

## 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 COVID-19 and the situation in Nigeria.

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### **Covid-19: Nigeria Acquires Storage Freezers for Pfizer/Biontech Vaccines, Rolls out N10bn for Local Production of Vaccines, Begins Rapid Response Register for Urban Poor Affected by the Pandemic**

As world demand for Covid-19 vaccines continues to rise, Nigeria has acquired ultra-cold freezers needed to store the Pfizer/Biontech vaccines in readiness of its arrival. The federal government had disclosed that it will be receiving about 100,000 Covid-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Biontech through the COVAX co-financing public-private facility. According to the Executive Director of the primary HealthCare Development Agency (NPHCDA), Faisal Shuaib, the country now has enough capacity for storing the vaccines. Nike Adebawale, [Premium Times \(19<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) details.

Meanwhile, the federal government has rolled out N10bn for the local production of the Covid-19 vaccines and also asked the African Union to provide the country with 10 million Covid-19 vaccines. This was disclosed by the Minister of Health, Osagie Ehanire, during the Presidential Task Force (PTF) briefing. Ehanire said that the funds would be used to “explore options for licensed production in collaboration with recognised institutions”. He added that plans are already in motion for the arrival of the vaccines. Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze, [Guardian News \(19<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) and Reuters, [Daily Maverick \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) explain.

Still on vaccines, the Director General of Nigeria’s National Agency for Food Drug and Administration Control (NAFDAC), Mojisola Adeyeye, has warned citizens against fake Covid-19 vaccines. This is coming in the wake of the Covid-19 vaccine arriving to the country. According to Adeyeye, no Covid-19 vaccine has been approved by NAFDAC. [Aljazeera News \(15<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) reports.

On the same note, the Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello, has faulted the effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccines available, alleging that the vaccines are meant to “kill”. Bello stated that there is “no cure for HIV and many other diseases troubling mankind”. He cited a past event where the Pfizer polio vaccines allegedly crippled and killed children in Kano State. Reacting, the National Publicity Secretary of the APC, Ifeanyi Emeka, while criticizing the statement asked citizens to ignore Bello’s allegation as it stems from an alleged presidential ambition. Soni Daniel and Luminous Jannamike, [Vanguard News \(20<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) explains.

A survey conducted across 36 states of the country and Abuja by SBM Intelligence indicates that about “35.9 % citizens are unwilling to take the COVID-19 vaccine, while 24.1% are yet to decide whether or not to take the vaccine”. According to the report, titled: ‘COVID in Nigeria–The second wave’, only 39.9% of respondents showed interest in taking vaccines. [The Cable \(20<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the ravaging Covid-19 cases in the country has led to an increased demand for oxygen. According to Chioma Obinna of [Vanguard News \(17<sup>th</sup> January\)](#), “almost 100% of patients are currently on oxygen, struggling to pull through”. With the increased demand, most medical facilities in Nigeria are overstretched. The Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Akin Abayomi, revealed that a patient with the critical case of the Corona Virus may need 6 cylinders of oxygen in one day. The President of Nigeria Medical Association, (NMA), Innocent Ujah, has recommended the establishment of oxygen production facilities across the country.

In developing news, President Muhammadu Buhari has approved N6.45bn for the nationwide establishment of gas plants in 38 locations across the country which would facilitate the treatment of Covid-19 patients who need oxygen. This was disclosed by the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, at the National Economic Council meeting presided by Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo. Zainab added that will help to address the oxygen crisis in the country. Johnbosco Agbakwuru, [Vanguard News \(22<sup>nd</sup> January\)](#) reports.

On another note, the federal government has set in motion an emergency intervention database, known as the Covid-19 Rapid Response Register (RRR) for urban poor made poorer by the pandemic. The scheme which was launched by Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo aims to disperse N5,000 monthly to 1 million households in the next six months. According to Osinbajo, 24.3 million citizens equivalent to 5.7 million households have been registered. Williams Ukpe, [Nairametrics \(20<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) details.

