

## 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: 19% of Nigerians Fully Vaccinated

The Federal Government, through the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Faisal Shuaib, announced it had been able to fully vaccinate 21.236.404 residents with Covid-19 vaccine, equaling 19.05% of its eligible population. At the same time, 28.426.564 people were partially vaccinated, amounting to 25.4% of the eligible population. According to Shuaib, more aggressive actions are needed to be taken to fast-track the process to achieve herd immunity in Nigeria. The Director General of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Ifedayo Adetifa, who additionally presented an update on the state of affairs regarding epidemics in the country, said the NCDC was making efforts to keep the various infectious disease outbreaks at bay. While giving updates on Monkeypox infections in the country, Adetifa said as of Mid-June, 41 confirmed Monkeypox cases and one death had been reported. Onyebuchi Ezigbo, [This Day Live News \(22<sup>nd</sup> June\)](#) reports.

### President Buhari Responds to Calls for Fuel Subsidy Removal, International Air Transport Association Says Nigeria Responsible for 25% of Unremitted Revenues, Nigeria Appeals to Allies for USD 13 Billion Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline, UN Task Nigeria on Net-Zero Carbon Emission by 2060, Osinbajo Says Nigeria's Growing Population a "Ticking Time Bomb"

President Muhammadu Buhari has argued that in spite of last year's plans to remove fuel subsidy, the political events unfolding this year as well as consultations with stakeholders made the move increasingly untenable. The President, in an interview he granted Bloomberg, argued: "Most western countries are today implementing fuel subsidies. Why would we remove ours now?" Last week, the World Bank in its Nigerian Development Update (NDU) said the special intervention lending, which spreads across power, agriculture and manufacturing among others, was crowding out risk-adjusted lenders. But Buhari told Bloomberg that the Central Bank of Nigeria funding arrangements align with the country's developmental agenda, adding that orthodox approaches had failed the country in the past. Geoff Iyatse et al., [The Guardian News \(22<sup>nd</sup> June\)](#) reports.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has disclosed that airlines' unremitted revenues from Nigeria (known as blocked funds) has risen

to USD 450 million, representing 25% of the total amount of international carriers' funds held back by central banks of many countries. The IATA Regional Vice-President for Africa and the Middle East, Kamil Alawadhi, said airfares for flights to Nigeria charged by international carriers were three times higher than what obtains in other countries that do not retain airlines' revenues and expressed fear that the fares might continue to rise until Nigerians would not be able to afford international travel and that would eventually weaken the nation's economy. He further said IATA would go to Nigeria to renew negotiation for the remittance of the funds. Yet Alawadhi maintained that "the continuous holding of airlines funds and the high fares charged Nigerian passengers would eventually damage Nigeria down the road". Chinedu Eze, [This Day Live News \(20<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) writes.

The Federal Government on Monday charged all parties involved in the construction of the USD 13 billion Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline – Nigeria, Niger and Algeria – to fast-track measures for the completion of the multibillion dollar project. It said this was vital because many European countries were currently asking Nigeria and its partners for alternative gas supply due to the negative impact on gas supply by the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. At the Ministerial Meeting on the Re-activation of the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline Project in Abuja, Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, said the three nations must hasten efforts to start supplying gas to Europe because many European countries were now asking for alternative gas supply from Africa. He even went so far as to argue that gas had become a weapon of war between Ukraine and Russia which caused the necessity for African gas. The Algerian Minister of Energy and Mines, Mohamed Arkab, said the declaration signed by the three parties and the roadmap agreed on were indeed tangible signs of willingness of all parties to move further on the project. Arkab believes the project will have a significant and positive impact on the socio-economic development of the involved countries. Okechukwu Nnodim, [The Punch News \(21<sup>st</sup> June\)](#) reports.

The United Nations (UN) has urged Nigeria to vigorously pursue the implementation of national climate change plans, including the Nationally Determined Contributions, Energy transition Plan and Climate Change Act, and ramp up its ambition towards meeting net-zero carbon emissions by 2060. The UN High Level Champion for COP26, Nigel Topping, made this call during a visit to Nigeria

to engage with government on the implementation of national climate change plans. On a successful implementation, Topping said: "The mobilization of both State and non-State actors – including businesses, academia and civil society – is essential to improve the investment climate of Nigeria so that the country can in turn attract the right investments that will accelerate the transition into a low-carbon and resilient economy." Sulaimon Salau, [The Guardian News \(19<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) reports.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo called for effective and efficient management of Nigeria's booming population. Speaking at a high-level dialogue on Nigeria's new National Population Policy, Osinbajo, represented by Special Adviser to the President on Social Investment Maryam Uwais, said population growth without adequate management is "cancerous and a ticking time bomb". He added that Nigeria needs to invest heavily in human capital in order to experience economic growth. "It is time for us as a country to engage with sensitive matters because the very stability of our future depends on these conversations," the Vice President urged. Outlining the advantages of a high population, he mentioned increased taxes, productivity and a large workforce, among others as benefits. He, however, said when a high population is not properly managed, it leads to increased crime rates, unemployment, environmental pollution and more issues. Chiamaka Okafor, [The Premium Times News \(23<sup>rd</sup> June\)](#) reports.

