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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.

Content

Mixed Feelings over the State of the Nation at 60 Years of Independence, President Buhari Addresses the Nation

Excitement as NASS Resumes Sitting, Reviews Petroleum Industry and Water Resources Bill, Buhari Will Submit 2021 Budget

Outrage as Labour National Unions Halt Nationwide Protest over Electricity / Petrol Hike, Analysts Worry over Inflation, and CBN's Interest Rate Cut Amid Looming Recession

Outcry as Ondo State Gubernatorial Election Draws Near, Pandemonium in Ekiti State APC Chapter

Insecurity: Governor Zulum's Convoy Attacked Again as Insecurity Worsens

Mixed Feelings over the State of the Nation at 60 Years of Independence, President Buhari Addresses the Nation

As Nigeria marks 60 years of independence from the colonial rule, President Muhammadu Buhari in his speech, blamed past leaders of the country for the “near destruction of the country.” Addressing the nation, President Buhari referred to the past democratic government between 1999-2015. It is believed that this is in response to the statement by former President Olusegun Obasanjo who criticized President Buhari on the state of the nation. Nasir Ayitogo, [Premium Times \(1st October\)](#). See full details of his speech in [Premium Times \(1st October\)](#). President Buhari also defended the petrol hike which received backlash from citizens. Clifford Ndujihe et al, explain further in [Vanguard News \(2nd October\)](#).

Also, the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, has raised alarm over “current cracks in the nation’s walls”. Osinbajo said this through the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, at a church service to mark Nigeria’s 60th independence anniversary. He made reference to a biblical story on rebuilding the nation and called for “focus and consistent prayers” against challenges that might be encountered. Queen Esther Iroanusi, [Premium Times \(28th September\)](#) reports

Still on independence, citizens have expressed concerns over the state of the nation, expressing their expectations from the federal government to restructure the country. The National Publicity Secretary of the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), Ken Robinson, while lamenting on the challenges encountered especially in the allocation of natural resources, expressed the need for unity in the country and called for a change in governance. In a similar vein, the transition council Chairman of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, Keeper Gbaranor, as well as the National Publicity Secretary of Ohaneze Ndigbo, Chuks Ibegbu, urged citizens to be persistent in the call for restructuring. Terhembra Daka, [Guardian News \(1st October\)](#) writes. On another note, citizens even embarked on street protests in Osogbo, Lagos and Abuja. However, some of the protesters and journalists covering the story were arrested by security officers. Luminous Janamike et al, [Vanguard News \(2nd October\)](#) write. Also the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), declared a stay home order on October 1 to drive

home their demand for the actualization of Biafra. The stay home order was reported to have been successful in some parts of Abia, Ebonyi, Anambra, Imo, Delta and Rivers States, and unsuccessful in other parts of Ebonyi, Imo, Enugu States. Seun Opejobi, [Daily Post \(1st October\)](#) and James Eze, [Premium Times \(1st October\)](#) report.

On the present state of the nation, international analysts have expressed their viewpoint on the situation of the country from its independence in 1960 till date. An article by Maryam Laushi of [DW News \(30th September\)](#) looked at significant events that occurred within the timeline. She cited the challenges that have continued to trail the nation over the years like unemployment and insecurity and the country’s inability to tackle these challenges and as such, “there’s not much to celebrate”. She questioned the rationale for the poor achievements while recognizing the struggles of citizens especially the youths. She called for reinforced efforts in driving the country forward. On the oil industry, Silja Fröhlich in [DW News \(30th September\)](#) examined the recent removal of fuel subsidy by the federal government which led to a hike in petrol price. Fröhlich also mentioned the hike in the price of food products and faulted Nigeria’s inability to produce and refine oil despite being rich in oil resources as well as its failure to diversify the economy. Fröhlich pointed to corruption as a major problem in the country among others. Furthermore, an article by the [BBC News \(30th September\)](#) examined the squabbles for dominance among ethnic groups in the country since independence. It analyzed the provision of the Federal Character Principle which is supposed to address the issue of disunity which today is one of the most contentious government policies, that has done more damage to the country than good.

