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Nigeria Office

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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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President Buhari Inaugurates Dangote Refinery, Central Bank Raises Benchmark Lending Rate to 18.5%, Over 70% of Food Product Exported Abroad Rejected, Airline Operators Fault Federal Governments Delivery of Nigeria Air Planes Against Court Order, UK banned Nigerian Students from Bringing Spouses and Children

In Lagos, the inauguration of the world's largest single-train refinery, a 650,000 barrels per day facility built by Africa's richest man, Aliko Dangote, took place. President Muhammadu Buhari and the presidents from Togo, Ghana, Senegal, Niger Republic and Chad were present to mark the opening event. The President of Rwanda attended virtually. The refinery aims to alter the international energy landscape and will try to sanitize the country's petroleum sector by ending the smuggling of imported petrol outside the country. Presently, 80% of fuel in Africa is imported. Afreximbank, the largest financier of the over USD 19 billion Dangote refinery, disclosed that the world's most extensive petroleum refining facility would come into operation this month. Emmanuel Adede et al., [This Day Live News \(May 22nd\)](#) report.

On Wednesday, in a dedicated push to contain the nation's inflationary pressure, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) raised its benchmark lending rate from 18% to 18.5%. The CBN governor announced this after the bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting. The governor disclosed that the MPC voted to keep the cash reserve ratio at 32.5% while the liquidity ratio was retained at 30%. The CRR is the share of a bank's total customer deposit that must be kept with the central bank in the form of liquid cash, while the bank's liquidity ratio is the proportion of deposits and other assets they must maintain to be able to meet short-term obligations. Abdulkareem Mojeed, [Premium Times News \(May 24th\)](#) reports.

The Director-General of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Mojisola Adeyeye, reported that over 70% of food exports from Nigeria were rejected abroad. She expressed hope that the incidence of rejection of food exports in some European countries and the United States of America might soon become a thing of the past if collaboration between the agency and other government agencies at the ports is strengthened. NAFDAC was responding to the challenge by collaborating with the agencies at the docks by ensuring that goods

met the regulatory requirements of the importing countries and destinations. Furthermore, the deplorable state of export trade facilitation for regulated products leaving the country continues to be a severe cause for concern for the agency. Lara Adejoro, [Punch News \(May 22nd\)](#) reports.

Airline operators and aviation stakeholders have faulted the federal government's (FG) delivery of two Nigeria Air planes to herald the takeoff of the national carrier. Under the aegis of the Airline Operators of Nigeria (AON), the stakeholders criticized the project being launched on the last day of the current administration and in violation of extant court orders. Contrary to court orders, aviation minister Hadi Sirika had said that the aircraft would be unveiled in Nigerian colors in fulfilment of all promises the Buhari-led administration made in the aviation sector. The AON has described the new twist as a last-minute disobedience of a court order and called the commissioning of the national carrier a phantom project. The court gave the order upon receiving the application of the AON, urging it to stop the national carrier deal and withdraw the air transport license (ATL) already issued to Nigeria Air by the FG through the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA). Operators like Air Peace, United Nigeria, Azman and Top Brass claimed that the firm serving as transaction adviser was linked to the aviation minister. The local airlines further alleged that the ATL issued to Nigerian Air did not pass through average security clearance. Wole Oyebade, [The Guardian News \(May 26th\)](#) reports.

The United Kingdom (UK) announced on Tuesday that international students would not be allowed to bring their spouses, children and parents, to the country. Home secretary Suella Braverman announced that the restrictions would take place from January 2024. She further said that the ban would only apply for foreign undergraduate and postgraduate students on non-research courses. The UK government is cutting migration to reduce the number of immigrants taking critical sectors of its economy. Earlier this week, Braverman called for lower immigration and suggested more British people should be trained to do jobs commonly done by overseas workers such as lorry driving and fruit picking. According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Nigeria is the third highest country with students living and studying in the UK after China and India, making it the first in Africa. Biodun Busari, [Vanguard News \(May 24th\)](#) reports.

