

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: Schools to Resume October 12 as ASUU Insists on Strike, Report Reveals Rise in Poverty and Food Insecurity

The federal government has announced the reopening of schools with effect from October 12. Disclosing this, the Minister of Education, Adamu Adamu, said that all schools resuming would have to comply with the Covid-19 guidelines as directed by the Presidential Task Force (PTF). Adamu stated that the decision was made after consultation with stakeholders and the recent reports which showed a fall in the Covid-19 infection rate. He also said that schools defaulting on the Covid-19 guidelines for reopening will be sanctioned. Azeezat Adedigba, [Premium Times \(2nd October\)](#) explains.

Also speaking on this, the representative of the Minister of Education, Ben Goong, said the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), wrote to the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to work out modalities and decide when they intend to open. Reacting to the announcement of resumption, the Academic Staff Union of universities (ASUU) is insisting on the strike saying that "lecturers would not resume on an empty stomach". In an interview, the National President of ASUU, Biodun Ogunyemi, added that the federal government is not committed to negotiating with ASUU and faulted the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF), Ahmed Idris for allegedly withholding the salaries of lecturers. Friday Olokor et al, [Punch News \(6th October\)](#) write and [Vanguard News \(8th October\)](#) details.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo had lamented that millions of citizens are living below the poverty line. Osinbajo who made this call at a "2-day retreat, which reviewed the challenges of the relationship and interdependence between the executive and legislative arms of government" added that the Corona Virus has also worsened the unemployment and poverty rate in the country. He called for reinforced effort in tackling the issue. Seun Opejobi, [Daily Post News \(6th October\)](#) reports. In a similar vein, the World Bank (WB) has revealed a 2018 report stated that about 79 million Nigerians are living in extreme poverty. The WB who stated this in its "Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report" noting that the impact of the Covid-19 would further push the rate higher as the country already accounts for 20% of the poverty rate in Sub-Sahara Africa. Nigeria has the

highest rate among the 5 countries in the poverty projection with the Northern Region having the highest rating. Femi Asu, [Punch News \(8th October\)](#) explains. On a similar note, a report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), also revealed that 68% of households experienced food insecurity in August due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It also showed that many households have taken loans and about 1 in 4 households are in debt prior to the pandemic. Nike Popoola, [Punch News \(6th October\)](#) explains.

President Buhari Presents 2021 National Budget to NASS as Analysts Express Concern over Nigeria's Economic Outlook, PIB Controversy Continues

President Buhari presented the 2021 National Budget to the joint session of the National Assembly (NASS). Buhari made reference to the 2020 budget performance, the recent economic crisis with regards to crude oil price and the COVID-19 pandemic, among others. See full details of the budget speech by Abiola Odutola, [Nai-rametrics News \(8th October\)](#). President Buhari had earlier called for cooperation from the legislature in achieving his administration 9 points development agenda. He stated this at the Joint Executive-Legislative Retreat held at the State House Conference Centre, Aso Villa. President Buhari asked that the legislative agenda be made to fall in line with that of the executive. Lawrence Olaloye, [New Telegraph News \(6th October\)](#) details. Still on the budget speech, President Buhari also revealed that the country may slip back into another recession towards the end of the year. He however, assured of the federal government's commitment in resolving the crisis and lifting 100 million citizens out of poverty. Timileyin Omilana, [Guardian News \(8th October\)](#) and [Leadership News \(9th October\)](#) detail.

On the economy, the President of the Nigerian Economic Society (NES), Sarah Anyanwu, has raised concerns over the governance of the economy by President Buhari describing it as directionless and unstable. She criticized the Buhari administration on the exclusion of economists from its economic management team. Anyanwu noted the practice of the past administration that included a member of the NES as part of the economic team to advise on economic matter, saying that the non-inclusion in the Buhari administration has further plunged the economy. She called

for the swift passage of the bill that NES submitted to NASS. Reacting, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu, stated that the Presidential Economic Advisory Council “consists of the best 11 economists in the country”. He mentioned some of the team members and gave a brief profile about them. He added that Anyanwu may have been referring to the past administration in her statement. [Punch News \(7th October\)](#) explains.

