

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-present) signs the 2022 fiscal budget into law citing his concern over “worrisome changes”. Finance minister Zainab Ahmed announces new taxes including a sugar tax on non-alcoholic beverages and a 6% tax for digital non-resident companies. The federal government states its intention to reform and merge government agencies but promises to retain jobs while incentivising employee retention. President Buhari appoints Mu’azu Jaji Sambo as the new minister for state, works and housing and Doyin Salami as new Chief Economic Adviser to the President. Ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) leader Bola Tinubu suggests he may run for president in 2023. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports an increase in inflation in December, ahead of the next Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on 25 January. The ministry of justice designates two bandit groups in Northern Nigeria as terrorist organisations. New cases of Covid-19 fall in January signalling the end of the country’s fourth wave of infections.

Buhari signs 2022 budget into law...

President **Muhammadu Buhari** (2015-present) signed the 2022 budget into law on 31 December, despite concern over “worrisome changes” made by the **National Assembly**.¹ Buhari presented the 2022 budget to parliament in October (see *ARC Briefing Nigeria Oct 2021*) but the appropriation bill was allegedly delayed by the failure of the **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** to produce a budget for 2022.² President Buhari expressed his concern over

*“[the] increase in projected FGN [Federal National Government] Independent Revenue by N’400 billion [\$962m], the justification for which has yet to be provided to the executive [and] reduction in the provision for Sinking Fund to Retire Maturing Bonds by N’22 billion [\$52.9m] without explanation”.*³

A rise in the price of oil may account for the federal government’s projections that independent revenue will rise by \$962m. The new budget increases the benchmark oil price from \$57 to \$62, reflecting a stronger international market value of oil, and pegs daily production at 1.86 million barrels per day (bpd).⁴

An increase in the international oil price amid a positive outlook for a sustained higher price of oil will benefit state coffers. **Norway**-based NGO **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)** estimates that Nigeria’s oil production accounts for 65% of total government revenue, and that Nigeria’s production capacity is 2.5 million bpd.⁵ Nigeria’s output capacity is set to rise; Nigerian business magnate and **Dangote Industries Ltd** chairman **Aliko Dangote** announced on 23 January that the new Dangote oil refinery will launch operations by the end of Q3 2022.⁶

Additional taxes, including digital and sugar taxes, have been introduced to boost government revenue. Finance minister **Zainab Ahmed** announced on 5 January the introduction of a N’10 (\$0.02)

¹ [Premium Times](#), 31 Dec 2021

² [Premium Times](#), 20 Sep 2020

³ [The Guardian](#), 1 Jan 2022

⁴ [Premium Times](#), 31 Dec 2021

⁵ [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#), 17 Jan 2022

⁶ [Bloomberg](#), 22 Jan 2022

per litre excise duty on all non-alcoholic, carbonated and sweetened beverages.⁷ The official justification for the new tax is “to discourage excessive consumption of sugar in beverages which contributes to diabetes and obesity”.⁸ However, the Nigerian media has received the tax sceptically, accusing the government of seeking only to increase its revenue base.⁹ Beverage manufacturers have called for a halt to the sugar tax, stating poorly considered effects and potential business collapse. **Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)** director general **Segun Ajayi-Kadir** noted a rise in production costs, “which in turn adversely affect production levels and intimately result in dwindling profits”.¹⁰ The federal government stands to lose should the new levy cause the industry to shrink or collapse; the targeted income raised by the additional excise tax is lower than total taxes raised from Nigeria’s beverage industry.

Ahmed also announced the implementation of a new tax levied on **Over The Top (OTT)** companies known as ‘digital’ non-resident companies.¹¹ Non-resident firms providing digital services and products operating in Nigeria will be taxed 6% of their turnover, closer to Nigeria’s current 7.5% value-added-tax (VAT).¹² The new tax will impact mobile phone apps, high frequency trading, electronic data storage and online advertising.¹³

In June, the **World Bank** called for an expansion of the federal government’s tax base, and for the government to increase non-oil revenues to 12.75% of gross domestic product (GDP) and total revenue from 4.5% of GDP to 7.0%.¹⁴ While reform appears to be underway, federal government revenue was significantly challenged in September when the governors of **Rivers, Lagos and Ogun** states approached the **Supreme Court** to challenge the right of Nigeria’s tax collection agency, the **Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)**, to collect VAT (see *ARC Briefing Nigeria October 2021*). Ahmed revealed in a televised interview on 6 January that the government now seeks to increase revenue to 15% of GDP.¹⁵ The FIRS collected N’6.4 trillion (\$15.4 billion) in revenue in 2021; the highest revenue ever realised despite the **Covid-19** pandemic and subsequent economic downturn.¹⁶

