

## CRUDE OIL EXPORTS: Malami was paid 200million Dollars as whistle blower, Rep alleges

By Levinus Nwabughioqu, ABUJA

The House of Representatives ad hoc committee investigating the sale of 48 million barrels of crude oil, amounting to over \$2.4 billion and crude oil export to China from 2014 to date, said it has uncovered payment of \$200 million allegedly made as consultancy fees in whistleblower recoveries by the Attorney General of the Federation, AGF, Abubakar Malami. within statutory approvals. Chairman of the committee, Mark Gbillah, who disclosed this at the resumed public hearing on the issue, also said Malami and the Minister of Finance, Mrs Zainab Ahmed, had not been cooperating with the committee, failing to answer to issues arising from the crude sales, despite letters of invitation sent to them. He said: "We have not been getting any form of cooperation from the Ministry of Finance and Attorney General's office regarding this investigation, despite a series of correspondents sent to them on this matter we are investigating. " We have seen documentation from the Accountant General's office, where the minister of finance approved the payment of the substantial amount of money to so-called whistle-blowers where details of monies recovered were not provided. "'We've heard media reports by the Federal Government indicating that millions of dollars were recovered through whistle-blower revelations on behalf of the country, but we as a parliament have not seen that those monies were routed through the constitutional appropriation process before they were expended. The constitution is very clear about the receipt and expenditure of Nigeria's money. Gbillah, who expressed displeasure at the actions of the two public officers, however, appealed to them to cause an appearance before the committee or risk arrest. "We've looked at the functions of the Attorney General's office and we've not seen any statutory powers provided for the Attorney General by the constitution to determine how Nigeria's money should be spent.

"There was an incident about a whistleblower, who made a formal report to Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit, NFIU, about \$200million paid into two companies accounts, Biz Plus and GSCL, allegedly for consultancy services, which allegedly were approved by the Attorney General's office on the approval of Mr. President. "We need the Minister of Finance, and the Attorney General of the Federation to appear before this House to provide clarity on the inflows that have come in from whistleblowers' recoveries, and how these monies were recovered. "The CBN is required to provide information that has been provided by these whistleblowers about substantial amounts of monies paid allegedly for consultancy services when there's no record of any agreement entered into by those companies regarding any s e r v i c e s .

"These are very weighty allegations and as a responsible House, we owe everybody a fair hearing and benefit of the doubt, and this is what we've been seeking to accord those

who have been mentioned in these allegations. "But we find it unfashionable that the minister of finance and Attorney General of Federation have not bothered to respond to any of the correspondence from the committee and this in our opinion shows a lack of regard not only to the institution of House but also that of the National Assembly as a whole. "We will make this further appeal to the minister of finance and Attorney General of the Federation and all others who have not responded or who have not honoured the committee's invitations to do so in the national interest. " In the event that they fail to do so, we will be constrained to invoke the instrument of the summons and all other necessary powers the National Assembly can exercise in this regard. "But we want to make this a formal and final notice to those concerned, the minister of finance and Attorney General of the Federation, to cause appearance before the committee to give evidence with regards to the allegations that have been laid before the committee," Gbillah said.

## Nigeria spent 13 Trillion on Subsidy between 2005 and 2021, and blew 6 Trillion Naira between 2022 and 2023 - NEITI

**N**igeria has spent over N13 trillion or \$74 billion on fuel subsidies in 16 years, which is between 2005 and 2021. The Executive Secretary, Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Orji Ogonnaya Orji, who stated this at a policy dialogue on oil swap in Abuja, said the removal of fuel subsidy and full deregulation of the petroleum sector will end oil swaps, which have also failed.

*Daily Trust* reports that adding an estimated N6trn spending on petrol subsidy between 2022 and June 2023 to the N13trn fuel subsidies cost, the amount would have reached N19trn in about 17 years.

