

Nigeria Press Review

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Welcome to Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Nigeria Weekly Press Review

The weekly press review seeks to explore and keep you informed on selected issues relating to politics, business and economy, insecurity, infrastructure and development, health related issues, new trends and matters bothering on the overall situation in Nigeria.

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The governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Olayemi Cardoso says the apex bank remains resolute in its commitment to maintaining order in the country's foreign exchange market by identifying and eliminating bad actors whose activities undermine the stability of the naira. Cardoso made the bank's position clear in his statement at the February 2025 Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, which was released on Tuesday on the apex bank's website. This came as findings showed that the naira depreciated slightly at the official foreign exchange market on Tuesday. At the Bureau de Change (BDC) segment, the exchange rate remained unchanged, reflecting a steady spread between the official and parallel market rates. Sami Tunji, [Punch News \(March 26th\)](#) reports.

The recent suspension of the naira-for-crude policy by the federal government has raised concerns over a potential petrol price hike as some fuel marketers and depot owners begin stockpiling products in anticipation of increased costs. The Dangote refinery had earlier announced a temporary halt in selling petroleum products in naira, citing a mismatch between its sales proceeds and crude oil purchase obligations, which are denominated in US dollars. Following the announcement, private depots in Lagos raised their petrol loading costs from less than NGN 850 per litre to about NGN 900 per litre. Meanwhile, the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has warned against panic buying, cautioning marketers that any price reversal could result in financial losses. Talks between the federal government and Dangote refinery are ongoing. Reports also suggest that the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) has pre-sold large volumes of crude to secure international loans, limiting its ability to supply local refiners. Meanwhile, stakeholders including IPMAN and the Crude Oil Refinery Owner's Association of Nigeria continue to advocate for a resolution that ensures stability in the domestic energy market. Dare Olawin, [Punch News \(March 24th\)](#) reports.

Despite earlier reports suggesting a shift, the Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) has clarified that the Dangote refinery has yet to commence the sale of petroleum products in US dollars. PETROAN President Billy Gillis-Harry stated that its members were still purchasing fuel in naira, indicating that no formal directive has been issued regarding a change in transaction currency. Gillis-Harry emphasized that PETROAN has consistently advocated for Nigerian crude to be sold in naira, warning that any policy change should involve stakeholder consultations through the petroleum industry stakeholder forum, led by the minister of petroleum. However, the organization reassured Nigerians that there is no immediate risk of fuel scarcity, urging against panic buying. Emmanuel Addeh, [This Day News \(March 27th\)](#) reports.

Following the suspension of the United States' aid to developing countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that eight countries, including Nigeria, risk running out of HIV drugs. Findings show that this prediction is now a reality as clinics around the country have completely run out of supply or are rationing what they have left. It was gathered that some clinics are dispensing between one or three-month dosages of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to people living with HIV instead of the erstwhile six-month refill routine. Minister of health and social welfare, Prof. Mohammed Ali Pate, has also assured that the federal government was addressing all funding and policy gaps to tackle the challenges in the nation's healthcare system, especially in the face of the cut in funding by the United States. Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze et al, [The Guardian News \(March 24th\)](#) report.

Senator Oluremi Tinubu launched the Organisation of African First Ladies for Development's (OAFLAD) "Free to shine" campaign aimed at preventing retroviral diseases in the country. The campaign is an advocacy initiative led by the African Union (AU) for the OAFLAD and global partners to address the growing complacency in response to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. She spoke on Wednesday in Asaba, the capital of Delta state, during the campaign's launch for the south-south region. She disclosed that the campaign will cover the 6 Nigeria geopolitical zones. The first lady said the campaign also seeks to significantly reduce new HIV infections among women of reproductive age, prevent mother-to-child transmission and ensure that every child born with HIV receives the necessary treatment and support to thrive. She also noted hepatitis and syphilis as ma-

for public health concerns. Claire Mom, [The Cable News \(March 26th\)](#) reports.

