# Senate Amends CBN Act to Raise Lending Limit to FG

## ●*Extends 2022 supplementary budget implementation by six months*

**Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja

The Senate yesterday held an emergency session and amended the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Act to raise the total advances the apex bank can grant the federal government from five per cent to 15 per cent.

The Red Chamber also passed another bill to extend the implementation of the 2022 supplementary budget by six months from June 30, 2023, to December 31, 2023.

The two bills, which were both read for the first time, were sponsored by the Senate Leader, Senator Abdullahi Ibrahim Gobir (APC, Sokoto East).

They were titled: "A Bill for an Act to Amend the 2022 Supplementary Appropriation Act and for Other Matters Connected therewith, 2023 (SB. 1124)" and "A Bill for an Act to Amend the Central Bank of Nigeria Act C4 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Thereto, 2023 (SB. 1125)."

While leading the debate on the CBN Amendment Act, the Senate Leader said the Bill seeks to amend the CBN Act regarding the Ways and Means Advances policy.

Under the CBN Act, the Ways and Means provision allows the government to borrow from the apex bank if it needs short-term or emergency finance to fund delayed

**Continued on page 5**

**Akpabio, Jibrin Walk a Tightrope as Yari Insists on N'West Senate Presidency... Page 8**

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**TINUBU'S INAUGURATION LECTURE...**

L-R: Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III; Vice President-elect, Alhaji Kashim Shettima; President Muhammadu Buhari; former President of Kenya, Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta; Archbishop of Sokoto, Mathew Hassan Kukah; and the President of African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, at the inauguration lecture for the incoming administration in Abuja ...yesterday GODWIN OMOIGUI

# Tinubu Absent as Kenyatta, Others Call for Inclusive Govt

**Olawale Ajimotokan** and **Adedayo Akinwale** in Abuja

There was disquiet at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Abuja, venue of

**Continued on page 5**

# In National Broadcast, Buhari Urges Politicians to Accept Decisions of Election Tribunals

## ●*Salutes Tinubu's courage, says he's the best to succeed him*

**Deji Elumoye** in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has again apologised to Nigerians over steps taken by his administration in the last eight years to revamp the nation's economy.

Buhari had in late April asked Nigerians hurt by his policies for forgiveness.

In a farewell broadcast to Nigerians earlier today the outgoing President boasted that his government made considerable progress in the fight against corruption through reforms implementation.

While expressing happiness that he is leaving Nigeria better than it was in 2015, President Buhari charged political stakeholders to accept the outcome of all court cases associated with the 2023 general election.

The president also hailed the

**Continued on page 5**



**PROJECT INAUGURATION...**

L-R: Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai; former National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Chief Bisi Akande; Kaduna State Governor-elect, Senator Uba Sani; and APC chieftain, Alhaji Ali Modu Sheriff, during the inauguration of Ronchess Projects in Kaduna...yesterday

**$1.2bn Zungeru Power Plant Begins Supply of 700MW to National Grid... Page 8**



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NEWS

# IN NATIONAL BROADCAST, BUHARI URGES POLITICIANS TO ACCEPT DECISIONS OF ELECTION TRIBUNALS

courage of the President-elect, Bola Tinubu, whom he described as his political friend of 10 years, saying he is the best candidate to succeed him.

In the speech, which Buhari described as his last assignment as a democratically-elected President of Nigeria, the outgoing President noted that the 2023 presidential election was the most keenly contested presidential election since the First Republic, describing it as a demonstration that Nigeria's democracy was getting better and more entrenched with each election.

"We must as a nation improve and sustain gains we make in the electoral process, on an incremental basis for Nigeria to take its rightful place among Nations.

"Our democracy provides for, allows, and encourages seeking redress for perceived injustices, enabling some candidates and political parties that did not agree with the results to go to court.

"Irrespective of the outcome of the various cases, I urge all parties involved to accept the decision of our courts and join hands to build a better Nigeria," Buhari explained.

He saluted what he described as the doggedness and resilience of all the presidential candidates and their political parties for believing in the judicial system by taking their grievances with the election results to the court.

"In the course of the campaigns, we had argued and disagreed on how to make Nigeria better but we never disagreed or had any doubts that Nigeria has to be better," he added.

"As your President, I call on all of us to bear the strength of our individualism, the power of our unity, the convictions of our beliefs to make Nigeria work better and together with one spirit and one purpose.

"To my brother, friend, and fellow worker in the political terrain for the past ten years - Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu -, I congratulate you on the realisation of your dream, which was propelled by a burning passion to put Nigeria amongst the leading nations of the world.

"You have indeed worked for this day and God has crowned your efforts. I have no doubt that your passion for excellence, reliance on competence, fairness in relationships, commitment to equity, loyalty to the country and desire for Nigeria to be globally relevant would come through for you, under God's guidance, as you lead our country to levels higher that I am leaving.

"You are the best candidate among all the contestants and Nigerians have chosen well," Buhari explained.

The outgoing president described the last eight years as an exciting experience in his desire and commitment to see a Nigeria in which public goods and services are available, and accessible within a united, peaceful, and secure nation.

President Buhari noted that he started this journey with a great deal of promise and expectation from Nigerians, adding that he never intended to be just politically correct but to do the correct things that would make a meaningful impact on the lives of the common Nigerian.

He stated the high expectation was not misplaced because, like the ordinary Nigerian, he had grown tired of watching the country progressively moving away from the path of correctness.

"To ensure that our democracy remains resilient and our elected representatives remain accountable to the people, I am leaving behind an electoral process, which guarantees that votes count, results are credible, elections are fair and transparent and the influence of money in politics reduced to the barest minimum. And Nigerians can elect leaders of their choice.

"We are already seeing the outcome of this process as it provided an even playing field where persons without any political godfather or access to money defeated other well-resourced candidates," he explained.

The Nigerian economy, he said, has become more resilient due to the various strategies put in place to ensure that the economy remained afloat during cases of global economic downturns.

President Buhari recalled the supply chain disruptions and economic downturn that the world witnessed between 2020 and 2022 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He declared that the deftness of the response of his government to the pandemic remains a global best practice.

He also stated that his administration increased the ability of the poor and rural Nigerians to earn a living, provided more food for millions in the villages, and gave women opportunities to earn a living.

According to him, young men and women in urban centres were also supported to put their skills into productive use, adding also that his administration also provided an enabling environment for the private sector to engage in businesses for which their return on investments is guaranteed.

He noted that the private sector proved a strong partner in his government's drive to build a resilient and sustainable economy as evidenced by the growing number of turn-key projects in various sectors of the economy.

"In the course of revamping the economy, we made some difficult choices, most of which yielded the desired results. Some of the measures led to temporary pain and suffering for which I sincerely apologised to my fellow countrymen, but the measures were taken for the overall good of the country," he said.

Speaking on his efforts to provide adequate infrastructure to drive economic growth, the outgoing president disclosed that his administration completed age-long projects and processes.

He identified some of his accomplishments to include the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), the completion of some power projects, the completion of the Second Niger Bridge, and various important roads linking cities and states.

He also noted that his administration's battle to ensure that all Nigerians live in a safe and secure environment achieved considerable results.

"As I complete my term in office, we have been able to reduce the incidences of banditry, terrorism, armed robbery, and other criminal activities considerably," he said.

President Buhari stated that to sustain the gains made so far, all Nigerians should be more vigilant and support the security agencies by ensuring that core values defined by being brothers' keepers govern all actions.

"Up-till now, I still grieve for our children still in captivity, mourn with parents, friends, and relatives of all those that lost loved ones in the days of the senseless brigandage and carnage. For all those under unlawful captivity our security agencies are working round the clock to secure their release unharmed," he added.

He further stated that he was determined to rid the country of corrupt practices that had consistently diminished her efforts to be a great country.

"I did pursue this commitment relentlessly, despite the expected pushback. I am happy that considerable progress had been made in repatriating huge sums of money back to the country and also taken over properties illegally acquired from our commonwealth," he said.

Buhari also claimed that Nigeria's influence has continued to grow on the international scene as exemplified by notable Nigerians occupying headship and leadership positions in renowned global bodies.

He noted that Nigeria's democracy has continued to thrive on the principles of separation of powers.

The outgoing president commended the leadership and members of the National Assembly for their patriotism which did not detract from their roles as a check to the executive arm.

"I also want to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to a good number of Nigerians who provided their support and encouragement to help me navigate the exciting journey of moving Nigeria forward.

"I cannot and will not forget the millions who prayed for me during my illness in my first term of office. I am constantly praying for you and for Nigeria to thrive in peace.

"As I retire home to Daura, Katsina State, I feel fulfilled that we have started the Nigeria Re-Birth by taking the initial critical steps and I am convinced the in-coming administration will quicken the pace of this walk to see a Nigeria that fulfills its destiny to be a great nation.

"I am confident that I am leaving office with Nigeria better in 2023 than in 2015," Buhari added.

# TINUBU ABSENT AS KENYATTA, OTHERS CALL FOR INCLUSIVE GOVT

the Inauguration Lecture yesterday, following the conspicuous absence of the President-elect, Bola Tinubu from the event, which was organised in his honour.

However, Tinubu was represented by the Vice President-elect, Senator Kashim Shettima, who did not say anything about his whereabouts, but only proceeded to read his speech.

In the speech read on his behalf, the President-elect declared that Nigeria stands at the precipice of a new era, where the ideals of democracy would guide her path towards sustainable development.

At the event, President Muhammadu Buhari also declared that Nigerians could overcome their differences and forge a common cause for progress.

Former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya has appealed to the incoming President of Nigeria, Tinubu to unite the country irrespective of the ethnic, political, and religious cleavages that may exist.

The Vice President-elect, Shettima also insisted that Tinubu cannot Islamise Nigeria.

At the Inauguration Lecture organised by the Presidential Transition Council (PTC), with the keynote address delivered by Kenyatta at the International Conference Centre (ICC) in Abuja, Tinubu was absent and was represented by the Vice President-elect, Shettima.

In a statement issued by the Office of the President-elect and signed by Tunde Rahman, the incoming president, through the Vice President-elect, Shettima, highlighted the indispensable role of democracy as the cornerstone for the nation's progress and prosperity.

The president-elect also called on Nigerians to stand together with his incoming administration to birth a better country, while also restating his commitment to the ideals of democracy as the best form of government.

He said: "Distinguished guests, democracy is more than a system of governance; it is the very lifeblood that empowers a nation to flourish and thrive.

"We stand at the precipice of a new era, where the ideals of democracy will guide our path towards sustainable development," he explained.

Tinubu, while embracing his African identity, further stated that he recognised the collective efforts of Nigerians and Africans in shaping their democratic political cultures and institutions, tailored to the unique conditions and challenges faced by their societies.

He articulated the essence of democracy, emphasising that it transcends being a mere form of government.

Tinubu noted: "Democracy, my fellow countrymen, is not only a political system; it is a way of life. It embodies a distinctive code of thought and conduct, demanding the utmost integrity and self-improvement from leaders."

While explaining the paradoxical nature of democracy, the president-elect noted that while it guarantees freedom, its survival hinges on responsible and measured use of that freedom.

He added that democracy, as an ever-evolving concept, empowers the majority to express their will while safeguarding the fundamental interests of the minority.

"Our democracy is not an abstract ideal; it is a practical vessel that will propel our nation to new heights in every facet of our collective existence," Tinubu added.

Drawing insights from Nigeria's national experience, he acknowledged the merits of democracy even in its imperfect manifestations, stressing that it surpasses the most perfect dictatorship in terms of justice, humanity, and productivity.

Tinubu also mentioned the importance of fostering open forums for discussion and debate, where the best ideas and policies could enter the national discourse and capture the imagination of the people.

He pledged to utilise democratic institutions not only to safeguard political and civil rights, but also to drive comprehensive economic reforms that engender broad-based prosperity, create employment opportunities, and unlock the nation's untapped potential.

"Today, I stand before you, ready to dedicate my entire being to the service of our great nation and the African continent," Tinubu noted.

Speaking in his capacity, Shettima also said a lot of lies were being traded as truth, insisting that his principal, Tinubu has no Islamisation agenda.

"Asiwaju Tinubu is a Muslim who is married to a Christian, not only a Christian but a Pastor of Redeemed Christian Church of God. Someone who has not Islamised his family people are believing he is going to Islamise the nation.

"I stand here in profound conviction that in unity we are going to move a mountain. I implore all Nigerians to give us the benefit of the doubt. In this structure, I am confident in the Tinubu project. He believes in the Nigerian project in spite of the division that permeated our politics in the last 2023 presidential election," Shettima said.

## We Can Overcome Our Differences and Forge a Common Cause, Says Buhari

On his part, President Buhari stated that Nigerians could overcome their differences and forge a common cause toward progress.

"We have learnt that democracy is not just a system of governance. It is a way of life. True democracy is when the voice of the people is heard. Our nation's progress rests on inclusivity, unity and not leaving any citizen behind, and ensuring every citizen enjoys the dividends of good governance. We must heed the lessons of this lecture and translate them into action. We must fight against corruption in all its forms. We must remain united. Our diversity is our strength.

"We can overcome our differences and forge a common cause towards progress," Buhari explained.

Buhari noted that the inauguration lecture took participants on a journey of introspection on the imperatives of democratic governance and nation-building, noting that the various challenges that confront the socio-political fabrics of Nigeria were highlighted.

## Kenyatta Urges Tinubu to Unite Nigeria

In his address, the keynote speaker and former Kenyan President, Kenyatta appealed to Tinubu to unite the country.

Speaking on the theme: 'Deepening Democracy for Integration and Development', Kenyatta summed up the leadership crisis in Africa as negative ethnicism, religious intolerance, and economic greed.

Kenyatta noted that while elections may divide the people, leadership must bring them together.

He encouraged Tinubu to surround himself with voices that challenge his own and reach out to those who may feel aggrieved to build a stronger nation together.

In closing his presentation, Kenyatta said: "The contest is now over and the hard work of building a prosperous and unified Nigeria now begins.

"I encourage you to surround yourself with the voices of those who will counterbalance the hardliners that feel entitled to a piece of your office, you will lose nothing and gain everything by reaching out across the political, ethnic, and religious lines."

He added: "To those who may feel aggrieved by your victory in one way or another, please allow them to exhale and be part of your vision for a greater Nigeria.

"It is my hope and my prayer that the lessons from across the continent will give you the resolve to walk the difficult path of overcoming those three enemies.

"I started by mentioning the three enemies of nationhood: Negative ethnicity, religious discrimination, and corruption. As your fellow African, I look forward to a Nigeria that emerges from this transition, ready to flex and fight for its rightful place on the global stage with both hands at the ready," Kenyatta said.

Also the President, African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, who spoke on the topic, "Strengthening the Nigerian Economy in the Tinubu Years," urged the president-elect to drastically improve the economy and spark a new wave of prosperity.

Continued on page 14

# SENATE AMENDS CBN ACT TO RAISE LENDING LIMIT TO FG

government expected cash receipts of fiscal deficits.

According to him, the amendment specifically seeks to increase the total CBN advances to the federal government from five per cent to a maximum of 15 per cent.

Gobir said: "The very essence of this bill is to enable the federal government to meet its immediate and future obligation in the approval of the ways and means by the National Assembly and advances to the federal government by the Central Bank of Nigeria.

"This amendment is very consequential and it needs the support of us all. This is to enable the federal government to embark on very important projects that will inflate and rejig the economy."

The CBN Act allows the apex bank to grant temporary advances to the federal government in respect of temporary deficit of budget revenue at such rate as the bank may determine.

It, however, stipulates that the total amount of such advances outstanding "shall not at any time exceed five per cent of the previous year's actual revenue of the federal government."

In addition, it stipulates that: "All advances shall be repaid as soon as possible and shall, in any event, be repayable by the end of the federal government financial year in which they are granted.

"If such advances remain unpaid at the end of the year, the power of the bank to grant such further advances in any subsequent year shall not be exercisable, unless the outstanding advances have been repaid.

Specifically, Section 38 of the CBN Act states: "Notwithstanding the provisions of section 34(d) of this Act, the Bank (CBN) may grant temporary advances to the Federal Government in respect of temporary deficiency of budget revenue at such rate as the Bank may determine.

"The total amount of such advances outstanding shall not at any time exceed five per cent of the previous year's actual revenue of the federal government."

Leading the debate on the bill to amend the supplementary budget, the Senate Leader said it was necessary to extend the implementation of the budget because some "significant amounts of funds remain with MDAs."

He explained that the bill which seeks to amend the 2022 Supplementary Appropriation Act would extend the implementation year from June 30, 2023, to December 1, 2023.

The 2022 supplementary budget of N819,536,937,813 was passed last December to finance some unplanned situations that occurred as a result of flooding and other events with a mandate to end the implementation on March 31, 2023.

Gobir recalled that the National Assembly extended the implementation of the 2022 Supplementary Appropriation Act from December 31, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

He said: " This was to allow full implementation of

the budget, especially in light of the 2022 Supplementary budget approved in December 2022.

"The extension had allowed MDAs to utilise a large proportion of funds released to them. However, significant amounts of funds remain with Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs) and will require a further extension to be fully expended.

"Given the critical importance of some key projects nearing completion, requesting a further extension of the expiration clause in the 2022 Supplementary Appropriation Bill and the Long Title and Explanatory Memorandum is expedient.

"This is to avoid compounding the problem of abandoned projects, given that some of the projects were not provided for in the 2023 Budget," Gobir explained.

Gobir urged his colleagues to give their full support to the Bill to allow full utilisation of the capital releases to help reflate the economy.

At the emergency plenary, the bills titled "2022 supplementary Appropriation Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023 (SB.1124) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 (SB. 1125)" were read for the first time, and adopted after which they were passed for second and third reading respectively before they were approved.

The Senate passed the bill after the clause-by-clause consideration at the Committee on Supply.

The Senate President, Dr. Ahmad Lawan, directed the Clerk to the National Assembly to transmit the two bills to the executive arm of government for the president's assent.

NEWS




**PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF ICAN-AI…**

L-R: Chairman, Accountability Index, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Mr. Oladipo Oladele; Past President of ICAN, Sir Ike Nwokolo; ICAN President, Mallam Tijjani Musa; Past ICAN President, Mallam Issmaila Zakari; Registrar/CEO ICAN, Prof. Ahmed Kumshe; and Council member, Mr. Austin Irem, at the public presentation of 2020 & 2021 Accountability Index (ICAN-AI ) Reports held in Lagos…recently MUBO PETERS

# At Children's Day: Buhari Tasks Parents on Cultural Values

*Atiku bemoans scourge of out-of-school children*

**Deji Elumoye** and **Chuks Okocha** in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has called on Nigerian parents and children to hold onto the ancient truths of integrity, honesty, knowledge, and hard work despite the changing times, saying these landmarks remain the pillars of destiny.

This is just as former Vice President and presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 presidential election, Atiku Abubakar bemoaned the rising number of out-of-school children in Nigeria.

The president, according to a statement issued yesterday by his Media Adviser, Femi Adesina, to mark this year's Children's Day, said "On this special day, we are immensely grateful to God for another opportunity to celebrate our children, on May 27, 2023. Every Children's Day reminds us of the future, and the necessary sacrifices and building blocks by parents, guardians, teachers, leaders, and government to secure our greatest assets on earth, the younger ones.

"As a father and grandfather, I share in the joy that children bring into our lives and the fulfillment of seeing them grow. And I also feel the pain of loss, anxiety, and frustration that comes with uncertain times, like the disruptions to families due to insecurity, which we have worked hard to contain in the last eight years.

"We must not lose hope, and our faith should be rekindled in the ability of the Government to safeguard the future of our lives and children. In eight years, we have focused on children, negotiating and fighting for the release of many that were taken captive, and painstakingly building intelligence on the whereabouts of others. Some have been released; more will come, by God's grace, as the next administration continues on the same noble path," he assures.

President Buhari admonished parents to treat their children with dignity while staying focused on discipline.

He said: "Every child is special and should be specially treated with dignity.

"At the twilight of this administration, we are thankful for all the support we have received from parents, government officials, development partners, professionals, and religious leaders in realizing some of our targets, like the school feeding programme, resuscitation of the primary health care system, and protecting our schools by the security agencies.

"As we are aware, raising healthy and promising children is a collective responsibility. In Nigeria, like in most of Africa, the community has a stake in the upbringing of the child. Truly, it takes a village to raise a child. And as the world continues to become smaller with new technology, and the borders on culture and cultural values are steadily getting blurred, we must retain our identity and values. Our core values of integrity, honesty, hard work, and love for learning should not be negotiated. Our children should know, and stay with the ancient landmarks of what is true, and right at home, and abroad," he added.

The President noted that efforts should be geared towards putting building blocks that will sustain unity, peace, and prosperity for the sake of the children.

According to him: "At over 80 years of age, and served the country all my working life, I still believe our children hold the keys to a brighter future for Nigeria, with these three undeniable and unchangeable truths; fear of God is supreme, love for knowledge is elevating and hard work will always pay off.

"Happy Children's Day and God bless our children," he says, felicitating with parents, children, and guardians.

### Atiku Bemoans Scourge of Out-of-school Children

Meanwhile, Atiku has congratulated children across the globe and in Nigeria, especially over the celebration of Children's Day this year.

The former vice president said in a statement issued yesterday by his media office that "the celebration of Children today is to allow today's leaders to build a brighter future for the society."

Atiku remarked that while May 27 every year has been earmarked for the celebration of children, "our world is still troubled with existential threats mitigating the possibility of a promising future for our children."

He said further, "In Nigeria, for instance, we continue to grapple with the problem of out-of-school children and children being forced into child labour or, even, crime.

"Sadly, not much has gone into establishing a system of protection for children against these dangerous tendencies.

"Either at the governmental or civil society levels, our failures to build the wall that will shield our children from negative influences that can affect their future remains inexcusable," the former Vice President noted.

## Soludo: South-east Eternally Grateful to Buhari for Second Niger Bridge

**David-Chuddy Eleke** in Awka

Anambra State Governor, Prof Chukwuma Soludo, has said the South-east geopolitical zone will be eternally grateful to President Muhammadu Buhari for the completion of the Second Niger Bridge.

While speaking during a live television programme at the weekend, Soludo expressed gratitude to the Buhari administration for keeping to its promise of completing the bridge.

"The people of the South-east have cried; we have agitated; we have complained and (did) all we can — over five key fundamental infrastructural provisions that will change the south-east," Soludo said.

"One such infrastructure is the dredging project, which needs to be executed to enable the South-east to have access to the Atlantic Ocean in terms of access to the sea.

"Number two was the Second Niger Bridge, and three is the highway from Anambra to Lokoja abandoned by the federal government. Number four is the gas pipeline around the south-east and the last one is the rail line infrastructural project."

While the other projects are yet to be executed, the governor said he believes the completion of the Second Niger Bridge is a step in the right direction.

"Those are the five major infrastructural projects we thought the federal government would have been able to help us kick start, but we are eternally grateful that one out of five has been completed.

"It was a promise made and a promise kept. It is a game changer and it will decongest traffic, and create a twin city between Asaba and Onitsha."

On May 23, governors from the South-east geopolitical zone named the Second Niger Bridge after President Buhari.

Soludo also pushed for the release of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, to resolve the security issues in South-east.

He reiterated that he was ready to stand as a surety for Kanu if the federal government is ready to release him.

Kanu was re-arrested in Kenya and brought back to Nigeria in June 2021, after he jumped bail and fled abroad.

The governor said he wrote to President Buhari requesting Kanu's release, noting that the continued detention of the IPOB leader is behind some of the security issues in the South-east.

Soludo said: "I copied the Attorney General in the letter I wrote to the President; but if the Buhari administration fails to release him, we will continue to pursue the issue with the incoming administration.

"Our interest, in this case, is simple: peace, security, and development. If it's because of the court process, you can release him as part of the conditions, and hand him over to me. We will keep him. When you need him, we will release him and bring him to you. I will be the surety. I am prepared to do that."

## IMF Urges Tinubu to Broaden Nigeria's Sources of Income

**Festus Akanbi**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has encouraged the incoming administration of Bola Tinubu to broaden the nation's sources of income.

The Resident Representative for the IMF's Nigeria office, Ari Aisen, made this statement at a virtual discussion on Nigeria's debt position.

He also counseled the next administration to reduce its reliance on debt to pay for expenses significantly.

Aisen contended that revenue and spending should be the main areas of focus in order to address Nigeria's debt problems.

He said that the federal government was spending more than it was actually bringing in through taxes, which is why the debt issue had become worse.

"How do you reduce the spending needs of the government? That should be the question. It is really about fiscal discipline. People should not permanently spend beyond what they generate in revenue because it becomes unsustainable.

"Eventually, some people will come and ask for their money back and some will refuse to give further loans," he said.

A Senior Research and Policy Analyst at the Nigerian startup BudgIT, Vahyala Kwaga, also encouraged the next administration to redress the imbalance between the fiscal and monetary authorities. Kwaga claims that a lot of money is being put into the economy and that this has an effect.

"The Ways and Means is another lump sum of money that affected the economy significantly in the sense that it compounded the problem of inflation. A lot of these monies, according to the president, were used for infrastructure projects. Some were also given to the state governors as bailouts," he said.

Kwaga noted that a lot of money is being put into the economy and that this has an effect. "The Ways and Means is another lump sum of money that affected the economy significantly in the sense that it compounded the problem of inflation," he said.

"A lot of these monies, according to the president, were used for infrastructure projects. Some were also given to the state governors as bailouts," he added.

He urged Nigerians to focus their attention on the state governors' financial practices.