However, unless the federal government can implement tax reforms that support both the federal purse and the industries contributing to its revenue, it remains poorly equipped to deliver on President Buhari’s legacy projects “promoting social inclusion and strengthening the resilience of the economy”.¹⁷ Buhari pledged to complete the 11.9-km **Second Niger Bridge** and 120-km **Lagos-Ibidan** highway, amongst other key projects, as part of the **Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF)** established in May 2018.^{18, 19}

The 2022 budget makes no provision to increase Nigeria’s VAT, currently set at 7.5%. However, during an interview with the **Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)** on 6 January, Ahmed stated:

“We have to increase VAT at sometime going forward, we can’t stay at 7.5% when we want to increase our revenue [...] at some point, I am not saying this year, because we didn’t make provision this year.”²⁰

⁷ [Tribune Online](#), 6 Jan 2022

⁸ [Tribune Online](#), 6 Jan 2022

⁹ [Tribune Online](#), 6 Jan 2022

¹⁰ [Bloomberg](#), 7 Jan 2022

¹¹ [Reuters](#), 5 Jan 2022

¹² [Reuters](#), 5 Jan 2022

¹³ [Reuters](#), 5 Jan 2022

¹⁴ [World Bank](#), 15 Jun 2021

¹⁵ [Punch](#), 7 Jan 2022

¹⁶ [Tribune Online](#), 6 Jan 2022

¹⁷ [Premium Times](#), 31 Dec 2021

¹⁸ [The Guardian](#), 12 Oct 2021

¹⁹ [State House](#), 17 May 2018

²⁰ [Punch](#), 7 Jan 2022

The 2022 budget increases government expenditure by N'735 billion (\$1.76 billion).²¹ Debt service accounts for N'3.88 trillion (\$9.33 billion) of government spending and non-debt recurrent expenditure N'6.9 trillion (\$16.6 billion).²²

Buhari's review of the amended budget also noted cuts to defence spending, reducing non-regular allowances for the **Nigerian Police Force (NPF)** by N'15 billion (\$36.1m) and **Nigerian Navy** by N'5 billion (\$12m).²³ Cuts to defence spending may have adverse implications for Nigeria's securitised response to rising banditry and lawlessness (see below).

... amid promise of structural reform

Finance minister Ahmed has committed to structural reforms alongside tax reform, including merging government agencies with the aim of reducing the government's salary bill. Ahmed announced on 6 January that the government will reduce its overhead costs by merging currently distinct agencies.²⁴ Although she was quick to reassure viewers and government employees that this would not result in redundancies, amalgamation of government agencies is likely to involve some layoffs. Ahmed said "*incentive packages to retrain and redeploy*" would be the government's first option to manage the transition:

*"Mr president does not want to disengage staff. This is what he has directed from the beginning of the administration. He also directed that we pay salaries. [...] we do hope that at the end of this exercise, some agencies will be merged, and it will cut down operational cost."*²⁵

President Buhari is reluctant to implement unpopular layoffs ahead of the 2023 presidential elections. While he is not eligible to run for a third term as executive, he is likely to remain an influential player behind the presidency. Cutting civil servants' salaries or publicly condoning a raft of redundancies may negatively impact his support base.

However, Buhari has implemented other high-level changes, including the appointment of **Mu'azu Jaji Sambo** as the new minister for state, works and housing on 24 December.²⁶ Sambo assumed his ministerial duties on 29 December.²⁷ Sambo has vowed to abandon the legacy of poor infrastructure development in Nigeria, stating that "*socio-economic development is tied to massive infrastructure development*".²⁸ Sambo is from the North-Eastern **Taraba state**, and his CV details a career in the public and private sector, including roles at the **National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA)**, **Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)**, **Nicon Insurance Corporation (NIC)**, **Allied Bank of Nigeria (ABN)** and **Savannah Bank of Nigeria Plc**.