The world bank has raised concerns over Nigeria's poor statistical performance, stating it lags behind its aspirational peers such as Mexico, Colombia, South Africa and Brazil. During a courtesy visit to Nigeria's minister of budget and economic planning, senator Abubakar Bagudu, a world bank delegation led by country director Ndiame Diop and practice manager for West and Central Africa Johan Mistiaen emphasized the need for better investment in statistical infrastructure. They recommended an annual investment of USD 10-15 million to enhance the credibility and accuracy of Nigeria's statistics and align them with global standards. In response, minister Bagudu reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining the independence of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The statistician-general of the federation and CEO of NBS, Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, praised the government for boosting the agency's budget allocation to its highest level in the past 10 years but emphasized the need for continued funding and stronger partnerships with international development agencies. Sami Tunji, [Punch News \(March 26th\)](#) reports.

Rivers Sole Administrator Suspends All Political Appointees in the State, Rivers Administrator Appoints New SSG as Head of Service Resigns, PDP Governors Challenge Rivers State of Emergency Proclamation at the Supreme Court, Nigerian Bar Association Calls on Tinubu to Restore Fubara, House of Representatives Advances Key Constitutional Reforms, Tinubu Signs South-West, South-South Development Commission Bills

The sole administrator of Rivers state, retired vice admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas, has suspended political appointees and office holders in the state with immediate effect. Those affected include the secretary to the state government, the chief of staff, all commissioners, chairpersons and members of boards, agencies, commissions and parastatals as well as all special advisers, special assistants and senior special assistants. The suspension took effect from March 26. Those affected are to hand over to the permanent secretaries of their respective ministries, departments and agencies. Ibas was appointed sole administrator by president Bola Tinubu after he had declared a state of emergency in the state. Ibas promised to work with stakeholders to ensure that order is restored in

the state. Okiki Adeduyite, [Punch News \(March 26th\)](#) reports.

Sole administrator of Rivers state Ibok-Ete Ibas has appointed Prof. Ibibia Worika as the new secretary to the state government (SSG) following a rigorous selection process. Iyngi Brown has also been appointed as the acting head of service after the resignation of George Nwaeke from the position. In making these appointments, administrator Ibas reaffirmed his commitment to leveraging Rivers state's human capital to drive peace, stability and security amid the ongoing political transition. He emphasized that Worika's expertise in governance and legal policy will be instrumental in implementing president Bola Tinubu's directives for the state. This reshuffling follows the controversial suspension of governor Siminalayi Fubara under the state of emergency declared by president Tinubu. Joshua Ogbologugo, [Channels Television News \(March 25th\)](#) reports.

Some state governors belonging to the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have sued president Bola Tinubu at the supreme court over his suspension of Rivers state's democratically elected officials under an emergency rule he recently imposed. They have urged the court to declare that the president "has no powers whatsoever" to suspend a democratically elected governor and deputy governor of a state under the guise of proclamation of a state of emergency in any state of the federation. The president suspended governor Fubara, deputy governor Ngozi Odu and all the State House of Assembly members for an initial six months and appointed Ibok-Ete Ibas as the sole administrator of the state. They prayed for, among other orders of the supreme court, an order "nullifying the proclamation of a state of emergency in Rivers state made by the president and wrongfully approved by the National Assembly". They also urged the court to nullify the appointment of a sole administrator to superintend over Rivers state. [Premium Times News \(March 27th\)](#) reports.

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has again called on president Bola Tinubu to restore governor Siminalayi Fubara back to his elected position as Rivers state governor without further delay. Last week, president Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers state and followed it up with what many Nigerians have described as the unconstitutional suspension of the elected governor of the state, his deputy and all the members of the State House of Assembly over the political crisis rocking the oil-rich state. NBA president Afam

Osigwe made this call as a guest on Channels Television. He said the measures being taken to address the Rivers problem “are overreaching, extensive, undemocratic and above all unconstitutional”. Meanwhile, the nongovernmental organization Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has filed [a lawsuit](#) against president Bola Tinubu over “the unlawful suspension of democratically elected governor, deputy governor and members of the State House of Assembly of Rivers state while exercising his constitutional powers to proclaim a state of emergency in the state”. Among other reliefs, the plaintiffs are seeking a declaration that the president has no constitutional power to do what he has done and an order setting aside the suspension of democratically elected representatives. No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit. John Owen Nwachukwu, [Daily Post News \(March 24th\)](#) reports.