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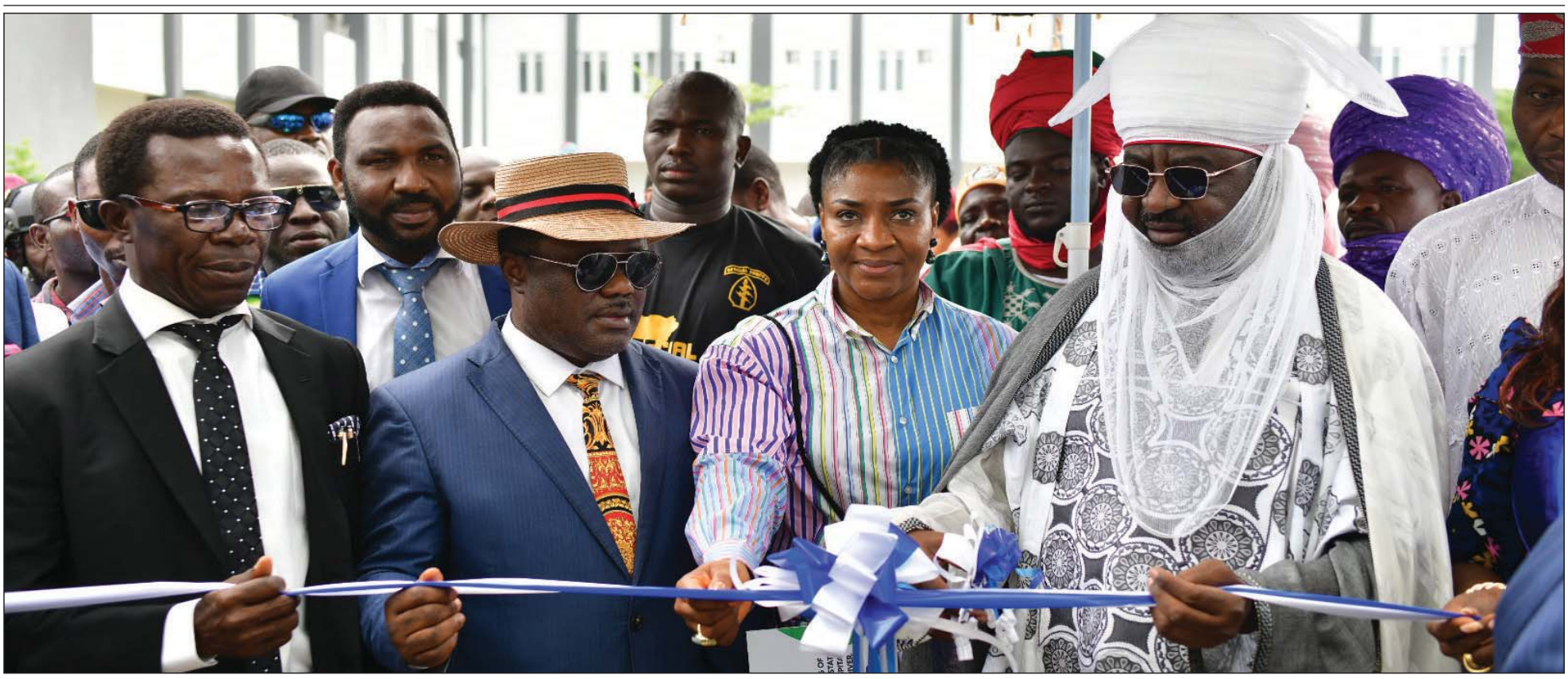
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NEWS



**FOR IMPROVED HEALTH…**

L-R: Chief Executive Officer of COSCHARIS Group, Mr. Cosmos Maduka; Cross River State Governor, Prof. Ben Ayade; state Commissioner for health, Dr. Janet Ekpenyong; and Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, during the inauguration of the 140-bed Obudu-German Specialist Hospital in Obudu …yesterday

# $1.2bn Zungeru Power Plant Begins Supply of 700MW to National Grid

**Emmanuel Addeh** in Abuja

The Minister of Power, Abubakar Aliyu, has announced that the long-awaited Zungeru Hydroelectric power project has been completed, and is already supplying 700 megawatts of electricity to the national grid.

Aliyu, who spoke at a farewell party organised for him and the Minister of State, Goddy Jedy-Agba, noted that the development will boost power supply nationwide and significantly fill the gap in the nation's electricity demand.

The Zungeru hydroelectric power plant is a $1.2 billion investment by the federal government to expand the base-load generation in the country and enhance the grid's ability to take renewable energy.

Aside from providing energy security by reducing the challenge of using gas for power generation, the government said the project is currently providing employment for many Nigerians as well as enhancing flood control, irrigation, and water supply in the area.

"Today, the Zungeru hydroelectric power plant has become a reality. We have as of today joined the grid with 700mw. Testing started Wednesday night.

"Information has reached us with the pictorial view of the meters showing us that the 700mw has gone on the grid. You may recall that last week we were there with the team from the National Assembly. Today, we have launched that on the grid," Aliyu said at the event.

According to the minister, the Kashimbila hydroelectric power project, a joint project with the Ministry of Water Resources, has also been completed, with phase one taking electricity to Yandev in Benue State spanning over 240 kilometres.

Aliyu added that the completion and generation of power from the Zungeru hydroelectric power plant was a milestone by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, who he said has demonstrated a commitment to further improving the power supply in the country.

On the Siemens project, the minister said that the ministry had already installed transformers in Abuja and Ajah in Lagos, adding that 10 massive mobile substations had been cleared.

"We have 10 of them at the port and the first one is in Ajah substation and some are also on the sea coming," he disclosed, explaining that the Ministry of Power had earlier presented to the Federal Executive Council (FEC), a contract for over 13, 000 kilometers distribution line.

Also speaking, the consultant for the project, Dr. Johnson Adewumi of Decrown West Africa Company Limited, said that the test run of the project was successfully done without any challenges

"The combined test protocol for Zungeru hydropower was carried out Wednesday till the early morning of Thursday. Generation with load started at 7 am on 25/5/2023 and was maintained till 1 am on 26/5/2023 under the control of the National Control Centre (NCC) and Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

"We had engineers from the Federal Ministry of Power and Mainstream Energy in attendance. The plant was stable, there was no unusual vibration and all monitoring equipment produced results consistent with technical specifications. The plant achieved a peak capacity of 718MW, which is a good value," he explained.

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Sanusi Garba, stressed that the plant had significantly diversified Nigeria's electricity supply mix.

"We are pleased to report that the technical commissioning of the Zungeru power plant has not only added 700MW of clean generation capacity but significantly diversified our generation mix and enhanced the nation's security of supply.

"In compliance with the sector requirements under the reform agenda, the ministry has acquired a generation licence for NERC for the special purpose vehicle of the project. A market participation agreement has also been executed with the Market Operator (MO) thus ensuring that the power plant is set for commercial operation," he noted.

# Akpabio, Jibrin Walk a Tightrope as Yari Insists on N'West Senate Presidency

**Chuks Okocha** and **Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja

The opposition to the emergence of the former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Godswill Akpabio, as the preferred candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the position of the next Senate President and Senator Barau Jibrin as his deputy has continued unabated as a former governor of Zamfara State, Abdulaziz Yari, has insisted that the North-west must produce the Senate President, THISDAY has learnt.

The ruling party had anointed Jibrin and Hon. Tajudeen Abbas as its preferred candidates for the Deputy Senate President and Speaker of House of Representatives, respectively.

Both Jibrin (APC, Kano), and Abbas (APC, Kaduna) are from the North-west.

THISDAY gathered that Yari, who is the arrowhead of the opposition by the North-west, has refused to back down on his ambition to challenge Akpabio.

The former Zamfara governor, it was learnt, has been mobilising North-west Senators to reject the two positions allocated to the zone and insist on Senate Presidency so as to head one arm of the government.

Yari, Senators Orji Uzor Kalu and Osita Izunaso had vowed to challenge APC's anointed candidate.

Izunaso, in particular, insisted that he is the best man for the job, having served in both the Senate and the House of Representatives without any baggage.

However, unlike Yari, whose campaign office at the prestigious Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja has consistently been playing host to both the newly-elected senators and the returning ones, Kalu and Izunaso do not operate from any established campaign offices.

Despite the APC leadership's insistence on its choice of Akpabio, the former Zamfara State governor has continued to mobilise North-west Senators to insist on the Senate Presidency.

Some of the North-west senators-elect, who spoke to THISDAY on conditions of anonymity insisted that Yari would run for the position of the Senate President to represent the interest of the North-west in the incoming Bola Tinubu's government.

"We in the North-west have discovered that we are being sidelined from the incoming administration of Tinubu because we would not be in control of any arm of government if the APC anointed candidates for the presiding officers' positions in the 10th National Assembly succeeded.

"For instance, the President, who would head the executive is from the South-west while the judiciary currently has another South-west indigene as the head. There is also, every possibility that the person who would succeed him is from the Southern part of the country.

"If we allow the current zoning arrangements of the APC to stand, it means that the nation's legislature would be in the firm control of another southerner.

"That is why we are very serious about the Yari project and we have seriously mobilised all our people within and outside the National Assembly to key into the agenda. We shall make it a reality," one of the North-west senators told THISDAY.

Meanwhile, a civil society group, the Coalition for Good Governance Network (C2G-Network), has called on President-elect, Tinubu, to listen to the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari's voice of reason on the independence of the legislature.

Buhari had on Thursday, during the inauguration of the permanent site of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) in Abuja laid emphasis on the need for the lawmakers to be truly independent and be able to elect their leaders without executive interference.

The C2G-Network, in a statement yesterday said, the revelation by President Buhari was commendable and worthy of emulation by Tinubu in the interest of Nigeria's constitutional democracy.

National Coordinator of the group, Michael Musa, and Secretary, Ajayi Bello, commended the President for such revelation at this time.

The group also called on Tinubu to refrain from meddling

**Continued on page 10**

# I Will Never Call Tinubu My President, Says Bakare

**Segun James**

The Serving Overseer of the Citadel Global Community Church, Pastor Tunde Bakare, has said that he will never call the President-elect, Bola Tinubu, his president.

The cleric and politician, during a webinar yesterday, alleged a series of malpractices during the 2023 elections, saying the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made a mess of the electioneering process.

He said these while responding during a Question and Answer session after delivering his speech on the Zoom programme titled, 'Building the New Nigeria: The Role of the Diaspora' organised by the PTB4Nigeria In Diaspora Group.

The meeting began 7pm Saturday night and was monitored by our correspondent.

While speaking earlier during the programme, he said the 2023 elections were below acceptable standards.

When asked if he would be happy to work for the new government as a Minister of Diaspora Engagements, he laughed and said he would say what he said to the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari last week.

Bakare said he told Buhari that sometimes he called him President of Nigeria and other times, he called him "My President."

"Last Wednesday, I was at the Glass House where he (Buhari) has been restricted now because the main house is being renovated. I said I have done that for you. I want you to know that, because of the circumstances of your flying into power on the wings of integrity and incorruptibility, but you're now passing onto someone who does not have that value," the cleric told the participants.

He said that at "any public lecture anywhere, before this mess is cleared off, I will address Asiwaju as a President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria but I will never call him my president."

He said he didn't participate in the elections, and therefore, no one could say he lost in the exercise.

Bakare, who participated in the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential primary election on June 14, 2022 and polled no vote, said: "I participated in the primary, and there were hundreds who participated only by stepping down, so there is no shame in what we have done. We spoke truth to power within seven minutes.

"I wasn't there when they voted, I wasn't there when they scored (me) zero, but we won that badge of zero and badge of honour."


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NEWS




**SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY…**

L-R: Chinemenma Emma-Ugoji, daughter of the late Emmanuel Ugoji; former Vice President of Nigeria and founder of American University of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar; and Asuku Onukaba, son of late Dr. Adinoyi Onukaba, at the 14th Commencement Ceremony of AUN in Yola, Adamawa State…yesterday

# Ehanire: Nigeria Among Those with Worst Health Indices Globally

**Adibe Emenyonu** in Benin City

The outgoing Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, has disclosed that Nigeria is still among the countries with the worst health indices in the world.

He noted that to turn the table, steps must be taken to win the people's trust, confidence, and acceptance of government health interventions to save lives and reduce illnesses.

Ehanire pointed out that the primary healthcare system is the bedrock of any functional healthcare delivery system, being the citizens' first point of contact with the nation's healthcare system.

He said it had been confirmed that between 60 to 70 per cent of what had been driving people to seek health care could be provided near them, in a primary health care centre.

The minister described primary health care centres as a platform to deliver basic preventive, curative, and rehabilitative health care to communities, for public education and enlightenment on hygiene, nutrition, family planning, and child care, among others, being so close to the people.

Ehanire stated these yesterday in a keynote address at the inauguration of South-south Zone Traditional Leaders' Committee (SSTLC) on Primary Health Care Delivery at the Festival Hall of Government House, Benin City.

He said: "This event marks an important milestone in our efforts to expand and strengthen the delivery of healthcare services to all citizens, particularly in the South-South zone, and at the grass-roots level.

"Nigeria has made significant progress in recent years in improving primary health care services, especially with revitalisation of more primary health care centres, with the policy of the Buhari administration, that aims to leave no one behind. However, we still have a lot of work to do, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas, where access to healthcare services remains a major challenge.

"Experience teaches us that the government cannot do it alone. This is why in all our primary health interventions, community engagement remains our strategic approach. In this regard, we know that our respected traditional leaders are key to success, because, not carrying the gatekeepers and custodians of our culture and values along, yields no result."

The outgoing minister also stated that efforts were being made to build a partnership with the monarchs, whom he described as the custodians of community interest, to fast-track ways to promote health and prevent disease among the people, with scientifically-proven ways and means in modern health care.

Also speaking at the event, Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, state Ministry of Health, Dr. Stanley Ehiarimwian, hailed the health minister, an Edo indigene, for making the state proud, while promising to support the newly-inaugurated SSTLC, to achieve its goals.

The Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Dr. Faisal Shuaib, in his remarks, stated that SSTLC was conceived as a zonal coordination platform for paramount traditional leaders from the six states in the South-South zone.

He said: "The intent is for our traditional fathers to meet quarterly, to receive updates on the status of primary health care in their states from the government, through NPHCDA; discuss their states best practices and challenges if any; share experiences on how best each state can improve the quality and uptake of immunisation services (polio, routine immunisation, and COVID-19 vaccination), and other PHC services.

Oba of Benin, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II, who was represented by the Obasogie of Benin, Chief George Ekhator, stated that the health minister was full of vision and wisdom while giving an assurance that Benin Kingdom would fully support the SSTLC initiative.

The South-south Zonal Director of NPHCDA, Dr. Josephine Obayagbona, earlier in her welcome address, described primary health care as the cornerstone of a healthy nation since it was the first point of contact for individuals and families in accessing essential health services.

# Osinbajo: I Hired Those with Desire to Fix Nigeria

## *Describes wife as 'my most potent weapon'*

**Deji Elumoye** in Abuja

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has explained that his desire to make Nigeria better, alongside President Muhammadu Buhari, in the last eight years, was the reason why he specifically hired those who have the desire to fix Nigeria.

Osinbajo stated this in Abuja at a valedictory dinner organised in his honour by his staff.

The outgoing vice president was accompanied to the dinner by his wife, Dolapo, whom he described as "my most potent weapon."

According to him, "I'm honoured to have worked with such incredible people; everyone put in exceptional hard work. I personally interviewed most of you that worked with me. I wanted people who had a heart for this country, genuine love and concern about the progress of this nation. Eight years have gone by very quickly, I must say. Here we are today, a few days before the inauguration. There are many great experiences, great things that have happened and I'm glad we've come this far."

Commending the staff for their dedication and patriotism – while highlighting the selfless service of his police and Security Details, civil servants, his Chief of Staff, Special Advisers, Senior Special Assistants, and Special Assistants among others - Osinbajo expressed gratitude to everyone for their support throughout the eight years of the Buhari administration.

He also noted that Nigeria's story, despite the challenges, is one filled with hope, courage, triumphs and the incredible talents and potential of its people, for a better future.

Highlighting the country's potential to become a world leader in different sectors, the vice president said, "The story of our country is a story of incredible talents, everywhere you turn, you will find talents."

He conceded that there are some tensions and challenges, "but we must not give up. We mustn't be despondent or discouraged by any challenge or circumstance. This country is so precious and our people talented, so much that we can bless the entire world."

With a thankful heart, Osinbajo also recalled how God saved him and 11 others with him from the helicopter crash on February 2, 2019, in Kogi State.

He also recalled a similar chopper forced landing in Gwagwalada in June 2018.

The chopper conveying him and members of his "Main Party" from the Nigeria Customs Command and Staff College, Gwagwalada, made a forceful landing a few seconds after take-off.

At the end of the dinner, the vice president was also presented with gifts, including handwritten valedictory notes from staff members.

## AKPABIO, JIBRIN WALK A TIGHTROPE AS YARI INSISTS ON N'WEST SENATE PRESIDENCY

in the affairs of the legislature and instead promote a culture of mutual respect and collaboration between the two arms of government to engender good governance for Nigerians.

Meanwhile, with the expected inauguration of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as the President on Monday, some senators-elect have advised him to address the sharing of the National Assembly presiding offices crisis to the extent that the North-west concedes one presiding office to the North-central.

The senators-elect said after their meeting Thursday in Abuja that it would be against the spirit of equity to allow a zone to occupy two offices of the presiding offices when the other has none.

The senators-elect advised that Tinubu should avoid inheriting another crisis like what happened in 2015 when the All Progressives Congress (APC) lost the Senate presidency and the office of the speaker due to internal squabbles.

According to one of the senators-elect, who spoke with THISDAY, "We intend to meet Tinubu as President, once he is sworn in between Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss with him this time as the President and Commander-in-Chief.

"We want to lay bare before him the implication of starting off with squabbles and agitation from a zone that feels neglected and cheated.

"We will reason with him on why a zone, the North-west will occupy two offices of presiding officers and another zone, the North-central will have none.

"This is the major position of our meeting on Thursday. To some of us, this is just to lay a landmine of crisis for him as the President.

"He is the President and he should not start off with agitation and crisis or allow the National Assembly to slip out of his control. If he allows himself to be deceived, then, it means that he will inherit the crisis," the senator-elect stated.

The senators-elect mostly from the North-central explained that it is expected that the North-west be allowed to choose from the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the deputy senate president.

According to the senator-elect, "Senator Jubrin Barau from Kano State and Hon Abbas Tajudeen from Kaduna have been micro-zoned for the offices, without considering the North-central that also contributed substantially to the victory of the APC. For equity, we expect that one of the presiding offices should go to the North-central."

When asked of the continued agitation of the chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriation, Hon Aliyu Betara, he said, "From what we gathered, the Vice President-elect, Kashim Shettima and the Governor Babagana Zulum are not disposed to him becoming the Speaker because of his alleged governorship ambition.

"They seem to be against his cult followership as Muhammadu Buhari. If he becomes the Speaker, then it will be difficult to control him when the tenure of Zulum is over," the senator-elect said.

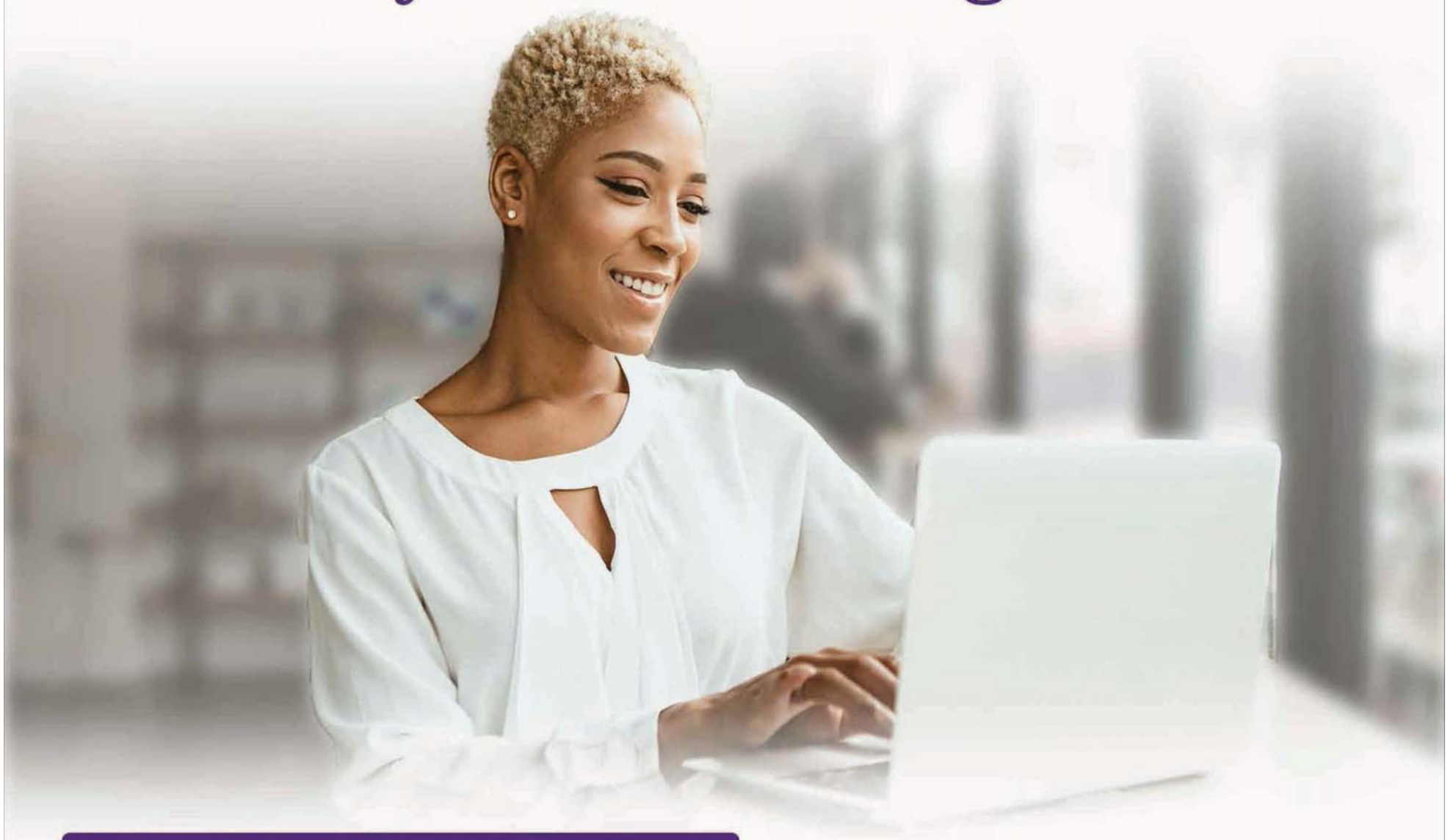
When he was reminded that the national chairman of the APC is from the North-central, he said: "We are talking of the National Assembly presiding offices and not party offices."

The senator-elect explained that they decided to wait till the swearing-in Tinubu as President to see his body language in the first appointments that he would make.

He said: "By the time he appoints the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and his Chief of Staff, we can see the direction of his government. For now, we will only be guessing what he will do."

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# Congratulations

The Chairman and Founder, Eleganza Group of Companies,
**Chief (Dr.) Rasaq Akanni Okoya CON**, an experienced figure
in the manufacturing sector and a respected elder citizen,
extends his heartfelt congratulations to our esteemed

***President-Elect, His Excellency***

## Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR

and

***Vice President-Elect, His Excellency***

## Senator Kashim Shettima, GCON

We offer our prayers and hope that the industrialisation of the country would gain valued considerations with availability of constant electricity. We believe these programmes would keep our youths busy and further foster security.

We also offer our prayers to you for a productive tenure. We trust that both of you would make Nigeria proud for having you.

***Long live our President and Vice President and long live Nigeria***





**SIGNED:**

**CHAIRMAN OF ELEGANZA GROUP OF COMPANIES**

**Chief (Dr.) Rasaq Akanni Okoya CON.**

**Aare of Lagos**

# Congratulations

The Chairman and Founder, Eleganza Group of Companies,
**Chief (Dr.) Rasaq Akanni Okoya** CON,
an experienced figure in the manufacturing sector and a respected elder citizen, extends his heartfelt congratulations to the Governor of Lagos State,

***His Excellency***
## Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu
and his Deputy,
***His Excellency***
## Dr. Obafemi Hamzat
for their re-election in Lagos State.

You are a blessing to Lagos State for your good works.

However, as one of the oldest industrialists in Nigeria, l am highly concerned about the erratic power supply. We hope this would be given top priority in your administration through the Lagos State Electricity Board.

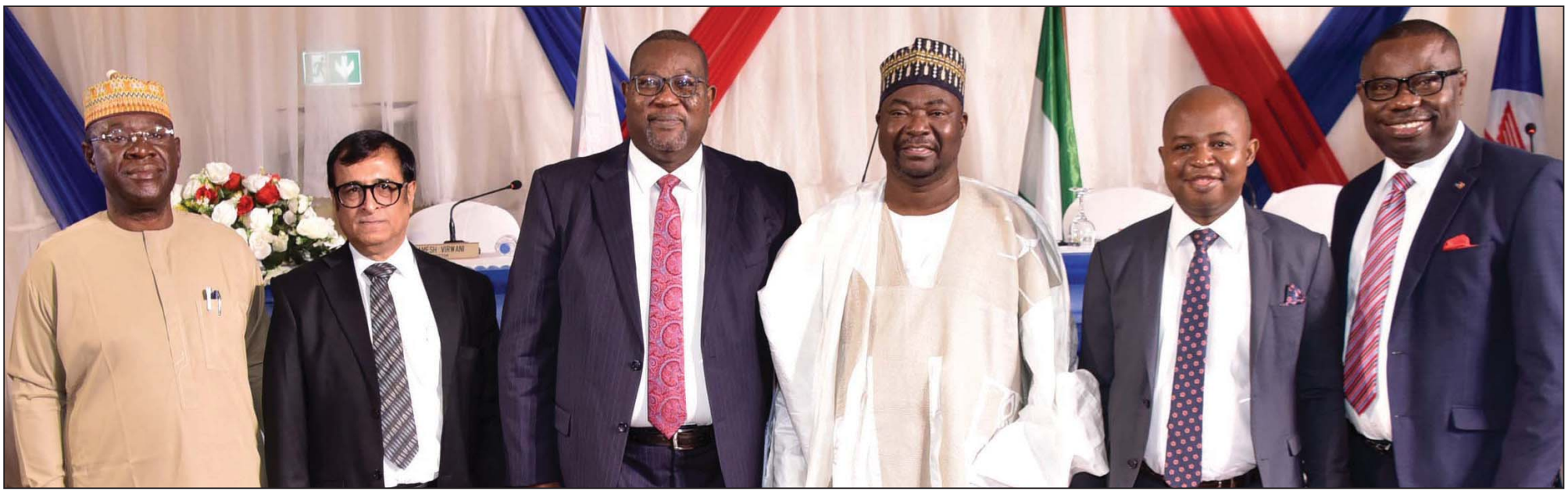
Development of the industrial sector would assist to create jobs for our youths and foster better security.