Also, 'Tofe Ayeni et al, in [the African Report \(1st September\)](#) gave a brief overview of significant historical events and looked at some policies that have continuously stunted the growth of the country, concluding that the outlook is gloomy. Similarly, [This Day News \(1st September\)](#) also looked at the country’s timeline from independence till date. It posited the expectations of the founding leaders and outlined some of the country’s achievement over the years which seemed “farfetched” considering the country’s unsteady socioeconomic development.

Excitement as NASS Resumes Sitting, Reviews Petroleum Industry and Water Resources Bill, Buhari Will Submit 2021 Budget

As excitement heightened over the past weeks following resumption of plenary sitting in the National Assembly (NASS), there are speculations that the recent removal of fuel subsidy, hike in electricity tariff, rising insecurity, and the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA), among others will top the agenda of NASS. Sunday Aborisade and Leke Baiyewu, [Punch news \(29th September\)](#) write.

The most critical issue may be the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), and the Water Resources Bill (WIB). The PIB, which seeks to boost government revenue, privatize the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), amend offshore royalties as well as strengthen the legal and regulatory framework of the oil industry, was presented by the Senate Leader, Yahaya Abdullahi and has passed first reading in the Senate. Abiola Oduola, [Nairametrics \(30th September\)](#) and Tsvetana Paraskova, [Oil Price.Com News \(28th September\)](#) explain. This is coming following a deliberation on the details of the PIB between the Minister for State on Petroleum, Timipre Sylva, the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila and other leaders. Sylva called for the cooperation of NASS in the swift passage of the PIB and made reference to a global prediction which revealed that the market value of oil would reduce by 50% in 2024. He criticized failed attempts in the past by NASS to act on the PIB. Henry Umoru, [All Africa News \(29th September\)](#) reports.

On the same note, Lawan noted the importance of the passage of the PIB but also stated that the “details of its contents must be understood and thoroughness applied in its consideration”. Similarly, Gbajabiamila said that the 9th Assembly will pass the “PIB speedily; however, with a caveat because we won’t sacrifice thoroughness at the altar of speed”. He added that an adhoc committee has been set up to examine the provisions of the bill and will advise the House of Representatives accordingly. Deji Elumoye, [This Day News \(29th September\)](#) writes.

Still on the PIB, Antony Squazzin and Paul Burkhardt of [Bloomberg \(30th September\)](#) also analyzed the provisions of the PIB which have been in motion for quite some time. They also

looked at the new regulations that the bill provides for the NNPC and its revenue output. Squazzin and Burkhardt also examined the regulatory framework provided for the NNPC in the bill, coming to the conclusion that the bill “isn’t as aggressive about privatizing the NNPC as a 2012 version of the bill”.

On another note, the NASS has disclosed that it will treat the PIB and the 2021 budget concurrently. Sunday Aborisade, [Punch News \(29th September\)](#) reports. Lawan stated that President Muhammadu Buhari will submit the 2021 budget to NASS next week. He said this while welcoming lawmakers at the resumption of plenary sitting after the 8 weeks recess by NASS. He called for the assessment of the 2020 budget which was revised due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He stated that “the month of October will be for budget defence while November will be for the internal processing of the document”. He said that the country lost about \$14bn due to the overdependence on oil and called for a diversified economy. Deji Elumoye explains in [This Day News \(30th September\)](#).

Meanwhile, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved a budget proposal of N13.08trn for the 2021 fiscal year. The Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, noted an improvement in the budget forecast for 2021 compared to the 2020 budget though it did not meet the target recovery. Ahmed further revealed details of the 2020 budget performance. [Guardian News \(30th September\)](#) details. Still on budget, there are growing concerns over the failure of the NASS to publicise details of its own budget. Yusuf Akinpelu, [Premium Times \(30th September\)](#) reports.

In developing news, the House of Representatives has withdrawn the already passed Water Resources Bill (WIB) following the backlash it received from citizens and members. Disclosing this, Gbajabiamila stated that “the bill should be withdrawn and brought back on a later date for “proper” consideration”. The WIB has received criticisms from citizens who believe that the WIB would give the federal government “undue control over water resources”. On the same note, the WIB caused an uproar in the House of Representatives when Benjamin Mzondu representing Makurdi-Guma Federal Constituency in Benue State, questioned the initial process of the natural water bill. Countering this, the Chairman of the House Committee on Water Resources, Sada Soli,

argued that the passage followed due process. Chinedu Asadu, [The Cable News \(29th September\)](#), and [Channels News \(30th September\)](#) report.