On another note, analysts at Afrinvest Security criticized the revised Nigerian Economic Outlook by Fitch Ratings stating that “there were still severe foreign exchange and fiscal risks that show less optimistic view of the economy”. They pointed to the citation by Fitch Ratings on stable oil prices and the impact of the feared second wave of the Corona Virus on global oil demand which may have implications on the prices of oil. According to analysts at Afrinvest, there would also be a drop in foreign investment and remittance which would affect external reserve as there was a 15.5% drop this year. They further analysed the depreciation of the naira and the forex market. They opined that Fitch Ratings downplayed the implications of the measures adopted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and “would not be enough to significantly close the fiscal funding gap”. Taofik Salako, [The Nation News \(7th October\)](#) explains.

Meanwhile, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, has denied the rumour that the NASS is suspending the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) stating that deliberations on the bill have been moved to 2021. Sylva stated this at the Joint Executive - Legislative Retreat hosted at the State House Conference Centre, Aso Villa. He stated that the National Assembly would need more time to deliberate on the bill. Nnomdim Okechukwu, [Punch News \(7th October\)](#) details. On the same note, the Senate has reiterated its commitment in ensuring the swift passage on the bill. Naomi Sharang, [Herald News \(9th October\)](#) reports. David Whitehouse in [The African Report \(8th October\)](#) examined the provision of the PIB and analysed the regulatory framework of the Bill with regards to the NNPC. He cited the opinion of an economic analyst, Steve Hanke, who stated that the foreign currency reserve is low and Nigeria would want to raise money. On a more positive note, he quoted Hamish McArdle and Tom Edwards of the Baker Botts law firm in London, who said that “these projects would bring in \$47.6bn of new investment and raise Nigeria’s

current petroleum production by about 40%”. He noted concerns by Deji Olatoye over “moral hazard” and called for an improvement in governance. He mentioned some obstacles that may mar the implementation of the bill and stressed that “Raising money through a sale of stakes in NNPC will at best be a short-term fix unless Nigeria’s institutions are strengthened”.

Presidency Reacts to Agitations for Restructuring of the Nation

The Presidency has reacted to the call from citizens on the immediate restructuring of the country stating that “the Buhari administration will not succumb to threats and undue pressure over the matter”. Contained in a statement, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity, Garba Shehu described the mounting agitation as “unpatriotic” and added that any hasty decision would affect the welfare of 200 million Nigerians. He also said that any form of restructuring would follow due process. [Guardian News \(5th October\)](#) details.

Governors of the 36 states have joined other stakeholders on the call for restructuring the nation. The governors called for more delegated powers and funds to address rising complaints from residents in their states stating that the nation’s structure is unstable and on the verge of collapse. The Chairman of Nigeria Governors’ Forum, (NGF), and Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi, made the call at a press briefing stating that “if we do not re-jig the polity to meet the yearnings of all, it will consume us all because ‘resource constraint is a challenge for every state’”. Clifford Ndujihe et al, [Vanguard News \(5th October\)](#) and Friday Olorok et al, [Punch News \(4th October\)](#) report. On the same note, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue state has advised the federal government to heed to calls for the nation’s restructuring. Ortom who said this through his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Terver Akase made reference to the reaction by the presidency labeling the call as ‘unpatriotic outbursts’. He added that Nigeria is a democratic nation and the call is in line with the provisions of the constitution on freedom of expression and as such, the federal government should listen to the people. Peter Duru, [Vanguard News \(7th October\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, an editorial on Nigeria’s independence by [Punch News \(7th October\)](#) analysed the

numerous call for the restructuring of the country. The editorial listed some stakeholders who made the call including the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Enoch Adeboye, and also outlined some of the challenges bedeviling the nation. It analysed the practice before the military rule in Nigeria and compared the system of government Nigeria operates to that of some foreign countries. It stressed on the importance of restructuring and the need to listen to the complaints of citizens.