***God bless Lagos State.***
***Long live Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu***
***and Long Live Dr. Obafemi Hamzat.***
***Long live Nigeria.***




**SIGNED:**

**CHAIRMAN OF ELEGANZA GROUP OF COMPANIES**
**Chief (Dr.) Rasaq Akanni Okoya** CON.
**Aare of Lagos**



**STOCKTAKING…**

L-R: Independent Non-Executive Director, 11Plc (formerly Mobil Oil Nigeria Plc), Lawal Idirisu; Chief Operating Officer, Ramesh Virwani; Managing Director, Adetunji Oyebanji; Non-Executive Director/Alternate Chairman, Abdulkadir Aminu Mamman; Company Secretary, Chris Olumayowa Meseko and Non- Executive Director, Paul Chukwuma Obi, during the company's Annual General Meeting in Abuja…recently

# Court Grants Wives Equal Rights over Husbands' Properties

**Wale Igbitade**

A Lagos High Court sitting in Ikeja has added a new vista to the rights of women in Nigeria as it declares that wives are joint owners of the properties with their husbands as men hold such properties in 'constructive trust' for the family.

The court ruled that "indirect contributions of a wife to the marital property should not be quantified in monetary terms in order to entitle her to a share of the property".

"Constructive Trust," the court said, quoting the English Master of Rolls, Lord Denning, "is a trust imposed by law wherever justice and good conscience require a remedy by which the court can enable an aggrieved spouse or party to obtain restitution and the success of the party's case does not depend on his or her direct physical or monetary contribution to the building or acquisition of the property."

Justice Dorcas T. Olatokun made this pronouncement in a case between a couple, Mr. Pius Aina, and his wife, Caroline, over a property at Festac Town, Lagos, acquired by the husband while he worked with the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in the early 1980s.

The couple who had been married for 35 years live in the property with their three children for more than 30 years.

After his retirement, the husband in 2018 sold the property for N20 million and relocated back to his hometown in Ondo State.

His wife however challenged the sale, claiming that as his wife, and joint owner, the husband cannot sell the property without her consent.

She therefore sued her husband, asking the court to void the sale.

Joined as defendants in the suit are her husband, Mr. Pius Aina, Michael Oluwaseun Da-Silva, Albert Sanyaolu Da-Silva, Joe Vincent, and Femi Adeniyi.

The second and third defendants are the purported buyer of the property, and his father who manages it, respectively. The two other defendants are the agents that facilitated the sale.

The claimant's lawyer, Ademola Adesina, argued that his client is legally married to the first defendant for 35 years under the Marriage Act and the marriage is blessed with three children. The first defendant was a staff of FHA and while in employment, he was allocated a two-bedroom bungalow described as House 6, N Close, 3rd, Avenue, Festac Town, where he resided with his family as their residential home.

In 1989, FHA wrongfully and compulsorily withdrew the services of the first defendant and 69 other employees and was asked to vacate the house.

However, the employees challenged FHA in court and they were reinstated on November 24, 1997.

According to the claimant, her husband was eventually retired compulsorily on July 4, 2001, five years after the reinstatement.

FHA gave him a right of first refusal to purchase the property at a price of N400,000. This offer was paid for with the husband's N200,000 entitlement while the wife paid the balance of N200,000.

The wife further claimed that in 2006, her husband took a loan of N30,000 from Cooperative Bank without her knowledge.

She added that by the time she knew, the loan had accrued interest which took it to N150,000. The husband allegedly used the house as collateral and when they were going to lose the house, the wife claimed that she had to cough out the money to repay the loan.

She also cited another time that FHA sought to revoke the right of first refusal given to the husband due to the fact that he had got another allocation at the Ipaja, Lagos scheme of the authority, which he sold.

FHA position was that the husband is only entitled to one allocation. The wife claimed that her husband challenged FHA in court and won the case.

However, she claimed that she was the one who financed the litigation as she paid the lawyer, Chief M.O.B Omolemen of Messrs Gab-Anna Chambers the sum of N1.5 million as cost of litigation.

She stated further that on December 8, 2018, while on a trip abroad, she discovered that her husband had sold the family home to the second and third defendants without any form of consent from her.

She claimed that the sale was conducted with fake documents as she had the original documents of the house with her. She stated that every attempt to make her husband revoke the sale or render accounts of the sale proved abortive. She therefore urged the court to void the sale.

However, the husband in his defence, stated that the property, the subject matter of the suit is a product of a private contract between him and the FHA.

He argued that the wife is not a party to the contract and therefore, cannot challenge his right to transfer the property to the second and third defendants, particularly in the absence of evidence that she is an assignee to the contract and property.

He further claimed that the statutory marriage between him and his wife was contracted in 2001 during the subsistence of a valid customary marriage between him and his first wife contracted in December 22, 1980.

This fact, according to him, is known to his wife, and therefore, cannot rely on her marriage to him to shortchange him and his first wife.

He stated that he consulted both wives on his decision to sell the house and retire back to his hometown in Ondo State, to which they both consented.

As part of the resettlement plan, the husband stated that he purchased a three-bedroom flat residential apartment for the claimant at Block 147, Flat 2, Amuwo Odofin Low- Cost Housing Estate, Mile 2, Lagos for the claimant and his children.

He also bought a property for himself at Lotogbe Family Layout, Ago Itunu, Ondo-Akure Road for N6.5 million.

# Buhari Confers Citizenship on 385 Foreigners

**Kingsley Nweze** in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has conferred citizenship on 385 foreign nationals, declaring them worthy Nigerians after meeting all necessary conditions.

The conferment was conducted on behalf of the President by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, at the General Abdulrahman Danbazzau Conference Hall, Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS), Headquarters, Abuja.

Buhari said his administration gave citizenship to more foreigners than any administration so far, asserting that the gesture was to encourage foreign investment and boost the nation's economy.

He described those conferred the citizenship as worthy of the honour, saying they have contributed in various fields of human endeavours to the development of the country.

The Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, said those conferred with citizenship met the stringent conditions attached to it and called for the review of the Nigerian Constitution to allow more foreign nationals to apply for citizenship.

He said in Europe and the United States, foreigners who had lived there could apply for citizenship after five years, but wondered why in Nigeria foreigners would have to wait for 15 years before they could apply for Nigeria citizenship.

"Between 2011 and 2013, a total of 266 foreigners became Nigerians. In 2017, 335 people took up Nigerian citizenship. But last year, 286 foreigners, and today at this ceremony, 385, making a total of 671 have acquired Nigerian citizenship.

"I am still not pleased with this figure. In Europe and America, thousands of foreigners are inducted into citizenship every year. They do this to attract youths and people in their prime who would like to contribute to the development of their countries.

"The bane of the smooth pathway to Nigerian citizenship however is the constitutional requirement of continuous residency in Nigeria for 15 years.

"This is a huge disincentive, considering that in the United States and most European countries, it is five years. Some of these countries have made a habit of snatching young and resourceful brains – who after four years of schooling and working for just one year – through easy pathways, to obtain quality migration to their countries.

"I will therefore urge the relevant institutions of state to reconsider this in the next effort at an amendment to the constitution. We ought to have easier pathways to citizenship for foreigners than currently obtains."

## TINUBU ABSENT FROM HIS INAUGURATION LECTURE, SAYS IT'S A NEW ERA FOR NIGERIA

Adesina expressed the hope that Tinubu will heal and unite a fractious nation, rise above party lines and forge a compelling force to move the nation forward, with inclusiveness, fairness, equity, and justice.

He also urged him to drastically improve the economy by removing the inefficient fuel subsidies.

"Nigeria's fuel subsidies benefit the rich, not the poor, fuelling their and government's endless fleets of cars at the expense of the poor. Estimates show that the poorest 40 per cent of the population consume just three per cent of petrol. Fuel subsidies are killing the Nigerian economy, costing Nigeria $10 billion alone in 2022," Adesina said.

He also called for reduction cost of doing business, which he noted is too high for any meaningful development to take place.

Adesina expressed hope that Tinubu will heal and unite a fractious nation.

On his part, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto Rev. Matthew Hassan Kukah, noted that religion is not the problem of Nigeria as erroneously projected by the media and the political elite who assumed that there is a conflict between politics and religion.

"In all countries, no business, no family, no organisation, has a future if you don't figure how to manage diversity. Religion has been turned into a weapon and it is a weapon of choice for politics and politician. I am a Nigerian and I can work with anybody. We must get to that point in which we have enough trust in ourselves," Kukah said.

The lecture had in attendance, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Boss Mustapha; the Sultan of Sokoto, Mohammed Sa'ad Abubakar III; the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi; and Deputy Secretary-General of United

# Emmanuel: Why I Didn't Contest for Senate Seat

**Okon Bassey** in Uyo

The outgoing Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Udom Emmanuel, has revealed that he did not seek election to the Nigerian Senate because as a "professional in politics," he did not look at the next election but the next generation.

Emmanuel said he instead sought to be Nigeria's president because he could rescue the country and put it back on track.

The governor, who stated this during a television interview, said: "I didn't seek to go to the Senate; I sought to be the President because I know I can restore Nigeria, and that's why I wanted to be president.

"In every country on planet earth, the presidency is based on economic blueprints, and we can have a good economy; that's what the nation needs. I have what it takes to put this country back on track," Emmanuel said.

Emmanuel, who is exiting office on Monday after eight years as governor, was one of the aspirants defeated by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar at the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential primary in May last year.

After losing the primaries, Emmanuel was appointed the chairperson of the PDP Presidential Campaign Council.

Speaking on the country's current challenges, particularly the brain drain, Emmanuel said it was multi-sectoral and beyond the power of a subnational.

The governor said it has to be looked at holistically from the national level to build a strong economy to reverse it.

"It is not only affecting one sector - go to education, health, ICT. In our days when you are sent on an exchange programme, all your salaries in Nigeria would still be there. You would be earning allowances there to keep you; so, when you come back and accumulate the salaries, then you should be able to buy a car. That was the attraction then.

"But now people are leaving for so many reasons, and I keep saying this, employees do not resign their jobs they resign their bosses – they love the jobs, but what their bosses put in place for the job is what they don't like."

The bosses, Emmanuel, said in this case, are the federal, state, and local government areas, including business firms.

Unlike other aspirants, particularly those in the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) who returned to contest for Senate after losing at the presidential primary, Emmanuel did not.

He said doing so would have been a violation of the law.

"I don't like violating the law – I can't be running for President and at the same time, I go and collect forms for the Senate. I mean, that's a total violation of the Electoral Act," he said.

Although the governor did not mention anybody's name in particular, several APC presidential aspirants, including his predecessor, Godswill Akpabio, after losing at the presidential primary, contested for Senate and won.

Besides Akpabio, others include Governors David Umahi of Ebonyi State and Ben Ayade of Cross River States.

Emmanuel declined to comment when asked about his relationship with his former boss and predecessor in office, Akpabio.

# NEWS

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**LEGAL LUMINARIES…**

L-R: Permanent Secretary and Solicitor-General, Federal Ministry of Justice, Mrs. Beatrice Jeddy-Agba; Chairman, Council of Legal Education, Chief Emeka Ngige, SAN; and a Chartered Arbitrator, Mrs. Olufunmilayo Roberts, after the inauguration of the Council of Legal Education in Abuja…recently

## Buhari Must Be Told He Failed Woefully, Says Ortom

**George Okoh** in Makurdi

Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, has again lashed out at President Muhammadu Buhari, describing his administration as the worst in the history of Nigeria.

Ortom noted that the outgoing president "must be told that he failed woefully and Nigerians are feeling the impact of that failure because we are all suffering."

He said the president plunged the country into unimaginable poverty and insecurity, unlike what used to flourish under his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan.

Speaking at the inauguration of the headquarters of the Benue State Community Volunteer Guards (BSCVGs), in Makurdi yesterday, the outgoing said that Buhari took Nigeria from the top to the bottom, making life miserable for all Nigerians.

He said: "I served under the then President Goodluck Jonathan's administration and we all saw how Nigeria flourished under that administration. We all knew what the prices of goods and services were at the time.

"We also know what our exchange rate was at the time and what it is today. I want Nigerians to do a simple comparison and you will realise how bad it has been under this government and how Nigeria has been taken several years backwards by the Buhari government.

"The fact is that never in the history of Nigeria did we experience this kind of bad governance in the country.

"Corruption is so endemic in this government, yet people who steal chicken are thrown into prison, but people in government who are busy stealing the wealth of the people are walking free.

"The president recently apologised to Nigerians; we accept the apology but he must be told that he failed woefully and Nigerians are feeling the impact of that failure because we are all suffering."

Ortom also lamented the refusal of Buhari to curb the excesses of the armed Fulani herdsmen and designate them a terrorist organisation for being responsible for the killings in the country.

"The president told us he is retiring to tend to his cattle, is it because he is returning to be a herder that he failed to deal decisively with herdsmen? That was unfair to Nigerians," he added.

The governor assured the people of the state that he would continue to speak out against injustice in the country.

## Two Days to Inauguration, Abia NLC Ends Indefinite Strike

**Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo** in Umuahia

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Abia State, yesterday called off the strike embarked upon by Abia workers 19 days ago.

This was announced in a statement by the Chairman of Abia NLC, Pascal Nweke and Secretary, Emma Alozie after an emergency meeting of the state executives council(SEC) on Saturday.

The workers embarked on the industrial action on May 9 in protest against the Abia State Government for non-payment of salaries, pension arrears and gratuity and check-off dues to industrial unions.

But the news came less than 48 hours to the inauguration of a new government of the opposition Labour Party with Mr. Alex Otti as the incoming governor.

"As a law-abiding organisation and in recognition of the efforts of well-meaning Abians and in consultation with the national headquarters of Congress, SEC-in-Session resolved to suspend the strike action embarked upon on May 9.

"Consequently, all Abia workers are directed to resume all services hitherto withdrawn with immediate effect," the statement read.

Abia workers had on May 9 resumed their industrial action which was suspended in February after five days of staying away from their duty posts.

However, the expected resolution of the workers grievances did not materialise as the outgoing government of Governor Okezie Ikpeazu could not meet the workers' demands.

## Kano Governor-elect Declares Assets Ahead of Inauguration

**Ibrahim Garba** in Kano

Ahead of the May 29 inauguration, Kano State Governor-elect, Mr. Abba Yusuf, has declared his assets and liabilities in a completed form submitted on Friday to the Code of Conduct Bureau, Kano office.

This was contained in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Sunusi Tofa, saying the incoming governor was received on Friday by the CCB State Director, Hajia Ibrahim.

Yusuf said his earnest declaration of assets is a demonstration of transparency and accountability that will form the bedrock of his incoming administration in Kano State.

"Today, I have fulfilled the constitutional obligation of declaring my assets before assuming the office, May 29," the statement read.

"The Governor-elect told his host that public service is a calling; it is a service to humanity and I am always ready to serve having won the confidence of the good people of Kano State.

"Furthermore, Yusuf declared that the coast is now clear for the journey of restoration of sustainable development in all the sectors, where every Kobo of the public fund spent will not only be justifiable but accountable in Kano State under his watch."

## Ogun Police Launches Manhunt for Armed Robbers Fleeing with $11m

**James Sowole** in Abeokuta

The Ogun State Police Command has begun a search for a four-man armed robbery gang that escaped with $11 million in Abeokuta, the state capital.

Findings revealed that the armed robbers operated successfully Oke Sokori, Abeokuta North Local Government Area without being challenged by security operatives.

All adorned on black T-shirts and jean trousers, they wore black face masks, and brandished rifles in the three-minute robbery.

They were said to have fled the scene with their targeted money, stacked in two 'Ghana-Must-Go' bags, after dispossessing the car of their victim – a Hausa trader – who rode the area in a Toyota Venza salon car.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi confirmed the report yesterday, describing it as unfortunate.

Oyeyemi said: "It is quite unfortunate that the suspects had escaped the scene before our operatives could arrive at the scene. But I want to assure you that we will definitely get them and bring them to justice."

"The command had immediately upon receipt of information about the incident, sent a signal across the state to ensure that the suspects were tracked down. All our technical units have been activated and for sure, we will get them."

"I, however, want to use this medium to assure the good people of Ogun State not to panic as there is no course for alarm; they should remain calm, and go about their normal and routine businesses because our men will surely track down the suspects."

## DataPro Canvasses Political Will to Fight Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing

**Esther Oluku**

Nigeria's leading compliance consulting firm, DataPro Limited has urged the incoming government administration to strengthen compliance with best practices in all sectors of the economy to drive development.

The Managing Director of of the data firm, Mr. Abimbola Adeseyoju made the remark at a session with the Association of Chief Compliance Officers of Banks in Nigeria (ACCOBIN) at the weekend.

At the session, Adeseyoju emphasised the need to imbibe the principle and practice of observing world best practices in leadership through accountability, fairness and upholding national interest beyond personal interest in the course of its activities.

As the new administration takes on the leadership mantle tomorrow, the managing director observed that a political will was key to fight issues of money laundering, terrorism, terrorist financing, and the proliferation of other financial crimes,

He said: "Rewarding honesty and hard work will set the stage for the development that the country currently seeks and curb the rising brain drain. Anywhere you go all over the world, talented Nigerians who do not want to come home because the environment does not reward talents.

"Government needs to understand that their inaction or failure affects the totality of everybody in Nigeria and we believe that they can do better. A lot of appointments are going to take place so we can just make that a mantra that for every decision they are going to take, the interest of the country or the interest of the state will come first and that any action that they take in government, they should be able to defend it," he said.

## Appeal Court Halts Contempt Proceedings against Oil Firm, Officials

**Wale Igbintade**

The Court of Appeal sitting Lagos has ordered the Federal High Court to halt contempt proceedings against Excel Exploration and Production Limited and its officials pending the hearing and final determination of the appeal filed against the court's ruling.

Justice Jimi Olukayode Bada issued the order recently, directing the stay of all proceedings against the oil firm at the trial court presided over by Justice Lewis Allagoa.

The appellate court ordered the lower court to suspend all proceedings/further proceedings including the Committal Proceedings before it in Suit Number FHC/CS/L/371/2021.

The lower court had in a ruling delivered on November 1, 2021 ordered Excel Exploration and Production Limited (Appellant) to render monthly reports to a Receiver Manager on the activities in Eremor Marginal Oil field.

Dissatisfied, the appellant through its counsel, Prof. Taiwo Osipitan (SAN) appealed against the ruling and also filed a Notice of Appeal dated April 20.

Thereafter, the appellant compiled and transmitted records of appeal and the appeal entered as - Appeal Number: CA/LAG/CV/973/2021 — Excel Exploration and Production Limited v Access Bank &Others.

The appellant in a 21-paragraph affidavit in support of the Motion on Notice deposed to by one Babajide Oyedele, a legal practitioner, stated that subsequent to the entry of the records of appeal, appellant filed a motion on notice dated May 10, 2022 praying the court for a stay of execution/enforcement of the orders of the court below.

# NEWS



**NEW ADVOCATES OF COMPLIANCE…**

L-R: Chief Compliance Officer, Coronation Merchant Bank, Ibrahim Bello; Chief Compliance Officer Nigeria Mortgage Refinancing Company, Phyllis Uzoma; Chief Compliance Officer, Union Bank, Abigail Duopama-Obomanu; Founder, DataPro Limited, Abimbola Adeseyoju; Chief Compliance Officer, Citi Bank, Opeyemi Adojutelegan; Chief Compliance Officer, Unity Bank Plc, Patricia Ahunanya; and Chief Compliance Officer, Parallex Bank, Isioma Anazodo, at a stakeholders' meeting of the Association of Chief Compliance Officers of Banks in Nigeria in Lagos …recently .

## Kogi Constitutes Bottlenecks to Ajaokuta Steel Mill Concession, Minister Reveals

**Kasim Sumaina** in Abuja

The outgoing Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Mr. Olamilekan Adegbite at the weekend revealed that the Kogi State Government constituted bottlenecks to the concession of Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited (ASCL).

Adegbite, however, observed that the challenges posed by the Kogi State Government and other bottlenecks to the planned concession of Ajaokuta would be resolved by the next administration and the steel mill would eventually be made to produce.

He made the disclosure at a valedictory dinner organised by Segilola Gold Project, the subsidiary of Thor Explorations Limited in recognition of the minister's outstanding stewardship in Abuja at the weekend.

Speaking at the dinner, Adegbite noted that in spite of all bottlenecks, the President Muhammadu Buhari administration had taken the process of completing and operationalising the Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited (ASCL) to an advanced level that will see it producing in the near future.

He noted that the federal government "is a continuum, and as such successive administrations should be able to build on what has been achieved to accomplish set development goals in the overall interest of the people as a federation.

"Ajaokuta seems to be intractable. But that is not true. We have taken Ajaokuta to a point. We would have achieved a bigger milestone. But we had an impediment.

"The Kogi State Government thought it differently. It went to court, and that stopped what we were doing. But I'm sure this will be resolved and Ajaokuta will start producing. Government is a continuum," the outgoing minister said.

The federal government had commenced the concession process for ASCL and National Iron Ore Mining Company, NIOMCO, at Itakpe both in Kogi State with an advertisement.

In protest, however, the Kogi State Government went to court and got an injunction restraining the federal government from proceeding with the concession process.

The defendants in the matter are the Attorney General of the Federation, Ministry of Mines and Steel Development, Bureau of Public Enterprise, Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited and the National Iron Ore Mining Company.

On the $600 million private integrated steel plant, located in Gujeni village, Kagarko LGA, Kaduna State, being built by African Natural Resources and Mines, Adegbite said it had been fully completed, but being test run ahead of its official commissioning.

Welcoming the guests on behalf of the organisers earlier, the CEO of Segilola Gold Project, Mr Segun Lawson said the event was put together with stakeholders to appreciate the good works of Adegbite, the Minister of State, Senator Gbemisola Saraki and Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Dr Oluwatoyin Akinlade.

## Defence Minister Heads Indian Delegation to Tinubu's Inauguration

**Michael Olugbode** in Abuja

Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has sent a high level delegation led by the Defence Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh to the inauguration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as Nigeria's 16th President.

This was revealed in a statement the Indian High Commission in Nigeria issued yesterday, saying Singh would arrive in Abuja on Sunday, May 28 as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the new Nigeria's President.

The statement explained that the visit of Mr. Rajnath Singh "reflects the growing bilateral relations between India and Nigeria and signifies India's commitment to strengthening ties with Nigeria.

"Singh is accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs of India. Singh is the senior most Minister in the Government of India."

The statement insisted that sending such a senior Minister to Nigeria as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India reflects India's commitment to the deep-rooted bilateral relations with Nigeria.

## Delta Police Beef up Security for Oborevwori's Inauguration

**Sylvester Idowu** in Warri

The Delta State Police Command yesterday ordered an all-round security emplacement across the length and breadth of the state to ensure a rancour-free inauguration of Sheriff Oborevwori as governor of the state tomorrow.

In a statement by its Police Public Relations Officer, Edafe Bright, the command said that policemen have been deployed to all corners and crannies of the state.

The statement said the Commissioner of Police Delta State Command, CP Wale Abass "assures residents of the state of a hitch free inauguration ceremony slated to hold on 29th May 2023.

"The Commissioner of Police has ordered massive deployment of personnel across the state and venue of the inauguration ceremony, especially at the Stephen Keshi Stadium Asaba.

"The deployment aims at providing adequate security before, during and after the event to ensure protection of all residents in the state and the success of all activities lined up to mark the event," the statement explained.

The statement warned that any mischief maker with the intention of fermenting any form of hostility before, during, and after the celebration would be arrested and made to face the full wrath of the law.

## FCTA Requires $22bn for Public Health Care Funding Gap

**Olawale Ajimotokan** in Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory Administration said it would require $22 billion to close the Primary Health Care (PHC) funding gap in the territory of which the USAID has supported with N14 billion.

The Secretary, Health and Human Services Secretariat Dr. Abubakar Tafida made the disclosure while briefing the press.

He said it had become necessary to bridge the funding gap given that over six million FCT residents are currently being catered for by health facilities originally targeted to serve between 1.5 million to two million people.

To this end, he noted that the HHSS in collaboration with international partners came up with a system where philanthropists and spirited individuals can help to revitalise PHC through their moral support.

Tafida said the secretariat was currently developing new structures in Primary Health Care centres all in an effort to ensure that services provided are standard.

"It is not that FCTA is not doing their best, they have revitalised about 83% of the Primary Health Care, we have 154 functional PHC in FCT with at least 83 in minimum operations. They procured $ 2.4 million drugs and consumables were provided to us. There has been a lot of interventions in FCT, there has been the Basic Healthcare Province Fund component. This means one ward one PHC and we have 62 wards in the six Area Council

"We are soliciting support from various organisations and international partners and individuals to come and look at the status of the PHC and revitalise them, we are not asking for money.

## Sanwo-Olu Warns against Parking Roadside to Avoid Prosecution

**Segun James**

Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu has warned trailer and container owners against parking on roads to avoid prosecution.

Sanwo-Olu gave the warning at the inauguration of the Jimoh Odutola Road, Surulere and Reeve Road/Onilegbale Road in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The inauguration was part of activities to herald the Sanwo-Olu-led administration's second tenure which will commence on May 29, 2023.

The governor, who was represented by his deputy, Dr Obafemi Hamzat, said the government was ready to enforce a law prohibiting parking on the roads.

He said: "The challenge we always have is that trailers will always park on the road. As a government, we will not accept it and we will enforce it."

The governor also charged residents on taking full ownership of all infrastructures provided by protecting and maintaining them adequately.

He stressed that it was germane for the citizens to ensure they made good use of the roads and not allow people to turn it to parks and mechanic workshops.

"Let us do the right thing by taking good care of our roads and other infrastructure in the state. Mechanics should get a workshop instead of turning the roads to workshops like truck/container owners.

"We want you to do your business but do right by getting a place as a park. By so doing, the government will have more funds to provide additional infrastructure across the state for the well-being of all citizens.

