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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 COVID-19 and the situation in Nigeria.

Content

Covid 19: NAFDAC Approves AstraZeneca Vaccines as Vaccination Process Begins, Citizens Express Concerns on the Safety of the Vaccines

Social Media Bill Protest Re-Emerges, NASS to Enact State of the Nation Bill, Concerns over Ibori's Recovered Loot, AGF Reacts

AfDB, SEC, Strengthen ECOWAS Market Operation, CBN Introduces Diaspora Remittance Scheme, Labour Unions Begins Street Protest over Minimum Wage, New Petrol Price Hike

APC and PDP Bicker over 2023 Upcoming Elections, Jonathan Restates 2023 Presidential Ambition as Speculative, Atiku Calls for Unity and Party Supremacy

Insecurity: FG, Osinbajo, Others, Propose Actions for Improved Security, President Buhari Issues an Ultimatum to the Service Chiefs, Mattawale goes Hard on Bandits

Covid 19: NAFDAC Approves AstraZeneca Vaccines as Vaccination Process Begins, Citizens Express Concerns on the Safety of the Vaccines

The Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, in an event held at the National Hospital, Abuja revealed the clearance of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine as safe for use in Nigeria. Following the receipt of 3.94 million doses shipped via the COVAX facility, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) concluded its final test and certified the vaccine. Ehanire said "for us in the health sector, it is a relief and the marking of the start of a tedious but hopeful exercise to see our fellow citizens develop immunity against this virus." Don Silas, [Daily Post News \(March 5th\)](#) reports.

Following the arrival of the Vaccine and its endorsement by NAFDAC, President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo on March 6th at the State House, Abuja received vaccination for the Coronavirus (COVID-19). President Buhari guaranteed equal distribution of the vaccine and applauded the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19 and other stakeholders on the successful approach in the management of the pandemic throughout the country. [Leadership News \(March 6th\)](#), and [Independent News \(March 6th\)](#) report.

Speaking shortly after the vaccination exercise, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) and chairman of the PTF on Covid-19, Boss Mustapha, speculatively noted that the vaccine certificate will soon become a travel requirement, as other countries have begun setting up restrictions to receiving visitors without the certificate. Kayode Oyero, [Punch News \(March 6th\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, citizens have begun to express worry over the side effects of the vaccines. According to Isaac Taiwo et al, [Guardian News \(March 10th\)](#), some individuals questioned the content of the vaccine, its long-term effect, if it's necessary to take the vaccine, among others. Others expressed confidence in the certification of the vaccine by NAFDAC and the authorities. However, NAFDAC has said that the vaccine does not have side effects. [Punch News \(March 12th\)](#) reports.

Social Media Bill Protest Re-Emerges, NASS to Enact State of the Nation Bill, Concerns over Ibori's Recovered Loot, AGF Reacts

The controversial social media bill has continued to gain media attention as another protest rocked the Unity Fountain in Abuja, witnessing heavy security as protesters marched out to demand that the senate immediately kill the Social Media Bill. This is coming on last week's protest at the National Assembly (NASS) over the transparency of reports on the bill. Maryam Ahmed, the convener for Center for Liberty (CFL) who spoke on behalf of the protesters said "today, one year after, the future of free speech and democracy in Nigeria is still at the mercy of a Senate that appears to be neither interested in publishing the report of the public hearing wherein the bill was overwhelmingly rejected, nor willing to conduct a third reading on the bill where it is expected to be killed and buried eternally". Ahmed urged the senate as a matter of urgency to align with the developments of the last year, which she noted clearly gives enough reason to kill the bill. Matthew Ogune, [The Guardian News \(March 10th\)](#) Writes.

On another note, a bill for an act "to make provision for State of the Nation address by the President and other matters, 2020" has passed its second reading. The bill which was introduced on the floor of the House of Representatives in NASS, on December 1, 2020, was sponsored by Rep. Ben Rollands Igbakpa representing Ethiope federal constituency of Delta State. Igbakpa said that the reoccurring cases of President Buhari's failure to appear before the House necessitated this bill. Also, the House is seeking an amendment of Section 10 of the Electoral Act of 2010 and the alteration of Section 77 of the 1999 constitutions (as amended) to make the National Identity Number (NIN), a compulsory requirement for voter's registration. Igbakpa, said it would eliminate the possibilities of multiple voter registration and end voter rigging. Levinus Nwabughio, [Vanguard News \(March 8th\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, a Member of the House of Representatives has urged the Ministry of Finance to halt the disbursement of 4.2 million pounds recovered from a former Governor of Delta State, James Ibori, pending final determination by the House. This is coming after representatives of both the U.K. and Nigerian governments signed an agreement for the return

of the money to Nigeria. The Minority Leader of the House, Ndudi Emeka (PDP-Delta), sponsored the motion alongside nine co-sponsors from Delta State. Speaking, Emeka noted that assets seized by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) from other states were returned to the respective states. He stressed that the money belonged to the people of Delta State and should be returned to them for developmental purposes. [Premium Times \(March 10th\)](#), reports.