Tension Mounts as Ondo State Governorship Election Nears

Ahead of the Ondo State governorship election slated for October 10, there are concerns over the safety of voters as recent reports have shown a clash between alleged political thugs of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Akure, Ondo State which left casualties. Security officers were deployed to contain the situation. Speaking on this, the Spokesperson of the Ondo State Governor Rotimi Akeredolu Campaign Organisation, Richard Olabole Olatunde, blamed the PDP for the clash stating that the PDP is allegedly seeking other means to decimate the support of Akeredolu. Responding, the PDP governorship candidate Eytayo Jegede criticized the APC for the incident stating that their intention was to allegedly create chaos and fear to prevent citizens from voting. Larry Nwabuoko, [Online Nigeria News \(5th October\)](#) reports. However, some of the candidates for the election have signed a peace pact to ensure violence-free election with a promise to accept its outcome. The pact which was anchored by the former Head of State, Abdulsalami Abubakar of the National Peace Committee (NPC) was signed by Akeredolu of the APC, Jegede of the PDP, Agboola Ajayi of the Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) among others, to assure citizens of their commitment to peaceful elections. Dayo Johnson, [All Africa News \(6th October\)](#) writes.

Similarly, President Buhari has assured citizens of his commitment to ensure free and fair elections in Ondo State. Rallying his support for Akeredolu, at the grand finale of the APC governorship election campaign, President Buhari expressed his commitment towards credible and fair elections. In attendance were the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, the Chairman of the APC National Caretaker Committee and Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala

Buni, the Chairman of the APC National Campaign Council for Ondo State Governorship election and Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, among others. Chuks Okocha et al, [This Day News \(8th October\)](#) report.

The Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Adamu, has reassured citizens of peaceful elections stating that the Nigeria Police will be on alert in maintaining law and order in accordance with the Electoral Act during the election. The force spokesman, Frank Mba, who represented the IGP stated that security officers have been deployed to Ondo State to coordinate the election. He called for professionalism in the enforcement of their duties. [Guardian News \(3rd October\)](#) explains. In a similar vein, Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has charged electoral officers to be of good conduct as they work towards ensuring a successful election. He called for accountability and professionalism. [Daily Times \(8th October\)](#) writes. INEC also added that about 1.4 million voters would partake in the election process. The Ondo State electoral commissioner, Rufus Akeju, gave the figure of verified eligible voters to news men in Akure, the state capital. [Leadership News \(9th October\)](#) reports.

On another note, the disagreement between Governor Akeredolu and Ajayi who was the Deputy Governor and running under the platform of the ZLP has heightened. Akeredolu stated that Ajayi is allegedly "greedy" as he oversees 2 ministries and receives N13m monthly making him the highest paid deputy governor in Nigeria among others. Responding, Ajayi said that the governor's claims erroneously gives the indication that he was collecting the sums illegally. Ajayi, who said this through his media aide Allen Sowore, accused Akeredolu and his family of corruption. Joshua Oluwole details in [Premium Times \(3rd October\)](#). Speaking at the debate organised by the state broadcasting corporation, Akeredolu added that his first term administration was "used to initiate policies that would prepare a good ground to push the state towards the pact of industrialisation in line with the vision of the founding fathers of Western Nigeria, saying "my second term shall be a positive reference point in Nigeria". He debunked the corruption allegation indicting him and his family. [Tribune News \(4th October\)](#) explains.