## US Physician Explains Reasons Tinubu forfeited $460,000

**Fidelis David** in Akure

A United States-based medical doctor, Dr. Marindoti Oludare has faulted allegations that the President-elect, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, was ever involved in drug dealings in the United States of America

Oludare, also the Convener of Social Rehabilitation Gruppe (SRG) further explained that Tinubu's love affair for Nigeria is one that has taken a lot of sacrifices.

He made this clarification in a statement he issued from the State of Texas, United States yesterday, faulting claims that the money was the proceeds of drug trafficking.

He said: "One thing that is universal about true love is that love is giving and Tinubu has always given without holding any lien. Many times this gift has not been reciprocated by those who have received it.

"Other times, the gift has been maligned by its beneficiaries. A case in point is the $460,000 he forfeited in September 1993," the statement explained.

Citing the court filing, Oludare added: "Asiwaju's money of over $2 million dollars were seized in January 1,0 1992, but an official filing was not made until July 15, 1993 (19 months after), a court order for the seizure was not officially given until August 19, 1993 and the banks did not receive an official notice until August 25 1993.

"The compromise settlement was filed September 15, 1993 and Asiwaju was given another 10 days to come and claim the remaining $460,000 if he chooses to. A thinking mind will ask, why did the prosecutor wait 19 months to file a case then settle it under two months.

This is because the prosecutor never had a case against Asiwaju. Had Asiwaju been a white man, maybe his fate would have been different in the racist American judicial system. Let's go into the details of the case because that's where the devil lies.

BUSINESS

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# Buhari's Footprints in the Economy

**Festus Akanbi** and **Emmanuel Addeh** examine key areas of intervention of the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari administration in critical sectors of the economy in the last year eight years



**Second Niger Bridge**



**Railway project**

Finally, the curtain falls on President Muhammadu Buhari's administration tomorrow, Monday, May 29, 2023, when the baton of leadership is to be officially handed over to the President-elect, Bola Tinubu, amidst pomp and ceremony at the Eagles Square Abuja.

As expected, the past two weeks have witnessed a clinical examination of the performance of the outgoing administration which came into power, first in 2015 before it secured the mandate for a second term in office in 2019.

However, in what observers described as a last-minute effort to set the record straight, the presidency through the Presidential Communications Team (PCT) last week released a list of President Buhari's major achievements in key sectors, including security and justice, the economy, power, housing, infrastructure, among others.

**Investments in Rail Transportation**

Top on the list are the rail projects including the 156-kilometre Lagos-Ibadan Standard Gauge Rail completed and commissioned, within a period of four years (2017 to 2021). Others include the 8.72-kilometer extension to Lagos-Ibadan Rail Line, to Lagos Port Complex and which was completed in 2021.

Also on the list are the 186-kilometre Abuja-Kaduna Standard Gauge Rail Line, completed and commissioned in 2016, and the – 327-kilometre Itakpe-Warri Standard Gauge Rail completed and commissioned in 2020, 33 years after construction began.

The administration also completed the Abuja Light Rail in 2018 while construction has commenced on Kaduna-Kano Standard Gauge Rail Line, following the ground-breaking by President Buhari in July 2021.

The rail project has turned out to be a huge employment generator as more than 11,000 new jobs were said to have been created from the ongoing rail modernisation projects in the country.

**Milestones in Road Construction**

The Buhari administration indeed recorded some milestones in the area of road construction and rehabilitation in its eight-year tenure.

The road projects were anchored by the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF), which invested over a billion dollars in three flagship projects: The Lagos-Ibadan Expressway (for completion in May 2023), Second Niger Bridge (which was commissioned last Tuesday) and the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Expressway (two of three sections for completion in May 2023).

One novel idea by the Buhari administration was the Road Infrastructure Development and Refurbishment Investment Tax Credit Scheme, which was issued by President Buhari on January 25, 2019, through Executive Order #7 of 2019. It allows companies that are willing and able to spend their funds on constructing critical roads, to recover their construction costs by paying reduced taxes, over a while, and in a transparent manner.

So far, about three trillion naira has been mobilised or committed through Executive Order 7, for road projects across all six geopolitical zones of the country, by companies like Dangote Group, MTN, BUA, NLNG, and NNPC Limited.

Another initiative was the Highway Development and Management Initiative (HDMI), a public-private partnership programme to mobilise, in its first phase, over a trillion Naira in private investment into the development and maintenance of 12 roads, amounting to 1,963km in length.

Under President Buhari, more than N600 billion worth of Sukuk Bonds were raised since 2017 for more than 40 critical road projects across all six geopolitical zones, saying between November 25 and December 13, 2021.



**Housing project**

**Air and Seaports**

Among the achievements of the Buhari administration was the completion of new terminals for international airports in Lagos, Abuja, Kano, and Port Harcourt. This included the completion of new runways for the Abuja and Enugu International Airports. The Abuja International Airport Runway was reconstructed in 2017 for the first time since the airport was built in the early 1980s.

In 2019 President Buhari approved a special fund of N10 billion for the reconstruction of the Enugu Airport Runway; it was completed and reopened in August 2020).

It was gathered that President Buhari approved funds for the Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB) / Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) to build a world-class Flight Safety Laboratory (FSL) in Abuja, and train personnel to run it. Now Nigeria no longer has to send aircraft Cockpit Voice Recorders and Flight Data Recorders (Black Box) abroad for downloading and analysis.

The list of the achievements also includes the cabinet's approval for the award of a 30-year Concession of Onitsha River Port, under a Rehabilitate, Operate, and Transfer (ROT) arrangement in February 2022.

**Port Activities**

It is also on record that it was under the regime of President Buhari that the Lekki Deep Sea Port – the first new Sea Port in Nigeria in decades, was completed in Q4, 2022, and inaugurated by the President in January 2023. On Thursday, 6th April 2023, the first commercial vessel berthed at the new Deep-Sea Port, formally marking the start of commercial operations at the port.

Other port activities included the ground-breaking for Bonny Deep Sea Port in March 2021); the inauguration of Kaduna Inland Dry Port in 2018; the construction of Kano and Katsina Inland Dry Ports is ongoing, for completion in 2022, and the inauguration of the 'Deep Blue Maritime Security Project, completed in 2021. The project includes 17 special mission vessels, two special mission aircraft, and three helicopters.

It was also to the credit of President Buhari that a new Cabotage Compliance Strategy was launched in 2019, by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), to enforce the implementation of the Cabotage Act.

**Huge Investment in Power Sector**

One of the promises of the administration was to effect an incremental 4,000MW+ of power-generating assets during the life of the Buhari administration, including the Zungeru Hydro, Kashimbila Hydro, Afam III Fast Power, Kudenda Kaduna Power Plant, the Okpai Phase 2 Plant, the Dangote Refinery Power Plant, and others.

It also embarked on the project of energising education programme by taking clean and reliable energy (Solar and Gas) to federal universities and teaching hospitals across the country. Four universities were already completed and commissioned: BUK (Kano), FUNAI (Ebonyi), ATBU (Bauchi), and FUPRE (Delta); others are ongoing.

The second dimension involves energising economic programme by taking clean and reliable energy (solar and gas) to markets across the country.

Completed projects include Sabon-Gari Market in Kano, Ariaria Market in Aba, and Sura Shopping Complex in Lagos.

Also on the scorecards was the National Mass Metering Programme which entails a nationwide rollout of electricity

BUSINESS

# Buhari's Footprints in the Economy

meters to all on-grid consumers, launched in August 2020. The Central Bank of Nigeria is providing 200 billion.

It would be recalled that the contract for the pre-engineering phase of the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) was signed in February 2021, following the 2020 approval for the payment of FGN's counterpart funding for that phase, while the first set of equipment contract awards was made in December 2021, comprising 10 Mobitra Mega Transformers and 10 Substations.

There are, as of Q1, 2022, 135 ongoing projects for transmission lines, substations, and other associated grid infrastructure. TCN has completed 30 key substation projects and 12 important transmission lines.

Some of the critical grid interventions across the NESI include the resuscitation of the second Egbin-Ajah Transmission Line and the recently commissioned NDPHC Lafia 2X150 MVA & 2X60 /132/33/330 KV Transmission Substation (under NIPP). Other ongoing interventions include 330kV Quad Lines in Alaoji to Onitsha, Delta Power Station to Benin as well as the Kano to Katsina 330kV line (respectively).

**Housing Projects**

President Buhari's presence was felt in the housing sector as well. For instance, the Federal Government, through the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, has completed or is completing housing projects in 34 states of Nigeria, under the National Housing Programme, with the support of the state governors who provided the land. So far more than 5,000 houses are at various stages of completion, and thousands more are planned.

**Water Resources**

It is also to the credit of the Buhari administration that a Nigeria Water Sector Roadmap (Immediate and long-term strategies for the sater Sector), 2016-2030 has been developed.

Upon assumption of office, the administration inherited dozens of projects in the water sector; many of which had been abandoned before 2015. A technical audit in 2016 identified 116 inherited projects for priority completion: 37 dams and reservoirs, 41 water supply projects, and 38 irrigation and drainage projects.

Since 2016, 12 dam projects have been completed by the Buhari Administration – 10 completed construction projects and two rehabilitations – as follows: Kashimbila

Multipurpose Dam, Taraba; Ogwashi-Uku Multipurpose Dam, Delta; Adada Dam, Enugu; Sulma Earth Dam, Katsina; Gimi Earth Dam, Kaduna; Amla-Otukpo Dam, Benue; Amauzari Earth Dam, Imo; Ibiono-Ibom Earth Dam, Akwa Ibom; Gadau/Lafia Zigau Dam, Bauchi; Alajue Small Earth Dam, Osun; Kampe Omi Dam, Kogi (Rehabilitation) and Kargo Dam, Kaduna (Rehabilitation).

**Ease of Doing Business Reforms**

In pursuant of the ease of doing business, President Buhari established the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) in July 2016, under the chairmanship of Vice President Osinbajo, to drive reforms to eliminate critical bottlenecks and bureaucratic constraints to doing business in Nigeria. For the first-ever, the Buhari administration instituted a coordinated effort in implementing reforms to improve the business environment.

In July 2017, the National Economic Council (NEC) unanimously approved the replication of PEBEC's intervention structure at the subnational level implemented through the PEBEC-NEC Technical Working Group. This mandate was later articulated in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020 and subsequently retained in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021- 2025.

The Enabling Business Environment Secretariat (EBES) is the operational unit of the PEBEC and collaborates with Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the private sector, and other stakeholders at national and subnational levels to articulate and implement reforms.

PEBEC has, working with the public and private sectors, recorded notable achievements, including:

Subsequently, Nigeria Moved 39 places up the World Bank Doing Business ranking from 170 to 131.

During the period under review, Nigeria was twice recognised as top 10 most improved economies by the World Bank Doing Business Report.

Also, more than 160 individual reforms were implemented/achieved since 2016 and this led to a 360 per cent reduction in time for filing Corporate Income Taxes, from 14 days to 72 hours, a 60 per cent reduction in time to register property in Lagos and Kan, a 51 per cent reduction in time to obtain development permits in Lagos from 61 to 30 days.



Dangote Refinery



Lekki deep seaport




5G Network

**Digital Economy**

Buhari administration also witnessed record-setting contributions to GDP. In the first quarter of 2020, ICT singlehandedly (without digital services) contributed 14.07per cent of Nigeria's GDP, topping this in the second quarter of 2021, with a 17.92 per cent contribution to GDP and again topping this in the second quarter of 2022 with 18.44per cent.

The administration also extended the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) 'Pioneer Status' to e-Commerce and software development companies.

The regime's achievements also included the launch of a new national 5G policy in 2021 and the successful licensing of two private companies to roll out 5G nationally.

Nigeria's 5G rollout commenced in August 2022. The 5G spectrum auction has generated $547 million in license fees.

**Energy Sector: PIA as a Game Changer**

Buhari's assent to the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) on August 16, 2021, was a game changer as it broke a two-decade-old jinx and set the stage for the unprecedented transformation of Nigeria's oil and gas sector.

Under the new Act, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), has now become a limited liability company, while a number of the agencies under the petroleum ministry have been restructured.

Again, the signing ceremony in May 2021 of the execution of Oil Mining Lease (OML) 118 Agreements between NNPC Limited and its Contractor Partners: Shell, Exxon Mobil, TOTAL, and NAOC was a major feat.

These agreements no doubt settled the long-standing disputes that stalled NNPC's development of deepwater assets as it will unlock more than $10 billion of new deepwater investment in Nigeria.

Under the Buhari-led administration, Nigeria's oil and gas industry also recorded a major feat with the Final Investment Decision (FID) in January 2021 on 10,000 tonnes per day methanol plant and 500 million standard cubic feet of gas per day gas processing plant, being promoted by the NNPC Limited and the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) in partnership with the private sector. The plant is being constructed in Odeama, Brass, Bayelsa State.

As part of its oil sector recovery agenda, the outgoing administration embarked on the comprehensive rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt Refinery (PHRC).

Buhari also supported the establishment of modular refineries across the Niger Delta.

**Making Agriculture a Priority**

In agriculture, the Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP) of the Central Bank of Nigeria, launched on November 17, 2015, has disbursed more than N800 billion to more than four million smallholder farmers of 23 different commodities (including rice, wheat, maize, cotton, cassava, poultry, soybeans, groundnut, fish), cultivating over five million hectares of farmland.

Another initiative was the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI) launched as a government-to-government partnership between the Nigerian and Moroccan Governments, in December 2016 and it has produced 30 million 50kg bags of NPK 20:10:10 equivalent in 2020, bringing total production since inception to over 60 million 50kg bags equivalent; and some participating blending plants.

The administration also came up with the Special-Agro Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) Programme which is a half-a-billion-dollar partnership between the FGN, AfDB Group, IsDB, and IFAD. Under the SAPZ programme, Agro-processing centres will be established across the country.

**Social Investment, Poverty Alleviation**

In 2016, President Buhari launched the National Social Investment Programme, currently the largest such programme in Africa and one of the largest in the world. The National Social Register (NSR) of poor and vulnerable Nigerians (NSR) now contains more than 50 million persons from more than 12 million poor and vulnerable households, identified across more than 150,000 communities in the 36 states of the country and the FCT.

From this number, close to two million poor and vulnerable Nigerian households are currently benefiting from the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program, which pays a bimonthly stipend of N10,000 per household. - In addition, about 355,000 vulnerable persons have received a special one-off grant of N20,000 each in the 36 states and the FCT.

**Fiscal Trade, Monetary, and Investments Reforms**

The Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) has seen total additional inflows from the government of around US$2 billion under the Buhari Administration – since the original US$1 billion which the Fund kicked off in 2012.

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Council (NIPC) 2017 completed a long-overdue revision of the list of activities that can benefit from Nigeria's Pioneer Status Incentive, which grants beneficiary companies a three to five-year tax holiday.

The administration will also be remembered for the restoration of the Federal Budget to the January-December cycle, with the 2020 Budget, for the first time in 12 years.

It also introduced the annual Finance (Reform) Bills to accompany the annual Federal Appropriation Bill.

**Support to States**

The Buhari administration has extended more than N2 trillion in bailout packages to state governments, to enable them to meet their salary and pension obligations, especially in the face of dwindling oil revenues in the first three years of the administration. The support has come in the form of the Budget Support Facility (total of N614 billion) extended to the states.

Paris Club Refunds ($5.4 billion). It also made more than N700 billion in refunds for federal road projects embarked upon by state governments.

Economic analysts said the onus lies with the Tinubu administration to take the gauntlet and build on the achievements of the Buhari administration.

ENERGY



Experts laying solar panels

# Adopting Renewable Energy in Nigeria

Nigeria faces significant electricity supply challenges stifling industrial growth, limiting commercial ventures' expansion and profitability, and the well-being of people. Presently, the primary energy sources are gas and hydroelectricity. In the face of the current low level of diversification, **Collins Okeke**, in this report, makes a case for investments in Nigeria's renewable energy

It is estimated that about 92 million of the over 200 million people that make up the entire population of Nigeria have no access to electricity. Where access to electricity is available, a full day of uninterrupted supply is not guaranteed. Despite abundant natural energy sources, Nigeria faces significant electricity supply challenges stifling industrial growth, limiting commercial ventures' expansion and profitability, and the well-being of people. Presently, the primary energy sources are gas and hydroelectricity. Although the country is diversifying to renewables, progress is extremely slow. This article makes a case for investments in Nigeria's renewable energy.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) 'Renewable 2020' report, renewable energy capacity is set to expand by 50 per cent between 2019 and 2024, led by solar energy. Solar, wind, and hydropower projects are rolling out at their fastest rate in four years, arguing that the future lies in using renewable energy.

Energy security concerns caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine have motivated countries to increasingly turn to renewables such as solar and wind to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels, whose prices have spiked dramatically. Global renewable power capacity is now expected to grow by 2,400 gigawatts (GW) over the 2022-2027 period, an amount equal to the entire power capacity of China today, according to Renewables 2022.

This massive expected increase is 30 per cent higher than the growth forecast just a year ago, highlighting how quickly governments have thrown additional policy weight behind renewables. The report finds that renewables are set to account for over 90% of global electricity expansion over the next five years, overtaking coal to become the largest source of global electricity by early 2025. Nigeria's location in the tropics offers an abundance of sunshine all year round, with over 2,600 hours of sunlight per year (about 7 hours of sunlight daily, on average).

Experts believe Nigeria has the economic war chest and environmental conditions to tap into renewable energy sources, especially solar. Estimates by the World Bank suggest that investing in solar-powered plants could increase the availability of electricity to almost 80 million people who currently have none. This means transitioning to solar-based energy could help diversify Nigeria's energy portfolio and reduce high electricity bills.

Nigeria is not oblivious to the global trend and many opportunities. It so is progressively evolving policy and regulatory frameworks to incentivise renewable energy, such as the National Electric Power Policy 2001, Renewable Electricity Policy Guidelines 2006, and Electricity Power Sector Reform (EPSRA) Act 2005.

The EPSRA is the principal law that governs the Nigerian power sector. It also establishes the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), the principal regulator of the power sector in Nigeria. The NERC, in the performance of its functions, has established several policies and regulations like the NERC Mini-Grid Regulation 2016, NERC Renewable Energy Feed-In Tariff Regulations 2015, and recently the Independent Electricity Distribution Network (IEDN) licence.

Aside from laws and policies, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has put incentives such as the VAT (Modification Order) 2020. This exempts specified renewable energy equipment from the application of VAT concerning the importation or in-country sale of the equipment. The FGN also launched the Solar Power Naija Project.

The project focuses on providing five million households with solar home systems for off-grid communities under the Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan (NESP). The implementation of the project is facilitated by the Central Bank of Nigeria, which will make available NGN140bn (approximately US$340m) in direct and indirect loans to qualifying projects.

Multilateral agencies and institutional investors have made impact investments in players in the sector. For example, the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are currently partnering with the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) concerning the Nigeria Electrification Programme with a US$350m commitment from the World Bank and about US$148m from the AfDB.

According to the REA, the programme has provided electricity to five million consumers. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has launched a sustainable energy financing and advisory programme, the Climate Change Investment Programme for Africa. It will provide funds and advisory services to banks to help them increase financing for private sector energy efficiency, renewable energy, and cleaner production projects.

Similarly, the EU has committed about US$47m in funding for renewable energy projects in emerging markets, including Nigeria. These efforts appear to be yielding fruit, as many significant renewable energy projects are coming on-stream. In addition to a large number of mini-grids and small-scale solar Independent Power Projects (IPPs) springing up across the country, the Federal Government of Nigeria is also taking steps to boost the existing hydroelectric generation capacity, with the concession of Gurara Hydropower Project, the proposed concession of the Zungeru Hydropower Project and the planned development of the 3,050 MW Mambilla Hydropower Project.

Renewable energy will continue to rise in the upcoming decade, edging out fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Governments worldwide, including Nigeria, are making laws, policies, and regulations to diversify to renewables.

Energy companies must work to take advantage of existing incentives and opportunities such as marketing opportunities, reduction of emissions, lower energy costs, and many others.

***• Okeke is of the Olisa Agbakoba Legal (OAL), Lagos.***

# SOFT FINANCE

INVESTMENT | ECONOMICS | FINANCE | MONEY | E-COMMERCE



*with*
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# You Can Build A Comfortable Life Working For Others

By popular demand, we represent the classic interview by Chief Olusegun Osunkeye, former managing director and chairman of Nestle Foods Plc, offering valuable tips on how to create value and build a comfortable life working for others. By staying at Nestle for 41 years (27 years of executive responsibilities and 14 years as Non-Executive Chairman), Chief Osunkeye, a Chartered Accountant by training, has demonstrated that you can be wealthy and live a good life working for others. The interview was first published in the May 8 edition of Thisday. Enjoy

In this interview with **Ayo Arowolo**, he explains some of the strategies that made that feat possible. Please enjoy.

**Q1. When did you decide you would stay that long working for others instead of building your own business?**

After completing my professional examination in accountancy and taxation May/June 1965, in the United Kingdom, I stayed on to work for 18 months with a practising firm of Chartered Accountants in the Birmingham area. Those times gave me the chance to think about my future goals. I had to decide whether to join a practising firm, in this case, Messrs Akintola Williams & Co, where I started my Accountancy tutelage in 1959, and work my way to the top to become a Partner; or join a manufacturing company, and work my way up, to become a 'Captain of Industry' as the cliché goes. Meanwhile, to hedge, I wrote to Mr (now Pa/Elder) Akintola Williams informing him that I had completed my studies and might want to work for the firm on my return to Nigeria if there is a vacancy. Mr Akintola Williams graciously replied that there will always be a place for me if I wish to join the firm as a qualified accountant. I maintained contact all along with Mr Williams, which developed into a mentor/role model over the years to this day. Towards the end of 1966, the United Africa Company, UK advertised on behalf of its Nigeria Subsidiaries, UAC Nigeria, an opening for Accountants to work in Nigeria. I applied, and luckily, I was appointed to start work at UACN in March 1967. So, the decision to work in an industrial organisation was made.

**Q2. What made you take that decision? Was there any specific factor that influenced it?**

In all my considerations of where to work or what to do, it never crossed my mind to be a "businessman" or to buy and sell/distribute or import/export. I had always been moving in professional circles. Before going to the UK, I worked in Peat Marwick Casselton Elliot & Co, a practising firm of Chartered Accountants, to complete my studies. So, the dignity of the accountancy profession and comportment, professionalism and ethics of my bosses (Mr Akintola Williams, Mr Charles Sankey, both of Akintola Williams & Co and Messrs H.W Bond, D. Easton, and Leslie Parker of Peat Marwick) influenced me. Doing audit work took me to industrial clients to learn first-hand the broad range of commercial and industrial management and operations. I suppose this also shaped my thinking and ultimately swayed me to the path of becoming an industrialist.

**Q3. Given your personal experience, what would you suggest are the success factors for anyone who wants to follow that path to wealth creation?**

From the onset, I was determined to be a person of character and integrity. These must be your credo alongside your competence in your work. Whatever work, pursue excellence in your assignments, whatever you are given to do, and this involves diligence and continuous learning and improvement. In this same vein, try your best to develop a savings culture. Like the richest man in Babylon said, a tenth of what you earn is yours to keep. Your accumulated savings is the seed of future investment. Integrity, too, is a big asset. In due time, it can and does attract/create other assets. Let me expatiate:

Under the 1976 Indigenisation Decree, foreign companies were required to sell at least 40% of their shareholdings to Nigerians. So, a close friend, a lawyer, and I, also working in a big company, wanted to benefit from the indigenisation exercise, but we had no money to back up our wish. So, we approached UBA (General Manager then was Mr John West). We told him our mission. He agreed to give us a loan of N60,000.00 each on credit to buy shares in any companies of our choice. The loan was repayable in five years, and no collateral was required, only self-recognition (integrity at work!). That was how our wealth creation (as an employee) started. We repaid the loan within three years.

**I strive for balance in my life while pursuing my career of lifelong employment, first in the UAC Group for 5 years, then in the Nestle Group for 27 years. Managing the work/life balance is very important. You may not be 100% successful all of the time, but one must be conscious of it and work at it**

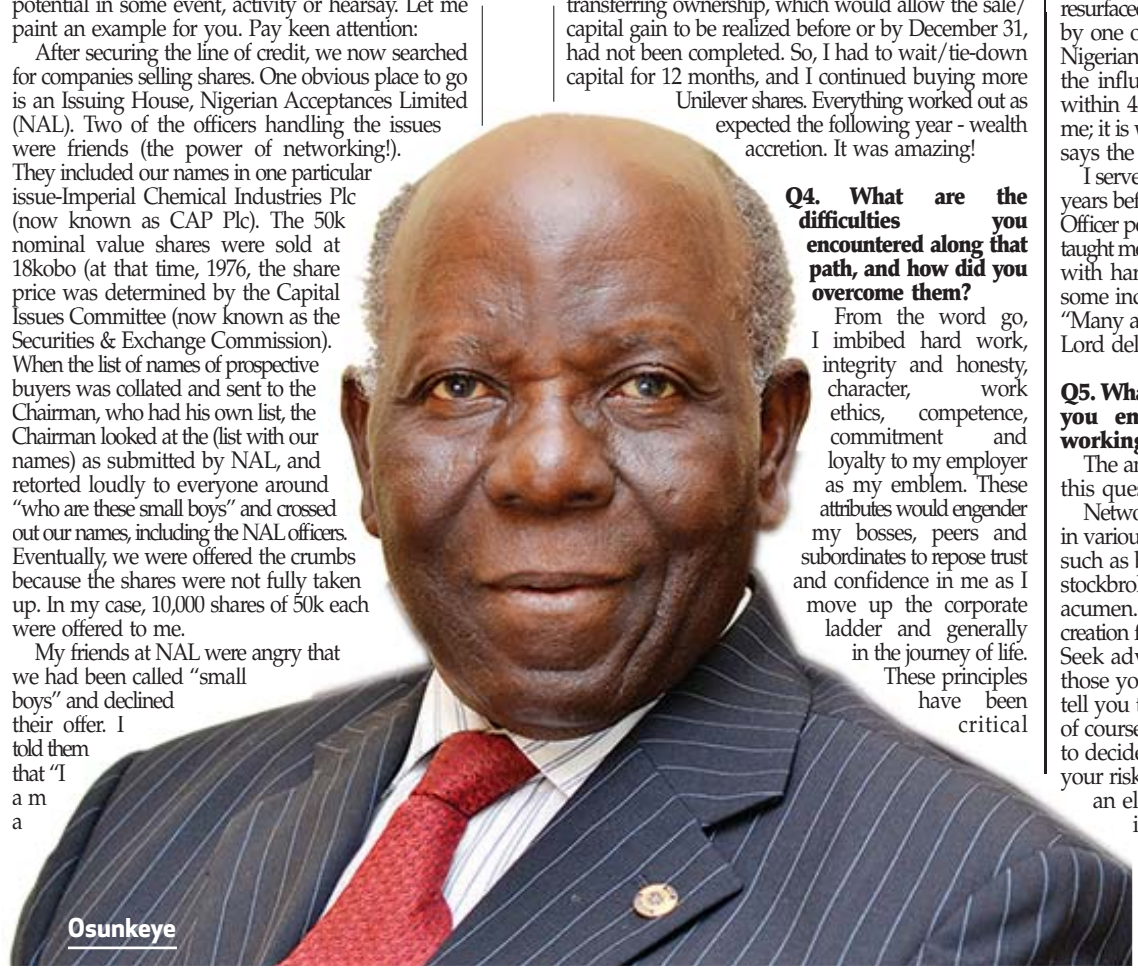
In life, opportunities come in waves, and it is beneficial to have a discerning mind or recognise or perceive the wealth potential in some event, activity or hearsay. Let me paint an example for you. Pay keen attention:

After securing the line of credit, we now searched for companies selling shares. One obvious place to go is an Issuing House, Nigerian Acceptances Limited (NAL). Two of the officers handling the issues were friends (the power of networking!). They included our names in one particular issue-Imperial Chemical Industries Plc (now known as CAP Plc). The 50k nominal value shares were sold at 18kobo (at that time, 1976, the share price was determined by the Capital Issues Committee (now known as the Securities & Exchange Commission). When the list of names of prospective buyers was collated and sent to the Chairman, who had his own list, the Chairman looked at the (list with our names) as submitted by NAL, and retorted loudly to everyone around "who are these small boys" and crossed out our names, including the NAL officers. Eventually, we were offered the crumbs because the shares were not fully taken up. In my case, 10,000 shares of 50k each were offered to me.

