

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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NBS Explains Delay in Release of Unemployment Data, CBN Says Nigeria's Economy Maintains Nine-Quarter Consecutive Growth, Nigeria Ranks Sixth Among High Tuberculosis Burdened Countries, UNICEF Reports on Water Crisis

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has explained the delay in providing Nigeria's unemployment data for the past two years. According to its Twitter handle, the NBS has been collaborating with World Bank Nigeria since 2021, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other stakeholders to enhance the methodology and implementation of the Nigeria labour force survey, which generates the unemployment report. The NBS said they had conducted a pre-test and pilot of the new approach and trained trainers and enumerators. In addition, it organized a nationwide stakeholder sensitization workshop that brought together key government, private sector and academia stakeholders. However, analysts say the delay is unsuitable for Africa's biggest economy as it shows a misplaced priority towards human capital development, a lack of innovation and investments and a wastage of resources towards solving unemployment in the country. [The Leadership News \(March 22nd\)](#) reports.

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian economy has maintained a positive growth trajectory for nine consecutive quarters since exiting the recession in 2020. According to CBN governor Goodwin Emefiele, the economy's improved performance has been mainly driven by sustained growth in the services and agricultural sectors. He also cited a rebound in economic activities associated with economic recovery and the CBN's continued intervention in growth-enhancing sectors as responsible for the growth. The Committee, however, observed with concern the marginal increase in headline inflation in February 2023, to 21.91%. [The Vanguard News \(March 21st\)](#) reports.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned that plans to end tuberculosis by 2030 are under threat, as the disease remains one of the world's deadliest infectious killers. Speaking during a road show to mark World Tuberculosis Day in Abuja, the Director of the Federal Ministry of Health's Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control Programme, Ahmad Muhammad Ozi, said Nigeria records about 400.000 cases of tuberculosis yearly. Nigeria is among the 14 high-burden countries for tuberculosis and further ranked sixth among the 30 high

TB-burden countries globally and first in Africa. According to the WHO, TB occurs in every part of the world, with the African region accounting for 23% of new cases in 2021. To support the drive to end tuberculosis globally, Nigerians can get tested for free. Chukwuma Muanya and Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, [The Guardian News \(March 24th\)](#) report.

A UNICEF report highlights the alarming water crisis in Nigeria, calling it a wake-up call for the nation to take swift action. According to the report, 78 million children are at high risk of water-related concerns, such as waterborne diseases, malnutrition and poor sanitation. UNICEF Nigeria pointed out that at the current pace, it will take 16 years to achieve access to safe water for all in Nigeria. The time to act was now by investing in climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services, not only as a matter of protecting children's health today but also ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come. The report also stated that Nigeria is one of the ten countries that carry the heaviest burden of child deaths from diseases caused by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene. [The Leadership News \(March 23rd\)](#) reports.

Low Voter Turnout in Lagos Due to Attack by Thugs, Governorship Election Update, Suspension of Elections in Three States Met with Protests, EU Election Observers Says INEC Failed to Meet Expectation of Nigerians, Four Presidential Candidates Ask Tribunal to Nullify Presidential Elections, President-elect Bola Tinubu Condemns Ethnic Smears and Election Violence, Calls for Peace, President Buhari Rejects 19 Constitution Alteration Bills, FG to Install Facial Recognition at Airports, PDP Suspends its Members Over Anti-party Activities, Nigerian Labour Congress to Begin Strike Action Next Week

Nigeria's gubernatorial election in Lagos state on Saturday, March 18, was marred by violence and voter intimidation leading to low turnout. Preliminary reports from various councils across the state showed that polling units were sparsely populated or empty as of noon. There were several live reports on voter intimidation on social media. Magazine *The Africa Report* had reported earlier that there was looming electoral violence in Lagos as thugs loyal to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) had before the election warned those who were not planning on voting for the APC to stay at home. Governorship candidate of the Labour Party, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, who enjoys a large

following among urban youths and non-Yoruba speakers, decried the voter intimidation and suppression while speaking with journalists after casting his vote in the state capital. "It is very unfortunate that Lagos State has been under the rule of people that only bring thuggery and violence every four years. When they had the opportunity to do well and create a group that would be actually happy to vote for them, but they always choose violence," Rhodes-Vivour said. Eniola Akinkuotu, [The African Report \(March 18th\)](#) reports.

Collation of results began at local government level after voting has ended in the governorship and state assembly elections that held last Saturday. Governorship elections were held in 28 states while state legislative elections were held in all 36 states. The exercise was held in 1,021 state constituencies providing for 28 governorship and 993 state assembly seats. An interim report on the elections said the polls were marred by violence and vote buying. All 18 registered political parties fielded over 400 governorship candidates in the 28 states. The breakdown shows that Abia, Akwa Ibom, Plateau and Taraba States have the highest number of candidates, with 18 each, followed closely by Delta, Enugu, Kano, Rivers and Sokoto, with 17 candidates each. Cross River and Yobe have the minor candidates, with 11 each. Meanwhile, elections were not conducted in Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Ondo and Osun states, where off-cycle polls are held at different times. In addition, the electoral calendars of those states were altered due to judicial pronouncements. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has scheduled November elections in Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo states. Kabir Yusuf, [The Premium Times News \(March 19th\)](#) reports.