Citing NEITI's recent policy brief on subsidy, Orji said, "Nigeria spent over N13trn (\$74bn) on fuel subsidies between 2005 and 2021. The figure in relative terms is equivalent to Nigeria's entire budget for health, education, agriculture, and defence in the last five years, and almost the capital expenditure for 10 years between 2011 2020." In spite of this spending, the NEITI head said Nigeria continues to suffer inefficient supply arrangements-scarcity and its attendant fuel queues. Orji noted that while the country was bleeding through subsidies, Nigeria lost another N16.25trn (\$46.16bn) from 619.7m barrels of crude oil to theft in 12 years (2009 to 2020). "The volume of crude oil losses represents a loss of more than 140,000 barrels per day," he noted. On failed oil swaps, Orji said several deals did not work including the Direct Sale Direct Purchase (DSDP) started in January 2016.

The Executive Director, Policy Alert, Tijah Bolton-Akpan, urged NNPC and other agencies to increase their transparency role noting that NNPC Ltd has stopped its data disclosure. But justifying its transparent actions, Executive Director at NNPC Trading Limited, Maryamu Idris, who represented the GCEO of NNPC Ltd said, "We

have shared all the information that needs to be shared; our processes and we are very excited to be here."

The Registrar General/ CEO of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Alhaji Garba Abubakar, the Beneficial Ownership (BO) portal will be launched in May; registered companies since 2020 will disclose real owners while those registered before 2020 will do so whenever they come to file their annual returns. The Commission Chief Executive of Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Gbenga Komolafe, said a beneficial ownership register portal has been launched to ensure shareholders with 5% stake and above for all exploration companies disclose their identities.

## American firm uncovers Nigerian gov't's N28 trillion stuck in US banks

An asset recovery firm, Forensic Assets Investigation and Recovery Services LLC (FAIR), says it has uncovered \$69 billion (about N28.3tn) in illegal oil deals by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) stuck in American banks. According to the American firm, the funds are stuck in banks based in Texas. The firm said it could recover all the identified funds if Nigeria agreed to pay its expenses and compensation. FAIR disclosed this in a confidential memo forwarded to the Special Presidential Investigation Panel for Recovery of Public Property (SPIP), The Punch reported Friday. According to the report, the funds were believed to have been siphoned from undeclared crude oil sales under the Goodluck Jonathan administration allegedly by the NNPC officials and their collaborators in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Nine billion dollars of the total sum was allegedly traced to a bank account linked to late National Security Adviser (NSA), General Andrew Azazi, who died in a plane crash alongside the Governor of Kaduna State, Patrick Yakowa, in 2012. FAIR's memo was said to have informed a March 18, 2019 letter written by former SPIP Chairman, Okon Obono-Obla to President Muhammadu Buhari to seek his approval to authorise FAIR to commence the recovery of the funds. "Mr President, we intend to work together with the Americans in order to secure the recovery of the definite \$9bn within 3-5 months they stated and to engage them to see and recover the larger part of the estimated \$60bn-\$80bn stolen from Nigeria during the oil boom. Also, to engage the NNPC and the CBN in the overall recovery of those funds in the United States. "Our prayers to the President are: To approve the engagement of the American company to recover the funds and assets in the US and to approve the support of the visiting American firm to integrate software technology in the CBN in order to trace fraud funds. "To approve the presence of interface offices of the Special Presidential Investigation Panel in NNPC and the CBN. Your Excellency, the immediate recovery of the identified \$9bn within the stated timeframe of 3-5 months will totally eliminate borrowing to fund the 2018 budget deficit and sustain the 2019 budget," the letter was said to have read in part. However, the matter was said to have been

abandoned after President Buhari removed Obono-Obla and directed the Solicitor-General of the Federation and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Justice, Dayo Apata, to take over the affairs of the SPIP. (The Herald)

