

Africa

Ethiopia to resume Eritrea flights

More than 30 Nigerian opposition parties join forces against Buhari

ABUJA, July 10, (Agencies): More than 30 opposition parties in Nigeria said Monday they are teaming up to try to prevent President **Muhammadu Buhari** from being re-elected to a second term in power early next year.

Representatives of 39 registered political parties, including the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP), signed a memorandum of understanding "to form an anti-Buhari alliance in the election next February."



Buhari

PDP spokesman Kola Ologbodiyan told AFP that the accord would enable the opposition "to come together, present one presidential candidate who will oust the incompetent government of President Muhammadu Buhari."

Yunusa Tanko, head of one of the parties — the minority National Conscience Party — said the alliance would enable the opposition to "work together to rescue power."

"It's a grand alliance of 39 political parties. It's an alliance, not a merger. The idea is that we are going to work together as equal," Tanko told AFP.

The parties would present a common candidate for all elective posts at all levels up to the presidency, he explained.

"Every political party will have a chance of being represented in a government of national unity."

Niger jails 17 B. Haram members:

A court in Niger has sentenced 17 members of the violent Islamist movement Boko Haram to between two and seven years in jail, a senior state prosecutor said Monday.

"Of 42 suspects on trial, 17 got between two and seven years in prison and 21 others were released" at the end of a six-day trial in the southeastern Diffa region, Chaibou Samna, prosecutor at the high court in Niamey, told AFP.

The trial of the four other suspected members of the jihadist movement,

which originated in Nigeria and has launched bloody attacks in neighbouring countries, was postponed until mid-October, Samna said.

The men held for trial included Niger nationals and Malians as well as Nigerians, accused of "criminal association connected with a terrorist enterprise", another judicial source said.

Some were "captured during fighting" or during security checks carried out under a state of emergency imposed on the Diffa region, across the border from Nigeria, according to a source in the security forces.

UN gets 180 child soldiers: Nigeria's military command says it has handed to the government and the United Nations more than 180 former child soldiers who had been arrested or rescued in various military operations in Nigeria's north-east.

Commander Nicholas Rogers said Monday during the handover ceremony in Maiduguri that the children were former Boko Haram fighters being turned over in line with international humanitarian laws. He said many children coerced into using weapons against the state were killed in fighting between Boko Haram and government forces.

The UN Children's Agency says the children's release comes after they were cleared of ties to Boko Haram. It said eight girls and 175 boys will receive medical attention and psychosocial support before reuniting them with their families. The children range in age from seven to 18 years.

Ethiopia to resume flights:

Ethiopian Airlines said on Tuesday it would resume flights to Eritrea's capital Asmara on July 17 for the first time in 20 years, a day after the neighbours and longtime foes declared their "state of war" over.

In a historic deal on Monday, the Horn of Africa neighbours agreed to open embassies, develop ports and resume flights, concrete signs of a rapprochement that has swept away two decades of hostility since war erupted over their disputed frontier in 1998.



Pakistan's Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai waves as she stands next to the singer Jamah (left), during a meeting with women who campaign for education and children's and women's rights in Sao Paulo, Brazil on July 9. (AP)

Lat/Am

'Mockery of Brazil's legal system':

Former Brazil president **Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva**'s on-off prison release following a corruption conviction risks undermining the country's legal system, a legal expert told AFP.

Brazil's political scene was thrown into tumultuous uncertainty on Sunday when it was initially announced that a judge had ordered Lula — serving a 12-year sentence for accepting a bribe — be released from prison, only for a more senior judge to later overturn that decision.

As it turned out, Lula's Workers Party (PT) had contested his imprisonment at an appeals court in Porto Alegre where judge Rogerio Favreto was on call.

Favreto, who Brazilian press were quick to point out was a PT member for almost 20 years and several times worked as a consultant for Lula's government, duly ordered the former president's release.

But Ivar Hartmann, a law professor at Rio de Janeiro's Getulio Vargas Foundation, blasted the PT for making a mockery of Brazil's legal system.

"The Brazilian people should not pay the price of a demoralized justice system because of the PT's political strategy," he told AFP. (AFP)

Odebrecht settles with 2 bodies:

Construction conglomerate Odebrecht has signed an agreement with two more Brazilian state bodies to settle cases related to a corruption scheme in which Odebrecht and others formed a de facto cartel to rig bids with state-

run oil giant Petrobras and bribe officials.

Odebrecht signed an agreement Monday with the solicitor general and the comptroller general to pay around \$700 million over 22 years to Petrobras and other state entities. The two state bodies will drop legal proceedings against Odebrecht.

After the installments are adjusted for inflation, authorities estimate Odebrecht will pay around \$1.76 billion.

The agreement expands a 2016 settlement in which Odebrecht agreed to pay at least \$2.6 billion to resolve charges with authorities in the United States, Brazil and Switzerland. Monday's fine is part of that \$2.6 billion. (AP)

Priests roughed up in Nicaragua:

Masked supporters of Nicaragua's government under president **Daniel Ortega** attacked a group of Roman Catholic priests led by Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes on Monday as they arrived to help anti-government protesters trapped inside a church.

Managua auxiliary Bishop Silvio Jose Baez sustained cuts to his arm as the delegation



Lula



Ortega

made its way into the San Sebastian Basilica in Diriamba south of the capital. The Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua posted photos of Baez's injured arm to its Twitter account with a message saying that pro-government "gangs awaited them, specifically to physically attack them."

The message continued: "Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Dozens of government sympathizers chanting "Murderers!" and "We want peace!" and waving flags of the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front roughed up the religious delegation. Some journalists covering the arrival were also attacked and had their equipment stolen. (AP)

More protests in Haiti:

Protesters clashed with police Monday in Haiti's capital while a general strike kept most people at home across the country in a fourth day of unrest sparked by a now-rescinded government plan to raise fuel prices in the impoverished nation.

Demonstrators linked to various opposition factions marched on the parliament building but were turned back by police. Protesters also set fire to a tax office in the Tabarre area of the capital.

But much of Port-au-Prince and the country shut down.

The general strike halted the mini-buses and taxis that most Haitians depend on to get to work or school. Most businesses closed after the people took advantage of the protests to loot shops around the capital.

Public Security Secretary Ronsard Saint Cyr and leaders of the House of Deputies and Senate called for an end to the protests and to the general strike. (AP)

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