

133 Million Nigerians are living in poverty. FG Admits

The federal government has disclosed that 63 percent of persons within Nigeria, 133 million, are living in poverty. The figure was presented during the launch of Nigeria's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Survey in Abuja. It was conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). Daily Trust reports that the measure used to calculate the figure was based on Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) with five components of health, living standard, education, security and unemployment. The survey, which sampled over 56,000 households across the 36 states of the Federation and the FCT, conducted between November 2021 and February 2022, states that 65 per cent of the poor, 86 million people, live in the North,



while 35 percent, nearly 47 million live in the South. It identified Sokoto State as having the most poverty levels across States, with 91 percent while Ondo has the lowest with 27 percent. Speaking at the event, President Muhammadu Buhari said the index was adopted because it provides ways poverty could be identified and tackled with policies. Buhari was represented by his Chief of Staff, Prof. Ibrahim Gambari. The report added that "over half of the population of Nigeria are multidimensional poor and cook with dung, wood or charcoal, rather than cleaner energy. High deprivations are also apparent nationally in sanitation, time to healthcare, food insecurity, and housing." "In general, the incidence of monetary poverty is lower than the incidence of multidimensional poverty across most states. In Nigeria, 40.1% of people are poor according to the 2018/19 national monetary poverty line, and 63% are multidimensional poor according to the National MPI 2022."

State Governors responsible for Political Violence in the country -IGP, BABA

The Inspector-General of Police, IGP, Usman Baba, has blamed the increasing incidences of political violence in the country on some state governors. Mr Baba said this during a meeting with leadership of political parties and other stakeholders recently in Abuja. He said the meeting was called to engage political parties' leadership on the increasing trend of political violence and to present a common front in addressing the issues.

"We have been receiving reports of some State Governors who encourage political thugs. "They use sub-national security outfits under their control to disrupt seamless and statutorily guaranteed campaign activities of parties or candidates with whom they hold opposing political views. "In so doing, they deploy their powers and influence to either prevent the mounting of campaign bill boards or pull them down.

"They also denying political opponents of spaces to undertake their campaigns or peaceful political congregations in contravention of the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 (As amended)," he said.

The IGP said blamed most incidences of violence on political extremism, misinformation, intolerance, wrong political orientation, hate speeches, incitement and desperation of strategic actors. According to him, such actors usually give a wrong direction to their party faithful, arm them, reorient them and encourage them to resort to the use of threat, violence, and other extra-legal means to

frustrate competing political parties. He said political violence in any form, shape or manifestation is an offence under the electoral act and a crime under extant criminal laws of the country.

Mr Baba said the Nigeria Police and other security agencies in fulfillment of their statutory obligations would remain duty bound to initiate enforcement actions to restore order within the political and national security systems. He pledged to adopt proactive steps to identify, isolate, apprehend and bring any political actor and their thugs at political rallies or any other political engagement to deserved justice.

"We have also resolved to emplace firm actions that will deter targeted attacks on INEC assets across the country. "More than a stern warning, this is a clarion call for us all, both as security agencies and political actors to speak out with one voice in condemning political violence," he said.

Mr Baba said leadership of political parties are critical in the eradication of political intolerance, threat, violence and other negative tendencies in democratic processes. He said this was because they are the strategic gatekeepers to our democracy whose conducts or misconducts do have a reverberating effect on the actions of their followers.

The IGP appealed to the leadership of political parties to be determined to show the right leadership virtues and publicly dissociate themselves from acts of politicarigandage and violence.

NBS: Nigeria's Inflation Rate Increases to 21.09% in October 2022

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), says Nigeria's headline inflation rate increased to 21.09 per cent on a year-on-year basis in October 2022. This is according to the NBS Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Inflation Report for October released in Abuja. According to the report, the figure is 5.09 per cent points higher compared to 15.99 per cent recorded in October 2021. "This shows that the general price level for the headline inflation rate increased in October 2022 when compared to the same month in the preceding year. "Meaning that in October 2022, the general price level was 5.09 per cent higher relative to October 2021." According to the report, factors responsible for the increase in annual inflation rate include disruption in the supply of food products.