My friends at NAL were angry that we had been called "small boys" and declined their offer. I told them that "I a m a small boy" for this purpose, and I accepted and paid N1,800 for the 10,000 shares. A year later, ICI declared a dividend such that I received N2062.50 net! A year later again, ICI declared a bonus issue of 3 for 2, and I received 15,000 bonus shares. One of the NAL officers who had declined his offer offered to buy the bonus shares at N1.50 per share and paid me N22,500. I learnt later that the officer offloaded the shares at N2.25 per share within months! A win/win for all concerned. Wealth creation!

Another example: 30 years ago, at a business meeting, the Managing Director of Unilever Nigeria Plc mentioned that they had sold their factory and head office premises at Apapa and would be moving to Oregun when formalities were completed. A few days later, while pondering over the information gleaned at the business meeting, I deduced that the assets sold would have been fully written off and that the sale would have yielded a huge capital gain realised, which would show in the Balance Sheet at the end of the year ending December 31. I reasoned that shareholders would benefit from a handsome bonus issue if declared. This was around August/September, so I started buying Unilever shares on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, hoping that by the following May or June, when the Annual General Meeting would be held, I would realise gains (more wealth) on my investment in the shares. Unfortunately, it did not happen as planned. The paperwork transferring ownership, which would allow the sale/capital gain to be realized before or by December 31, had not been completed. So, I had to wait/tie-down capital for 12 months, and I continued buying more Unilever shares. Everything worked out as expected the following year - wealth accretion. It was amazing!

**In all my considerations of where to work or what to do, it never crossed my mind to be a "businessman" or buy and sell/ Distributor or Import/Export. I had always been moving in Professional circles**



Osunkeye

**Q4. What are the difficulties you encountered along that path, and how did you overcome them?**

From the word go, I imbibed hard work, integrity and honesty, character, work ethics, competence, commitment and loyalty to my employer as my emblem. These attributes would engender my bosses, peers and subordinates to repose trust and confidence in me as I move up the corporate ladder and generally in the journey of life. These principles have been critical success factors in my career. It is expected that along a career path spanning over 45 years, one would encounter intrigues, frustrations, and disappointments. I had a fair share at different times. Let me recount a few:

In the company I worked for, Nestle Group, international auditors go around auditing the operations of the Nestle subsidiaries in over 100 countries around the world (including Nigeria). They would arrive in the country without prior notice, bearing a letter of introduction from Nestle headquarters in Switzerland. In one such instance, the Auditor came and, after his work, went back to Switzerland and wrote a damning report laced with untruths and incorrect figures to make his case. It was a low point for me in my career, especially coming at a time (in 1978) when I was being prepared for secondment to Nestle companies in Malaysia/the Philippines/Switzerland for international exposure and development for further promotion. All this was now in potential jeopardy. As it was the practice, the auditee (Nestle Nigeria, typified by me) would be allowed to respond to the Auditor's findings, comments and recommendations. I gave a robust defence supporting my statements with verifiable facts and figures to disprove or lay bare the falsehood of some of the Auditor's major "findings". The powers above must have been satisfied with my response, and the transfer programme for me went on as planned. However, presumably, as a hedge, if things were as bad as the Auditor had painted, the same Auditor was posted to Nigeria to replace me as the Finance and Control Director on my transfer to Malaysia. During his stay in Nigeria, and in his unguarded moments, he would tell colleagues and the friends he had made among our distributors that he deliberately wrote a bad report so that he would be posted to Nigeria to come and clean the mess. He got his wish, except that there was no mess to clean!

My posting to the Far East and Switzerland was from mid-1978 to the end of December 1980. As time was getting close to return to Nigeria, the erstwhile Auditor (now Finance & Control Director) was brazen enough to ask our employer (Nestle S.A. Switzerland) for posting out of Nigeria, giving as his reason that he could not serve under me (a Nigerian). He was asked to submit his resignation immediately, which he did. He left Nigeria and resurfaced a few months later, having been engaged by one of our distributor partners, an influential Nigerian. After about six months, he fell out with the influential Nigerian who got him deported within 48 hours! The good Lord had fought for me; it is written: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay", says the Lord (Romans 12:19).

I served as de facto No. 2 in the company for 11 years before being elevated to the Chief Executive Officer position (Numero Uno). That waiting period taught me some lessons in patience, show competence with hard work to be blameless, and tolerating some indignities along the way. It is written that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all" Psalm 34:19.

**Q5. What were the wealth-building strategies you employed while you were actively working?**

The answer to question 3 has partially covered this question.

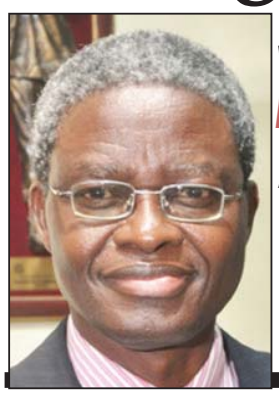
Networking allows you to meet diverse persons in various occupations, vocations, and professions, such as bankers, realtors, lawyers, industrialists, stockbrokers, analysts and persons with business acumen. One can glean opportunities for wealth creation from interacting with diverse personalities. Seek advice and information from experts and those you think should know. Stockbrokers will tell you that the market thrives on hearsay (and, of course, analyses); at the end of it all, you have to decide, go or no go, which would depend on your risk appetite. Every investment decision has an element of risk. Generally, the older one is, the less long-term your risk horizon should be.

***NOTE: Read the full Interview in the online edition on www.thisdaylive.com***


LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU
TO THE
2ND TERM
INAUGURATION
CEREMONY
of
MR. BABAJIDE OLUSOLA SANWO-OLU
As
GOVERNOR OF LAGOS STATE
&
DR. KADRI OBAFEMI HAMZAT
As
DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF LAGOS STATE
DATE:
MONDAY 29TH MAY, 2023
VENUE:
TAFAWA BALEWA SQUARE. ONIKAN LAGOS
TIME:
9:00AM

INTERNATIONAL

# UK's Foreign Policy Dilemma: Unfreezing Russian Assets and Rights of Nigerian Students



VIE INTERNATIONALE

*with*

**Bola A. Akinterinwa**

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Onyeama

The United Kingdom (UK) is a great power and a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). More important, the UK is also, with other four Permanent Members of the UNSC, a member of the UN recognised Nuclear Weapons States all of which have constituted themselves into an informal Nuclear Club to which access by all aspiring nuclear states has been denied. The Nuclear Weapons States want exclusiveness of the club to be preserved, arguing that other Member States of the international community do not have the capacity to manage the radioactive effect of any nuclear incident. In other words, the UK, like others, wants to preserve its own national identity.

In fact, it was majorly because of the need to underscore the British national identity that the UK opted out of the European Union. It is important to note here that the European Union began with the European Economic Community of Six, following the signing of the 25 March Treaty of Rome. The six countries were France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxemburg). In 1961, the UK sought membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) but to no avail. With the exception of France who vetoed it, all others wanted the accession of the UK to the Rome Treaty. The way the British interpreted how they were mistreated by the French President, General Charles de Gaulle, created a sharp division between proponents and opponents of EEC membership.

With more diplomatic lobby at work, the UK was admitted on January 1, 1973. Hardly two years thereafter, the opposition to continued membership of the EEC increased. This prompted the holding of a plebiscite in 1975. By chance, the proponents of continued membership won. This was how the British managed to sustain their membership of the EEC. Major issues raising the need for separate British identity began to emerge following the transformation of the EEC to European Community (EC) and then to European Union (EU). The EEC started in 1958 with emphasis on working towards a Common Market.

Having an EU requires harmonisation of all development policies. The EU wants its own currency, the Euro. The British want to maintain their Pound Sterling. The exercise of the supranational authority of some EU institutions is contested by the British, seeing it as an erosion of their pride. This consideration again prompted a second plebiscite on 23rd June 2016. It is against this background that UK's foreign policy dilemma should be explicated.

## Unfreezing Russian Assets in the UK

UK's foreign policy dilemma and challenges can be said to have been accentuated following Brexit. Recall that the outcome of the 1975 referendum revealed that there was 64% national turnout and that the target to secure a majority for winning was 12,951,598 votes. A majority vote of 8,908,508, which is 34.5% more than the votes of those who rejected continued membership of the European Community in 1975 was required. Besides, the Treaty of Lisbon was quickly signed by all EU members but the British hesitated in signing it. In this regard, Prime Minister David Cameron said, before the 2010 election, that he would hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Additionally, the 1993 Maastricht Treaty placed emphasis on a political Europe and was therefore considered the foundation of the European Union. All these cases point to Britain's animosity and considerations to seek withdrawal from the EU.

In 2016, 51.9% voted in favour of discontinuation of UK's membership of the European Union. Since the withdrawal of membership from the EU, the United Kingdom has been faced with many foreign policy challenges, including the most recent issue of freezing Russian assets in the United Kingdom in light of which the Russian government has also given an ultimatum to the Government of the UK to defreeze Russian assets in the UK immediately. And perhaps more interestingly, there is also the current issue of the 2024 UK student visa rules among others. In this regard, while the policy attitude towards Russia is about how to freeze Russian assets, UK's policy attitude towards Nigerian students in the UK expectedly as from 2024, is more about freezing the human rights of Nigerians than about concerns of net migration.

As regards the de-freezing of Russian assets in the UK, it has a European multilateral character. Even though the UK is no longer a member of the European Union, the country appears to be joining the EU members in sanctioning Russia over what they prefer to call Russian invasion of Ukraine. In other words, it is not only the UK that has frozen Russian assets. Others include France with $71bn frozen assets, Japan with $58bn frozen Russian assets, Germany with $55bn frozen assets, US with $38bn frozen assets, United Kingdom with $26bn frozen assets, Austria with $17bn and Canada with $16bn worth of frozen Russian assets.

One reason for the freezing of Russian assets in the UK is the consideration that Russia must pay compensation to Ukraine without which the Russian assets will remain frozen. In determining how much compensation would be required after the end of the war, the Council of Europe has established a digital register of damages caused by Russia to injure Ukraine as the first step towards international compensation mechanism for victims of the Russian aggression. In the thinking of the British, they do not expect direct payment of reparations to Ukraine. The British simply considered that Russian central bank assets should be retained as leverage for compensation. The assets have been estimated at $300billion (£243bn). The Russian central bank reserves are in G7 countries. £26bn of it is in the UK.

It is therefore not a surprise that the British Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, insisted four days ago that the Russian assets must be frozen. Without doubt, the expropriation of assets has the potential to create a precedent and also prompt counter-measures in the international financial system. Britain and the Council of Europe are both talking about freezing as distinct from attachment or seizure and strongly believe that freezing is consistent with international law.

True, the attachment of Russian assets is significant in its implication in many ways. First, it presumes that the Russians will eventually be defeated by the West. Russian defeat is possible but it is still doubtful. It cannot but be ridiculous to expect Russia to pay any compensation if it is Russia that wins the war. For now, there is nothing to suggest that Russia has the potential to surrender or even voluntarily accept peace negotiations in which President Putin would accept to pay reparations.

Secondly, the immediate implication of seeking to freeze Russian assets is that the NATO is clearly saying that the declaration of a Third World War is in the making, that it is imminent and that the world should be prepared for a new change in continuity: change of actors but continuity of East-West confrontation. Unlike the Second World War in which the Soviet Union was part of the Western Allies, engaging in battles against the Axis Powers (Germany, Japan, and Italy), the new World War in the making is likely, at least, to be comprised of new Axis powers, that is, Russia, China, and North Korea, and possibly including the US-described axis of evil countries. The evil countries or the terrorist countries may be joined in solidarity to fight the United States in particular and by so doing supporting Russia. In this type of scenario, the battle fields cannot but be far away from Ukraine which will only become the epicentre.

Thirdly, the UK's Russian asset freeze policy raises a controversial international law issue: attachment or seizure, on the one hand, and asset freeze, on the other. Professor of Public International Law at the University of Oxford, Professor Antonios Tzanakopoulos, told the Foreign Affairs Select Committee that 'we can freeze the assets as leverage – that is what international law defines as a counter-measure. The idea is that you breach the law causing pain to the wrong-doing states until they comply, so you can keep those measures in place, so long they are proportionate. More important, Professor Tzanakopoulos reportedly also has it that 'the essence of a counter-measure is to induce the State to comply with the law. . ., as a result, the measure must be temporary and reversible. On this basis, a disposal or seizure of the assets as a punitive measure was explicitly not allowed in international law (Vide Patrick Wintour, "UK to Keep Kremlin's Assets frozen Until Russia Pays Compensation to Ukraine," The Guardian (London), 25 May, 2013, 18.56 BST).

Additionally, Mr Andriy Koslin, the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, told the Foreign Policy Select Committee that he preferred direct seizure of Russian assets, rather than freezing of assets to compel Russia to accept to pay reparation. In his eyes, the issue to be considered should be about less state immunity and more about justice. This Ukrainian position is quite interesting. The more interesting point here is that international law is said to allow for freezing of assets for as long as the act of freezing is proportionate. Ukraine favours seizure which is inconsistent with international law. Ukraine wants to engage in an act of illegality to make legitimate claims. This is precisely one major problem in international politics in which might is always considered as right.

Why should a sovereign state seek to punish another sovereign state when one basic rule of international relations is sovereign equality? There is no disputing the fact that the assets of Russia are sovereign in character. There is also no disputing the fact that Russia's sovereign assets are protected by sovereign immunity under public international law. Why should the Prosecutor General of Ukraine be talking about or insisting on seizure of Russian sovereign assets?

Fourthly, how many countries in Africa will go along with the West in the event of a Third World War? Will the pro-Russia countries support the West? France is already losing her grips over Francophone Africa, especially with Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso accepting the pro-Vladimir Putin Wagner mercenaries to fight on their sides in the war against terrorism in the Sahel. They have already compelled France to withdraw her troops in their countries. For France, Russia is an enemy not to be accommodated in former French colonies. Will Anglophone and Lusophone Africa take side in the war or abstain? Many questions but few answers: the conditions of a new World War to be provoked by the Europeans again are most likely to be different. Using Africa as an instrument of the war may be far-fetched. Africa has rejected its being used solely as a source of raw materials for developing Europe.

## The 2024 UK Student Visa Rules

The UK Government announced a new policy on international students that takes effect from January 2024. Many people believe that the new policy might have been a resultant from an interview granted by a Nigerian in the UK according to which many Nigerians coming to the UK are not really coming to study but to use the pretext of studying as a means of escaping Nigeria and settling down as a landed immigrant in the UK. To a great extent, a closer look at the underlying five pillars of the new policy clearly lends credence to the speculations of Nigerians.

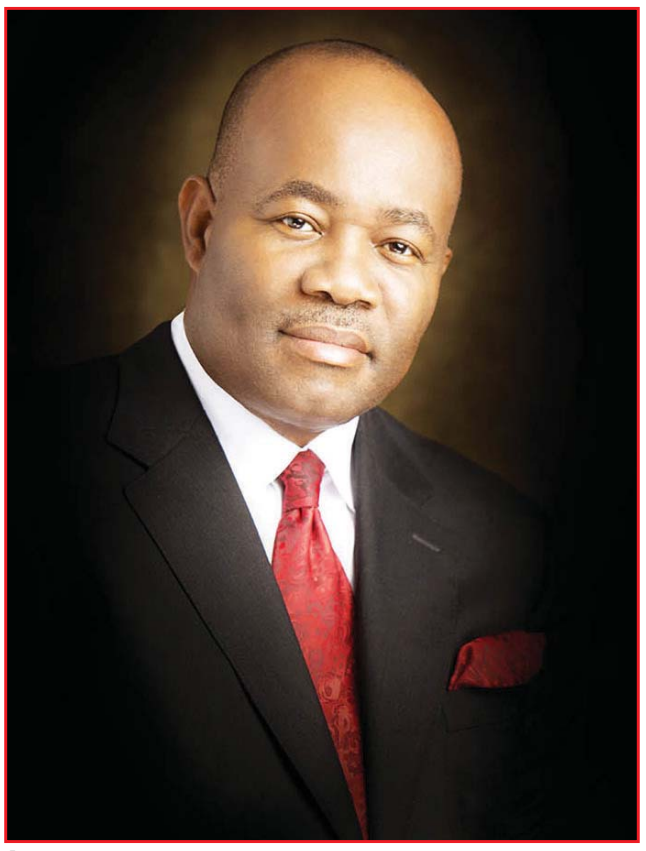
The five pillars are noteworthy: prevention of international students from bringing dependants with them unless the students are in post-graduate programmes with a research focus; curbing net migration; international students are allowed 2-3 years after their studies to remain in the UK under the Graduate Rule, meaning that the Graduate Route will not be constrained by immigration regulations; non-permission to switch to the Skilled Worker Route until completion of their educational programmes; and deterring unscrupulous agents from sending student to the UK. The UK Government also makes it clear that there is no intention of hostility and that the position of Government on international students is a good illustration of Government's policy stand.

**"For President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to enjoy domestic popular support with the ultimate objective of supporting the UK in a war against Russia cannot but be remote. For example, in terms of application of Nigeria's policy of non-alignment, it will be difficult to be aligned with the West based on the requirement of Nigeria's national interest. There is no significant national interest to defend by supporting the UK against Russia. What is of special interest to Nigeria is Russian pledge to help Nigeria with the completion of the Ajaokuta Steel Complex as jointly agreed to in 2019. It cannot but be difficult for President Tinubu to work against Nigeria's core national interest. Besides, Nigeria cannot taint her relationship with China. Will the Chinese accept that Russia be shamed and defeated? What are the implications of a weakened and defeated Russia for global peace and security? Will the way Germany was compelled to pay compensation following the end of the two World Wars be the same with Russia? And perhaps more interestingly, will the defeating of Russia mean the same as defeating China and North Korea? These questions are necessary because both China and North Korea are active supporters of Russia. Have the British seriously factored the implications of attaching Russian assets as a leverage mechanism in their foreign policy attitude towards Africa? Whatever is the case, there are many complicated problems still begging for solution. The UK can freeze Russian assets if capable but should not attempt to freeze the human rights of Nigerian students in the UK"**

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PERSPECTIVE

# Senate Presidency and Emerging Possibilities



Akpabio



Yari



Izunaso

**Samson Emeka**

The two possibilities playing out among the senators-elect on the contest for the Senate presidency of the 10th National Assembly favour the emergence of a dark horse in person of the Senator-elect from Imo-west, Senator Osita Izunaso

As at last night, the contest has been reduced to a three-horse race: Former governor of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Godswill Akpabio; former governor of Zamfara State, Senator Abdul'aziz Yari and Senator Osita Izunaso, representing Imo-west.

This has led to three power blocs, tendencies among the senators-elect.

The first is that of Senator Akpabio being sustained mainly by the endorsement of the President-elect.

This bloc is dominated largely by the South-west Senators and a few from South-South, South-east and North-central.

However, majority of the senators do not have personal conviction on the cause of the bloc and are acting only on what they were asked to do, as publicly disclosed by the outgoing governor of Ebonyi State, Dave Umahi and Senator Ali Ndume when they disclosed on national television that it was the President-elect that directed them to support Akpabio.

There are about 34 senators in this fold. Contrary to the general expectations, the bloc does not enjoy the support of the National Chairman of the party, Senator Adamu Abdullahi. The national chairman has been consistent in his call for "further and better" consultations on the zoning arrangement. He told Akpabio's counterpart in the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas to stop parading or seeing himself as the Speaker.

The second bloc is spearheaded by a former governor of Zamfara State, Senator Yari. The group is a response to the announcement of Akpabio by the party as the consensus candidate for the position of Senate President. They were angered by the unilateral selection of Akpabio by the President-elect and are predominantly from the entire North with a majority from the South-east, South- South and two or three senators from South-west. Their grouse is mainly against Akpabio who is generally resented by the northern senators. This group believes that the Northern interest would suffer in the hands of Akpabio as the Senate President. The group is formidable.

The third tendency is the Izunaso group with members spread across all the geo political zones. They are made up of former members of the House of Representatives, serving senators and new senators rooting for change. They meet regularly. Their vision is a rebranded Senate for the fruition of a new Nigeria. The group is growing daily.

However, there is only a thin line between the Yari and Izunaso group, as apart from both having similar goals of sanctity and independence of the senate, members of the Izunaso's attend Yari's meetings and vice versa. There are serious talks between the two tendencies to work together with the two leaders sharing the positions of Senate President and Deputy Senate president. If the talks which are already at an advanced stage are consummated, the combined group would have an overwhelming majority in the senate.

Some core loyalists of the President-elect are putting pressure on him to withdraw his support for Akpabio. Tinubu's loyalists argued that Akpabio is not the right person to lead the National Assembly at this critical period. They are concerned that the image of an Akpabio leading the legislative arm would send wrong signals to the world, and the global business community where the president-elect is already relating with for economic activities that would boost the Nigerian economy.

The loyalists have become worried and uncomfortable with the daily growing concerns being raised by Nigerians, individually, pressure groups, the media and influential stakeholders. The latest of which were the cries by the South-south Women Compatriots threatening to protest naked. Tinubu's loyalists hold that the government they have tagged Renewed Hope should not begin on a hopelessness note for an important issue such as the fight against corruption. All the protesters and commentators saw the endorsement of Senator Akpabio as an affront to Nigerians.

The loyalists both within and outside Nigeria are advising the President to look for a competent ranking senator from the South-south or South-east, who is free from corruption allegations to support the position.

In both the South-south and South-east, there are other two ranking senators apart from Akpabio. They are Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, a former Governor of Abia State and Senator Izunaso, the pioneer National Organising Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC) from Imo State. Out of these two senators, it is only Izunaso that is not accused of corruption.

If the president-elect listened to the pleas by Nigerians and the advice of his core loyalists, Izunaso is the man to support.

Similarly, the unbridled criticisms and angst against the endorsement of Senator Akpabio have made many senators have more than usual reflections on the issue with a growing rejection of the Akpabio. Realising that their image and future are tied to the perception of the National Assembly, many senators have started looking elsewhere for a more acceptable, presentable, fresh person capable of leading the assembly and earning it a good image.

Championing this are the 50 strong opposition senators who in the first instance never accepted the zoning dictation of the APC. This is the second possibility that would throw the same Senator from Imo-west, Senator Izunaso, whose brilliant outings on national television stations have become subject of discussions at various functions and fora of Senators-elect in Abuja and all over the country.

Senator Izunaso is a founding member of the APC. He worked with Chief Bisi Akande as the pioneer National Organising Secretary of the party. He also worked with Babatunde Raji Fashola and others to formulate policies, constitutions and other requirements that got the party registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 2014.

A lawyer and journalist, Izunaso is well educated, politically sagacious, well-grounded and experienced in legislative matters, broad-minded and above all clean without any baggage whatsoever. He is seen as the senator that can give the Senate and indeed the National Assembly a new image that would make the legislative arm of government attractive to Nigerians and the world.

He is the focus of the senators-elect now and would most likely emerge as the next Senate President. The emergence of a dark horse.

***Emeka writes from Lagos.***

**There are serious talks between the two tendencies to work together with the two leaders sharing the positions of Senate President and Deputy Senate president. If the talks which are already at an advanced stage are consummated, the combined group would have an overwhelming majority in the senate**

# OPINION

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## THE JUDICIARY AND THE RISE OF NEPOTISM

*The recruitment process is heavily flawed, argues* ***BAYO AKINLADE***



See Page 25

## EMMANUEL: FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

*The outgoing governor of Akwa Ibom State has done remarkably well, reckons* ***UFOT AKAN UMOREN***



See Page 25

## EDITORIAL

## AS PRESIDENT BUHARI DEPARTS…



See Page 26

*The administration posted an aggregate score far below public expectation, reckons* ***TUNDE OLUSUNLE***



# FINAL HOURS OF THE BUHARI YEARS

The title of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's account of his stewardship as Nigeria's President kept plodding in my mind as I thought through a heading for this piece. Nigeria's third President of the Fourth Republic authored *My Transition Hours,* which was published in 2018. It captures the breathtaking frenzy and flurry of activities and developments preceding, and immediately following his contest with the outgoing President, Muhammadu Buhari, at the 2015 presidential poll. The mean-spirited theatrics, confounding shenanigans, spontaneous alliance-switches and cross-carpeting, blatant betrayals, in the aftermath of his loss at the election are encapsulated in the book.