## Crude oil: Senate indicts NNPC over lack of transparency

The Senate on Tuesday gave a damning verdict on the management of certain operations of the downstream oil sector by subsidiaries of the Nigerian Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC). The Red Chamber accused the oil giant of lack of transparency in crude oil lifted from its Escravos terminal to Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Company (WRPC) and the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemical Company without necessary details or breakdown of what was delivered to respective companies. The Senate indictment was sequel to the 2016 Auditor General report submitted and presented by Chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Accounts, Senator Matthew Uhroghide which was upheld by the Senate Chamber at Wednesday's plenary session. A copy of the Auditor General's report sighted by Nigerian Tribune revealed that the volume of crude oil lifted by the two refineries totalled 8,399,017 with estimated value of \$376, 655,589 (N102.6 billion).

The Auditor's General report reads in part: "From the review and examination of domestic Crude Oil Lifting sales profile presented for audit verification, it was noted that several deliveries were stated to be jointly lifted by or delivered to Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Company (WRPC) and Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemical Company without necessary details or breakdown of what was delivered to respective companies. "From the examination carried out a total oil lifting of 8,399,017 bbls with a total sales value of \$376, 655,589 (N102.6 billion) was stated to have been lifted jointly by these two companies. "The failure to properly separate these deliveries and charge directly to each company makes it difficult to reconcile and account for each lifting." The Senate which subsequently upheld the recommendation of its Committee mandated the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mele Kyari, to ensure specific details of crude delivered to the two refineries for audit. The Senate also affirmed the indictment of 37 Ministries, Department and Agencies, (MDAs) for observing the breach financial procedure in the country. Findings revealed that in the Auditor's General report, 92 MDAs were issued queries, 80 submitted written responses and appeared before the committee to defend queries but did not appear before the committee while four failed to either appear or submit written responses to the committee despite several reminders.

Out of the 80 MDAs that appeared before the committee, 43 had their queries vacated while the queries of 37 MDAs were sustained and recommendations accordingly presented to the Senate.

The Red Chamber also resolved to submit the report of the indictment to the Office of Secretary to the Government of Federation for further action. Going forward, the Senate

said it was considering a bill that will enforce the implementation of the outcome of the Auditor General report submitted to both chambers of Parliament for consideration. (Culled from Nigerian Tribune)

## FG secures \$800m from World Bank as palliative for subsidy removal as Labour kicks By Our Reporter

The Federal Government says it has secured the sum of \$800 million from the World Bank under the National Social Investment Programme as part of palliatives to cushion the negative effects of the plan to remove subsidy on the petroleum products by June 2023. This was disclosed by the Minister of Finance, Budget, and National Planning, Hajiya Zainab Ahmed, while speaking with State House correspondents after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. She said the fund which had been secured was ready for disbursement. Throwing more light on the palliatives that would be put in place ahead of the removal subsidy on the premium motor spirit popularly known as petrol, the minister said: "The second question on exit of fuel subsidy, this is a commitment in the Petroleum Industry Bill. There is a provision that says that 18 months after the effectiveness of the PIA that all petroleum products must be deregulated, that 18 months takes us to June 2023. "Also, when we were working on the 2023 Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the Appropriation Act, we made that provision to enable us exit fuel subsidy by June 2023. "We're on course, we're having different stakeholder engagements, we've secured some funding from the World Bank, that is the first tranche of palliatives that will enable us give cash transfers to the most vulnerable in our society that have now been registered in a national social register. Today that register has a list of 10 million households. 10 million households are equivalent to about 50 million Nigerians.

"But we also have to raise more resources to enable us do more than just the cash transfers and also in our engagements with the various stakeholders, the various kinds of tasks that we have go beyond the requirement of just giving cash transfers. Labour, for example, might be looking for mass transit for its members. "So, there are several things that we're still planning and working on, some we can start executing quickly, some are more medium-term implementation." Hajia Zainab said \$800million had been secured to cushion the effect of subsidy removal. She said "\$800 million for the scale up of the National Social Investment Programme at the World Bank and it's secured, it's ready for this disbursement". She added that the incumbent government had been discussing subsidy removal with the incoming administration, she said, "there are a lot of discussions going on at different levels, including with members of the transition committee of the incoming government". Few days back, the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress gave conditional support for the removal of fuel

subsidy. The two labour bodies said that they would only allow the removal of fuel subsidy if the incoming administration of Bola Tinubu takes steps towards the repair and revitalisation of government refineries across the country and allow modular refineries. According to Labour, failure to do this, they said they would oppose the subsidy removal and mobilise workers and mobilise workers to protest against the decision.