President Buhari also appointed **Doyin Salami** to be the new **Chief Economic Adviser to the President (CEAP)** on 4 January.²⁹ An associate professor of economics at **Lagos Business School (LBS)**, Salami formerly served as chairman of the **Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC)**, established in 2019 by the president to produce reliable data with which to read economic developments in Nigeria.³⁰ In his new role, Salami is expected to assess key issues affecting the domestic economy and to present briefings on such issues to President Buhari, while monitoring international and national developments in order to develop appropriate policy.³¹

²¹ [Premium Times](#), 31 Dec 2021

²² [Premium Times](#), 31 Dec 2021

²³ [The Guardian](#), 1 Jan 2022

²⁴ [Punch](#), 7 Jan 2022

²⁵ [The Guardian](#), 7 Jan 2022

²⁶ [Vanguard](#), 30 Dec 2021

²⁷ [Vanguard](#), 30 Dec 2021

²⁸ [Vanguard](#), 30 Dec 2021

²⁹ [Premium Times](#), 6 Jan 2022

³⁰ [Premium Times](#), 9 Oct 2019

³¹ [Premium Times](#), 9 Oct 2019

Salami formerly served as a member of the **Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** and federal government's **Economic Management Team (EMT)**. Salami has also operated in a consulting role for international development and aid organisations including now defunct **United Kingdom (UK)** government agency **Department for International Development (DFID)**, **United Nations (UN)** Industrial Development Organisation (**UNIDO**) and **United States (US) Agency for International Development (USAID)**.

Salami has been critical of the Buhari administration's use of CBN funding, accusing the executive of using the central bank as a "*piggy bank*" to finance government debts in February 2021.³² Described as a neo-liberal economist, Salami's criticism of government debt and debt sustainability may seek to suggest a stronger reform agenda from the presidency.³³

By choosing to defer redundancies and tolerate a higher public wage bill in 2022, Buhari has demonstrated his sensitivity to the upcoming 2023 presidential election. New transport subsidies, launched by Ahmed in December (see *ARC Briefing Nigeria December 2021*), indicate a targeted spending regime designed to benefit voters most likely to vote for Buhari. Buhari's attempt to maintain his support base ahead of the 2023 election is likely to make him a key player, or kingmaker, in the next presidential elections.

Tinubu's bid for the presidency begins...

The campaign trail to the 2023 presidential elections has begun, with ruling **All Progressives Congress (APC)** party leader and former Lagos State governor **Bola Tinubu** testing the water.³⁴ Tinubu announced his ambition to stand for the presidency to state press on 10 January, following a closed-door meeting with President Buhari. Tinubu told reporters:

*"I have informed the president of my ambition, but I have not informed Nigerians yet, I am still consulting."*³⁵

Historically labelled a 'kingmaker' rather than a candidate himself, Tinubu asserted:

*"There is nowhere in the world where a kingmaker cannot himself be king."*³⁶

Tinubu has yet to formally declare his candidacy, which is likely to take place under the APC banner. Strong leadership of the APC and an early bid for the parties' presidential ticket may prove disruptive to Buhari's remaining months as executive.

A meeting of APC governors was scheduled to take place in Abuja on 9 January to determine the proposed national convention of the APC. However, the meeting was cancelled unexpectedly after several APC governors failed to travel to Abuja for the meeting; a matter made all the more significant in the wake of Buhari's refusal to sign the **Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill** in December (see *ARC Briefing Nigeria December 2021*)^{37, 38} The bill, passed by the national assembly and the senate, stipulated that a political party may elect candidates for each seat through party primaries.

Buhari, after failing to review and sign the bill within the legally mandated 30-day period, confirmed that he would assent to the bill if lawmakers provided options for the conduct of party primaries. On 19 January, the Senate passed a version of the bill that amended clause 84 and removed the requirement for each party to host primary elections.

³² [Premium Times](#), 24 Feb 2021

³³ [The Cable](#), 5 Jan 2022

³⁴ [The Guardian](#), 11 Jan 2022

³⁵ [The Guardian](#), 11 Jan 2022

³⁶ [The Guardian](#), 11 Jan 2022

³⁷ [Premium Times](#), 9 Jan 2022

³⁸ [The Guardian](#), 11 Jan 2022

On 20 January, **Sahara Reporters** published an article alleging that the National Assembly and Senate had approved different versions of the **Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill 2021**, stoking further controversy and prompting further legislative review of the bill.³⁹

Despite Buhari's pledges to complete his campaign promises before exiting office, the state of federal government finances and political attention already diverted to 2023 mean that delivery of these promises is increasingly unlikely. The 2023 presidential campaigns of all political parties are likely to play on cornerstone security and anti-corruption policies. Rather than achieving a dramatic story arc, Buhari's 'sitcom' presidency will end almost exactly as it began.