In a significant legislative move, the Nigerian House of Representatives has passed the second reading of a bill seeking to deprive the president and state governors of their power to proclaim the inauguration of the National Assembly and state legislatures. This constitutional amendment aims to eliminate the executive’s role in convening new legislative sessions, thereby reinforcing the separation of powers and ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of the legislative arm of government. Alongside this, the House also approved 38 other bills. Notably, a bill advocating for all election-related litigations to be resolved before winners are inaugurated passed without debate. In addition, the bills want an amendment to the constitution for presidential, governorship, national and House of Assembly polls to be conducted simultaneously on the same day determined by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in consultation with the National Assembly. Others include those seeking the creation of state police and special legislative seats for persons with disability (PWD) as well as special interest groups. One of the critical judicial reform bills, sponsored by speaker Abbas Tajudeen, seeks to amend the 1999 constitution to mandate that recommendations by the National Judicial Council (NJC) be binding on the president and governors in matters relating to the removal of court heads. In similar fashion, [a bill seeking to return Nigeria to the parliamentary system of government](#) passed second reading at the House. The bill seeks to establish the office of the prime minister as head of government and the president as head of state. The proposed legislation, sponsored by minority leader

Kingsley Chinda, seeks to alter the 1999 Constitution to introduce a parliamentary framework that will shift executive authority from the president to a prime minister elected by the legislature. Tony Akowe, [The Nation News \(March 26th\)](#) reports.

President Bola Tinubu has signed the south-west development commission (SWDC) bill and the south-south development commission (SSDC) bill into law, ensuring that all six geo-political zones in Nigeria now have dedicated regional development commissions. Senate president Godswill Akpabio announced this during plenary. The commissions are mandated to drive infrastructure development, economic growth and social welfare in their respective regions. With this move, the north-west development commission (NWDC) and the south-east development commission (SEDC) now have their counterparts across the country. Basheer Lado, special adviser to the president on Senate matters, welcomed this development stating that the commissions will serve as catalysts for industrialization, economic expansion and social progress across Nigeria, further boosting job creation and addressing regional inequalities. Abdulqudus Ogundapo, [Premium Times News \(March 25th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Nigeria Launches Special Forces to Tackle Terrorism and Cybersecurity, Nnamdi Kanu Tenders Apology for His Outburst Against Justice Nyako

The federal government has inaugurated a special operations force to strengthen Nigeria’s security framework and combat terrorism, insurgency, transnational crimes and emerging threats like cyberattacks. The initiative, spearheaded by the ministry of defence, aims to enhance the operational readiness of 800 elite soldiers drawn from the Nigerian army, navy and air force with plans to train 2,400 personnel. Speaking at the training launch in Kaduna, defence minister Mohammed Badaru Abubakar emphasized the importance of intelligence-driven operations as well counterterrorism tactics in safeguarding Nigeria’s sovereignty, ensuring peace and protecting its citizens. The chief of army staff, general Christopher Musa, assured that the special forces would play a pivotal role in neutralizing security threats across Nigeria. The special forces are expected to be deployed to critical areas nationwide, reinforcing Nigeria’s overall security infrastructure. Isaiah Benjamin, [Leadership News \(March 25th\)](#) reports.

The leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, has tendered an apology over his recent attacks on the Federal High Court and Justice Binta Nyako. He did this through his new counsel, Kanu Agabi, SAN. Agabi tendered the apology on Kanu's behalf on Friday before Justice James Omotosho, the new trial judge. He said Kanu was angry and had been for a very long time. He also apologized to the prosecution team.

In accepting the apology, Adegboyega Awomolo, counsel to the federal government, added that they would do their best to ensure an expeditious hearing of the case. Justice Omotosho said the length of the trial may have taken a toll on Kanu. He said when he was arraigned in 2015, he was 47; now he is 57 and still does not know what the result of his trial will be. Emmanuella Ekele, [Channels Television News \(March 21st\)](#) reports.

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