### **Experts Fault Insecurity, Others, for the Rising Inflation, Predict Recovery for 2021, Smuggling on the Rise**

As the country continues to battle the dwindling effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy, experts have faulted the deteriorating security situation in the food producing part of the country for the rising inflation. According to the Nigeria Bureau

of Statistics (NBS), Inflation rose to 15.75% in December 2020. This is as a result of the increase in the prices of food products, transportation, medical services, among others. Nike Poopola and Femi Asu write in [Punch News \(16<sup>th</sup> January\)](#).

In an interview with Wale Okunrinboye, CFA, Head Investment Research, Sigma Pensions, Samuel Onyekanmi of [Nairametrics \(19<sup>th</sup> January\)](#), reports that Okunrinboye predicts a “lingering impact of the main shocks to 2020 inflation”. He spoke of several factors that led to the inflation rise and predicts an ease in inflation rate due to the reopening of land border. Okunrinboye projects however a 19% inflation rise this year and foresees a raise in the MPR by the Apex Bank. He expects the country to “exit recession by the second quarter of the year assuming there is no re-introduction of lockdown measures”.

On the same note, Geoff Iyatse, Assistant Business Editor of [The Guardian News \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#), examined the challenges thrown up by the ravaging Covid-19. Iyatse quoted experts opinion on how to address the inflation challenge. According to the former director-general of West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management, Akpan Ekpo, “the rising misery index would push more Nigerians below the poverty line and escalate social tensions, except urgent measures are taken to check it”. Also, other experts have emphasized on the importance of managing the crisis, establishing a relationship between production and inflation. They advised that increased local production will help fight inflation.

On another note, the Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR) of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has projected a medium term rise in Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), following the surge in oil price and positive vaccine trajectory. In addition, they cited the rise in food prices and naira adjustments as part of the challenges disrupting the Nigerian economy. OPEC predicts a Nigerian economy recovery among others for the year 2021. Emmanuel Addeh, [This Day News \(15<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) details.

In developing news, President Muhammadu Buhari had a meeting with the Beninese President, Patrice Talcon over the re-emergence of smuggling across border. President Talcon submitted a draft agreement regarding the stationing of officers at the border. The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of both countries. [The African Report \(21<sup>st</sup> January\)](#)+ explains. Previously to the meeting, among others Matthieu Millecamps of [the African Report \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#), analysed the alleged re-emergence of

smuggling following the reopening of the Benin-Nigeria border.

### **President Buhari Optimistic on a New Nigeria-America Relationship, Biden Lifts Nigeria Immigration Ban by Trump**

President Buhari while congratulating Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their inauguration as President and Vice President of the United States of America, expressed optimism that the new “presidency mark a strong point of cooperation and support for Nigeria as well as the African continent”. He also said “We look forward to the Biden presidency with great hope and optimism for strengthening of existing cordial relationships, working together to tackle global terrorism, climate change, poverty and improvement of economic ties and expansion of trade.” [Premium Times \(21<sup>st</sup> January\)](#) reports. Also, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar has asked President Biden to support Nigeria in its war against insurgency and also review the travel restrictions placed on the country. This was contained in a goodwill message to President Biden, and Vice President Harris. Samuel Oamen, [The Nation \(22<sup>nd</sup> January\)](#) writes.

In the wake of his inauguration, President Biden has lifted the immigration ban placed on Nigeria by former President Donald Trump. Biden asked the State Department to begin processing the visa for individuals from the affected country. Victoria Ojeme and Dirisu Yakubu, [Vanguard News \(22<sup>nd</sup> January\)](#) reports.

### **APC and PDP in Fresh Squabble over Obaseki’s N18bn Loan Bid, Tension in PDP over Jonathan-APC’s Relationship**

The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are in verbal argument over an alleged secret N18bn loan bid by the Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki. This was revealed in an online statement by a chieftain of the APC, Prince John Mayaki. Mayaki accused Obaseki of “using debts to recover funds paid to PDP’s tax collectors”. Responding, the PDP’s Publicity Secretary, Chris Nehikhare, stated that the allegation is an attempt to gain sympathy from the public. Nehikhare urged the APC to accept the result of the past gubernatorial election. Bisi Olaniyi, [The Nation \(20<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) explains. Nehikhare further berated the former National Chairman, Oshiomhole and Mayaki for

criticisms. He said that “Obaseki, is not profligate like Oshiomhole and this much is evident from the governor’s leadership style as well as the manner in which he has managed the state’s resources to the admiration of local and foreign partners, who continue to commend the prudent, transparent and judicious allocation of resource in pursuit of sustainable development and economic advancement in the state”. Oluwatosin Omojuyigbe, [Punch News \(21<sup>st</sup> January\)](#) writes.