Inflation increases but benchmark forecast to hold...

A sudden rise in inflation in December saw consumer prices rise by 15.6% in comparison to 15.4% the previous month.⁴⁰ Statistician general **Simon Harry** informed reporters in Abuja that headline inflation continues to exceed the central bank's target band upper limit of 9%.⁴¹ Headline inflation has exceeded the upper limit since June 2015 – one month after Buhari began his first term as president. However, headline inflation has been in decline since April 2021, rising for the first time in eight months in December.⁴²

The greatest increases in inflation were recorded in gas, liquid fuel, wine, housing, narcotics, tobacco and clothing and shoes, further increasing the price of living for Nigeria's population who are already adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated economic shocks.⁴³ **Centre for Promotion of Private Enterprise (CPPE)** CEO **Muda Yusuf** speculated that the surge in demand during the "December festivities" played a role in the marginal spike and reversal of deceleration trend in the December inflation figure:

*"Food inflation is the biggest worry for the poor [which] rose from 17.21% in November to 17.37% in December."*⁴⁴

Despite the possible role of seasonal activities in the rise in inflation, inflationary pressures remain a significant macroeconomic risk to the Nigerian economy. Yusuf cited insecurity, climate change and poor infrastructure as limitations to financial recovery and contributors to high transaction costs:

*"To tame the current inflationary pressure, the government needs to reform the foreign exchange market to stabilise the exchange rate and reduce volatility, address forex liquidity issues through appropriate policy measures, [to] address productivity issues in the real sector of the economy."*⁴⁵

US-based financial publication **Bloomberg's** economist survey indicates that benchmark rates will hold in the CBN's first MPC meeting of 2022, scheduled for 25 January. Bloomberg conducted a survey of 12 economists, determining that the sudden increase in inflation is unlikely to trigger a benchmark hike.⁴⁶ **Standard Chartered Plc** head of research for **Africa** and the **Middle East**, **Razia Khan**, stated:

*"The big picture, weak economy, high inflation, remains the same."*⁴⁷

Meaningful reform to foreign exchange policy is unlikely as Buhari enters the final year of his presidency.

³⁹ Sahara Reporters, 20 Jan 2022

⁴⁰ The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴¹ The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴² The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴³ The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴⁴ The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴⁵ The Guardian, 18 Jan 2022

⁴⁶ Bloomberg, 17 Jan 2022

⁴⁷ Bloomberg, 17 Jan 2022

Security update

Insecurity continues to plague Nigeria, contributing to high transaction costs and the worsening financial position of the federal government. The government designated bandit groups **Yan Bindiga** and **Yan Ta'adda** as terrorist organisations in the government gazette's 108th volume, published 29 November.⁴⁸ The designation is supported by a ruling at the **Abuja High Court** in November, and allows law enforcement to pursue and prosecute

*"any persons or group of persons participating in any manner whatsoever, in any form of activities involving or concerning the prosecution of the collective intentions, or otherwise, of the groups referred to in paragraph 1 of this notice [under] the provisions of the **Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011**".⁴⁹*

The government has accused the groups of

"Banditry, incessant kidnappings for ransom, kidnapping for marriage, mass abductions of school children and other citizens, cattle rustling, enslavement, imprisonment, severe deprivation of physical liberty, torture, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, other forms of sexual violence, attacks and killings in communities and on commuters and wanton destruction of lives and properties in Nigeria, particularly in the North-west and North-central states".⁵⁰

In a bid to manage kidnap-for-profit activities, which have continued to accelerate in Nigeria, the market regulator **Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** has introduced a new rule expanding the reach of authorities and allowing greater oversight of financial links to suspected terrorist groups.⁵¹ **Capital Market Operators (CMOs)** are now required to *"screen and verify every client."*⁵² CMOs are also required to screen existing clients prior to executing any future transactions.⁵³ If a CMO detects a suspect transaction, it is required to file a **Suspicious Transaction Report (STR)** with the **Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU)**.⁵⁴

It remains to be seen whether the new legislative and regulatory approaches to managing Nigeria's insecurity will bolster the military response to the bandits. The inclusion of these groups under the Terrorism (Prevention) Act 2011 offers new legislative approaches to dismantle support for the groups, whether financial or physical. However, security services should remain cautious and resist a heavy-handed approach to the newly designated groups, or risk upsetting local populations and generating new recruitment opportunities.