## Nigeria dangerously divided along ethnic, religious lines as economy is in doldrums – Sanusi

The former Emir of Kano [Muhammed Sanusi](#) has said Nigeria is dangerously threading on ethnic and religious divides that can spell doom for the country if not properly managed. The ex-Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said the country is currently more divided than it was during the civil war between July 1967 and January 1970.

According to him, the country has been "divided dangerously" along ethnic and religious lines, putting the integrity of public institutions in question.

Sanusi spoke at the Third Nigerian Leadership Colloquium in honour of the senior pastor of Trinity House, Lagos, Ituah Ighodalo, who turned 62. "I don't think Nigeria has been in a place as difficult as this since the civil war. We have a challenge of nation building. "We have a country that has been divided dangerously along ethnic and religious lines. "We have an economy that is in the doldrums, and unfortunately, we seem to be having a dearth of leadership among political leaders," he said.

According to [Sanusi](#): "In October 2022, speaking at the Kaduna Investment Forum, I told Nigerians that if anyone told them that dealing with Nigeria post-2023 would be easy, they should not vote for that person and I meant it.

"No process is perfect as we have seen in the United States and the United Kingdom that they have made mistakes in choosing their leaders. But at the very least, the people know who they are voting for. I think we need to begin to look at the Electoral Act much earlier than elections. "We need to have a system where you cannot just go to participate in party primaries without exposing yourself to public scrutiny. This is what happens in the UK Labour Party, others, the US Republican and Democratic parties. People need to know who they are voting for. In other climes, they are compelled by law to participate in public debates to discuss issues of policy. "You can actually get to the presidency without Nigerians knowing whether you have the capacity or the vision to do the job." Sanusi also canvassed for more transparency in the electoral process, adding that doing so will encourage political parties to select best candidates capable of doing the work. "We need to also begin to look at the electoral process and the voting process which is very flawed and which can be improved upon in the Electoral Act. The important thing is there must be an improvement in the transparency. "INEC must be compelled to discuss their issues and their vision. I

think when we do that the parties will be forced to give us candidates that can do the work," he added

## Naptip Arrest Members Of Sextortion Syndicate Who Terrorise Abuja Residents

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), has arrested members of a notorious sextortion syndicate in the Federal Capital Territory, (FCT), Abuja following intense surveillance and underwear operation by the agency trailing the group.

Director-General NAPTIP, Professor Fatima Waziri-Azi, made this known in Abuja. She said the group is known for perpetrating gruesome acts of sextortion and terrorizing young girls and other residents of the FCT and its environs. In a communique signed by the agency's press officer, Vincent Adekoya, the DG described the arrest as a major breakthrough because of the growing number of complaints and reported cases reaching the agency by victims and stakeholders. According to the communique, "Sextortion is a crime that occurs when someone threatens to distribute nudes and private videos of another person when that person refuses to grant them sexual favours or pay them money. "It is sexual exploitation as it is where the perpetrator uses coercion and threats to compel the victim to produce sexual images or videos engaging in sexual acts and this act is punishable under the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015 (as re-enacted)".

Professor Waziri – Azi, expressed concern about the incremental cases of sextortion perpetrated by mostly young men against young girls within the FCT and called for increased vigilance among parents and stakeholders. The Director General explained, "After the criminals have one or more videos or pictures, they threaten to publish that content, or they threaten violence, to get the victim to produce more images.

