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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: FG Commences Implementation of Policies for Economic Recovery, Records 65% Deficit in Oil Revenue Projections

As part of efforts to mitigate the negative effects of the Covid-19 on the economy, the federal government has commenced the implementation of its plans for economic stability with priority on small businesses and the economy as a whole, Ruth Okwumbu writes in [Naira metrics \(17th July\)](#). The government's initiative has led to the adoption of new strategies for economic growth and diversification. [Nigerian Tribune \(20th July\)](#) and Eromosele Abiodun et al, detail in [This Day News \(17th July\)](#). Similarly, the federal government has retained its monetary policy rate to support economic recovery, promote growth and stability. Bassey Udo, [Premium Times \(20th July\)](#) reports. On the same note, the federal government has launched a N15tn infrastructural development company to drive infrastructural development across the country. Obinna Chima and James Enejo write in [This Day News \(21st July\)](#).

Meanwhile, the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, has revealed that the ravaging effect of Covid-19 has thrown up new challenges in different sectors of the economy. Speaking at a seminar organized by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Ahmed disclosed that the Covid-19 distortions have led to a "65% decline in projected net revenues from the oil and gas sector in the first half of 2020 fiscal year". Latifat Opoola details in [Daily Trust \(20th July\)](#). However, the balance in Nigeria's Excess Crude Account (ECA) for the month increased by \$186,000, from about \$72.2m recorded last month. Bassey Udo of [Premium Times \(19th July\)](#) explains.

Still on the economy, the federal government has proposed the sum of N12.66trn as aggregate expenditure for 2021 on a deficit of N5.16trn to be financed by total loan packages of N4.28trn. Taiye Odewale, [BluePrint News \(21st July\)](#). However, development strategist Chiwuike Uba has urged the federal government to quickly intervene in the economic situation of the country. Lawrence Njoku, [Guardian News \(20th July\)](#) details. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives has passed a bill to strengthen Nigeria's financial system. Helen Orji details in [Guardian News \(24th July\)](#).

Covid-19: Federal Government Reveals October for Resumption of International Flights, Issues Guideline for Schools Resumption

The Minister for Aviation, Hadi Sirika, has disclosed that international flights may resume in October, however, he did not give a specific date for the resumption. Chike Olisah, [Naira Metrics \(21st July\)](#) explains. Responding to the initial report of 15th October, Sirika explained that the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) only issued a routine 90-day notice to airmen and that the ministry will announce the agreed resumption date, Chinelo Obogo, [Daily Sun \(21st July\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, the federal government has issued a 52-page guideline for resumption of schools. Azeizat Adedigba reports in [Premium Times \(17th July\)](#). With July 29 set as the deadline for schools across the country to meet the requirements for reopening, the Pediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN) has kicked against the reopening of schools, stressing that Covid-19 is still on the rise. Ernest Chinwo, [This Day News \(23rd July\)](#) reports. Supporting the view of PAN, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has stressed that Nigerian universities may not be reopened even if the federal government orders the resumption of all schools amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Adejumo Kabir, [Premium Times \(19th July\)](#) explains. An article by Iyabo Lawal, [Guardian News \(23rd July\)](#) examines the controversy of reopening schools in the country.

Probe of Corruption Cases Deepens as Reps Investigate Seized Assets by Anti-Graft Agencies

As investigation continues into the N81.5bn corruption case in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by the House of Representatives Committee on NDDC, the acting Managing Director of the NDDC, Kemebradikumo Pondei, has slumped during the probe hearing. Following this, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has condemned the All Progressives Congress (APC) led administration over incessant corruption cases. Kehinde Akintola of the [Nigerian Tribune \(21st July\)](#) writes. The PDP alleged that the "dramatic collapse" of the acting Managing Director of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Kemebradikumo Pondei, further exposed the mounting corruption that has bedeviled the government. Saawua Terzungwe, [Daily Trust \(20th July\)](#) details.

As the probe intensified, the Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, has alleged that 60% of the NDDC contracts were awarded to the National Assembly members. Deji Elumoye et al, [This Day News \(21st July\)](#) details. Responding to this, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila, has given a 2 day ultimatum to Akpabio to publish the names of the lawmakers who received contracts from the NDDC. Dyepekazah Shibayan, [The Cable News \(21st July\)](#) writes. In developing news, the Senate has asked the NDDC to report directly to President Buhari and refund unjustifiable funds paid to staff. Queen Esther Iroanusi, [Premium Times \(23rd July\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, a panel of the House of Representatives has begun the probe of seized assets by anti-graft agencies. The panel is investigating 332 unaccounted assets allegedly diverted by the ex-acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu. Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(21st July\)](#) details. The presidential panel has deepened the investigation of Magu, with the presidency urging citizens to prepare for the revelation of its findings. [The Nigerian Voice \(20th July\)](#) details. However, citizens have questioned Malami's role in the indictment of Magu. A prosecutor with the Special Presidential Investigation Panel for Recovery of Public Property, Oluwatosin Ojaomo, has accused Malami of withholding approval in the prosecution of assets forfeiture and criminal cases. Adelan Adepogba, [Punch News \(19th July\)](#) explains. Speaking on some of the allegations leveled against him, Magu has accused Malami of interfering with the efforts of the EFCC in the performance of its duty. Nicolas Ibekwe, detail in [Premium Times \(21st July\)](#), and [Premium Times \(22nd July\)](#). On the same note, Magu disclosed that seized vehicles were auctioned to the presidential villa and other government agencies. Eniola Akinkuotu writes in [Punch News \(22nd July\)](#). An article by the [Vanguard News \(21st July\)](#) further examines the effect of the ongoing investigation of the EFCC on the prospects of the APC's race for the 2023 presidency