Following the dissatisfaction of some electorates in managing the governorship and state assembly elections, protests against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) rocked some states last week. Angry voters objected to the delay of the electoral body in releasing the results and the alleged discrepancies in the election results signed by party agents against what was uploaded to the INEC portal. The commission, however, declared the governorship election in Kebbi, Enugu, Abia and Adamawa states inconclusive as hoodlums attacked collation centres, saying the suspected party thugs surrounded them and did not allow people to enter. Bridget Chiedu Onochie et al., [The Guardian News \(March 21st\)](#) report.

The European Union election observation mission (EU-EOM) says the conduct of the elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) fell below expectations by Nigerians. In a statement in Abuja on Monday, Barry Andrews, the mission's chief observer, said Nigerians had an excellent appetite for democracy but were disappointed by INEC and the political elites. Andrews said the development led to voter apathy, noting that multiple incidents of thuggery and intimidation of voters also disrupted election day. In addition, Andrews said the mission observed that organized violence in parts of the country led to a fearful environment while noting that the underrepresentation of women in the process demonstrated Nigeria's contrary practice to its constitutional provision and international commitment to inclusion. On a positive note, he stated that "INEC introduced some corrective measures ahead of Saturday's polls, allowing a timely delivery of sensitive materials and improved use of election technologies, yet the institution continued to lack transparency". EU-EOM also commended the civil society, media and fact-checkers for promoting democratic standards by raising awareness and providing electoral information of public interest to voters. Vivian Chime, [The Cable News \(March 20th\)](#) reports.

Four presidential candidates on Tuesday approached the Presidential Election Petitions Tribunal in Abuja with separate petitions, seeking the nullification of the declaration of Bola Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the winner of the February 25 presidential poll. The petitioners seeking annulment of Tinubu's emergence as President-elect are Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP), Solomon Okangbuan of Action Alliance (AA) and Allied People's Movement's (APM) Chichi Ojei. Alternatively, the petitioners are also asking the tribunal for an order cancelling the election and compelling the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct a fresh election in which Tinubu, his running mate Kashim Shettima and the APC altogether shall not participate. Meanwhile, AA and APM have also lodged separate petitions before the court. However, the chief spokesman for the APC Presidential Campaign Council, Festus Keyamo, disclosed that his principal would not oblige the LP candidate with an official response since the case is in court. Adebayo Folorunsho-Francis et al., [The Punch News \(March 22nd\)](#) report.

President-elect Bola Tinubu has condemned what he described as “isolated” cases of infractions, ethnic slurs and violence that trailed the 2023 general elections, declaring that elections were now over for the healing process to begin. Tinubu said the governorship polls which were held across 28 states and the state legislative poll across the 36 states of the federation, had brought the 2023 election cycle to a close. While he praised president Muhammadu Buhari, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other stakeholders, Tinubu said consolidating democratic governance at the sub-national level will bring more development and improved quality of life to the masses. Condemning the violence and other negative trends that followed the conduct of the elections, the president-elect appealed to Nigerians to rise above the foibles of partisanship, ethnicity and religious sentiments and focus more on the “valued strings that bind us together as a people”. Henry Ojelu et al., [The Vanguard News \(March 22nd\)](#) report.

President Muhammadu Buhari assented to 16 of the 35 constitution alteration bills transmitted to him by the national assembly. The bill on power to summon president and governors as well as 18 other bills became a source of concern to Senate president Ahmad Lawan, following Buhari’s refusal of assenting to the alterations. Drawing the attention of senators to the action, Lawan submitted that the most striking of the 16 bills signed was the fifth alteration, which makes provisions for financial independence of the state houses of assembly and judiciary. He indicated that the rejected 19 bills would still be pursued vigorously by both chambers of the federal legislature. John Akubo, [The Guardian News \(March 22nd\)](#) reports.