Still on the Ondo State election, Nwokoye Mpi of [The African Report \(8th October\)](#) analysed the

growing tension as the Ondo State governorship election draws near and the APC's expectation in the election. He looked at the past relationship between Akeredolu and Mimiko and the influence of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a longstanding member and National Leader of the APC in the 2016 Ondo State election in comparison to the just concluded Edo State election last month. Mpi cited the view of Gbenga Abimbola, a political analyst on the Tinubu influence, who said that "the Tinubu factor has never worked in Ondo State since 2012". He also spoke of the speculations of Tinubu contesting for the 2023 presidential election. Nwokoye examined the "3 horses" believed to be the strongest contenders of the Ondo State election. Concluding, Mpi looked at the recent policies by the federal government which may largely influence decision of the people in the Ondo State election.

Insecurity: Outrage as Citizens Protest #End-SARS Violation, IGP Bans SARS Operations, NASS Investigates

Citizens have condemned the alleged brutality and extreme abuse of human rights by security officers, especially, the activities of officers under the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force calling for the dissolution of the unit with the #EndSARS hashtag. [Sahara Reporters \(3rd October\)](#) details. Citizens have also embarked on street protest in Edo, Imo, Delta, and the FCT. There were reports of violence in some areas and arrests of protesters by security officers. Kingsely Omonobi et al, [Vanguard News \(9th October\)](#) explain. Following the development, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Adamu Mohammed, has banned the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) and other Tactical Squads of the force from operating on Nigerian roads. In a statement by the Police Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, the new directive also prohibits the enforcement of duties in non-duty wears among others. Ifeoluwa Adediran and Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(4th October\)](#) writes. Supporting this, the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) commended the directive of the IGP and called for assurance in the enforcement of the ban. On the same note, the FSARS Commissioner of Police, Imohimi Edgal, has begun the implementation of the new directive from the IGP. He said that officers have been withdrawn from routine patrols and firearms would be given to officers on guard duties and response units only. Odita Sunday et al, [Guardian News \(6th October\)](#) explains. Also,

the Minister of Police Affairs, Muhammad Dingyadi, has disclosed that the Federal Ministry of Police Affairs will investigate the allegations of human right abuses against officers of the FSARS. Kayode Oyero, [Punch News \(5th October\)](#) reports. Dingyadi also called for the reform of the sector and professionalism in the performance of duties.

The Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, has equally condemned the activities of police officers who harass, assault and sometimes kill innocent Nigerians. He said this after a meeting with the IGP to discuss ways to address the situation. He criticized the methods of the SARS adding that erring officers will be punished and prosecuted. Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(4th October\)](#) explains. Similarly, the Minister for Youth and Sports, Sunday Dare, former Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and former Vice President Atiku Abubaker, criticized the constant violation of human rights by security officers who are supposed to ensure the safety of lives and called for the federal government's decision in addressing the issue. Williams Uke, [Nairametrics \(4th October\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International (AI) has criticized the ban by the IGP stating that, "This is yet another lame attempt to rein in this unit of the Nigerian police which is notorious for the widespread torture and other ill-treatment of Nigerians". The Nigerian Director of AI, Osai Ojigbo, added that with the proliferation of abuse of human rights by SARS, the federal government needs to do more. [Vanguard News \(7th October\)](#) details.

In new developments, the National Assembly has commenced investigations into the activities of the FSARS and SARS. The Senate has charged the Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters, led by Senator Opeyemi Bamidele to handle the issue. On the same note, the House of Representatives is partnering with other stakeholders to amend the 1999 constitutions to provide stiffer punishment for erring officers. The Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, however dismissed the idea of dissolving the unit but rather called for reform of SARS. Henry Umoru et al, [Vanguard News \(8th October\)](#) explains. Also, the Rivers State Police Command has set up a team that will oversee the reform of the unit and the implementation of the directive from the IGP. [Vanguard News \(9th October\)](#) report.

As for the North East of the country, [The African Report \(3rd October\)](#) examined the history of Lake Chad and the Lake Chad Coast which it described as the region with least peaceful countries in Africa according to the 2020 Global Terrorism Index Report. It cited data collected from interviews

conducted in the region and its close border countries which revealed the consequences of the drying lake on livelihood and stability, noting the importance of replenishing the Lake for stability in the region.

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