It said other factors were increased in import cost due to the persistent currency depreciation and a general increase in the cost of production such as the increase in energy cost. The report said on a month-on-month basis, the Headline inflation rate in October, 2022 was 1.24 per cent, which was 0.11 per cent lower than the rate recorded in September 2022 at 1.36 per cent. "This means that in October 2022, the general price level for the headline inflation rate on a month-on-month basis declined by 0.11 per cent." According to the report, the factor responsible for the decline in the monthly inflation rate is a decline in the current month's food index relative to the reference month index, which is due to the harvest season. The report said the percentage change in the average CPI for the 12 months ending October 2022 over the average of the CPI for the previous 12 months' period was 17.86 per cent. "This indicates a 0.91 per cent increase compared to the 16.96 per cent recorded in October 2021."

It said increases were recorded in all Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) divisions that yielded the headline index. The report said the food inflation rate in October 2022 was 23.72 per cent on a year-on-year basis, which was 5.39 per cent higher compared to the rate recorded in October 2021 at 18.34 per cent. "The rise in food inflation is caused by increases in prices of bread and cereals, food products, potatoes, yams and other tubers, oil and fat." It said on a month-on-

month basis, the food inflation rate in October was 1.23 per cent, which was a 0.21 per cent decline compared to the rate recorded in September 2022 at 1.43 per cent. "This decline was attributed to the reduction in prices of some food items like tubers, palm oil, maize, beans, and vegetables. "The average annual rate of food inflation for the 12- months ending October 2022 was 19.83 per cent , which was a 0.92 per cent points decline from the average annual rate of change recorded in October 2021 at 20.75 per cent.' The report said on a year-on-year basis in October 2022, the urban inflation rate was 21.63 per cent, which was 5.11 per cent higher compared to the 16.52 per cent recorded in October 2021. "On a month-on-month basis, the urban inflation rate was 1.33 per cent in October 2022, this was a 0.12 per cent decline compared to September 2022 at 1.46 per cent."

It said the corresponding 12-month average for the urban inflation rate was 18.38 per cent in October 2022. "This was 0.85 per cent higher compared to the 17.53 per cent reported in October 2021." The report said on a year-on-year basis in October 2022, the rural inflation rate was 20.57 per cent, which was 5.09 per cent higher compared to the 15.48 per cent recorded in October 2021. "On a month-on-month basis, the rural inflation rate in October 2022 was 1.16 percent, which declined by 0.11 per cent compared to September 2022 at 1.27 per cent."

Half salary to Lecturers most senseless action — Senator Ali Ndume blast Buhari

Senator Ali Ndume, representing Borno North at the National Assembly, says the half salary paid university lecturers by the federal government was one of the most Senseless actions of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration. He therefore thumbs down the negotiators of the current impasse between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the government. He said that most of the negotiators on the government side who have shown interest in the case have their kids studying abroad and may not bother about the decadence of the University system in Nigeria. The Senator passed the vote of no confidence on the managers

of the ASUU crisis in the last nine months adding that they have not done much in the management of the impasse between the lecturers, ministry of education officials and the adamant government which has been unable to stick to the letters of the Babalakin agreement for the fixing of federal universities in the country. "I am not satisfied with the negotiators who are handling this lingering matter. This is because they are not qualified to negotiate on behalf of parents of these kids. It's clear because most of their own kids are outside the country schooling. "I wish to call for a committee of well- respected Nigerians to sit with ASUU to sit down with these intellectuals to solve the problem. Such respected Nigerians will achieve results and would be taken seriously." Ndume said he was totally against the half salary issued out to the lecturers in the Federal University as last month's salary against what was the ideal when it was the federal government that broke the chain of implementation started by former President Goodluck Jonathan.

The chair senate committee on Army regretted that the executive was reserving N8 trillion naira for recurrent expenditure in a budget of N20.5 trillion for 2023 while lecturers who went on strike to correct the anomalies in the system are being punished for no reason of theirs. That to him was extremely unjust and unfair when we consider that all the demands of the professors were in order.

"I suggest that the President should sign an executive order to make all public servants send their kids to public schools. This is because the federal government is not sincere at all about fixing the education sector in the country. They are only paying lip service to education.