On another note, there is mounting tension in the PDP over the relationship between former President Goodluck Jonathan and some leaders of the APC, and its implication on the forthcoming 2023 elections amid party crisis rocking the PDP, particularly the party leadership. Gbade Ogunwale of [The Nation \(19<sup>th</sup> January\)](#), cited last week’s attack by the Rivers State, Governor, Wike Nyesom on the PDP’s National Leader, Uche Secondus. Speculations indicate that Wike’s attack allegedly stems from Secondus declaration of Jonathan’s eligibility for the 2023 elections. In addition, Ogunwale believes that the APC is allegedly trying to field Jonathan as the call for zoning heightens. Justifying this with the Constitutional Amendment Bill Number 16, which states that a “vice president or a deputy governor who succeeds and completes the tenure of a president or governor can only run for the office one more time”, Ogunwale is optimistic that APC will offer the ticket to Jonathan.

On internal party disputes, the APC has initiated moves to reconcile the Kwara State Governor, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq; the Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, and the Minister of State for Transportation, Gbemisola Saraki. The disagreement between them was as a result of the removal of the APC state Chairman, Bashir Bolarinwa, by the Buni-led caretaker committee replacing him with his deputy, Samari Abdullahi. Commending the reconciliation attempt, the Kwara State APC Stakeholders, Ambassador Nurudeen Muhammed, described it as a “life-saving decision” following reports of an alleged attempt to disrupt forthcoming membership registration of the party in the state. Hammed Shittu, [This Day News \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) writes.

### **Insecurity: Canada to Support Nigeria’s Fight Against Insecurity with \$10m, Governor Wike Demands New Service Chiefs, Ekiti Supports Amotekun with N1,4bn**

The acting Canadian High Commissioner Nicholas Simard has revealed plans by Canada to support Nigeria’s fight against insecurity with \$10m. Disclosing this during a visit to the Minister of Police Affairs, Muhammad Maigari Dingyadi, while commending the efforts of the Nigeria Police Force, Simard emphasized on the “need to build the capacity of personnel of the Police Force, among other things to diminish violence”. Nicholas Kalu, [The Nation News \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) reports.

A report titled “Violent Incidents Report: December 2020” disclosed that in December 2020 about 348 people were killed in violent attacks across Nigeria. The report, revealed that 315 were civilians while 33 others were security officers. In addition, a total of 411 people were kidnapped across the country. Adejumo Kabir, [Premium Times \(19<sup>th</sup> December\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike has joined the call for the removal of the service chiefs “in order to allow for fresh ideas and strategy in tackling the threats to internal insecurity in Nigeria”. Wike stated this at the 2021 Armed Forces Remembrance Day. Wike emphasized on the increased insurgents activities. He asked the service chiefs to retire and give way for “fresh hands and ideas” towards tackling insecurity. Idowu Bankole, [Vanguard News \(16<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) details.

On another note, the Ekiti State Government has allocated N1.4bn to Amotekun. Disclosing this at press conference, the state commissioner for budget Femi Ajayi, stated that funds will help support the security architecture in its war against kidnapping, herders/farmers clash and other forms of criminality. Explaining the budget provisions, Ajayi stated that the state government allocated N550m for the purchase of drones. [All African News \(17<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) and [The Nation \(18<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) explain.

In developing news, there is a brewing controversy over an alleged employment scam in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) issued a 7 days ultimatum threatening oil and gas operations in the region with hostility if the issue is not resolved quickly. This was contained in a statement signed by the spokesperson of MEND,

Gbomo Jomo. MEND alleges that politician are substituting candidates of the employment for their ward. [Sahara Reporters \(19<sup>th</sup> January\)](#) details.

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