"The shame, fear, and confusion victims feel when caught in this cycle often prevent them from asking for help or reporting the abuse." She advice young girls to be aware of this criminal trend and protect themselves by reporting all cases of sextortion to NAPTIP,

"Do not be afraid to speak up. Do not be gaslighted into thinking it was your fault. It is a crime and a crime against you. Report all perpetrators. If you do not report, you are emboldening these criminals, and what happened to you will definitely happen to someone else" "Parents, please support your children if they report cases of sextortion to you. Do not revile them. A lapse in judgment should not lead to condemnation".

"If you or someone you know is a sextortion victim, you can help stop the harassment by reporting it to NAPTIP. Save all conversations, chats, or messages between yourself and the perpetrator". "Do not pay or share more of your sexual images with them. Your webcam or recording devices can be activated remotely as such, never have your phone or other electronic camera devices pointed at you

while undressing or in a position, you would not want to share with the world. Be smart and stay safe", she said.

## Donald Trump arrested, charged, pleaded not guilty to criminal charges

Former US President, Donald Trump, has been arrested on criminal charges. He was arrested and arraigned at the Manhattan Criminal Courthouse. He was charged for money paid to adult film star Stormy Daniels in 2016 before he took over as America's number one citizen. Shortly before his arrest, Trump took to Truth Social, his media platform, to express shock. "Heading to Lower Manhattan, the courthouse. Seems so SURREAL — WOW, they are going to ARREST ME. Can't believe this is happening in America. MAGA!" he said. The indictment returned by a grand jury against Trump. Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg's indictment marks the first criminal charges against Trump, but it's not the only potential legal trouble in front of the former president, according to CNN.

Special counsel Jack Smith is still moving forward with an investigation into Trump's role in the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol and the handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago. Trump arrived in New York, flying up on his jet from Palm Beach. He stayed overnight in Trump Tower, and headed 4 miles south to the courthouse in downtown Manhattan. Law enforcement in New York and the US Secret Service have been planning for the prospect of Trump's appearance at the courthouse for weeks.

## 2023: NHRC Cautions NBC on Sanctioning of Media Houses

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has appealed to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to apply caution when acting on petitions of political parties against media organisations. The appeal came against the backdrop of the sanction against Channels TV by the NBC after a petition was writing against the news channel by one of the All Progressives Party (APC)'s Presidential Campaign Committee (PCC) spokesperson for airing an interview with the Vice Presidential Candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Alhaji Datti Baba Ahmed that was allegedly inciting. Channels TV was slammed a penalty of N5 million by the broadcasting control body and further warned against airing any content that could incite the public to violence following the Datti's interview. Speaking at the monthly review of the NHRC's Mobilising Voters for Elections (MOVE) Programme in Abuja, Commission's Project Coordinator, Hilary Ogbonna noted that freedom of the press is an important feature of democracy and actions that may be construed as gagging it must be avoided. He noted that the manner in which some media organisations were

recently sanctioned by the government over complaints made by political parties, is creating negative narrative on the democratic process in the country. He said the speed at which sanction was imposed on Channels TV station just five days after a complaint was made through a petition against it was wrong adding that such quick action was capable of sending wrong signal to the public and international community that thorough investigation was not carried out. According to him, the NHRC is not questioning the right of sister government agencies to carry out their statutory responsibilities but said caution should be exercised when petitions written by politically exposed persons are involved. He said as the body saddled with the protection of human rights in the country, the National Human Rights Commission found it is expedient to advise sister government agencies to promote human rights in the country rather than impede rights of citizens. The NHCR Project Coordinator added that due to the crucial roles played by the media, sanction should be the last resort when it concerns the sector. In his opening speech, the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Chief Tony Ojukwu, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), said the briefing was the fourth in the series of the efforts of NHRC to bring the media up to speed with what was being done to ensure that those tracked to have made hate speech, violated the rights of citizens and other actions that hindered access and participation at the just concluded elections were brought to book. He called on Nigerians and others living in the country to continue to maintain the peace as that is the only way to engender development of the country. The NHRC boss thanked the media, the Ford Foundation, UN bodies and other partners for the successes recorded so far in tracking those that undermine the just concluded elections.