"This half salary issue is one of the most senseless decisions the executive has ever taken so far. Instead of the lecturers having half salary, I would rather suggest that my own colleagues in the house take half salary for the sake of these patriotic academics. "ASUU has a right to go on strike and they should have been given the benefit of the doubt that negotiations were going on throughout the eight months of the strike." They are members of the labour community and all the labour laws should cover them like other unions. The Federal government has not been sincere at all and they have no justification to give them half salaries. It is unjust and wrong and should be corrected" said Ndume. ASUU had gone on an eight-month strike to press home their points for basic reforms of federal

universities some of which are over 5 decades old without reforms and expansion. One of the bitter demands of the academics is the inclusion of the academics into the integrated payroll and personnel information system (IPPIS) which to some of the senior professors and Vice Chancellor is the most sinister decision taken by the federal government. Minister of Labour Ngige had bragged that the lecturers would be given half salaries because they worked for only half of the month of October.

Eight Nigerian-Americans Win in US Midterm Elections

At least eight Nigerian-Americans emerged victorious at the US midterm elections that took place recently in America. Five of the Nigerian-Americans in the US midterm elections have so far emerged as winners in the Georgia State House of Representatives, one emerged as a state representative in Pennsylvania and another in Minnesota. Adeoye "Oye" Owolewa, a pharmacist, who first emerged in November 2020, as the shadow representative of the United States House of Representatives from the District of Columbia was re-elected to the same position. Carol Kazeem, who is resident in Chester emerged as winner to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to represent the 159th Pennsylvania Legislative District.

Esther Agbaje another of the Nigerian-Americans who contested for re-election to the Minnesota House of Representatives was victorious. She contested on the banner of the Minnesota Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party, and represents District 59B, which includes portions of north and downtown Minneapolis in Hennepin County. The five other Nigerian Americans whose victory have been confirmed in the US midterm elections were in the Georgia House of Representatives and include Gabe Okoye, a former Chairman of the Gwinnett County Democratic Party, Gabe who was elected in the contest in Georgia's District 102. Solomon Adesanya won his poll in the US District 43, in Georgia, Tish Naghise another of the Nigerian-Americans in the US midterm elections emerged victorious in the Georgia House of Representatives District 68 while Phil Olaleye emerged victorious from District 59.

Toyota (China) Automobile Recalls 14,799 Defective Lexus Vehicles

The Federal Road Safety Corps wishes to draw the attention of the motoring public, particularly those who are presently using Lexus NX260, Lexus NX3650h and Lexus NX400h+ manufactured between 31 March, 2021 to 26 April 2022 to a faulty programming of the Lane Keeping Assist (LKA) System, which has prompted the Company to recall the categories of the listed vehicles. According to the report contained in a memo forwarded by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, the company is also recalling 6,491 Lexus NX260 with defective Electric Parking Brake (EPB) system which was manufactured between 19 April 2021 and 15 July 2022. The withdrawal is specifically premised on the fact that the vehicles will pose safety hazard to their users thereby leading to crashes. The Acting Corps Marshal, Dauda Ali Biu is by this notice, admonishing the general public, particularly dealers and riders of these categories of vehicles, to desist from selling or using the identified motorcycles on Nigerian roads to avoid any mishap.

EFCC Reveals Three Governors Planning to Pay Salaries in Cash

Abdulasheed Bawa, the chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), has disclosed that the commission is monitoring 3 serving governors. According to Daily Trust report, the EFCC boss said the governor's plan to stash billions of naira through table payment of workers' salaries. Bawa said some governors had decided to find a means of laundering the money they stashed in houses, stating that the commission is closely monitoring their activities. While refusing to disclose the identity of the governors, Bawa disclosed that 2 of the governors are from the northern part of the country, while the third governor is a southerner. He maintained that the intelligence the commission had obtained showed that the three governors had concluded plans to pour the money into the system by paying their state workers' salaries in cash. His statement reads in part: "Let me tell you something, the Intel that I have yesterday and I would want you to take this thing very

seriously. Already, some state governors that have some of this cash stashed in various houses and the rest are now trying to pay salaries in cash in their state."

AU adopts new strategy to curb insecurity, military coup in Africa

The African Union (AU) has adopted a new strategy to curb violent extremism, terrorism and unconstitutional change of government on the continent. The AU Commissioner, Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Amb. Bankole Adeoye, made the disclosure in Abuja at the inaugural lesson learning forum on AU Peace Support Operations and the African Standby Force. Adeoye said that Africa cannot afford to continue relying on donors to solve all its challenges, hence the need to adopt an African method that best suits the situation. He also urged that African Union must look inward to proffer long lasting solutions to its challenges at all times. "We must continue to face the reality on our continent.