Outrage as Labour National Unions Halt Nationwide Protest over Electricity / Petrol Hike, Analysts Worry over Inflation, and CBN's Interest Rate Cut Amid Looming Recession

The outcome of the meeting between the federal government and the organized labour unions which led to the suspension of the nationwide strike action slated for September 28, has sparked outrage in the media as citizens have begun to criticize the last minute decision by the labour unions. Frank Ikpefan et al, [The Nations \(29th September\)](#) and Robert Egbe, [The Nation News \(29th September\)](#) write. This is coming after media reports reflected a firm position of the labour to embark on the protest after meeting with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Femi Gbajabiamila. Leke Baiyewu, [Punch News \(27th September\)](#) explains. Reports from the meeting revealed that “all parties agreed on the urgency for increasing the local refining capacity of the nation to reduce the over dependency on importation of petroleum products to ensure energy security, reduce cost of finished products, increase employment and business opportunities for Nigerians.” The two parties agreed on a 2 weeks grace period to come up with a solution. Ankara details in [AA News \(28th September\)](#).

Meanwhile, small businesses have begun shutting down due to the recent increase in electricity tariff, petrol price, and the inflation rate in the country. This is coming at a time when the country is trying to recuperate its economy from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ruth Olurounbi of [The African Report \(30th September\)](#), gives account of some small business owners who have been affected by the situation and have been forced to hike their products in order to survive. She cited the federal government's call earlier to support 1.7 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with about N75bn fund and noted concerns by analyst for the federal government to do more in the situation.

On another note, Ruth Olurounbi of [The African Report \(28th September\)](#) examined the recent cut interest rate by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) from 12.50% to 11.50%. According to Olurounbi, analysts at FSDH Capital are of the opinion that the rate cut “could suppress bond yields, which

have remained higher when compared with yields on short term instruments, following the existing market liquidity”. She mentioned other countries that have adopted the rate cut policy and noted concerns by analysts over the CBN's dilemma to revive the dwindling economy which led to the interest rate cut twice this year disregarding concerns of inflation. She quoted the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele who said that due to “structural factors”, traditional tools may not be enough to control inflation. She referred to analysts' opinions that the recent policies by the federal government such as the electricity and petrol hike, ban on forex for food imports, and the naira devaluation are some constraints to economic growth. Olurounbi further said, that some analysts believe the interest rate cut would boost the economy, and generate employment. Similarly, Nike Popoola of [Punch News \(1st October\)](#) has shed more light on the revised Nigerian outlook by Fitch Ratings. The revision came from a different angle looking at the impact of the Coronavirus on several sectors of the economy particularly the oil sector. Popoola also analysed the policies the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) adopted to control inflation.

Outcry as Ondo State Gubernatorial Election Draws Near, Pandemonium in Ekiti State APC Chapter

Ahead of the Ondo State gubernatorial election slated for October 10, the Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) in Ondo State, has expressed concerns over an alleged rumoured violent plot by the All Progressives Congress (APC) during the election. Disclosing this, the state chairman of CNPP, Rotimi Boboye, said that the incident at a local government election and the actions of some APC members were uncalled for. Bamigbola Gbolagu writes in [Daily Sun \(29th September\)](#).

In a similar vein, the National Campaign Council of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has called the attention of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) alleging that “there is no way Governor Rotimi Akeredolu can win in a free, fair and credible election”. The Publicity Secretary of the PDP, Kola Ologbondiyan, disclosed this in a statement while calling on INEC to abort the use of the “Z pad technology” following a failed test run of the device in Nasarawa State. He also stated that INEC should disregard blackmails that

may arise and focus on conducting credible election in the forthcoming Ondo State election. Peter Dada, [Punch News \(26th September\)](#) and [Vanguard News \(25th September\)](#) report. On another note, the PDP also asked the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), to investigate Akeredolu over allegations of embezzlement of Covid-19 funds allocation to Ondo State. Ologbondiyan made reference to a financial report on Covid-19 submitted by the State Commissioner for Finance, Wale Akinteriwa, to the Connected Development (CD) group. Ologbondiyan gave reasons for the disparities in the report among others. [Sahara Reporters. \(28th September\)](#) writes.