Covid-19 cases decline in January

The **Omicron** variant may have caused a sudden spike in Nigeria's Covid-19 cases in December, which have since declined. **Nigeria National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** director general **Ifedayo Adetifa** confirmed the presence of Omicron in Nigeria on 1 December.⁵⁵ Whilst the NCDC confirmed 45 cases of the Omicron variant on 24 December, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** declared Omicron to be the dominant variant in Nigeria on 13 January.^{56, 57}

⁴⁸ [Ministry of Justice](#), 14 Jan 2022

⁴⁹ [Premium Times](#), 5 Jan 2022

⁵⁰ [Premium Times](#), 5 Jan 2022

⁵¹ [Bloomberg](#), 21 Jan 2022

⁵² [SEC Nigeria](#), 17 Jan 2022

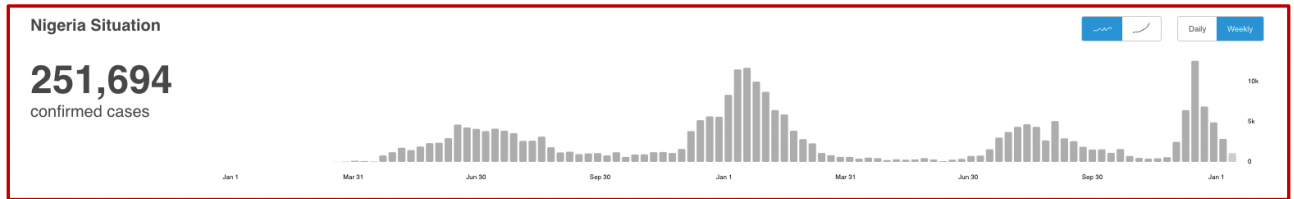
⁵³ [SEC Nigeria](#), 17 Jan 2022

⁵⁴ [SEC Nigeria](#), 17 Jan 2022

⁵⁵ [Premium Times](#), 7 Dec 2021

⁵⁶ [The Cable](#), 24 Dec 2021

⁵⁷ [The Cable](#), 13 Jan 2022



1- Extract World Health Organisation, accessed 24 Jan 2022

The fourth wave of Covid-19 infections, which began in December, peaked at 12,531 new cases per day on 20 December, the highest number of cases in a 24-hour period, exceeding the height of the second wave of Covid-19 in January 2021.⁵⁸ Reports of new cases have swiftly declined, with only 1,066 new cases of Covid-19 reported on 17 January.⁵⁹

To date, Nigeria has fully vaccinated 5.19 million (2.25%) of its population of 211.4 million. In total, Nigerian health authorities have administered 19.3 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine, with 13.7 million individuals - 6.68% of the population - having received a first dose of the vaccine.⁶⁰

On 23 January, the NCDC reported 228 new cases of Covid-19, 110 of which were recorded in **Federal Capital Territory (FCT)** followed by 38 in **Gombe state** and 32 in Lagos state.⁶¹

Planner

25 Jan 2022 **(Nigeria) Central Bank of Nigeria** Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting;

25 Jan 2022 **(Nigeria) Owerri** Federal court of appeal hear an appeal opposing the \$2 billion award against **Netherlands-based Royal Dutch Shell** for oil spills in Nigeria;

2023 **(Nigeria)** Presidential elections;

Chronology

20 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria) Premium Times**. Government approves the award of a major maritime project to **United Kingdom-based Frabemar**, a company alleged to be involved in high-level corruption in the **DRC** and **Mali**;

20 Jan 2022 **Owerri (Nigeria) Bloomberg**. Federal court of appeal in **Owerri** is to hear **Royal Dutch Shell's** appeal on 25 January to overturn an almost \$2 billion award against the company for allegedly spilling oil in **Nigeria**;

20 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria) Reuters**. **Federal Inland Revenue Service** chairman **Muhammad Nami** says **Nigeria** will prioritise tax collection from its digital economy in 2022 and focus on non-resident firms with significant economic presence that generate turnover in Nigeria;