The continent is now awash with all forms of violent extremism, with terrorism complicated further by political transitions." In all these, brave men and women, including children, have paid and continue to pay heavy ultimate prices to ensure that peace, stability and security prevail on our continent," Adeoye said. While giving an account of the various support missions provided by the ECOWAS, the commissioner in charge of Political Affairs, Peace and Security Amb. Abdel Moussa expressed worry over the rising insecurity in some West African states. Also, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama, urged the forum to come up with solution models based on the peculiarities of the continent. He said that Nigeria has always put peace and security in Africa as critical plank of its foreign policy, adding, "since 1960, the country has continued to deploy troops and police officers to several AU and UN peace missions." Onyeama said, it was therefore appropriate for the forum to appraise AU efforts in the deployment, management and liquidation of peace support operation taking place in Nigeria.

He said that the forum offered excellent opportunities for the AU, the regional economic commission, member states and partners to examine the efficacy of the AU Peace Support Operations interventions. He said: "Especially, the challenges faced, the techniques used to mitigate those

challenges and lessons that have been learned to improve future AU interventions and collaborations with regional groups and member states at large." Additionally, the changing nature of the conflicts on the continent over the last couple of decades give imperative to this discussion." The forum, which is expected to come up with full operational guidelines for the region is supported by the ECOWAS Peace and Security architecture and operations, the European Union and the German Economic Corporation

SENATE Probes 774,000 Public Works Employment Programme.

The senate committee on public account says it has commenced an investigation into the employment scheme of 774,000 Nigerians recruited for the special public works programme. In April 2020, the federal government approved the recruitment of 774,000 Nigerians on special public works programme with the mandate of 1000 people per LGA. The special public works programme, implemented by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), was part of the fiscal stimulus measures adopted by the federal government in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

According to PUNCH, Mathew Urhoghide, chairman of the senate committee on public accounts, at the committee sitting on Tuesday gave the NDE two weeks to provide a full report of the SPW beneficiaries across 36 states and the federal capital territory (FCT). All seven lawmakers present at the meeting reportedly said nobody from their constituents benefitted from the scheme. Thompson Sekibo, senator representing Rivers East, said nobody from his district benefitted from the programme, and that all names submitted by lawmakers were not approved. Micheal Nnachi, senator representing Ebonyi South, was also said to have asked the NDE to provide the list of beneficiaries from his district as nobody benefitted from his constituency. The committee also reportedly agreed that the NDE provide all names, phones number, and account details of the 1,000 beneficiaries in every 774 LGAs within one week.

The federal government had targeted the sum of N52 billion for the execution of the programme as voted in the revised 2020 budget. In June 2021, Festus Keyamo, minister of state, labour and employment, announced that the federal government had paid N24 billion to 413,630

beneficiaries of the scheme. But the senate committee was said to have discovered that the sum of N26 billion was collected by the NDE for the project. Abdul Isah, representative of the NDE, asked the committee to give the agency three weeks to compile the list of beneficiaries. But members of the senate committee were said to have declined the request, giving the NDE two weeks to tender the list of all beneficiaries across the country. Meanwhile, the project had caused a disagreement between Keyamo and the lawmakers who accused him of taking over the programme from the NDE. On June 30, 2020, members of the national assembly asked Keyamo out of the senate after he refused a closed-door meeting with the lawmakers. Despite the lawmakers' decision, in July 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered Keyamo to proceed with the implementation of the programme.

Nigerian government gets N787.6bn (\$1.8bn) from Islamic bank to finance projects, others

The Federal government is to get N787.6bn (\$1.8 billion) from the Islamic Development Bank, to be used to execute projects across the country. This was disclosed by the President of the Saudi-based bank, Dr. Mohamed Jasser, at a meeting with the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, in Abuja on October 24, 2022. The Islamic Development Bank is a multilateral development finance institution focusing on infrastructure development. It has 57 shareholding member states, with Nigeria holding an 8.75 percent equity. Jasser said on the loan, "The Islamic Development Bank has approved a total financing of \$1.8bn for Nigeria. "This includes \$971m in project financing and \$288m provided by our private sector affiliate and \$477m in trade operation by our trade arm, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, and \$90m by other Islamic Development Bank Group funds and operations." Jasser also disclosed that the Islamic Development Bank's portfolio in Nigeria stood at \$1.2bn, noting that the bank had completed 35 per cent of those projects and looked forward to strengthening the bilateral and regional initiatives with Nigeria. He said the bank's portfolio covered 15 states of the federation, commending the Federal Government for its economic diversification initiatives.

