road by the Vegetable Market. Just because it has not happened to you does not mean it doesn't exist.

"I saved the woman's children today. This is me. It happened in front of me. We were both buying something in the same place, at the vegetable market. This is me; I have bruises. These are my legs."

The incident was subsequently confirmed by the State Police Public Relations Officer, Eno Ikoedem.

Man, 23, Docked Over Alleged N15m Theft

A 23-year-old man, Onasanya Segun, was on Tuesday arraigned before an Abeokuta Magistrates' Court in Isabo for allegedly breaking into a house and stealing valuables worth over N15million.

The defendant, whose address was not provided, pleaded not guilty to a two-count charge of burglary and stealing.

The prosecutor, Insp. Opeyemi Lawal, told the court that the defendant committed the offences on Sept. 27

at about 2:00 p.m. at Kemta Housing Estate, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta.

Lawal alleged that Segun broke into the house of the complainant, Mr Seun Sowunmi, with intent to commit a felony.

He further stated that Segun stole cable wires, one fan coil and two fan switches valued at N15million, all belonging to Sowunmi.

Lawal said that Segun unlawfully entered into the dwelling of the

complainant through the ceiling, unaware of the presence of security guards on duty.

He was thereafter apprehended and handed over to the police.

"Segun, upon his arrest, made a confessional statement admitting to the crime and his intention to sell the stolen items," the prosecutor told the court.

Lawal said that the offences contravened sections 383, 390(9) and 412 of the Criminal Code Laws of Ogun

2006.

The Magistrate, Miss O.T. Odubanjo, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N5million with one surety in like sum.

Odubanjo said that the surety must be a registered bondsman with the Ogun State judiciary.

She ordered that Segun be remanded at the Oba Correctional Centre pending the perfection of his bail conditions.

The case was adjourned until Oct. 19 for hearing.

US Forces Exit Iraq After Two Decades, Leaving Opening for Iran

US forces are set to pull out from their last bases in Iraq by Wednesday, a departure celebrated as a victory by Iran and its allies, who now have deep influence in the country where 4,500 Americans died during more than two decades of war.

Iraqi security experts say the withdrawal — agreed in 2024 under President Joe Biden and carried out by Donald Trump's administration even as

it wages war against Iran — could give Tehran and its powerful allies free rein, while also allowing other US enemies to stage a comeback, including Islamic State.

"Iran stands to benefit strategically from the coalition's departure because it removes a military presence that for years acted as a counterweight to Tehran's influence in Iraq," said Jasim al-Bahadli, an Iraqi security analyst specialising in studying armed Shi'ite groups aligned

with Iran.

He predicted that the pro-Iranian militia groups would not only portray the departure as a victory for their movement, but also "seek to translate that momentum into greater influence over security and political decision-making".

Abu Mojtaba al-Yasiri, a commander in the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed armed factions, described the US withdrawal as "a historic

victory for the Iraqi Islamic resistance groups and honourable Iraqis, and a crushing defeat for the American project".

"On September 30, we will celebrate the turning of a black page in Iraq's history and the failure of the occupation to impose its will on our country," he told Reuters. "Iraq has proven that its sovereignty cannot be secured by foreign forces, but by the resistance and the will of its people."



Argentina Threatens Legal Action Against UK Over Falkland Islands Oil Exploration

Argentina's president has threatened to launch a legal challenge against the British government unless it halts oil exploration work off the coast of the Falkland Islands.

In a social media post, President Javier Milei set a two-week deadline for the Sea Lion oilfield project, a joint venture between Israeli and British companies, to be scrapped.

The companies insist they have

valid licences issued by Britain.

The comments heighten tensions between the UK and Argentina over the sovereignty of the archipelago, known in Argentina as Las Malvinas, more than 40 years after a British military task force ejected Argentine forces which had invaded the territory in 1982.

Milei said that if the two-week deadline was not met, he had "instructed the Foreign Ministry and

legal teams to initiate international arbitration" against the UK over what he called "the illegal plundering of our resources through the Sea Lion Project".

He continued to warn the UK that if the "illegitimate exploitation" of the region didn't end within two weeks, Argentina would take the matter before the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

The International Tribunal is an independent judicial body based in

Hamburg which is responsible for the fair application of the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The move comes soon after Milei roundly criticised the UN in his speech at the General Assembly for failing to act on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

He said the UN had become "a useless organisation" which only serves "arrogant parasites dressed up as well-intentioned bureaucrats".