Supreme Court Dismisses PDP's Suit Against Tinubu and Shettima, Presidential Election Petition Court Orders Merger of Atiku, Obi and APM's Petitions Challenging Tinubu's Victory, President-Elect Bola Tinubu Gets Transition Report, Vows to Tackle Insecurity and Power Crisis, Senate Passes Bill to Compensate EndSARS Victims, House of Representatives Committee Indicts Oil Firms for Tax Evasion, Health Workers Begin Indefinite Strike

The Supreme Court has dismissed the suit filed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) seeking the disqualification of president-elect Bola Tinubu and vice president-elect Kashim Shettima as candidates in the last presidential elections. The lawsuit which alleged the inappropriate nomination of Tinubu's running mate for the elections, Shettima, implicitly sought to stop the president-elect from being sworn in as president on May 29. The court reasoned that PDP failed to show any harm it suffered because of the vice-president-elect's alleged double nomination. Agreeing with the Court of Appeal's earlier judgement dismissing the suit. The court awarded the cost of NGN 2 million against PDP and in favor of the respondents. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [Premium Times News \(May 26th\)](#) reports.

The Presidential Election Petition Court has ordered the merger of the cases filed by Atiku Abubakar of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP) and the Allied Peoples Movement (APM) to challenge Bola Tinubu's announcement as president-elect for the All Progressives Congress (APC). In a ruling detailing a report of its pre-hearing session on Obi's petition, the court ordered a consolidation of the three pending petitions. The panel's chair citing paragraph 50 of the first schedule of the Electoral Act 2022, said a merger of the petitions would serve the interest of justice. After harmonizing the suits, the court ordered Obi and the LP to prove their case within three weeks instead of the six weeks they initially requested. The court decided on May 30 for the commencement of the hearing of Obi's substantive petition. He is expected to conclude his case on June 23. Ameh Ejekwonyilo, [Premium Times News \(May 23rd\)](#) reports.

On Thursday, president-elect Bola Tinubu, pledged to address the security and power crises, among other challenges confronting the country. Tinubu, who was handed the transition report by president Muhammadu Buhari, promised to satisfy Nigerians shortly after his investiture with the

country's highest national honor of Grand Commander of Federal Republic, (GCFR) alongside the vice-president-elect, Kashim Shettima, who was honored with the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) by outgoing president Muhammadu Buhari. After handing over the transition documents and transferring the baton of service to Tinubu, Buhari said he was confident to leave Nigeria in "capable hands." The outgoing president left a note of advice for the incoming administration saying: "As we celebrate this auspicious occasion, let us not forget the immense responsibilities that come with leadership. The challenges facing our nation are significant and the president and vice-president have to address them with courage, wisdom, and compassion". Okechukwu Nnodim et al., [Punch News \(May 26th\)](#) report.

The Senate on Wednesday passed a legislative draft, in second reading, seeking to compensate victims of the EndSARS protest. President of the Senate Ahmed Lawan referred the bill to the Committee on Special Duties for further legislative input and report back to plenary in one week. The bill seeks to amend the National Emergency Management Agency Act. According to the sponsor, Gershom Bassey, the victims have been left to continually groan under the pains of injury inflicted by hoodlums during the protest. The senator said the eventual establishment of the fund and implementation of the recommendation of the judicial panel of inquiry and Senate Joint Committee on EndSARS would certainly bring assistance to the victims of the 2020 nationwide protests. Tope Omogbolagun, [Punch News \(May 24th\)](#) reports.

The House of Representatives ad hoc committee investigating the structure and accountability of joint venture business and production sharing contract of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has indicted several oil companies for alleged tax evasion to the amount of trillions of Naira. The committee also blamed and sought the prosecution of the chairperson of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mamman Nami, for allegedly not doing enough to recover the outstanding taxes from the oil companies. Nami rejected the accusation, saying his agency was working hard to bring all tax evaders to book. The committee report also showed that all international and national oil companies who enjoyed capital allowance in Nigeria had no certificate of acceptance of fixed asset as prescribed by the Industrial Inspectorate Act. The spokesperson for

the FIRS described the claim as untrue, telling Premium Times News the tax agency was investigating and prosecuting several tax offenders. [Premium Times News \(May 25th\)](#) reports.

The Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) and the Assembly of Health Care Professional Association (AHPA) have directed their members to embark on an indefinite strike. The health workers are demanding the immediate approval and implementation of the technical committee report on the consolidated health salary structure adjustment by the federal government (FG), prompt payment of the omission and shortfall of the Covid-19 hazard and inducement allowances of affected health workers in the federal health institutions as well as recognition of support health workers in hospital facilities in the payment of new hazard allowances. They further ask for payment and inculcation of peculiar allowances to health workers under the aegis of JOHESU and AHPA. The leadership of JOHESU issued a 15-day ultimatum to the FG over alleged inconsistencies of the government in the ongoing negotiations to adjust the consolidated health salary structure for health workers on their platforms. Lara Adejoro, [Punch News \(May 26th\)](#) reports.

Insecurity: Department of State Services Alleges Plot to Disrupt Inauguration, Military Leaders Meet to Strategize on Countering Terrorism, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps licenses 44 Private Guard Companies, Bandits Take Over Kainji National Park

Ahead of the May 29 presidential inauguration, the Department of State Services (DSS) has again raised the alarm of plans by what they call subversive elements to disrupt the program in some parts of the country. The Public Relations Officer urged the media as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) to shun fake news, false alarms and sensationalism ahead of the May 29 inauguration. He said the call was to guard against reports that could inflame division, tension and violence before and after the inauguration. According to him, these stakeholders aim to undermine security agencies' efforts at ensuring a peaceful inauguration and create fear among members of the public. Molly Kilete, [The Sun News \(May 26th\)](#) reports.

According to data from the Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC), the activities

of Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in Nigeria decreased by 15% in 2020 compared to 2019. Yet Nigeria still makes up 8% of the world's total fatalities from terrorist incidents in 2020. As both Nigeria and her neighboring countries Cameroon, Chad and Niger are affected by Boko Haram, it is crucial for these countries to meet and seek ways to diminish persisting threats more effectively, major general and security expert Christopher Musa maintained at the just concluded Africa Land Forces Summit (ALFS) 2023 in Côte d'Ivoire. Musa summarized the significance for Nigeria and African military leaders to come together and conference. Defense leaders attending the ALFS 23 exchanged knowledge with renowned academics and non-governmental experts as well as military members. The conference was attended by 39 African army commanders along with army commanders from Brazil, the United States and some European countries. In total, 46 countries attended ALFS 2023. Pearl Matibe, [Premium Times News \(May 23rd\)](#) reports.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) has issued operational licenses to 44 new private guard companies (PGC) in order to boost national security. According to NSCDC spokesperson, NSCDC Commandant General (CG) Abubakar Audi distributed the licenses on Thursday at the national headquarters. While issuing the licenses, Audi warned that it was not for business purposes alone but an opportunity to contribute their quota to the nation's security. The CG emphasized the importance of licensing as he warned that unlicensed PGCs would be arrested, prosecuted and their companies sanctioned for employment and deployment of unlicensed guards. Omeiza Ajayi, [Vanguard News \(May 25th\)](#) reports.

Bandits have reportedly taken over Kainji national park in Niger state. They have also established camps and forced staff to abandon their duty posts in the games reserve. After sustained attacks by the gunmen, the national park staff members subsequently abandoned their duty post as communities in the area also left their farms and other business activities. Sources from the communities around the park reported that over 200 gunmen are believed to be occupying the games reserve and have turned it into their camp. When contacted, the vice chairman of the local government area council confirmed the development, describing it as very worrisome and disturbing. Adelejo Ojo, [Blueprint News \(May 21st\)](#) reports.

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