AfDB commits \$210m to Nigeria's agro-processing zones

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is providing \$210 million for the development of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme in Nigeria. AfDB's President, Akinwumi Adesina, disclosed this in his virtual address at the inauguration of SAPZ programme on Monday in Abuja. SAPZ programme, inaugurated by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, is a government-enabled and private sector-led initiative to mobilise private sector investment to develop value chains for selected strategic crops and livestock in participating states. Adesina said to fully unlock the potential of Nigeria's agriculture, more needs to be done to promote and support the agribusiness sector.

AfDB President, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina said SAPZs will put them close to farmers in production catchment areas, provide market offtakes for farmers, support processing and value addition, reduce food losses, and allow the emergence of highly competitive food and agricultural value chains. The AfDB boss said that SAPZ would reduce rural to urban migration, expand the fiscal space, and enhance the emergence of competitive agricultural value chains. He said that the SAPZ would help to transform rural economies of Nigeria from zones of economic misery to zones of economic prosperity, boosting wealth and livelihoods. Adesina added that he is delighted that the SAPZ has finally become a reality in Nigeria.

"The AfDB is providing \$210 million for the development of the SAPZs in Nigeria. "We are delighted with our partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) which is co-financing with \$150 million, and with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) which is co-financing with \$160 million." Adesina said the SAPZ programme in Nigeria is the largest in Africa. Adesina said that the inauguration of SAPZs marked the beginning of a long journey of transformation. "The SAPZ will help feed Nigeria; the SAPZs will help transform Nigeria's rural economies, help to expand fiscal space; and fully unlock Nigeria's agricultural potential. "The SAPZs will create millions of jobs; let us travel this journey together; Nigerians deserve the results; lower food prices, food security, and wealth for rural areas," he said. Earlier in her speech, Zainab Ahmed, the Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, said it is the desire of President Muhammadu Buhari to resuscitate the vigour of having agro-processing zones in Nigeria.

She said SAPZ is aimed at promoting the agriculture value-chain, to empower youths and revitalise non-functional investments in agriculture and to curtail the level of importation of products that could be locally produced in the

country. Ahmed said that the first phase of the SAPZ programme will kick-start with a credit facility of \$410 million already from secured from co-financing development partners – AfDB, IsDB and IFAD.

NAFDAC Alerts Nigerians on fake anti-biotic in circulation

National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has alerted Nigerians Of a falsified Antibiotic Medication, Augmentin 625mg Tablets, that Is Currently In Circulation Within The Country. The agency, in a statement said the falsified antibiotic has batch number 562626, a manufacturing date of April 2021 and an expiry date of April 2024. It added that the medication has a NAFDAC registration number of 04-1928 but failed to meet labelling requirements. "No inscription 'manufactured by' is written on the label, only the address. Manufacturing and Expiry dates do not meet the acceptable format. No MAS scratch number for verification. The logo 'gsk' is not properly positioned as on the original," the agency said. The Food and Drug agency noted that the aforementioned shows that the product is falsified and counterfeited.

NAFDAC added that it has notified all its branches across the country to carry out surveillance and mop up the falsified Augmentin tablets. "Please note that the genuine Augmentin 625mg has legible product labeling information including date markings – expiration and manufactured dates, batch number and NAFDAC registration number," the statement reads. "NAFDAC's advice to wholesalers, distributors and pharmacies is that medicines should be obtained from authorized /licensed suppliers, increased vigilance is hereby encouraged within the supply chain to avoid infiltration of the falsified product. The products' authenticity, physical condition and labels should be carefully checked. "NAFDAC implores healthcare providers to ensure vigilance to prevent the administration of the falsified products on unsuspecting patients. Members of the public in possession of the above suspected counterfeit product are advised to discontinue sale or use and submit stock to the nearest NAFDAC office. Healthcare providers and the public should notify the nearest NAFDAC office of any information concerning the distribution, sale, and use of the falsified version of the Augmentin product."