Meanwhile, political analysts have raised concerns following a request from President Muhammadu Buhari to the Senate seeking a refund of N148bn to Ondo, Bayelsa, Cross River, Osun and Rivers states for federal road projects which were executed. According to them, the timing allegedly seemed suspicious as the Ondo state governorship election draws near. They gave analysis of past situations where President Buhari had approved refunds as election dates drew near. Adejumo Kabir, [Premium Times \(2nd October\)](#) explains.

On party crisis, the Governor of Ekiti State, Kayode Fayemi has been suspended by the Ekiti State APC State Executive Council, for allegedly funding the election campaign of a PDP candidate, Seyi Makinde in the 2019 Oyo State gubernatorial election. The suspension which was signed by the Special Adviser to the President on Political Matters, Babafemi Ojudu, Ex-Minister Dayo Adeyeye and others, accused Fayemi of “anti-party activities and his role in the recent concluded governorship election in Edo State” which they stated contradicts the party’s constitution. Dennis Erezi, [Guardian News \(25th September\)](#) explains. Reacting, Fayemi said that the suspension is “a joke taken too far”. Fayemi who said this through the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Yinka Oyebode, noted that the persons who initiated the suspension were not executive members of the party and had no power to do so. Supporting this, the Ekiti State APC Chairman, Paul Omotoso, who was also suspended alongside Fayemi called for the signatories of the statement to deny the suspension. Rotimi Ojomoyela, [Vanguard News \(25th September\)](#) writes.

Criticising the suspension, APC National Secretariat dissociated itself from the suspension stating

that it is yet to receive any information from the Ekiti State Chapter. It also called on party members to comply with the party’s constitution. Samson Adenekan, [Premium Times \(25th September\)](#) reports. On the same note, the Chairman of the APC National Caretaker Committee (NCC), Mai-Mala Buni, has set up a reconciliation panel to resolve the internal crisis. Inaugurating the committees, the Secretary of the APC NCC, Akpan Udoedehe, stated that the panel will provide a platform for members to air their grievances and reach a common understanding. John Alechenu, [Punch News \(29th September\)](#) writes.

Insecurity: Governor Zulum’s Convoy Attacked Again as Insecurity Worsens

As the security unrest in the nation continues to escalate, the Boko Haram sect has attacked the convoy of the governor of Borno State, Babagana Zulum, along Monguno-Maiduguri axis which left several persons dead. This is coming barely 2 days after an attack along cross Kauwa-Baga in Borno State. The Borno State government disclosed that about 11 persons were killed and 13 injured. Contradicting the claim, a faction of the Boko Haram sect, ISIL disclosed on its website that about 30 persons were killed. Earlier in July, Boko Haram attacked governor Zulum’s convoy which sparked outrage on the media. [Aljazeera News \(26th September\)](#) and Kayode Idowu [Punch News \(27th September\)](#) detail.

Condemning the attack, President Muhammadu Buhari called for the unwavering support of the state government to the security agencies in restoring security stability in Borno State. In a statement by the spokesman’s, Garba Shehu, President Buhari sympathized with citizens affected by the situation in the state. [Premium Times \(27th September\)](#) writes. On the same note, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), criticized the attack. The PDP’s spokesman, Kola Ologbondiyan, said that the frequent attack on Governor Zulum and the rising insecurity in the nation exposes the need to review the security architecture of the country. Kunnle Sanni, [Premium Times \(28th September\)](#) reports.

Meanwhile, the National Association of Seadogs Pyrates Confraternity (NAS), has expressed concerns over the emerging insecurity rocking the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) despite being the centre hub of power. Speaking on this, the Ca-

poon Sahara Deck, Victor Ofili, spoke of the prevalent security situation in neighbouring states and the FCT. He gave details of some cases that occurred in the past year and mentioned some

crimes rocking the FCT. [Vanguard News \(29th September\)](#) details.

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