On the same note, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF), Abubakar Malami, explained that the “major consideration relating to who is entitled to a fraction or perhaps the money in its entirety is a function of the law and international diplomacy”. Malami argued that the law alleged to have been breached by Ibori was a federal law and repatriation of the funds were national and not sub-national. Jasper Omagbemi, [The City Pulse News \(March 10th\)](#) writes.

AfDB, SEC, Strengthen ECOWAS Market Operation, CBN Introduces Diaspora Remittance Scheme, Labour Unions Begins Street Protest over Minimum Wage, New Petrol Price Hike

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has signed a \$400,000 grant agreement with the Nigeria Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), “to strengthen securities market regulation and broaden market instruments”. Speaking on the development at the signing ceremony, Senior Director, AfDB Group, Lamin Barrow, described the development as enhancing risk-based supervision framework for the financial and securities market, derivatives and green bonds trading market, as well as market operators and regulators from the wider Economic of West African States (ECOWAS). Goddy Egene, [This Day News \(March 8th\)](#) writes.

On another note, efforts to sustain the increased inflow of diaspora remittances into the country led the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), to introduce a “CBN Naira 4 Dollar Scheme for Diaspora Remittances”. In a statement, the Director of Trade and Exchange Department, A.S Jibrin, said the CBN would pay N5 on all one-dollar financial remittances as an incentive for senders and receivers transferring money. Confirming that the incentive will last two months, Jibrin added that recipients will receive an additional N5 per USD either via transfer or as

cash over the counter in a bank. [Sahara Reporters \(March 8th\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, a large crowd of Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) workers stormed the National Assembly (NASS), in reaction to a move by federal lawmakers to remove the minimum wage from the exclusive legislative list to the concurrent legislative list. Describing the bill as an attempt to “undermine the Nigeria’s working class” and demanding that state governments implement new minimum wage to avoid trade dispute, the NLC President Ayuba Wabba, and the TUC President, Quadri Olaleye, who led the protest on behalf on the unions, presented their letters of demand to the Senate Deputy Chief Whip, Sabi Abdullahi, and House Majority Leader, Ado Doguwa. The sponsor of the bill, Garba Mohammed (APC Kano), said the bill allows both the federal and state governments to freely negotiate minimum wage “with their workers in line with our federalism”. QueenEsther Iroanusi, [Premium Times 9March 10th\)](#) reports.

In new developments, the Petroleum Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPRA), has announced that the pump price for petrol will retail between N209.61 and N212.61. The retail marketers had last week alleged that the fuel scarcity is an attempt by the federal government to hike the price of petrol. This new development contradicts the earlier statement by the NNPC, who held that there was no plan to increase petrol price in March. Mary Izuaka, [Premium Times \(March 12th\)](#) details.

APC and PDP Bicker over 2023 Upcoming Elections, Jonathan Restates 2023 Presidential Ambition as Speculative, Atiku Calls for Unity and Party Supremacy

The National Secretary, Caretaker/Extraordinary Convention Planning Committee CECPC of the APC, John James Akpanudoedehe, in a statement, has faulted the PDP “for its lame attempt at returning to power in 2023, describing the opposition party’s ambition as ‘incredibly delusional’”. Akpanudoedehe emphasized on the achievements of the President Muhammadu Buhari’s led administration and also stressed on the recent defection of members of the PDP. He restated the objective of the APC and added that the current state of affairs in the PDP will not help them win the mandate of the people.

Omeiza Ajayi, [Vanguard News \(March 10th\)](#) explains.

Reacting, the PDP's National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, said that the ongoing reconciliation exercise geared at reuniting aggrieved members and also, the alleged inability of the APC led government to address the nation's challenges "would give it a victory" in the 2023 elections. Alao Abiodun et al, [The Nation News \(March 10th\)](#) report.

On another note, former president, Goodluck Jonathan has called for synergy among President Buhari, Governors and security chiefs. This came after he led a delegation of politicians from Bayelsa State on a condolence visit to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa at the Government House in Asaba, Delta State. While speaking to newsmen, Jonathan debunked the rumoured interest in the 2023 presidential race. He described the reports as speculative saying his preoccupation was to "continue to serve God, humanity, Africa and the world". However, analysts have questioned Jonathan's response stating that he did not clearly state that he has no interest in the 2023 elections. Charles Ajunwa and Omon-Julius Onabu, [This Day News \(March 6th\)](#) write.