The two terms of four years each totalling eight years during which Buhari superintended over Nigeria, have gradually but assuredly diminished. Years, thinned down to months, months into weeks, weeks into days, the countdown has come down to hours, practically. Effectively, Buhari's dispensation is in its final hours even if he conveys the timing of his exit, as imperative in "a few days." Buhari indeed creates the impression that his job has been a pressure cooker which has exceeded boiling point and he cannot wait to return to his ranch in Daura and the annex in Maradi.

The last few days have been action-packed for Buhari. He has been busy with the commissioning of a harvest of projects initiated and driven by the private sector, and his administration, respectively. The $19 Billion Dangote Refinery and Petrochemical Plant in Lekki, Lagos, headlined the final hours of tape-cutting, Monday May 22, 2023. Aliko Dangote, President of the Dangote Group, is perhaps Nigeria's most committed, Africa-centric and adventurous investor whose hands are in many pies in the nation's socioeconomic development. His interests among others include manufacturing, construction, commerce and agriculture. The Dangote Refinery may be Africa's single largest investment in petroleum development in a long time. It is yet another private sector-led initiative to boost the nation's economy.

Tuesday May 23, 2023, Buhari commissioned eight major infrastructural projects across the country. Seven of them handled by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, received louder amplification than the eighth. The Second Niger Bridge, christened after Buhari; the Loko-Oweto bridge linking Nasarawa, Benue and states in the South East and South South, and the Ikom bridge in Cross River State, were all commissioned. New federal secretariats in Anambra, Bayelsa and Zamfara States, and the Kaduna-Kano segment of the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano roads, were similarly commissioned. Buhari opted to commission the brand new "Customs House" located in Abuja on the same day, as information technology allowed for his virtual, simultaneous, real-time opening of the non-Abuja domiciled projects.

This rash of valedictory ceremonials are proceeding parri passu with various events scheduled for the Commander-in-Chief by his primordial constituency, the military, these last days, these final hours. The goal is to reengineer our collective consciousness to actually think that Buhari, has been a rare breed conscientiously committed leader, who should be eternally venerated for heroic exploits in statecraft and national development. We must not allow



ourselves to be distracted from the reality that Buhari has presided over a debilitating kakistocracy over the last eight years. Buhari rode into power after three previous unsuccessful attempts in 2015, on the crest of presumed integrity, assumed frugality and touted believability. He earned the sobriquet of *Mai Gaskiya,* the honest one. He was profiled as that desired transformational leader who will turn things around in the fractious polity and discombobulated economy.

Buhari's suspect capacity, however, was first gleaned from his tentativeness in assembling a team to work with him. Elected in March 2015 and inaugurated in May of the same year, it was not until November that year that Buhari began piecemeal submission of the names of his prospective ministers to the National Assembly for processing. Indeed, in the course of Buhari's prevarication, the nation's economy took a southward descent into depression, the first of at least two such negative economic growths under his jurisdiction. Public expectations about the impeccably qualified and ultra-competent Nigerians Buhari assured he will integrate into his administration, waned immediately the "usual suspects" emerged on his *A* list.

Governments before Buhari purposefully headhunted and deployed the Ngozi Okonjo-Iwealas, Chukwuma Soludos, Magnus Kpakols, Amina Mohammeds, Arunma Otehs, Akinwumi Adesinas, and so on in nation-building and economic reconstruction. It is testament to their impeccable competencies, that many of them have moved up to higher responsibilities in global organisations. There were, however, no surprises when Buhari constituted his cabinet with many of the least suitable and competent operators, thus engendering a veritable *kakistocracy,* populated in the main by mediocres. There is perhaps no better validation of this assertion than the manner the country has fumbled and floundered over the past eight years, sometimes tethering on the brink.

A post on the social media by one Sanusi Dantata which has been trending for a few days now, almost summarises the epochal dysfunction of the Buhari government. This is in stark counterpoint to the facade of "landmark and legacy" achievements the regime serenades itself with. Says Sanusi Dantata: "If wishes were horses, I'd wish Muhammadu Buhari would drive from Abuja to Daura on Monday the 29th of May, instead of flying! He'd have the chance to see the infrastructure he has built, the insecurity he has addressed, the economy he has revamped and the youths he has provided opportunities for!" Dantata in this singular sentence effectively puts a pin on the helium balloon of the Buhari dispensation's penchant for narcissism. Nigeria has never had it so bad.

Buhari's government put a deliberate knife through our institutions such that standards, processes and best practices have been thrown to the hounds. We have a servile and complicit legislature whose members queue like school children for photo opportunities with the president, in a parliament which rubber-stamps any and every request from the president. The judiciary is wholly subservient in a Buhari era which sanctions the Gestapo-style nighttime invasion of the homes of forthright judges and justices, and intentionally sets up a Chief Justice for compulsory retirement. The Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC), is anything but independent. It takes orders from extraneous authorities about who to give a ticket, who to disqualify from a contest, where to simulate "inconclusive elections," and who to gift with "Certificates of Return."

It is common knowledge that the level of pilferage of public funds under Buhari, has long surpassed whatever was alleged to have taken place in preceding governments constituted by the Peoples' Democratic Party, (PDP). Buhari legitimised a *sadaka* poverty alleviation strategy, under which money is virtually thrown into the streets for the needy to pick up. Where on earth is the precedent to Buhari's *tradermoni* example, where government officials go around distributing N10,000 to select traders in marketplaces in the name of economic revamp? Where is the precursor to the *Special Works Programme,* (SPW), powered by the Labour ministry, where names of youths from across the country were compiled and they were each paid N20,000 per month for three months, for doing absolutely nothing, in the name of job creation? The COVID-19 pandemic which spilled well into 2020, precipitated large-scale stealing of public funds under the dubious cover of palliatives procured for the generality of the people. Accounts say that Sadiya Umar Farouq's Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, received funds in excess of N500 Billion for the palliatives, which never reached "the people" and which was not accounted for.

Aviation and Aerospace Minister, Hadi Sirika recently launched 10 firefighting vehicles distributed to various airports in the country, each costing a whopping N1.2 Billion! The same Sirika has just hurriedly concessioned the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, (NAIA), Abuja, and the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, (MAKIA), Kano, for periods of 20 and 30 years respectively. According to reports, about $800 Million will accrue to the nation's coffers from the deal, even as many have queried the secrecy which attended the transaction and why it was left till the final hours of the Buhari era.

*Olusunle, PhD, poet, journalist, scholar and author is a Member of the Nigerian Guild of Editors*

# THE JUDICIARY AND THE RISE OF NEPOTISM

*The recruitment process is heavily flawed, argues* ***BAYO AKINLADE***



Nepotism is the practice among those with power or influence of favouring relatives, friends, or associates, especially by giving them jobs. It is also defined as "The showing of special favor or unfair preference to any relative by someone in any position of power, be it ecclesiastical or not."

I am aware that my reference to President Muhammadu Buhari may immediately attract some form of debate which may most likely deter from the intent of this short writeup. I dare say that perhaps I am deliberate in this and my intent may have been achieved.

I have always wondered why the judiciary operates in a certain way in Nigeria. There seems to be an air of submissive behaviour around those on the bench. It is very distinct from mutual respect and professional courtesies. Let me describe what I am trying to explain; I once saw a magistrate kneel and cry before a very senior judge to my uttermost disgust, especially because this happened at a public legal function organised by magistrates.

I have seen many of these kinds of behaviour, some would say it's just a sign of respect; after all we are a country of traditions and deep cultures (whatever that translates to).

Before my mind goes wandering off, I must get back to the attitude of the judiciary which by and large is a reflection of the character of whoever is the Head of Court. Simply put, the Chief Judge of a Federal/High Court; the President of the Court of Appeal and the CJN determine the character of the Judiciary individually and collectively. This, of course, shouldn't be!

I would like to focus on the state judiciaries here. It is at the state level that everything good or bad about the nation's justice system begins. Immediately anyone complains about corruption within the judiciary the very first indicator or cause is the appointment process. Why is that so? I would agree that it is most likely that the appointment process is the door through which the corruption and incompetency within the judiciary majestically walks through. It is however sad that even if this is the case; no one seems to want to tackle this anomaly.

Recently again in Lagos State, magistrates were appointed with no oversight or vetting process, just the State Judicial Service headed by the Chief Judge recruiting and appointing. Surprisingly, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has no say in the process. What can I tell you here except that the leadership of the NBA itself leaves much to be desired.

In this exercise of appointing lawyers into the Bench, we can see all the traits and character of NEPOTISM. That's why a magistrate may seem subservient, a judge may appear condescending towards a more senior judge and so on, and so backward really. Professionalism, passion and knowledge are lost within the halls of justice in Nigeria. Frankly, more than a few of our colleagues on the bench are there because of who they know or who knows them.

As all things, there are a few exceptions but the thing is, it is hard to distinguish in most cases between a competency appointment-based process and the opposite, once the appointee has a connection with the appointor there is a doubt. Any form of relationship here has compromised the integrity of that process.

Of course, everything I note here may make us think for a moment that we need to change but after a few seconds of pondering; we reset our brains to default mode and submit to our basic phrase "This is Nigeria".

I now find it exhausting trying to compare other nation's judiciaries to mine, it makes no sense to. I have seen like never before a declining state of affairs within our justice delivery sector. The veil that covered the judiciary that made it sacred has been torn to shreds. The judiciary has been exposed, stripped of its virtues and sold off as a worn out chattel, no more to be celebrated, respected or feared.

The solution though, is a no-brainer but are we too set in our ways to retrace our steps? Only the future will tell. In the end, this is not about the leadership of President Buhari. His time is up but we still have the same heads of court and until their own time runs out, we remain as we are.

***Akinlade Esq is the convener of Fight Against Corruption in the Judiciary and Duty Solicitors Network (DSN).***

# EMMANUEL: FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

*The outgoing governor of Akwa Ibom State has done remarkably well, reckons* ***UFOT AKAN UMOREN***



Come May 29, 2023, when the class of 2015 state governors will be taking their last salute after their two-term tenure, the Akwa Ibom State Governor, Mr. Udom Emmanuel will stand out among others as the governor who has left a footprint in the hearts of Akwa Ibomites and Nigerians in general.

From the inception of his administration, Udom Emmanuel set out to achieve a new dimension of governance that dwells on creating enviable structures of development. As a private sector practitioner, Udom professionally deployed his eight years tenure to re-direct the conventional achievement of government from not just building roads, markets, schools and other infrastructural projects but raised the bar to elevating such infrastructure and human capital development efforts to best global standards.

It is worthy of mentioning that even in highly specialized areas where the federal government feared to thread or has failed, Governor Udom-led Akwa Ibom State to triumph in such ventures to the admiration of all.

Today, Ibom Air, a creation of the Udom administration, stands tall in our national aviation planet. It is to his credit that Ibom Air is the preferred airline when Nigerians speak of aviation business. Amongst his ranks of Governors, Udom will be remembered as the only governor who created an award-winning airline with a fleet of no fewer than nine aircraft. Not even the federal government of Nigeria attained such a feat.

He strategically introduced the international terminal at the Obong Victor Atta Airport, Uyo, and also built a facility for the maintenance, overhaul and repairs for, not just Ibom Air aircraft, but also for the servicing of other airline's facilities, thus opening the state to international tourists and creating access to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for the state.

Governor Emmanuel also embarked on the creation of wealth generating industries like the Jubilee syringes, which today is the largest syringes manufacturing company in Africa; the Automated Flour Mills, St. Gabriel Coconut Oil Factory, Ibom Deep Sea Port, Ibom Industrial Park/Jetty as well as power, refinery projects, gas processing plants and top-class health facilities amongst others in a drive to create functional employment for the youths of the state.

While power generation and distribution that will guaranty the availability of 24-hour electricity has been a mirage for the federal government, it is on record that Ibom power established under the leadership of Udom is already generating no less than 150 megawatts of power for the people of Akwa Ibom.

Any visitor to Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, will be welcomed by the towering Dakkada, the tallest building in the Niger Delta region, built by Governor Emmanuel which provides office space for various sectors of the economy.

There is also the Dakkada skills acquisition centre designed to train Akwa Ibomites in various fields which includes civil technologies, mechanical engineering, automobile engineering, ICT, fashion/tourism/hotel management, agriculture, steel fabrication, carpentry works and general studies.

On infrastructural development, Akwa Ibom has the best road network when compared to any state in the federation. A 10 lane road complete with two fountains; the 29km Etinan-Ndon Eyo road is also strengthened with two stayed cable bridges; the dualised Uyo-Ikot Ekpene road; and the Ikot Oku-Ikono flyover all attest to the magnificent achievements of Mr. Udom.

As Governor Emmanuel takes his exit, he will also be remembered by the good people of Akwa Ibom for life-touching projects including no fewer than 4,800 blocks of classroom with modern amenities modeled to provide the best of education for the future generations of leaders, highly equipped hospitals numbering about 20 and spanning across the rural areas of the State, state of the art skill acquisition centers, food production and agricultural projects.

The magnitude of achievement and meeting of the timelines despite the daunting challenges shows Udom Emmanuel as a governor that came into power prepared to work for the people.

Above all, Governor Emmanuel's tenure will be remembered for the peaceful atmosphere and secured environment that he created upon which the state machinery run freely especially the success of his novel Maintain Peace Movement, which created the enabling peaceful atmosphere for enhanced productivity as well as harmonious living in a multifarious state. Governor Emmanuel knitted the bonds of brotherhood and managed the process of succession without rancor.

Also noteworthy is his style of leadership primed on God's direction as well as his bond with the ordinary people of Akwa Ibom whom he engages with at his various visits to the villages, towns and the city of Uyo.

Governor Emmanuel has succeeded in weaving these sensibilities together to produce a successor, Pastor Umo Eno, whose victory at the polls signposts the expansion of the horizon of development in Akwa Ibom.

From the achievements of his administration, Governor Emmanuel has displayed the characteristics of a silent achiever in whom Nigerians can place their trust in the future.

***Umoren, National Coordinator of the Akwa Ibom Professionals, writes from Uyo***

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**
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# EDITORIAL

# AS PRESIDENT BUHARI DEPARTS…

## The administration has been largely ineffectual

After eight years in office, President Muhammadu Buhari's stewardship ends tomorrow. Whatever may be his shortcomings as a leader, no one will deny that his administration has invested heavily in transport infrastructure with concrete achievements. In quick succession, the strategic rail link between Abuja and Kaduna and that between Lagos and Ibadan were completed and pressed into service. Soon afterwards, the long abandoned Ajaokuta-Itakpe-Warri line was put into service. The travelling public heaved a sigh of immense relief. The Second Niger Bridge that had been under construction for four decades was also completed by the outgoing administration.

In a few other sectors, Buhari has also left indelible marks. The Petroleum Industry (PIB) Bill that had stalled in the National Assembly for more than a decade was passed and signed into law by Buhari. The response of his administration to the Covid-19 pandemic which claimed millions of people across the world was commendable. However, Nigerians are being ushered into a new administration with a flood of worries. The prevalent public disillusionment has been heightened by the outcomes of the 2023 general election. Despite investment in technology by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the elections were fought almost like wars–riddled with tensions, violence, and intimidation in a polity obsessed with ethnicity, religion, and regions. But regardless of whatever flaws in the elections, that leaders can be peacefully replaced, which Buhari's exit tomorrow symbolises, strengthens the argument for democracy.

Meanwhile, Buhari came to office in 2015 with a promise to revive the economy, fight corruption, and tackle the general insecurity in the country. Eight years after, the security challenge is being capped by the fact that the authorities are fast losing the dominance of the machinery of violence to non-state actors. So treacherous is the national security situation today that kidnapping, armed robbery, herdsmen-farmers conflicts, cultism, and banditry now constitute additional instability to a country that is still fighting insurgency and separatist crimes. Many of these challenges predate the Buhari administration but he will be held accountable for not tackling them seriously.



**Regardless of whatever flaws in the elections, that leaders can be peacefully replaced, which Buhari's exit tomorrow symbolises, strengthens the argument for democracy**

The challenge on the economic front has reached a desperate point. Nigeria's rising debt profile is increasingly raising serious concerns. The World Bank revealed last month that the country used 96.3 per cent of its revenue generated in 2022 to service debt. Such is the level of borrowings by the Buhari administration that the director-general of the budget office of the federation, Ben Akabueze recently had to sound warning of impending danger. "Once a country's debt service ratio exceeds 30 per cent, that country is in trouble, and we are pushing towards 100 per cent and that tells you how much trouble we are in," said Akabueze who laid bare the economic challenges that the next administration would have to grapple with. On the so-called fight against corruption, the less said the better. Without any information about offices, routes, personnel or the financials, a hurriedly painted aircraft that took off from Addis Ababa and landed in Abuja has been presented as the launch of a national carrier, 'Nigeria Air'!

Overall, while 24 years of unbroken democracy is a positive development, especially for offering some windows to freedom of expression and other civil liberties, the idea that people would be better governed and more prosperous has remained a mirage. Many basic services such as education, health and infrastructure are decrepit while a demographic crisis is looming large on the horizon. The past eight years under Buhari have witnessed several strikes, especially by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). The unemployment rate, going by recent figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), is not only frightening but breeds the risk of social, economic and security turbulence.

One important lesson about tenure legacies is that they are often determined long after the principal has departed. What seems peculiar about the Buhari tenure is that the nation did not have to wait till his departure to testify to his ineffectuality. As he therefore bows out tomorrow, we can only wish President Buhari the best in his future endeavour.

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# Letters to the Editor

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief(150-200 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to **opinion@thisdaylive.com.** We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (950-1000 words). They should be sent to **opinion@thisdaylive.com** along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer

## LETTERS

# AS THE GENTLEMAN-VICE PRESIDENT TAKES A BOW…

***"We act in these matters in the right, as a matter of high principle. We act out of the integrity and conviction of our most deep-founded beliefs. If we permit ourselves to be tempted by narrow self –interest and vain ambition, if we barter our beliefs for short-term advantage, who will listen when we claim to speak for conscience, and who will contend that our words deserve to be heeded?"***
***– Gabriel Haile Sellasie, 1963***

In a matter of hours, Prof Oluyemi Osinbajo will be completing his tour of duty as the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It will bring to an end eight years of service as the second-in-command to the inimitable President Muhammadu Buhari with whom he was elected to office in 2015 in a historic poll that saw an incumbent President, for the first time, losing an election. Prof Osinbajo would be the first Vice-President to have served a full tenure of two terms without a record of rancour and friction, unlike what was the case during the second term of President Obasanjo and his deputy, Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

As insignificant as that might be to some, it is not so to some of us, as it is offers a window into the nature of both men, whose relationship has progressed, over time, into what some might even tag a 'bromance'. For Osinbajo, that he has distinguished himself in office, first with a sense of loyalty that is nonpareil and an uncommon fidelity to the values of Omoluabi has not come as a surprise. If anything, it is how he has brought that to bear the intrinsic values of Omoluabism on the process of governance and engagement with the people, that has been quite refreshing to see. In the estimation of Nigeria's former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, "Prof. Osinbajo is one of the most effective vice presidents Nigeria has ever had". That, he says, is because "Vice President Osinbajo is known for his collaborative approach to governance which has enabled him to work effectively with different stakeholders in achieving common goals."

Even in the face of Nigeria's prolonged economic downturn, first triggered by the 2015 crash in the price of oil, which led to economic recession and the unprecedented headwinds that came with COVID-19 pandemic, just as the economy was beginning to recover, there is no doubt that the outgoing Administration recorded major strides that should speak for it now, and in the future. The investment in heavy infrastructure, such as railway, major highways and Bridges, especially the second Niger Bridges is quite striking. Also worthy of note is the funding template developed through which infrastructure development has come from a mix of funds (Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF), Sukuk Bonds and Road Infrastructure Tax Credit Scheme) apart from long term facilities.

In analysing some of the landmark achievements of the administration, especially in the first term, commentators always find a way to identify the imprint of the Vice President on some of the policies and programmes.

The idea of the social investment programmes and what was accomplished through the different vehicles, even with the limited resources, will always stand out for me. The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), which led to an early exit from recession in 2017 and other programmes executed to mitigate the effect of COVID-19, which led to what experts referred to as 'an earlier than expected exit' in 2021 from the recession that was induced are quite remarkable.

It is instructive that it is the social investment programme, which I consider to be about the most defining of his work as Vice President, perhaps on account of philosophical disposition, that has been deliberately misconstrued, and weaponised by latter-day antagonists of the man.

Again, and for the record. TraderMoni was never about the Vice President going around marketplaces distributing cash to Traders, as fabricated by mischief makers. Rather, Tradermoni, along with MarketMoni and FarmerMoni are micro-credit schemes under the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme, GEEP, one leg of the Social Investment Programme.

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# The Many Faces of Tina Turner

**Stories by Vanessa Obioha**



**The late legend, Turner with her first husband, Ike.**



**Beyonce and Turner performing on stage at the 2008**

The world still mourns the death of the rock 'n' roll powerhouse Tina Turner who passed on Wednesday, May 24 in Switzerland. Turner who would have been 84 on November 26 was said to have died of natural causes. Revered as the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll, Turner left behind a legacy that will remain unmatched.

Born Anna Mae Bullock, Turner was many things to different people. She was a beacon of hope to those who suffered marital abuse having survived one with her first husband Ike.

Turner was 17 when she met Ike. She had come to watch his band Kings of Rhythm perform and struck up a relationship with him. Realising her star wattage, Ike made her his lead singer. He gave her the moniker 'Tina Turner' which she would eventually be known as for the rest of her life. His band's first studio recording with her netted $25,000.

Turner who suffered rejection as a child saw in Ike an oasis of peace when they got married in 1962. But that was not to be as she suffered abuse in his hands. From hitting her while she was pregnant, and forcing her to watch a live sex show in a brothel to other inhumane acts, Turner lived through hell in his hands. By 1976, she found the inner strength to walk away from the marriage. Her dignity and music career were in tatters at the time. Notwithstanding, Turner took the pain and refused to stay down. She walked away with nothing but a white, bloodstained Yves Saint Laurent pantsuit, two Jaguars, 36 cents, a gasoline card and her last name.

"When I left, I was living a life of death," she told People in 1981. "I didn't exist. I didn't fear him killing me when I left, because I was already dead. When I walked out, I didn't look back."

She reinvented herself and became the celebrated survivor who many women drew inspiration from.

"How do we say farewell to a woman who owned her pain and trauma and used it as a means to help change the world?" asked the actress Angela Bassett who portrayed Turner in the 1993 movie "What's Love Got to Do With It.'

"Through her courage in telling her story, her commitment to stay the course in her life, no matter the sacrifice, and her determination to carve out a space in rock and roll for herself and for others who look like her, Tina Turner showed others who lived in fear what a beautiful future filled with love, compassion, and freedom should look like."

"As a woman, she gave you lots of strength. And I'm sure she's encouraged so many young people, but she gave me lots of strength sometimes, and I gave her lots of strength, too. I think we were perfect friends for each other, truthfully," said the singer Cher in an interview about her friend.

To young black female artists, Turner was the epitome of power and passion as captured by Beyoncé in her tribute. She performed Turner's 'Proud Mary' with her at the 2008 Grammys.

"You are strength and resilience. You are the epitome of power and passion. We are all so fortunate to have witnessed your kindness and beautiful spirit that will forever remain. Thank you for all you have done."

When Turner started her solo career and decided to settle for rock 'n' roll, the genre was seen as a white music genre and therefore deprived Turner of the deserved fame in the United States. Being black did not help matters as many doors were shut to her. When Capitol Music refused to re-sign her, the late David Bowie stood by her until the record label reconsidered her. However, this didn't stop the success of Turner. She would enjoy superstardom outside of America following her first solo album 'Private Dancer' released in 1984. Perhaps, this explained why she and her husband, the German music executive Erwin Bach relocated to Switzerland. They bought an estate in the European country less than two years ago worth $116 million.

The 1984 album boasts the popular hit 'What's Love Got to Do With It' which won three awards, for Record of the Year, song of the Year and best female pop vocal performance, and 'Better Be Good To Me' which won for best female rock vocal performance at the 1985 Grammy Awards. Turner won eight Grammys during her lifetime and sold 200 million copies of her albums.

Beyond her music, Turner was a fashion icon. Her glittering sequined gowns made her a magnetic image on stage each time she grabbed the mic. The fashion designer Bob Mackie who designed her clothes during the early days of her solo career told New York Times that the cardinal rule of dressing Turner was "You couldn't cover anything up." Her legs were too beautiful to cover up, according to him.

Turner's clothes ranged from shimmering gowns with plunging necklines and fringes that showcased her toned legs to leather bustiers and miniskirts, and heels of course.

Turner's reinvention with her fashion spoke volumes of her resilience to claim her place in the pantheon of music stars. It is one message that is clearly understood by the artist Janelle Monae who also makes bold statements about her identity with her fashion. She acknowledged this part of Turner in her tribute.

"Tina. I owe you so much," she began. "You are the true epitome of a rockstar that gave your all this lifetime. You inspire me to give mine. You taught us lessons and what true transformative power through honesty and vulnerability looks like."

Turner is remembered for her ability to rock a crowd with her vocals and frenetic dance moves. Her raspy voice had a certain magic that pulled people to her, making them scream in excitement and admiration.

# Amstel Malta Celebrates African Creative Talents at 9th AMVCA



Akindele

Reaffirming its commitment to celebrating the African creative industry, Amstel Malta threw its weight behind the just concluded 9th edition of the Africa Magic Viewers Choice Awards (AMVCA), held on Saturday, May 20, 2023, at Eko Convention Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.

As the headline sponsor, the malt brand sponsored several distinguished categories. The notable winners included Kunle Afolayan, who won the Best Overall Film for Anikulapo; Victor Iyke and Kent Edunjobi respectively won the Best Indigenous Igbo Movie and Best Soundtrack for their performances in Uhuruchi and Anikulapo. Oluwatoyosi Fowode's 'Leaked' won the Multichoice Talent Factory Film, while Beauty Tukura took home the Best Dressed award at the event.

It also created moments with Golden Hour, where the guests were treated to an immersive photography journey.

At the AMVCA After Party, the malt drink transported guests into a world of pulsating music, dazzling glow in the night lights, and performances from dance troupes during the Amstel After Dark.