Akeredolu Wins Ondo APC Ticket as PDP and APC Bicker over Leadership

The incumbent governor of Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu has won the All Progressives Congress (APC) party primary and has secured the party's ticket for the Ondo governorship race. Adejumo

Kabir, [Premium Times \(21st July\)](#) reports. This is coming as the former National Chairman of the APC, Adams Oshiomhole, restated the party's commitment to secure the Edo State governorship seat following his appointment as a member of the 49 man Edo Campaign Committee. Samson Adenekan, [Premium Times \(20th July\)](#) explains. However, the disagreement between the APC and the PDP has continued to reverbrate following Oshiomhole criticism of the Edo State governor, Godwin Obaseki, over campaign rallies. [The Nation \(22nd July\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, following the suit filed by the APC for the disqualification of Obaseki and his running mate from participating in the upcoming Edo State election, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has stated that it has no power to disqualify Obaseki. Chuks Okocha and Adibe Emenyonu write in [This Day News \(21st July\)](#).

Insecurity: Army Chief Calls for Citizens' Commitment against Insurgency as Senate Orders Service Chiefs to Retire, 5 Humanitarian Aid Workers Executed by Boko Haram

With the deteriorating security situation in the country, the Chief of Army Staff, Tukur Buratai, has called for commitment from citizens towards tackling the insecurity in the country. John Owen Nwachukwu, [Daily Post \(20th July\)](#) details. Buratai further disclosed that "90% of kidnapers, bandits, and armed robbers operating in the country are Nigerians". Johnbosco Agbakwuru, [Vanguard News \(20th July\)](#) writes. However, the rising insecurity in the country has led the Senate to call for the retirement of the service chiefs. Samson Atekojo Usman, [Daily Post \(21st July\)](#) details. Reacting to this, the presidency has disagreed with the Senate saying that removal of the service chiefs from office is a "presidential prerogative". Queen Esther Iroanusi of [Premium Times \(21st July\)](#) details.

In reaction to the growing insecurity in the North-West, the presidency has also condemned the killings in the southern part of Kaduna State. Bolaji Ogundele reports in [The Nation \(21st July\)](#). Responding to this, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has criticized the federal government's effort toward the wanton killings in the state. Mohammed I. Yaba, [Daily Trust \(23rd July\)](#) details. An article by the editor of [Guardian News \(20th July\)](#) examines the security situation in the

North-West region and the perpetrators of the crime.

Meanwhile, President Buhari has bemoaned the assassination of 5 humanitarian aid workers by the Boko Haram group. Upon the kidnap of the aid workers last month, Boko Haram had made a ransom demand of \$500,000. Omololu Ogunmade and Kingsley Nwezeh, [This Day News \(23rd July\)](#) write.

ECOWAS: Buhari and West African Leaders in Mali on Peace Mission as Political Crisis Deepens

As part of efforts to resolve the lingering political crisis in Mali, President Muhammadu Buhari arrived in Bamako, Mali, with other West African leaders to find solutions to the crisis rocking the nation. Fidelis Mbah writes in [Aljazeera News \(23rd July\)](#). The visit may end up with no solution as another summit has been fixed for Monday. [Vanguard News \(24th July\)](#) explains. The visit is a follow up to the briefing by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Special Mission Envoy to Mali, led by the former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan. The mission

had held a consultative meeting in Mali which recommended the formation of a government of national unity with members drawn from different interest groups in the country, including the ruling coalition, opposition parties, and the civil society. [Premium Times \(19th July\)](#) details.

Earlier, Jonathan was at the State House with the President of ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, to brief President Buhari on the situation in Mali, to which Buhari asked for a further briefing from the President of Niger, who is the Chairman of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, to decide on the way forward. Bolaji Ogundele writes in [The Nation \(21st July\)](#).

Mali was thrown into crisis after the constitutional court nullified results of 31 parliamentary seats in the polls held recently, awarding victory to some other contenders. The situation sparked protests led by a resistant group, M5, against President Keita, insisting that the Constitutional Court must be dissolved, and the President resign before peace can return to the country. Muideen Olaniyi, [Daily Trust \(21st July\)](#) details further.

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