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Nigeria at 66: Reconstructing a Nation for Enduring Prosperity

OPINION

BY

DR OLAYIDE OWOLABI ADELAMI

As Nigeria marks 66 years of independence and enters her 67th year as a sovereign nation, October 1 should be more than another occasion for flags, speeches and celebration. It should be a moment of sober national reflection.

At 66, we should be asking difficult questions: Where did we begin? How far have we travelled? What went wrong along the way? And, most importantly, how do we build a country capable of fulfilling the hopes of its founding generation and the aspirations of those coming after us?

At independence in 1960, Nigeria inherited a regional constitutional system in which the regions carried considerable responsibility for economic development. The economy was productive and largely agricultural. Cocoa powered the Western Region; groundnuts and cotton were major products of the North; palm produce sustained the East, while rubber, timber and other commodities generated employment, public revenue and foreign exchange. The regions competed in education, infrastructure, agriculture and industry.

That promising trajectory was disrupted by political crises, military intervention, civil war and prolonged military rule. Then came the rise of petroleum as the dominant source of government revenue and foreign exchange. As oil earnings expanded, agriculture and other productive sectors gradually lost their central place, and Nigeria drifted from a production-oriented economy towards one heavily dependent on oil revenues and imported goods. The consequences remain with us.

The return to democratic rule in 1999 opened another chapter. Successive administrations recorded achievements in telecommunications, banking, infrastructure and agriculture. Yet policy inconsistency, unreliable electricity, weak productive capacity, import dependence, costly subsidies and inadequate public revenue continued to constrain the country's potential.

It was against this background that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office on May 29, 2023.

The courage and cost of reform

One economic truth is difficult to escape: no country can indefinitely consume what it does not produce, borrow continuously to finance consumption, or sustain subsidies beyond its means. Eventually, hard choices become unavoidable.

Since 2023, the Federal Government has pursued major reforms in petroleum pricing, foreign exchange, taxation, electricity regulation and the encouragement of domestic refining and private investment. These changes have no doubt imposed severe costs. Inflation and the erosion of purchasing power have placed noticeable pressure on families, workers, pensioners and businesses. Food, transport, housing and energy costs remain painful realities.

The reforms have also imposed substantial short-term costs. Inflation and the erosion of purchasing power have placed considerable pressure on households, workers, pensioners and businesses. And the question often asked, when will the benefits of these reforms become visible in the pockets of the masses, cannot but be said to be legitimate.

That question must not be dismissed. It is being answered each day by government functionaries. Beyond answers however, macroeconomic recovery does not automatically or immediately translate into household prosperity. Stabilisation must attract investment; investment must expand production; production must create jobs and increase supply; and rising productivity must

eventually improve incomes and moderate prices.

The World Bank's April 2026 Nigeria Development Update captures this tension well. It reported meaningful progress in restoring macroeconomic stability while also observing that household incomes had yet to recover fully and poverty remained high. That is precisely the challenge Nigeria faces today: stabilisation may be taking root, but the gains must move from government balance sheets and financial markets to the dining tables of Nigerian families.

From confidence to production

Macroeconomic stability matters because investment thrives on predictability. When exchange rates are volatile, public finances are uncertain and policies change abruptly, investors either stay away or demand a high premium for risk. Greater policy clarity can help attract patient capital.

But renewed investor interest must be converted into the real economy: factories, agro-processing plants, mines and mineral-processing facilities, electricity projects, petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries, technology companies, transport and logistics networks, and infrastructure that allows micro, small and medium enterprises to flourish.

Portfolio investment has its place, but productive investment has a deeper developmental impact when it creates jobs, transfers technology and expands domestic capacity. The success of reform should therefore not be measured only by the naira, foreign reserves or the stock market. It should be measured by production, jobs, lower inflation and rising real incomes.

Nigeria cannot prosper permanently as an exporter of raw materials and an importer of finished goods. We must return to production; not to the hoes and cutlasses of the 1960s, but to mechanised, technology-driven agriculture linked to processing, storage, transportation and export markets.

Our cocoa should feed Nigerian confectionery industries. Cassava should support starch, pharmaceutical and industrial production. Tomatoes should supply processing factories. Cotton should feed textile mills. Our gas resources should power industries and fertiliser plants. The national ambition must shift from exporting commodities to exporting value-added Nigerian products.