The federal government announced it would install facial recognition technology at major airports in Nigeria. Minister of State, Budget and National Planning, Prince Clem Ikanada Agba, confirmed that the airports would soon be operating automatically security measures that would incorporate the use of facial recognition technology to improve security around airports and easily detect impostors. Agba said that the technology would be deployed to airports through grant agreements between the federal government of Nigeria and the Japanese government, focusing on Lagos and Abuja International Airports in the pilot phase before the project would be extended to Port Harcourt, Enugu and Kano airports. In addition, the Minister disclosed that as part of the prerequisites for processing the facial recognition technology,

he would lead the ambassador and the team on a site survey visit to Lagos and Abuja airports for necessary assessments. Isaac Anumihe, [The Sun News \(March 23rd\)](#) reports.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday announced the suspension of former governor of Ekiti State Ayodele Fayose, former Senate president Pius Anyim as well as Prof. Dennis Ityavyar and Aslam Aliyu. The party said the suspension took effect on Thursday, adding that the decision was reached after an extensive review of the affairs of the party under the provisions of the PDP constitution (as amended in 2017). The PDP also referred the governor of Benue State, Samuel Ortom, to the National Disciplinary Committee over his reported involvement in anti-party activities. This was disclosed in a statement signed by the National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba. Reacting, Fayose, through his media aide, described the suspension by the National Working Committee as “the last kick of a dead horse”. Fayose said he and others who stood by the party and would rescue the PDP and give life back in due course, adding that “the purported suspension will have no leg to stand”. Also reacting, Ortom said the PDP National Working Committee against him was acting in contempt of a subsisting court order by referring him to the party’s disciplinary committee for alleged anti-party activities. Governor Ortom also said that it was contemptuous of the party’s leadership to disregard the court order which barred the party or any organ of the party from issuing any disciplinary measure against him. Segun Adewole, et al., [The Punch News \(March 24th\)](#) report.

President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, has directed public sector workers in the country to embark on a strike beginning from Wednesday next week. He also directed that affiliate unions constituting the NLC should be on standby for picketing exercises across all branches of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) nationwide. The directive followed an earlier request issued by the Central Working Committee members of the NLC last week criticizing the cash swap policy of the federal government. Ajaero said the decision to picket CBN branches became necessary as the federal government and the CBN have yet to show any commitment to address the situation. He lamented that despite the supreme court order allowing the old NGN 500 and NGN 1,000 notes to circulate alongside the new notes until December 31 this year, the situation appears to be getting worse as workers cannot access cash to pay fares

to work, nor can they buy food for their families. Briefing reporters on Wednesday at the headquarters of NLC, the apex labour union also criticized the pricing irregularities in the petroleum sector which was also a cause for concern. Williams Anuku, [The Daily Post \(March 22nd\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Defence Headquarters Rescues 201 Abducted Nigerians, Zamfara State Imposes Dusk to Dawn Curfew, President Buhari Inaugurates Counterterrorism Centre, National Security Adviser Building

The Defence Headquarters on Thursday revealed its troops have rescued no fewer than 201 kidnapped Nigerians during various operations in the last two weeks. The citizens were rescued during clearance operations conducted on terrorist hideouts in different locations in Borno and Kaduna states. The Director of Defence Media Operations, Major-General Musa Danmadami, disclosed this in Abuja while briefing select journalists on the activities of the military in March. Danmadami added that troops of Operation Whirl stroke neutralized 14 terrorists, arrested 12 terrorist logistics suppliers rescued 16 abducted civilians. Speaking on troops' activities in the South East, he said troops eliminated seven criminals and arrested 32 Indigenous People of Biafra/Eastern Security Network criminals. Solomon Odeniyi, [The Punch New \(March 23rd\)](#) reports.

The Zamfara state government has imposed a state-wide curfew from 8pm to 6am to forestall the breakdown of law and order following the declaration of the state's governorship election results. The state commissioner for information, Ibrahim Dosara, said the government's decision became imperative to restore peace in the state. Ac-

ording to him, the government of Zamfara state had noticed the destruction and vernalisation of government and public property and assets where several innocent citizens were inflicted with various degrees of injuries in the name of celebration of the declaration of the governorship election results. Dosara called on the security agencies to ensure full enforcement of the order. Bashir Bello, [The Vanguard News \(March 21st\)](#) reports.

President Muhammadu Buhari has inaugurated the new Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC). The two state-of-the-art facilities will optimize efforts at addressing evolving security challenges in the country, especially terrorism and violent extremism. Speaking at the inauguration, the president said they would serve as a significant legacy to provide the incoming administration with infrastructure to coordinate national security and counterterrorism efforts effectively. He also used the occasion to outline substantial milestones achieved by his administration on national security. These, according to Buhari, include gains in combating terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping, separatist tendencies, crude oil theft, piracy and militancy in the south-south as well as cybersecurity. In his welcome address, National Security Adviser (NSA) Babagana Monguno said the dynamic nature of the global and domestic security environment necessitated the modification and expansion of some of the functions of ONSA. According to him, the changing nature of the security landscape over the last three decades in the country and worldwide has led to the broadening of ONSA's mandate to accommodate the needs of emerging security threats and maintained Nigeria would further enhance its already recognized contribution to global counterterrorism efforts. [News Agency of Nigeria \(March 21st\)](#) reports.



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