"Amstel Malta remains committed to championing excellence, inspiring dreams, and providing a platform where African talent shines brightly. Together with the AMVCA, we will continue to empower African creatives and showcase their brilliance to the world," said Portfolio Manager, Non-alcoholic Brands, Nigerian Breweries, Elohor Olumide-Awe.

# Nigerian Idol Kicks off Live Show

Out of the thousands who auditioned for a spot in the eighth season of Nigerian Idol, only 10 contestants will participate in the live show which will begin tonight.

The 10 contestants were adjudged best performers by the trio of Obi Asika, D'banj, and Simi after five weeks of audition and theatre week performances.

The eighth season's top 10 contestants are Savvy Henry, Constance, Goodness, Abraham, Quest, Precious Mac, Victory, Reigny, Ose Daniel, and Chisom.

Performances on the live show will be judged by the viewers who hold the power to retain and evict contestants through their votes.

# Nollywood and African Storytelling Take Centre Stage at YouTube Africa Day Celebration

Over the weekend, YouTube hosted a spectacular event titled "Celebration of Nollywood on Africa Day," where luminaries from the Nollywood industry, creators, and influential figures gathered to pay homage to the captivating world of Nollywood and recognize the immense contributions of African storytelling through cinema. This grand affair served as a platform to honour the talented individuals who breathe life into these narratives and bring them to audiences worldwide.

With an attendance of 150 distinguished guests, the event welcomed renowned celebrities and notable personalities from the Nollywood scene. The star-studded guest list included the esteemed Sola Sobowale, the recipient of the AMVCA Comedian of the Year award, Bimbo Ademoye, as well as Adeyemi Okanlawon, Debo Adedayo (popularly known as Mr. Macaroni), and Linda Ejiofor-Suleiman. Adding to the excitement, popular Nigerian YouTube content creators like Taaooma (Apaokagi-Greene Maryam), and the AMVCA award winner Broda Shaggi (Samuel Animashaun Perry), among others.

One of the highlights of the event was a captivating panel discussion that delved into the growth of Nollywood and the transformative potential of digital technology within the industry. Esteemed panelists included Murphy Ben, the CEO of Murphy Ben International and Aforevo, Taaooma, and actress Rahama Sadau.

In a momentous address, Alex Okosi, YouTube EMEA Managing Director for Emerging Markets, acknowledged the profound impact of Nollywood and the remarkable power of storytelling. He emphasized YouTube's deep commitment to collaborating with Nollywood and serving as a global platform that champions the sharing and celebration of meaningful narratives.




**A drama presentation at YouTube Africa Day**

Through the "Celebration of Nollywood on Africa Day" event and ongoing initiatives, YouTube remains steadfast in its support for Nollywood, African storytelling, and the broader creative community.

# GLITTERATI

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

28.5.2023




# SUSAN ITEMUAGBOR HELPING OTHERS TO CREATE WEALTH

It is not every time you find tutors that admonish you on wealth creation. But you will find an encyclopedia of wealth in Susan Itemuagbor, whose many years of exploits as a business colossus with Forever Living Products have expanded her horizons. **Funke Olaode** spent an afternoon with Itemuagbor at her Lekki home and learnt from the stable of this Edo State-born magnate whose business acumen has continued to lift others


**ASSISTANT EDITOR** OLUFUNKE OLAODE/funkola2000@gmail.com

COVER

# My Involvement with Forever Gave Me the Freedom to be Me

Sitting delectably on a plush sofa in her tastefully furnished Lagos home, Mrs. Susan Itemuagbor radiates happiness and contentment. By all standards, she has seen it all. Loving husband, flourishing business and children who have responded to training. To cap it all, she is a deeply spiritual woman who is rooted in God. That Mrs. Itemuagbor is hospitable and accommodating will be an understatement. Her doors are always opened to all and sundry irrespective of your backgrounds and status.

Dressed in a forest green top with to match pants, she once again opened her doors to her business allies who she regularly engages on moving their business forward. By the way, they all belong to the family of Forever Living Products where Itemuagbor within 11 years has risen to Sapphire Manager. This is no small feat in this 45 years old conglomerate. It is due to her many years of dedication and commitment.

Mrs. Itemuagbor is a jack of all trades and master of all. She is a wife, mother, successful entrepreneur, mentor and a pastor. She combines all effortlessly that you begin to wonder how she does it. "Well, it is all about planning your way out, and I still thank God for the kind of business I do, that gives me the time. Because one of the reasons why I started my business was to have that time freedom to actually go round. When I started my children were in four different schools in different locations. So it was not easy for me to just be a mum, a wife and then still have to cope with my children, having to cope with their school work and school activities. So that is one of the reasons I started my business."

For Mrs. Itemuagbor, her success story didn't begin today, it was orchestrated years back through dedication and commitment. She was a trained Estate Surveyor Management who found herself in the banking industry. After many years at Savana Bank, she called it quit to run her own business. She opened her one-stop-shop for children at Sanusi Fafunwa on Victoria Island, Lagos. It was a business that involved travelling and bringing stuffs for her high profile clientele. "It was a very rewarding venture but it didn't give me the freedom until somebody introduced me to the business of Forever Living Products."

Here, she found her freedom . "Yes, you can say that again. I wanted to have that time freedom to actually be a mum, be a wife, and be me, which is very important. Being able to do what I do, I love to travel. People say as a woman, you can't have it all but with Forever, you can actually have it all, because you are working for yourself, which means that you have the time and most of the time we work from home and then you have that time to actually follow up with your children. So I have enjoyed that because In have time for myself, my business and my children."

There is popular cliché that 'you rise by lifting others'. Mrs. Itemuagbor fits in perfectly. Having immersed herself into marketing Forever Living Products and found it rewarding, she spread the gospel.



Itemuagbor

" There is something about helping people, because the way Forever is designed is like, if you help more people to get what they want you get what you want. I am not doing anything extraordinary because the bible says God will bless you and you will be a blessing. So actually, to make a lot of money from Forever, you have to help other people to get what they want, and in return you too will get what you want."

"So, with Forever you can actually make a significant amount of money. We run the business like a team and one thing about me it is seeing my team members win, seeing people make money. I always tell anybody who cares to help that, if you have that passion to help others, if you have passion to see people win. In Forever we use industrial marketing patterns to drive our business. So this is the only genuine industry where you can actually win and see others win."

Talking passionately about the business that has given her fortune, she added. "I have worked in so many places, I have been opportune to work with people and to work in good establishments. When you work in a corporate world, there are a lot of challenges such as scheming, back stabbing as people can do anything to get up there. But here is a business that is not about 'me' this is how I win, this is how I make money, and this is A – Z, which is not common in the world that we live in. So I think that is why a lot of people don't take this industry seriously because I am telling you, this is what I am doing to make money. This is what I am doing that is making my life better, this is what I am doing that gives me the time freedom to do what I do. But in this industry where I belong, is an industry where you tell everybody else because if you don't, you won't be a winner yourself."

Any valuable lesson learn over a decade? "Forever is an organization that enriches your pocket, and at the same time add value to your life. And beyond making money, "Forever brings out a lot in you. It is not really about the money, yes the money is important, and it is the person you become while doing this business that is very important. My background is in real estate but in my doing Forever, I found out that I have a lot of potential inside me. What people don't know is that we do a lot of personal development. Once you process it in your mind and your brain accept it, it will ginger the 'I can do spirit in you.'

"And when I came into Forever, I thought forever is about selling product, bringing in people in, it is more of personal development. I did a course in Institute of Integrated Administration in New York and got certified as head coach."

Highlighting the benefits of being a member of Forever, Mrs. Itemuagbor said it is rewarding. "We have two trips every year, all expenses paid for you and your partner. I think what Forever is just saying is that, if you work so hard, take time off, two weeks, three weeks out of your year and lets spoil you a little. I just got back from Bali in Indonesia and next year we are going on a cruise. And all expense paid trip. The hotel you stay is going to be a 5-star hotel because they value you, they know your worth. They know, yes you have worked, so you have to kind of live that life.

Speaking on how to succeed in marketing Forever Living products, she said everything is about yourself. "There is something I said earlier that we don't sell products, we sell you. You sell yourself. For anything and everything you want to sell, there is no way you don't have a circle. Take forever as an estate surveyor, if I am selling my property, it is not everybody that can afford property. But the fact is that what is the reason, why are you selling it? It plays a very big role in what we do, the why behind what you are doing. A lot of people don't get their why in place. God has a way of having to put things together for you so that you will be able to achieve what you want. For me, God brought Forever my way because that was one thing I was always crying about, that how am I going to do this? How am I going to be able to stay with these children? How am I going to leave my job? Because I was working with somebody here, I wouldn't have been able to do that. Again, the descriptions of the products make it attractive; these are products that can make you look good and feel good. One of our slogans is 'look good and feel good.'

How do you convince potential buyers? She said it is simple. "It is by making them see the value, because the value matters. You can't just go to somebody and say buy Aloe Vera gel. One thing you have to do is that, why is that person going to buy the Aloe Vera Gel? Because there is something out there that could be cheaper than the Aloe Vera Gel, so why is he going to buy yours? So first and foremost, find out why that person wants the gel. What is the person going through? Maybe the person says he has indigestion, and you introduce Forever and tell him that it works for you. So the thing is that if people get to know the value of what they buy, they will buy it. I think the example I normally use when people talk about price is that, you actually see a lot of people selling Mercedes Benz and they don't buy it. You see people who work in banks, and you send them out to go and bring 20 million, 30 million. These are people earning 100,000. So for the fact that you allow people to see the value of what you sell, you will break even."

Mrs. Itemuagbor is currently a Sapphire Manager having helped many people to realise their potentials.

No doubt, her faith in Christ has helped in her business exploits. 'I believe I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. I believe that there is nothing I cannot do. All I need is just to go on my knees, say my prayers and tell God to direct me. So that has been my staying, power, because I feel that God has ordered my step into this business and I thank God for blessing the works of my hands."

# HIGHLIFE

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*...Amazing lifestyles of Nigeria's rich and famous*

## Oba Saheed Elegushi and His Queen, Sekinat,



Oba Elegusgi and Queen Sekinat

The French expression, "La vie en rose" directly translates as "life in pink." However, the expression essentially represents the determination to have a positive outlook on life, seeing life through rose-coloured glasses. Considering the difficulties of life, this is not an easy outlook. But people like Oba Saheed Elegushi and his wife, Olori Sekinat Aramide have no problem living like this because they have each other. Thus, with the royal couple celebrating their 20th anniversary, people have only good things to say about them.

Oba Elegushi, Kusenla III, has never minced words regarding how lucky he considers himself to be the husband of Sekinat. The monarch admitted that the road may not have been very smooth, but he has had it easy with her by his side. Supporting him through thick and thin, she has demonstrated her role in his life as partner and confidante, someone he can always count on.

Indeed, it is obvious to all and sundry that the Elegushi pair are a match made in Heaven. In the same way that Sekinat has stood out for her king on many occasions, Elegushi has done the same.

For example, there was a rumour recently making the rounds about Sekinat. It was alleged that she had gone to Brazil for a butt-lift surgery, a procedure that reportedly threw her between the lines of life and death. However, Elegushi was quick to come to Sekinat's defense. He responded to the allegations by affirming her health and depriving rumour mongers of material for their dirty trade.

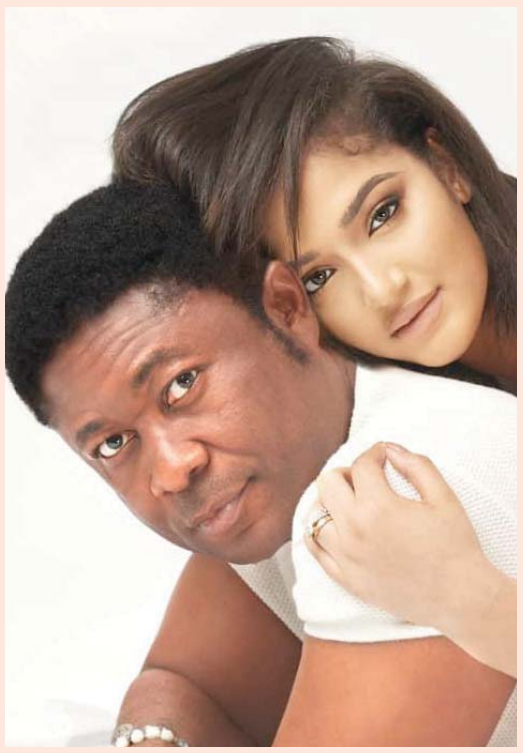
In many ways, Oba Elegushi has shown that before Sekinat is a queen, she is first his wife, someone he chose to love and care for all his life. The queen is no less reserved in her devotion to her husband. Thus, their 20-year marriage is unmatched and enviable to many.

## Billionaire Businessman, Jack Rich Stages Jaw-dropping Birthday Shindig for Wife ... Ooni of Ife, Others Honour the Couple

Many people like to believe that marriage is one of those areas in life where luck is extremely important. Looking at the life of Tein Jack-Rich and his wife, Dr. Elizabeth Jack-Rich, one is tempted to agree. After all, with Jack-Rich as the founder of BelemaOil Producing Limited and his wife a brilliant, beautiful, and accomplished entrepreneur, neither has anything to complain about in marriage.

Jack-Rich has always found a reason to place his wife in the limelight for others to admire. Thus, her 30th birthday celebration was recently crammed with all sorts of people, including some of the most influential dignitaries in the country including the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi.

There is no debating the genuineness of the relationship between the power couple. During the party which was held at the prestigious Balmoral event centre, Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, the pair were all smiles. Of course, it helped that Jack-Rich had gathered comedians to juice up the party, with K1 the Ultimate on the bandstand. At no time did Elizabeth not display her pride and love for her husband.



Jack-Rich and wife, Elizabeth

Without question, Elizabeth is not the kind of wife usually seen around rich people. As the CEO of ELIN Group Limited, as well as the Elizabeth Jack-Rich Aid Foundation (EJAF), she is one of the leading advocates for youth and women empowerment in the country. Specifically, she has used every means known to her to help people break out of poverty by providing quality education and health. The organisations under her have also contributed significantly to the prevention of child abuse and drug abuse all over Nigeria.

Thus, it is clear that the presence of the Ooni of Ife and other dignitaries at her 30th birthday was not only to honour her husband. These personalities were also there to celebrate Elizabeth the silent philanthropist, entrepreneur, and business magnate.



Disu

## Bella Disu: Shattering the Glass Ceilings at 37

When one thinks about how rapidly the rivers of life flow, one might despair while believing that time is too short to accomplish anything more than ordinary. But Bella Disu, the daughter of Dr. Mike Adenuga, is doing much more than ordinary even though she is just 37. In fact, at this age, the daughter of the man known as the Spirit of Africa is doing so well that it is believed that she is looking up to her father in terms of accomplishments.

There is no doubt that inheritance is an amazing thing, especially when what is being passed from one generation to the next is something positive and rare. For the Adenugas, it is clear that Bella has inherited her father's spirit of sterling achievements, borne on the shoulders of diligence, vision, and talent.

At 37, Bella is the proud Chairman of the Board of Directors at Abumet Nigeria Limited, a para-construction firm that is a subsidiary of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc. She came on board in 2021 and has taken the company's mandate of providing solutions for installation needs for aluminium and glass products further than anticipated.

One of the biggest deals about the company is that it is currently handling the renovation project of the NNPC Towers in Abuja. As a result, the company is being watched closely, especially because the person in charge has crafted corporate miracles out of nowhere in times past.

With her current corporate might as the Executive Vice-Chairman of Globacom, CEO of Cobblestone Properties & Estates Limited, and Board Director of the Mike Adenuga Center Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Bella is the splitting corporate image of her father. But that is not all she is: she is also a happy wife and proud mother.

At 37, Bella is doing amazing things, walking the same path as her father, but breaking glass ceilings up and down.

## Investing in Atlanta: Is Akwa Ibom Misfiring?

State governments that engage in business investments are not doing anything new. Since this tier of government began operating in Nigeria, it has always represented the will of the people even more perfectly than its federal counterpart. But, has it always succeeded in sorting out business investments? That is the question that people are asking regarding the reported investment plan of the Akwa Ibom government in a real estate project in Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America.

The tenure of Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa Ibom is almost complete and the reports of his administration are generally above average. However, such good reports are currently being threatened by the news of the same government deciding to invest in a real estate project in the US. Due to the high risks of loss believed to be involved in the investment, many indigenes of Akwa Ibom are reportedly distressed and wondering exactly what Governor Emmanuel is up to.

Based on investigations, it has been reported that the investment into the Atlanta project was not chiefly the idea of the governor. Instead, he is in a partnership with the Akwa Ibom State Association of Nigeria (AKISAN), the branch in Atlanta. In other words, the people the governor is doing business with in Atlanta are indigenes of Akwa Ibom who are operating as an independent association of Atlanta residents. It is believed that they are trustworthy and the investment is reliable.

Another note for concern is the fact that the project in question is a $10 million project. The governor believes that due to the locational advantages of the project, it will yield significant returns for Akwa Ibom. Since it will be overseen by indigenes of the state, what is there to worry about?



Emmanuel

# Made in Heaven: The Bond Between Aliko Dangote and Femi Otedola

The Dangote Refinery has finally become a real thing. Opened for operations in Lagos a few days ago, the refinery has garnered the interest and expectations of many Nigerians, all of whom are hoping that its presence in the country would be for good. Seeing Aliko Dangote and his dear friend, Femi Otedola, standing together and looking like young boys who just created the best gift for Christmas, one can rest knowing that the refinery will bring many positive changes for Nigeria and Nigerians.

It has to be said—the friendship between Dangote and Otedola is without equal among their peers. The pair have gone through many ups and downs in times past, much of it arising from the razzmatazz associated with corporate life. Even so, seeing Otedola supporting Dangote brought to mind the beauty of having friends that are understanding and reliable, not backstabbers wishing the worst on others.

Otedola has never minced words regarding the importance of Dangote to him. He has referred to Africa's wealthiest man as his mentor, big brother, and dearest friend many times in the past. Being a man of few words, it is always an eye-opener to see Otedola talking excitedly about Dangote's business arrangements, the brilliance of it all,



L-R: Femi Otedola and Aliko Dangote

and the unquestionable astuteness of the man.

On his end, Dangote has also been very vocal about his admiration for the man known as Nigeria's biggest philanthropist. Many times, he has shown that Otedola's presence and bearing as a solid and reliable person far outweigh the congregational attitudes of his peers. From how he supports Otedola, it is easy to see that he considers him to be a dear friend, confidante, and altogether precious chum.

# Akinwunmi Ambode is Back ... Celebrates Mother's 90th Birthday in Epe

Life at 90 is always worth celebrating. Former Lagos Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode has resurfaced on the social whirl on account of the celebration of his mother, Christianah Ambode's 90th birthday. Seen felicitating among his siblings, the former mover and shaker of the Center of Excellence has not lost his charm, enduring brilliance, and the bright spark in his eyes that moved ordinary people to cast their votes in his favour a few years ago. Will he remain in the public eye this time? That is the question.

It was a happening ceremony a few days ago at Epe. The hometown of Ambode once again bore witness to the impressiveness of his stature as he brought excitement to the heart of the people around him. With his siblings around him, Mr. Akinpelumi Ambode, Mrs. Kehinde Onigbanjo, Mrs. Taiwo Adeniran, and Mrs. Akinfemi Amode, St. Michael Anglican Church, Epe, was saturated with the strong presence of an ecstatic and carefree Ambode.

Naturally, Ambode had many others around him apart from his siblings. It is no secret that the man is immeasurably fond of his mother, always finding excuses to celebrate her. Thus, her 90th birthday was not allowed to pass by without banging the drums of jollification. Nevertheless, the occasion afforded people the opportunity to see Ambode after quite a while.

It has to be said that absence does make the heart grow fonder. Ambode's exit from gubernatorial power in 2019 was accompanied by much speculation, a large fraction painting the Epe man in a negative light. However, in the time since, the people of Lagos have come to understand him better and might even be considering granting him a second shot at leadership.

# Will Mudashiru Obasa Become Speaker Again?



Obasa

Some people have such strong luck that their very presence in a place appears to divest others of providence's favour. Honourable Mudashiru Obasa, the well-known Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly is one such person. After serving in the same seat in the Lagos State House of Assembly for five consecutive terms, the man has been re-elected and might be looking to become Speaker yet again.

Hon. Obasa is one of those people who always appear to have it better than others. His rivals have looked around for reasons to criticise him and found plenty. As a result, there is much on the internet that can be redirected against Obasa, especially on account of his being the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly. Although there are lies mixed in these tales, Obasa has indeed stayed in the House much longer than his peers.

This is why people are wondering if he can win the mandate of the Speaker once again. After all, since he assumed this position in 2015, it has been one controversy after another. It is obvious to even the blind that many people have their evil eyes trained on Obasa for countless reasons. But has this ever stopped the man? No.

However, whether it is right for Obasa to be Speaker yet again is one question. Can he convince the House to make him Speaker—that is even more important. Although the lineup might be different from last time, it is important to remember that the 2019 elections for Speaker in the House had Obasa's party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) winning all 40 seats. That made it easier for Obasa to emerge as Speaker.

Will it happen again? Will Obasa climb over everyone's heads to become Speaker yet again while flaunting his token as a sixth-term member of the House of Assembly? We will see.

# Pastor Idowu Iluyomade: The Graceful Man Doing Wonders in the Vineyard of God at 63

Different occupations and preoccupations exist, many for self-satisfaction and many others for the gratification of people other than the labourers in question. Pastor Idowu Iluyomade of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) City of David Parish, Victoria Island, Lagos is one of the labourers. It is people like him and his wife, Siju, that are labouring to see the will of God done in their lives and the land. Recently clocking 63, it is certain that Iluyomade has much to thank God for.

Despite being a clergyman in one of the many branches of the church, Iluyomade is well-known across Nigeria. One of the reasons for his popularity is that he is the Special Assistant to the RCCG General Overseer, Pastor E. A. Adeboye, on Christian Social Responsibility via the arm of His Love Foundation. Another reason is that Iluyomade can be held responsible for helping to make the construction of the Trinity Towers a reality in the City of David parish of the RCCG in Oniru Estate, Victoria Island, Lagos.



Iluyomades

Furthermore, Iluyomade is widely known for his service to God and the church. He and his wife have been married for almost 40 years and have spent a large fraction of this period in the service. As a result, Iluyomade is well-loved and regarded in RCCG and other churches across the globe.

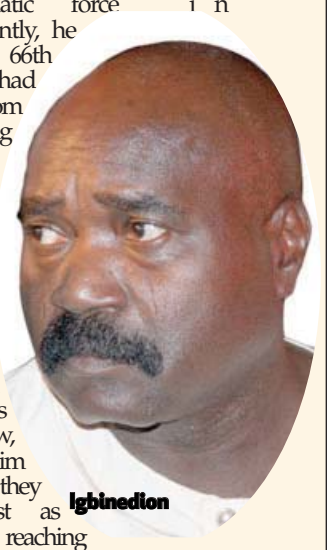
According to reports, Iluyomade and his wife, Siju, have gone on a pilgrimage to Israel in celebration of his 63rd birthday. It is also reported that the man in question would rather spend that time in the City of David rather than outside, but he has been ordered to rest a bit before diving back into labour.

Ultimately, the man is an inspiring figure. Even at 63, he is strong and getting stronger in service to God.

# Lucky Igbinedion Joyous at 66

There are many governors and former governors in Nigeria that have high levels of influence beyond their states. Lucky Igbinedion is one such former governor. Although he left the Edo State seat in 2007, the son of Gabriel Igbinedion, Esama of the Kingdom of Benin, continues to be a dominant and charismatic force in the state. Recently, he celebrated his 66th birthday and had Nigerians from all over sending their goodwill.

Clocking 66 is a big deal. For former Governor Igbinedion, the celebrations are not altogether necessary. Although Igbinedion holds this humble view, those around him do not. After all, they understand—just as he does—that reaching the age of 66 and remaining a prominent political figure despite not holding any big office is a thing of pride. But Igbinedion is not designed this way, thus evoking even more praise.



Igbinedion

For Nigerians from all over, Igbinedion is not a strange figure. Although he was not widely known when he emerged as Edo State governor in 1999, that changed during the early 2000s. Adding to the fact that he is the son of the Esama and has princely stakes in the state, Igbinedion did quite well for his people.

In truth, Igbinedion is not the only person holding up his fiery name. Back then, his wife, Eki, was known to be a strong advocate against the widespread sex trafficking of women. It is partly due to her and her husband's efforts that the dastardly practice stopped, inviting light to an otherwise dark situation.

Currently, both Igbinedion and the rest of his family mostly operate off-grid. Even so, people know that they are no less active now than they were when Igbinedion was in power. Therefore, his 66th birthday is worth celebrating many times over.

# Trophy Wife ... Governor El-Rufai's 32-year-old Son, Bello Takes New Wife Days Before Inauguration into House

Life is short. This is the anthem that folks have learned to recite when faced with a choice to do something crazy. In the eyes of some people, this is the anthem that Honourable-elect Bello, the son of Kaduna State Governor Nasir el-Rufai, must have recited before marrying a second wife days before his inauguration into the House of Representatives. Then again, what is considered crazy in the eyes of some is seen as perfectly alright in the eyes of others with 'celebration' and 'trophy wife' mentioned in-between multiple rounds of applause.

Bello appears to have tickled the minds of Nigerians with his recent find, a new wife. According to reports, Bello's new wife (his second) is Aisha Habibu, the daughter of the former Military Administrator for Plateau and Niger State, Colonel Habibu Shuaibu. She is also a niece to the late Maryam Babangida, First Lady of Nigeria during the era of the former Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida. So, Bello's new wife is not a nonentity.

What is amazing about the report is that Bello appears to have planned it to align with his inauguration into the House of Representatives. Bello recently defeated Samaila Suleiman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the sitting member of the Kaduna North Federal Constituency.

Conversely, Bello and Aisha's Nikkah ceremony is reported to have taken place in Abuja on May 19 with the main wedding scheduled for June. Clearly, Bello prepared everything



Bello and wife, Aisha

ahead of time knowing that he would be able to win the hearts of the people. Thus, with this new heart, Bello is in the best frame of mind right now, no doubt celebrating his trophies with great delight and pride.