### **INEC Declares APC's Biodun Oyebanji Winner of Ekiti State Governorship Elections, Court Stops INEC From Ending Voter Registration, INEC Agrees to Extend Voter Registration, Supreme Court Strikes Out Buhari's Suit Challenging the Electoral Act, Chief Justice of Nigeria Responds to Protest Letter by Supreme Court Justices**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Biodun Oyebanji, the winner of the Ekiti State governorship election. The Returning Officer for the election and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Kayode Adebawale, announced the results. The APC scored 187,057 votes to defeat its closest rival, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), getting 82,211 votes, and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which got 67,457 votes along with 13 other parties that participated in Saturday's governorship election. Out of the 360,753 votes cast, the total valid

votes in the election were 351,865. Noah Banjo, [The Punch News \(19<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) reports.

The Federal High Court in Abuja on Monday issued an interim order restraining the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from going ahead with its plan to end the ongoing voter registration exercise on June 30. The judge, Mobolaji Olajuwon, made the interim order in a ruling on an application for an interim injunction by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and 185 other concerned Nigerians. According to a statement by SERAP on Monday, the applicants filed the suit after INEC extended the deadline for the conduct of primaries by political parties by six days, from June 3 to June 9, but "failed to also extend the online pre-registration which ended May 30, 2022 and the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) ending June 30, 2022." [Premium Times News \(20<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) reports.

There was confusion at the House of Representatives on Wednesday over the June 30 deadline set by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for suspension of its Continuous Voter Registration. The House had on Wednesday last week, urged INEC to extend the deadline by 60 days to enable more eligible Nigerians to register, get their Permanent Voter Cards and participate in the 2023 general elections. The Chairman of the House Committee on Electoral Matters, Aisha Dukku, announced that INEC had expressed its readiness to extend the deadline. She could, however, not confirm how long and when the Commission would make the announcement. Leke Baiyewu, [The Punch \(23<sup>rd</sup> June\)](#) reports.

The Supreme Court on Friday struck out President Muhammadu Buhari and the Attorney General of the Federation's suit challenging Section 84(12) of the Electoral Act. The case was expunged on the grounds that it lacks the jurisdiction to entertain the suit and is an abuse of court process. Section 84 (12) of the legislation holds that, "no political appointee at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at the convention or congress of any political party for the purpose of the nomination of candidates for any election". There have been several debates regarding Section 84(12) of the amended Electoral Act 2022 which was assented to in February. Upon assenting to the Act, President Buhari had asked the National Assembly to delete the contended clause, however, the parliament declined the president's request. However, in its decision on Friday, the Supreme Court held that President Buhari having assented to the bill in

February, cannot turn around to challenge same Act. In a unanimous judgement delivered by Justice Emmanuel Agim the court said allowing the suit to have its way will amount to approbating and reprobating at the same time and no court of law shall allow that. [Channels Television \(24<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) reports.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Tanko Muhammad, has responded to a protest letter sent to him by 14 Justices of the Supreme Court complaining of poor welfare conditions and the deplorable state of the court. Premium Times had reported that the leaked memo, chronicling the operational challenges that have almost crippled the efficient adjudication of cases at the court, was the first of its kind in the court's 58-year history. CJN Muhammad responded to the leaked memo in a statement issued on Tuesday by his spokesperson Ahuraka Isah. He addressed the wide-ranging issues, including non-provision of diesel allowances for Justices, non-provision of equipped offices, accommodation and the complete set of vehicles for new Justices appointed two years ago, among others. For the full press statement, kindly follow the provided link. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [The Premium Times News \(21<sup>st</sup> June\)](#) reports.

### **Insecurity: President Buhari Sets Up National Early Warning Centre**

With the signing of Executive Order 12 by President Muhammadu Buhari, a National Centre for the Coordination of Early Warning and Response Mechanism has been established pursuant to Article 58 of the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Article 16 of the Protocol on the Mechanism related to Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. Under the ECOWAS instruments, including the 1993 Revised ECOWAS Treaty, each member state is to establish a national early warning centre to address issues related to threats to human security as part of the regional body's peace and security architecture. The Nigerian Centre is domiciled in the Office of the Vice President, and with the support of relevant national and transnational institutions will provide research, analysis and advisory on trends in the human security sector cutting across thematic areas as environment, public health and governance. The President had earlier approved the appointment of Chris Ngwodo as the Director General of the National Centre. [The Premium Times News \(17<sup>th</sup> June\)](#) reports.

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