Power, tax and human capital

No modern economy can industrialise without reliable electricity. The Electricity Act 2023 created a more decentralised framework by empowering states to establish and regulate intrastate electricity markets. The promise is significant, but the real test is

practical: more power to homes and factories, lower production costs and businesses that can compete without relying endlessly on generators.

Tax reform is equally important. Nigeria needs revenue to fund roads, healthcare, education and security, but taxation must be fair, as being currently pursued, efficient and supportive of enterprise. Simplifying administration and reducing overlapping taxes can improve the business environment. Yet higher revenue must go hand in hand with transparency, accountability and prudent use of public resources. Citizens should be able to see a relationship between what they pay and the quality of services they receive.

Nigeria's greatest resource, however, is its people. The Nigerian Education Loan Fund is an important attempt to widen access to higher education, but access alone is not enough. Education itself must be reoriented towards productivity.

Technical and vocational education, STEM, artificial intelligence, robotics, programming, data science, renewable energy, modern agriculture and fabrication should no longer sit at the margins of national planning. A youthful population without skills and opportunity can become a source of social strain; properly educated and empowered, it can become Nigeria's greatest competitive advantage.

Energy and infrastructure as multipliers

For decades, it was an economic contradiction that a major crude-oil producer depended heavily on imported refined petroleum products. Expanding domestic refining offers an opportunity to reverse that pattern. But Nigeria's ambition must extend beyond petrol and diesel to petrochemicals, fertilisers, plastics, pharmaceuticals, industrial chemicals and gas-based manufacturing.

The objective should be simple: retain more value at home, conserve foreign exchange and create productive jobs.

Infrastructure is just as critical. A good road connects a farmer to a market; a railway reduces transport costs; an efficient port improves export competitiveness; reliable electricity powers factories; and broadband connects entrepreneurs to the global economy.

Major highway, rail, port and aviation projects should therefore be judged not merely by kilometres built or the size of their budgets, but by whether they reduce logistics costs, stimulate commerce, expand production and improve the competitiveness of Nigerian businesses.

From statistics to household prosperity

Nigerians do not live on macroeconomic statistics. They experience the economy

through the price of food, transportation, housing, electricity, school fees and healthcare. The next phase of reform must therefore connect stabilisation with household prosperity.

The farmer, market woman, civil servant, pensioner and unemployed graduate must feel it. So must the manufacturer and small-business owner.

That requires a determined assault on food inflation, insecurity, transportation and energy costs, alongside higher agricultural productivity, stronger social protection and greater support for micro, small and medium enterprises.

Economic growth becomes meaningful when it raises real incomes, reduces poverty and gives citizens a reasonable expectation that tomorrow can be better than today.

The Nigeria we must build

Economic reconstruction alone will not be enough. Nigeria must strengthen institutions and the rule of law, deepen federalism, empower states and local governments as genuine centres of development, rebuild agriculture, expand electricity, improve security and educate children for productivity rather than certificates alone.

We must also reconstruct our national values. Integrity, discipline, patriotism, hard work, tolerance, accountability and respect for the dignity of labour must return to the centre of public life. Government has enormous responsibilities, but nation-building cannot be outsourced to government alone.

As 2027 approaches, Nigerians will again assess the country's direction. The proper test should be concrete and measurable: Are reforms producing more jobs? Is inflation easing? Are real incomes recovering? Is electricity improving? Are businesses investing? Is poverty declining?

Policy continuity matters where policies are working, but continuity must never become a substitute for accountability. Reforms deserve to endure when they deliver measurable results for citizens.

At 66, Nigeria is no longer a young nation. We have survived civil war, military rule, recessions, democratic transitions and repeated economic experiments. Our challenges are formidable, but so are our advantages: abundant natural resources, a vast domestic market, an entrepreneurial population, a strategic location and a large youthful population.

What we require now is the discipline to convert those advantages into broad-based prosperity.

As we raise our flag on October 1, let us renew our covenant with Nigeria. Let us build a country that produces rather than merely consumes; exports value rather than raw materials; innovates rather than imitates; and creates opportunities rather than exporting its brightest young people.

Let us build a Nigeria where the circumstances of birth do not determine the limits of ambition, where diversity is a strength, where public office is a call to service, and where every citizen can realistically aspire to a better tomorrow.

The reconstruction of Nigeria is possible, but it will not happen by proclamation. It will require consistent policy, competent institutions, accountable leadership, productive citizens and a shared commitment to the long work of nation-building.

At 66, the task before us is not merely to celebrate Nigeria.

It is to continue to rebuild her.

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