## Decide presidential poll petitions before May 29 – Agbakoba

**A** former President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Dr Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), has urged the Presidential Election Petitions Tribunal to conclude petitions on the February 25 presidential election before the inauguration of a new president on May 29. The Independent National Electoral Commission declared All Progressives Congress presidential candidate, Bola Tinubu, as winner of the poll. But the candidates of the People's Democratic Party, Atiku Abubakar, and Labour Party candidate, Peter Obi, who came second and third respectively, rejected the outcome of the election and have filed petitions at the tribunal to challenge it. Agbakoba, in a statement he personally signed urged the tribunal to adopt the procedures used for speedy conclusion of arbitration matters in its approach to the cases.

## Buhari's Administration's Chinese Loans Rise By 209%, Hit \$4bn

**F**ederal Government's borrowing from China has grown by 209.15 per cent under Muhammadu Buhari administration. This is as total bilateral

loans rose by 219.91 per cent from \$1.58bn as of June 2015 to \$5.07bn as of December 2022. Total borrowing from China rose from \$1.39bn to \$4.29bn in the period under review. Available data from the Debt Management Office (DMO) revealed that Chinese loans make up 84.73 per cent of the total amount Nigeria owes to other countries of the world. The remaining 15.27 per cent is spread across France, Japan, India, and Germany.

According to the DMO, loans from China are concessional loans with interest rates of 2.50 per cent per annum, have a tenor of 20 years, and grace period (moratorium) of seven years. As of September 30, 2021, the DMO listed 15 projects there were being funded with Chinese loans in a document titled, 'Status of Chinese loans as at September 30, 2021.'

The more listed loans include the Nigerian 40 Parboiled Rice Processing Plants Project (Fed. Min. of Agric & Rural Dev.), Nigerian Railway Modernisation Project (Lagos – Ibadan section), Nigeria Rehabilitation and Upgrading of Abuja – Keffi – Markurdi Road Project, Nigeria Supply of Rolling Stocks and Depot Equipment for Abuja Light Rail Project, and Nigeria Greater Abuja Water Supply Project. While Nigeria has drawn consistently from China's well under Buhari, China-Exim Bank declined recently declined an earlier agreement to grant Nigeria a loan of \$22.79bn. The loan had been approved under the 2016–2018 Federal Government External Borrowing (Rolling) Plan by the Senate and the House of Representatives on March 5, 2020, and June 2, 2020, respectively. This may impact the Nigerian Railway Modernisation Project (Kaduna–Kano segment), with the contractor (CCECC Nigeria Limited), and the Federal Ministry of Transportation, engaging China Development Bank for a loan of \$973.48m. Despite the recent hiccup in loan approval, China loaned Nigeria \$658.72m in 2022. In 2021, the immediate past Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, alleged that China was becoming sceptical of borrowing Nigeria money because of a National Assembly probe of the Federal Government's ability to pay back its loan.

While answering questions on Politics Today, on Channels Television, Amaechi alleged that the probe prevented China from granting more loans to Nigeria. He added that the combined effort of the Senate President and Speaker had stopped the probe, which had helped. Recently, the President of the World Bank, David Malpass, told The BBC that he was concerned about some of China's loans to developing economies in Africa. He noted that the terms and conditions of these loans need to be more transparent. This is as countries including Ghana and Zambia appear to be struggling to repay their debts to Beijing. He said, "What I encourage strongly is that they be transparent in their contracts. That's been one of the problems; if you write a contract and say 'but don't show it to anybody else', that's a minus. So, get away from that." He warned, "For governments in Africa, they shouldn't be offering collateral as an inducement to make a loan, because it locks it up for generations. That's been happening with China."