19 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria) Reuters** Proscribed organisation **Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)** leader **Nnamdi Kanu** pleads not guilty to eight new charges including terrorism and incitement at the **High Court** in Abuja;

18 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria) African Business**. **Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry** says the seven-month shutdown of **Twitter** cost the Nigerian economy 10.72 trillion Nigerian naira (\$26.1 billion);

18 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria) Punch**. President **Muhammadu Buhari** unveils the world's largest rice pyramids aimed to showcase the government's efforts to boost rice production, made with one million bags of rice in the city of **Abuja**;

⁵⁸ [World Health Organisation](#), accessed 24 Jan 2022

⁵⁹ [World Health Organisation](#), accessed 24 Jan 2022

⁶⁰ [World Health Organisation](#), accessed 24 Jan 2022

⁶¹ [NDCD](#), accessed 24 Jan 2022

12 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Tech Central*. **Nigeria** lifts a ban on **Twitter** after the social media platform agrees to open a local office;

6 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *The Guardian*. Police report the death of two **Nigerian** nationals and kidnap of three **Chinese** nationals working on a hydro-electric dam project in **central Nigeria** following clashes between armed gang members and security forces;

5 Jan 2022 **Lagos (Nigeria)** *Premium Times*. The **Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette** designates two bandit groups, **Yan Bindiga** and **Yan Ta'adda**, operating in the **North-West region** as terrorist organisations;

5 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Punch*. **United States (US) state department** updates its travel advice for **Nigeria** on 4 January, warning US citizens and dual citizens to reconsider travel in Nigeria as kidnappers begin to target US and dual nationals;

5 Jan 2022 **Lagos (Nigeria)** *Africa News*. A large fire damages informal settlement **Ebute Metta** in **Lagos**, an area known for its sawmills on the banks of the **Lagos Lagoon**;

4 Jan 2022 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *The Guardian*. President **Muhammadu Buhari** appoints **Doyin Salami** to serve as the first Chief Economic Adviser;

31 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Premium Times*. President **Muhammadu Buhari** signs the 2022 budget into law citing “*worrisome changes*” made by parliament;

31 Dec 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Ghana Web*. **Mohammed Sanusi Lamido**, former governor of the **Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)** and emir of **Kano state (Nigeria)**, declares that the **Bank of Ghana (BoG)** is a regional leader in the development of Fintech and other financial operations commending **Ghanaian** vice president **Mahamadu Bawumia** for Ghana’s digitisation drive;

30 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *The Guardian*. **United States (US)** consulate general **Claire Pierangelo** publishes a statement confirming that the US will begin construction of a new consulate compound in **Eko Atlantic City (Lagos state)** in 2022;

30 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Maritime Executive*. **Swiss** authority confirms that Nigerian authorities have released **San Padre Pio**, a 7,600 deadweight tonnage (dwt) product tanker managed by Switzerland-based **ABC Maritime**, following “*extensive diplomatic efforts*”; the tanker departed **Port Harcourt** on 8 December, nearly four years after its initial detention there on 23 January 2018;

29 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Punch*. President **Muhammadu Buhari** vows to improve access to foreign exchange (FX) for the importation of raw materials and machines not available locally to support Nigeria’s manufacturing sector;

29 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Vanguard*. Newly appointed minister for state, works and housing, **Mu’azu Jaji Sambo** assumes his duties vowing to develop Nigeria’s infrastructure to aid economic development;

28 Dec 2021 **Singapore (Singapore)** *Business Standard*. The ministry of health lifts a travel ban imposed on 10 African countries including **Botswana, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa** and **Zimbabwe** previously imposed due to concerns about the Covid-19 Omicron variant;

28 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Premium Times*. The **Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** publishes a situation report revealing that 92 individuals died of Lassa fever in Nigeria in 2021 with 454 infections in the same year spanning 16 states and the **Federal Capital Territory (FCT)**;

28 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Premium Times*. President **Muhammadu Buhari**'s spokesperson, Garba **Shehu**, states that the president's decision not to sign the **Electoral Act Amendment Bill** will save Nigeria from frivolous spending;

21 Dec 2021 **Abuja (Nigeria)** *Premium Times*. President **Muhammadu Buhari** refuses to approve an amendment to the electoral law, which includes the organisation of primaries to designate candidates for the presidential election scheduled in fourteen months;

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