Still on the 2023 elections, former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, has called for unity among members of the PDP. This is coming ahead of the PDP's zonal executive election. Atiku urged other zones to emulate the South-East zone, and charged party members to respect supremacy and internal democracy as a guarantee to a successful future. Onyekachi Eze, [New Telegraph News \(March 7th\)](#) report.

Meanwhile, the Minister for Women Affairs, Pauline Tallen has called for equal representation in the APC's leadership positions. Leading delegation to the national secretariat of the APC, Tallen filed a petition for the review of the party's constitution. She noted the role women play in elections and called for 50% representation for both genders among others. Tallen added that "no gender, women or men should occupy more than 60% as against the other". John Alechenu, [Punch News \(March 11th\)](#) explains.

In new reports, Oludayo Tade in [the African Report \(March 9th\)](#), encapsulates Nigerians retrogressing "frustrations" that shifted the mandate from the PDP after 16 years in power to the APC, as the APC's 2015 election manifestos

claimed to respond to the voices of the citizens. Tade cited the challenges bedeviling the nation and noted the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), which stressed "corruption" as a major challenge in the country. The detailed findings from an NBS survey confirmed bribery seen mostly amidst "public officials and males".

Insecurity: FG, Osinbajo, Others, Propose Actions for Improved Security, President Buhari Issues an Ultimatum to the Service Chiefs, Mattawale goes Hard on Bandits

Security concerns over the safety of students in schools has led to the introduction of a routine strategic school security system by the Federal Capital Territory Administration Authority (FCTA), also known as School Security Guidelines Watch (SSGW). In a bid to ensure the safety of students, the Acting Director of Administration and Finance, FCTA Education Secretariat, Mallam Leramoh Abdulrazaq, at the end of a stakeholder meeting in Abuja, explained that the SSGW initiative is a preventive measure as the safety of the students is a priority. [Leadership News \(March 6th\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo has reemphasized the need for state policing in tackling insecurity. Osinbajo also stressed on the implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP), in addressing the ongoing Farmers/Herders crisis. He made the disclosure at the International Conference on Patriotism, Security, Governance and National Development. Osinbajo called for collaboration and unity among citizens in addressing the security challenges in the nation. He reiterated efforts by National Economic Council (NEC) to address the Farmers/Herders conflict. Johnbosco Agbarachukwu, [Vanguard News \(March 6th\)](#) explains.

Also, the Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai proposed the use of "force against bandits to stop their menace in the country". El-Rufai made the proposal while presenting the annual security report for 2020. The report which revealed 937 persons killed also disclosed about 1,972 kidnapped by bandits among others. Speaking on the security situation in the state, El-Rufai further recommended the proper funding of security outfits in the state and also the concept of state policing. He restated that the Kaduna State

government will not consider negotiating with bandits as an option. Alfred Olufemi, [Premium Times \(March 10th\)](#) and [Pulse News \(March 11th\)](#) detail.

Still on insecurity, President Muhammadu Buhari has charged the newly appointed service chiefs to speed up activities in liberating the country from its current state of insecurity. The president, however, upheld the service chiefs to an ultimatum of “few weeks to deliver on their mandate”. The Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), Lucky Irabor, responded on behalf of the service chiefs, saying, they will not fail in their responsibilities, reiterating their mandate as clear. Jonathan Nda-Isaiah, [Leadership News \(March 6th\)](#) reports.

Following the Presidents charge, Tarkaa David [Leadership News \(March 7th\)](#) reports a major

reorganization and appointments of senior military officers across the Nigerian Army (NA) formations, departments and units, in order to reposition the army for optimum performance.

On a similar note, the Governor of Zamfara State, Bello Mattawale has issued a 2-month ultimatum to unrepentant bandits “to key into peace dialogue just as the federal government is set to deploy additional 6,000 soldiers to the state”. This comes in the wake of the abducted Jangebe school girls recently released. Mattawale stressed on the security challenges and the effort to curb the situation, expressing that some bandits are not willing to join the program. He issued directives to support the fight against insecurity in the state. Attahiru Ahmed Gusau, [Tribune News \(March 9th\)](#) explains.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V.

Dr. Vladimir Kreck, Resident Representative
Vera Ali, Administrative Assistant, and Adams Adamu, Intern/ Editors Press Review

Nigeria Office

www.kas.de/nigeria

www.facebook.com/kas.nigeria

vladimir.kreck@kas.de / vera.ali@kas.de



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