LOUD WHISPERS

with **JOSEPH EDGAR** (09095325791)

# Muhammadu Buhari: There Goes the Saint



Buhari

For me, what I will not really miss as President Muhammadu Buhari is headed to Daura after May 29 is his tailor. That man should be tried for treason. The kind of pants he used to sew for our maximum ruler can cause political upheaval. Did you see the pants our president wore to the Naval event the other day? The thing is not only what we used to call 'sofe' but pushed out like something palm wine tappers of those days used to wear. Na wa.

Well, by the time you read this, we will have only a day before this Baba finally goes to rest. This has been a long journey of missed opportunities. The longest ever career that, although laced with a lot of failures, kept rising to the point of hitting the top post twice. From his days as Petroleum Minister in the 70s till today as a two-term president, Nigerians have seen the worst in – make I no talk – leadership. Nigerians have a strong attachment to this Buhari, I swear and I don't know why. Shebi it was during his time as military leader that we were queuing for 'essential commodity', Decree 4 and jail terms for politicians that would make Idi Amin look like an angel.

Despite this, we looked at his 'body language' and voted for him twice. Na we get the problem, not him o. What did he do wrong? Nothing o. All he just did was to threaten us with the blood of baboon and we said, 'Oya come take am' and he immediately crashed the Naira, superintended the worst case of civilian bloodletting in peaceful times- we have lost more civilian lives during his tenure than during the civil war- the demystification of the judiciary, the 'attack' on Supreme court judges and a great increase in ethnic suspicions. My people, everything that wants to get wrong got wrong and in all these, daddy, just sat there with a toothpick while the people wailed.

I am looking for all those people who walked from Lagos to Abuja to celebrate his wins. I hope kwashiorkor and scabies will be their lot right now. They had better start walking back from Abuja and straight into the Lagos lagoon because their huge lack of foresight is amazing.

In a mad scramble to rewrite history, his handlers have come out with a long document chronicling his legacy. They are shouting infrastructure. Yes, to be fair, he scored some good points with infrastructure – the rail lines, the Second Niger Bridge, the Dangote refinery and other such projects that were completed in his eight years must be commended.

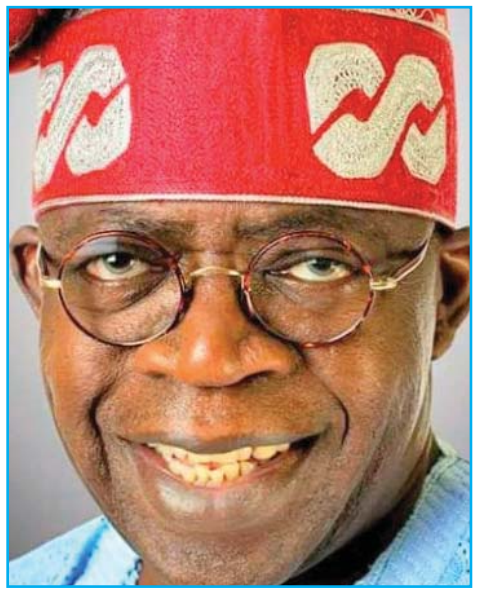
Even with this little glimmer, this was just one long dark tunnel. At least we should be happy that all the gra gra of vote for me oooo, the three attempts have ended and we are the worst for it. If we hadn't given him this opportunity, Nigerians will by now be shouting – ohhh Buhari would have performed the magic, Buhari would have done this and Buhari would have done that. My people, we cannot even say a huge sigh of relief by his exit, because he now has thrown up a successor from the worst ever electoral process since democracy was founded. Where he went to pick that kind INEC Chairman needs to be studied in Harvard. Such incompetence and lack of personal pride and understanding of history, I have never seen in my life. To superintend this kind of election and boldly stand there and say, 'go to court?'

This Buhari era? Make una leave me o. If I really write my mind, na koboko DSS go use flog me with pepper, make we just leave am. At least, the Baba no even try mention third term- third wetin? Third wetin? Kai.

Please as you move towards your beloved Niger Republic, let me on behalf of millions of suffering Nigerians, wish you well. We really do thank you for services rendered to the people. Thank you, my Lord, safe journey abeg. Kai. Na wa.



Balogun



Tinubu



Sanwo-Olu



Matawalle

## SUBOMI BALOGUN: HOME CALL FOR GREAT IJEBU SON

Otunba will see you now. That was his lovely assistant ushering me in to see one of the biggest Investment banking icons of our time. I had lost my job when the 'great' Nicholas Nyamali of Investment One had suddenly decided he didn't want my services again because of my penchant for wearing red socks to work. I had stayed out of work for three months until this opportunity came up. I was going to impress the doyen of the market, so I bought an 'okrika' pinstriped suit and wore a bowtie and walked into his office. He smiled immediately when he saw me. He was very handsome with a sexy gap tooth. He too was in a pinstriped suit and although in retirement, still carried the charisma of the great man that he was.

I could tell he liked me as he commended my suit and asked where I got it from. I wondered if I told him I got it next door at the Tinubu square for N5,000 if he would withdraw my offer of employment. So, I ignored his question. It was not a usual employment chat as it immediately morphed into an interview with me doing a Rufai Oseni on him. He was happy to oblige me, real great men usually are. I asked him questions on what drove him to set up the bank, the wahala that almost stole the bank from him, the growth of its shareholder base from just him to over 50,000, his penchant for Christianity, his love for philanthropy and his great love for Christian songs.

Otunba loved Christian songs. He would hum and stand up and dance and would worship God through those songs.

Otunba looked at me with small tears from his eyes: "Edgar, I started this bank from CSL as a local business. It was the stockbroking firm that birthed all of these. You are coming in to help rebirth the local business that is where the market is. Retail my boy."

I worked there for 15 months and as it was looking like these ones too wanted to sack me again – this time I had started writing this column which was unheard of for a banker to be writing such a troublesome column- and had also been pictured with Obanikoro when he was trying to unseat Tinubu, I had to run away.

I went back to Otunba, "sir, I have to go," and he looked at me and said, "Is there anything I can do to make you stay?"

I looked at him squarely in his very handsome eyes, still wearing my okrika pinstripe suit and said, "Daddy, I am doing what you did, I am also going to set up my own bank and you will come and open the bank."

He looked at me, with tears in his eyes and said, "you have my blessing, God will be with you and you will succeed and you will open your bank."

I looked straight into his eyes one last time, with tears in my eyes and a strong urge to hug him – but you cannot hug Otunba o, make you no go stain him white agbada and those huge beads o- and turned and walked away straight into EFCC cell.

EFCC arrested me oooo, that na story for another day. Una too like gist, I can imagine some of you shouting at this point and calling your side chick – see dem arrest Edgar oo. I no go talk that story today, today is for Otunba.

Otunba Subomi Balogun was an icon, a different Nigerian, a man with equivocal style and I thank God that he gave me those three rare opportunities of meeting with him and engaging him in a way that touched and inspired me. Sleep well my Lord.

## BOLA TINUBU: THE AMERICAN PIE

During the week, we saw a reported list of delegates the Americans are sending to our inauguration. As I looked through the list, shame and tears come catch me. How far have we fallen in international circles? See the kind of people Americans are sending to the inauguration of the president of the largest country in Africa. The giant of Africa na him dem come dey send these kind of journey men?

If you look at that list, you will just see the lack of respect for our people, our new president and the way they are looking at us. They are sending their own Fashola ooo. Their secretary of Housing and other such mid-level and almost junior people to witness this inauguration of 'Jagaban of Borgu.'

Ever since I saw that list, I have been looking for the famed Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi or Prof Akinterinwa to come and explain this thing to me. Not even the Secretary of State or the First Lady or even the Vice President? Usually when those ones refuse, they would send a former President like Bill Clinton.

But it's looking like even those ones have refused. So, to now mute that massive damage, a picture of Tony Blair looking for a job was released. The looming fact is that the character baggage of our incoming, the funny electoral process that threw him up and the general lack of seriousness the country is being faced with is what is most likely pushing this 'insult' towards you.

We should write to Biden and say, "Your Excellency, since we are on this road, kindly send us Beyonce or that porn star disturbing Trump instead of this boring lot you are sending." Thank you.

## BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU: A GREAT GUY

During the last elections, I jumped into his space and Lagos was surprised. "Edgar, you can't be supporting Sanwo and abusing Tinubu, they are one and the same." I would reply, "is it

your support? it is my support and I can decide who I want to give it to. It's my right."
I supported Sanwo-Olu wholeheartedly and faced fire. I believed and still believe that the opposition did not show any sign of seriousness throwing up interns and journey men and as a result, making Sanwo-Olu's reemergence a walk in the park.
For me, Sanwo-Olu represented the best possible opportunity for Lagos, the most important city state in Africa among the contenders. He came to the table with loads of experience, a 'can do' spirit and a reformist attitude.
Now that reformist own, make I careful small. He fit no get the mind to reform finish for obvious reasons, but at least he go try reform for some non-strategic areas- if you get my drift.
Anyway, Sanwo-Olu has performed creditably well, he has impacted critical areas like infrastructure, education and health. He has shown that he can be relatable and he has relative youth and clarity. So, we jumped in for him and secured ward C2 in Shomolu for him. My polling station was delivered overwhelmingly and I went home to a sweet bowl of afang.
Today, I have been invited to his inauguration. I received a call from the Ministry of Arts and Culture that I have been invited and that I should come and collect my invites. Now whether I was invited for my role during the elections, or for my activities in the cultural space or as a bribe to stop yabbing Tinubu is neither here nor there.
Me, I will land with my Akwa Ibom outfit complete with wrapper and no undies to show the inclusion and diversity of Lagos complete with my cooler of Afang - you know these Yoruba people, na stew dem go 'kill' us with - and sit down in one corner and be unwrapping my Fufu and pouring my Afang complete with snail, 'etuk' and dry fish with periwinkle and be chopping as Sanwo-olu is swearing not to beat Igbo people again. Kai. I am just a troublemaker.
Congrats your Excellency and well done.

## IF YOU MATAWALLE ME, I WILL BAWA YOU

These two have been going at each other with a vengeance. If this fight doesn't speak to the DNA of corruption among public officials, I will laugh and almost pee in my pants.
But this is a very serious case. The outgoing governor is under investigation for diverting about N70bn in state funds and in return he has accused the Chairman of EFCC for asking for a bribe of a reported $2bn. He also went further to state very categorically, that if the EFCC is serious about fighting corruption, he should turn his searchlight on the presidency.
The EFCC has fought back, asking us to ignore this 'person' and hiding under the very convenient moniker, 'corruption is fighting back'. But as if to increase the tempo, a press conference was called and the clip released where the spokesman accused the EFCC Chair with all sorts including living like an oil sheikh on a recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land.
You see, we have seen these scripts play over and over again, since the EFCC was established. It is not new. It is the same thing chairman after chairman and it is also the same thing as governors go on a thieving spree once elected with impunity. Hiding under the immunity clause they go into a kleptocratic orgy the scale that would make South American drug barons green with envy.
Now this big headed Mata 'something' instead to answer questions relating to his matter is saying, "na only me? After all you sef na thief." This is cowardly and disrespectful to us. Did you carry the N70bn first? Clear your name first and then after that come and join the crusade.
Shebi your brother el-Rufai has said candidly, that he has not carried any government money. Now that one has the moral justification to go on any anti-corruption crusade he wants to go if we can prove him right. But you? Until the investigation is over and you have been cleared, leave Bawa and the rest alone. That is not your business. If you were a student of Command Secondary school and you do this kind of thing, the kind of 'fagging' you will receive, even you will be surprised.
As for you Mr. Bawa, there is no smoke without fire. I am only supporting you this time because of the cowardly nature of Mr. Matawalle's accusation but then again, you must realise that you have a sacred mandate and as such you owe us a much higher level of responsibility. Please don't let me be hearing this kind of thing, otherwise, I will walk into that your office and give you the Seun treatment and disappear. Just try me. Please, you represent the youths, don't get sucked into this mess. Thank you

# WIGWE UNIVERSITY BERTHS

The last time I talked about education, na Commissioner of Police dem use chase me, so I had decided to move away from that sector. If Nigerians like, they can be using their money to spray expired strippers in the Las Vegas strip instead of putting it into a sector that is all but comatose will no longer concern me. Afterall is it my money?
Then I saw a clip of my favourite banker, Herbert Wigwe. Someone had sent it to me with a caption, "see your guy." In the clip, he was trying to do a Wike as he spoke very clearly completely with fingers waving in the air, like Wike o.
The head resemble, the posturing resembled and then something went wrong.
As Herbert was speaking – this is your project- he proclaimed to the youths, "You will protect it with your lives," music broke, the crowd went into a frenzy and the drums rent the air. Kai. Herbert just stood, dey look. The Wike in him had left. Kai, Wike would break into his monkey dance, bend his 'yansh' one kind, grab his imaginary sword and run towards the band as those ones will go crazy with 'Wike pepper dem.'
But Herbert, the ever-serious banker that he is, waited for all the noise to go down to continue with his speech. He had a vision in his hands and didn't want to be distracted.
He wants to build "a university that would create a new generation of fearless leaders and also be one of the best universities in the continent."
I believe him. Herbert is today one of the most fearless of financial leaders. Superintending the monstrous growth of the Access Bank Group from a mere commercial bank straight to a continental financial behemoth on its way to global recognition.
His foray into education tickles me to no end. What with the 'death' in the sector leading to Nigerians spending billions of scarce forex in search of credible educational opportunities.
The Wigwe University which is to be cited in his hometown Isiokpo, Rivers State would have a 60% local and 40% expatriate faculty population, with about 200 buildings spread over 400 hectares of land. The very exciting thing is the announcement that students of the university would spend one year abroad getting international exposure.
I also found out that there would be great infrastructural development in and around Isiokpo as a result of this huge project. This would in a very big way open up not only that region but the whole of South-south to international attention.
As I watched a clip of Herbert speaking at the event announcing the school, I heard him mention his 'brother' Aigboje and how they had built Access Bank from nothing to one of the biggest institutions in Africa, I felt my heart swell with pride. These are Nigerians doing big and great things. I wish Herbert very well and I remain eternally optimistic that this project would impact thousands of our youths, creating employment for thousands more and much more importantly driving the pride in our nation that seems to have been lost.
Well done bro. Well done. Please make me honorary warden of the female hostel, I get experience. Trust.



Wigwe

## ABDULRAHMAN ABDULRAZAQ: A NEW CHAIRMAN IN TOWN

Let me quickly leave my inaugural invitee duties and send a major congratulations to my brother and special Governor of Kwara State, His Excellency Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq on his emergence as the substantive Chairman of the Nigerians Governors Forum.
Coming from his successful reelection in Kwara, this is just one more very befitting accolade that he truly deserves. That his election was unanimous shows the confidence the body places on his ability.
His Excellency remains one of the most constructive in this era. He has quietly instituted reforms in his state, pushing developmental policies silently without distracting us with an expansive personality like his colleagues.
Congratulations Your Excellency. Well done

## NDIANA ABASI: THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

I personally used to just mouth this prayer in a hurry so that I could go and eat. My mother would have dropped a very appetising bowl of afang with 'usung udia' that is pounded yam for you people that are not Akwa Ibom. Then my father would say, "let us pray." He would now pray for like 30 minutes and I will be looking at the Afang and be thieving snail, periwinkle and all sorts.
After the long prayer, my papa will now say oya the Lord's prayer and I will quickly mouth it and move on and grab the fufu before my big headed brother Ernest rushed the thing.
Then I met my brother Ndiana who has actually gone through the valley of the shadow of death and came out. Sometime ago, he had Covid-19 and was rushed to one hospital. Those ones started treating malaria and the thing attacked his kidneys and destroyed it. His journey through the valley of the shadow of death began. It took him from Lagos, to Port Harcourt to Accra, to South Africa back to Accra before ending in India where finally with God, Aiteo, Indians and his wife, he was finally saved.
His beautiful wife gave him his kidneys and his boss at Aiteo covered the whole cost running in excess of $60,000 and today my brother Ndiana is hale and hearty.
He called on video immediately he came out of the surgery and screamed, "Edgar, ayin eka I am alive. Help me thank my wife o. Thank my wife oooo," he screamed. "Thank my boss, thank these Indians ooo, and most importantly, thank God oooo."
I screamed. "Ndiannnaaaaaaa, Abasiiiiiii oooooo Abasi ooooooo."
I cried and cried. My mumu driver was just looking at me as I shed bitter tears of joy. God saved this one. Jehovah stood for this one.
Now working with him, we will resuscitate the Kidney Trust Fund in an attempt to work with God to save millions more. Kai.

SOCIETY WATCH

**Adebayo Adeoye**
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# Ifeanyi Ubah Goes Poetic for Wife



**Ubah**

It is no news that wealthy businessman and politician, Ifeanyi Ubah has made fortunes and he is living large. As evidence, the senator representing Anambra South Senatorial District lives in one of the most breathtaking and awe-inspiring buildings in Abuja and his hometown, Nnewi. The houses are architectural masterpieces and as gathered by Society Watch, cost fortunes. The billionaire owns not just two luxury homes, he owns other eye-popping edifices in Lagos, Dubai and other places overseas.

As a billionaire, he can afford a lifestyle filled with luxury watches, expensive cars, private jets and luxury real estate. And what else does one do with a bunch of extra cash? Yes, he hangs out with the rich and famous. But the beautiful thing is that Ubah has tried to live his life without drama.

In his journey to riches, the oil mogul has his wife, Uchenna Ubah, as a dependable ally. He never hesitates to show his love and respect to his wife of many years and the mother of his children. For the shrewd businessman, he has a priceless partner in his wife who has rolled with the punches with him long before their bank accounts were rolling in the dough. However, if, for instance, you ask a group of people in and outside Anambra State to describe the person of the politician, there is the possibility that the pendulum will swing more to the side of those who will describe him as 'Mr. Tough man'. But those who are close to him are always quick to say that behind this veneer of seemingly toughness posturing is a soft man, who is as chivalrous as they come and also a great romantic man.

He has been described as a real man that stays faithful. They don't have time to look for other women because they are too busy looking for new ways to love their own. As if to lend credence to this claim, the philanthropist celebrated his wife when she clocked 50 recently.

Society Watch gathered that Senator Ubah went poetic and emotional while he showered her with sweet and romantic words.

"Let's celebrate my wife, she is a destiny partner, she is so supportive; celebrate her with me. The wife of my youth, we did it together," he wrote.

# Kola Karim's New Mega Deal

Serial entrepreneur and Chairman of Shoreline Group, Kolade Karim, has no doubt earned a name for himself through his visionary contributions to Africa's economy.

It is not for mean achievement that the man who is also the Agbaoye of Ibadanland is rated among Nigeria's high-flying tycoons. The billionaire is unarguably a visionary whose contributions to the nation's economy would forever be cherished. His record of incisive investment and vision to reshape Nigeria's business climate remains unequal.

For Karim, a major player in the energy sector whose intimidating profile dwarfed many of his contemporaries, cutting deals comes as easy as a hot knife slices through butter. Multiple times, he has proved to the world that he is indeed a genius and a cognoscente when it comes to investment and the art of making money.

Recently, the serial entrepreneur got a mega deal when his company was awarded the concession of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja (NAIA) and Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport Kano (MAKIA).

As disclosed, The Corporacion American Airport Consortium, which comprises the Corporation American Airports, Mota Engil Africa, and Mota Engil Nigeria, emerged as the preferred bidder.

Mota Engil Nigeria is a joint venture between Mota-Engil, a public-listed Portuguese contractor, and Shoreline Group, an energy and infrastructure conglomerate owned by Karim.

The Corporacion American Airport Consortium will make upfront payments of $7 million for NAIA and $1.5 million for MAKIA. During the concession period, total projected nominal revenues accruable from the combined concession of NAIA and MAKIA exceed $4 billion, of which over 70 per cent will be payable to the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

The partnership arrangement will be effective for 20 years for NAIA and 30 years for MAKIA.

It was gathered that the mega deal was awarded to the firm following a comprehensive evaluation process that commenced with the Request for Qualification (RFQ) advertised in local and international media on August 16, 2021, and subsequent rigorous evaluation of technical and financial bids, coupled with due diligence visits conducted from December 27-29, 2022, and January 9-10, 2023, the Corporacion American Airport Consortium has emerged as the preferred bidder.

The consortium is globally recognized for its superior technical expertise in the design, construction, management, and operation of infrastructure. The Corporation American Airports, a New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) listed airport operator, has a presence across three continents, managing 53 airports in six countries and serving approximately 82.4 million passengers in 2019.



**Karim**

# Adron Homes Boss, Adetola Emmanuel-King, Stickler for Excellence



**Emmanuel-King**

Adron Homes and Properties is fast becoming the company to beat in the real estate world. Driving this rapidly growing outfit is young and industrious Dr. Adetola Emmanuel-King, who has brought some finesse to the business of estate acquisition.

When it comes to affordable real estate in Nigeria, Emmanuel-King has set a precedent that would take others in the sector to meet. His ingenuity and innovations have set him far apart from his contemporaries.

His attention to detail, in the collective opinions of those who are close to him, is the secret of his successful exploits and continued relevance in the nation's real estate sector.

It was gathered that over 10 years ago, the Otun-Onigbagbo of Remoland came to the nation's real estate sector with a bang! His coming then had caused a stir in the sector, as he delighted stakeholders with beautiful promises. His sole objective is to redefine luxury in the Nigerian real estate industry and he is gradually achieving his dreams.

He has grown to become one of Nigeria's leading lights in the affordable real estate sector after building over 10,000 units of homes across the country, with several estates littered across the country. The brand is notable for its unique selling point, which is a flexible payment plan that gives customers the leverage to gradually build a home, most especially low-income earners.

The Estate Management and Development graduate from the University of Ibadan believes what is worth doing is worth doing well. More reason he has continued to stand out in the most saturated real estate sector, thriving excellently well and remaining a formidable force.

# City Businessman, Abbey Onas' New Innovation

"Innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. The act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth," says the Austrian-American educator and author Peter Drucker.

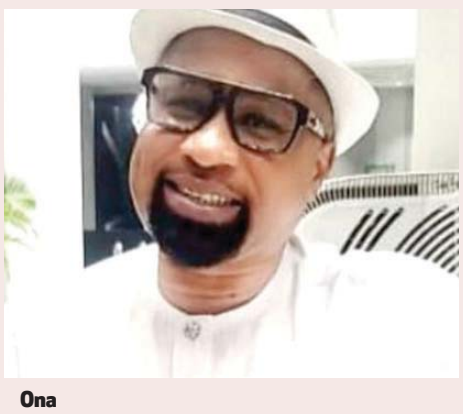
For city businessman and Chairman of ZGM Investment Group of Companies Abbey Onas, the driving force is his ability to create innovation all the time. This has made him dine with kings and queens.

As gathered, come Saturday, June 3, 2023, the man of great ideas will drag top personalities to witness yet another of his great innovation when he unveils a new concept in textile design, known as the Emilokan Fabric; a fabric produced to honour the president-elect of the country, Bola Tinubu.

As disclosed, the event which will hold at the prestigious Radisson Blu Hotel Ikeja has the Speaker of Lagos State House of Assembly as the Chairman of the day, while other dignitaries like the Lagos State governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and his Kwara State counterpart, AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq, will be special guests of honour.

Others expected at the event include Oba Mufatau Mohammed, Olofa of Offa and Oba Saheed Elegushi as the royal fathers of the day. Lanre Rasak of Lamex Group and Tajudeen Owoyemi, the Asiwaju of Offa will be the hosts.

According to Onas, the idea behind the project is to embrace the newly-elected president and support his government. As a businessman, he said he wants to encourage all other business persons and fellow Nigerians to support the vision of Asiwaju.



**Ona**

# Family Remembers Late Caroline Adesola

"Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed and very dear," so says a popular quote.

Despite the death of Madam Caroline Adesola, mother of popular auto magnate and serial entrepreneur, Adebayo Adesola, about three years ago, her memories have remained stuck in the minds of the auto magnate and his siblings.

When she died on May 1, 2020, at the age of 71, their hearts were indescribably heavy, but they were quickly comforted by the fact that their dear mother lived a fulfilled life and impacted humanity positively.

So, Adesola, the Ondo State-born managing director of Vision Wheel, alongside his siblings, pulled all the stops and gave their septuagenarian mother a befitting burial. She was interred at the Vaults and Gardens, Ikoyi, Lagos at a funeral that was attended by top personalities from all walks of life, home and abroad.

Family sources said Madam Adesola was given everything she dreamt of and so much more by her children even before she was diagnosed with cancer during a summer trip in 2015. The business mogul and his siblings didn't spare anything to ensure that she underwent intensive treatment till her cancer was in remission. But unfortunately, it resurfaced five years after and she eventually succumbed to it.

But since she was taken away by the grim reaper, she has remained in their memories. Recently, her children gathered once again for a memorial prayer for the soul of their loving mother.

Society Watch was told that a dinner was also held for family members, close friends as well as business associates that came for the remembrance service.



**Late Adesola**

# ẸNIÀNKẸ

OMOLARA OMOBOLAJI ADEAGBO FOUNDATION



## Mrs. Omolara Omobolaji Adeagbo

(Nee Tosho-Obembe)

*Forever in Our Hearts*

1st Year Remembrance

5th August 1966 -

28th May 2022

**One year ago, you went to rest with your heavenly Father. Although we will always feel the pain of losing you, the beautiful memories transcend and will always live on in our hearts and minds. We remember your infectious smile, your warm hugs, your kind words and faithful deeds. You were a beacon of light in our lives, a true source of inspiration and we miss you dearly.**

**Through the Ẹniànkẹ Foundation, we will honour your legacy and carry on the values you held close to your heart. Compassion, selflessness, kindness, and above all, your faith. The Ẹniànkẹ Foundation will support women and children across Southwest Nigeria in areas of education, healthcare, and creativity- enabling them to live more purposeful lives.**
**Continue to rest in perfect peace Lara, in the arms of the Lord. We love you; we miss you and we will always remember you. Until we meet again.**

***"Grief never ends, but we find a way to walk in the light someone has left behind, rather than living in pain's shadow"***
***–Caleb Azumah Nelson, Small Worlds***

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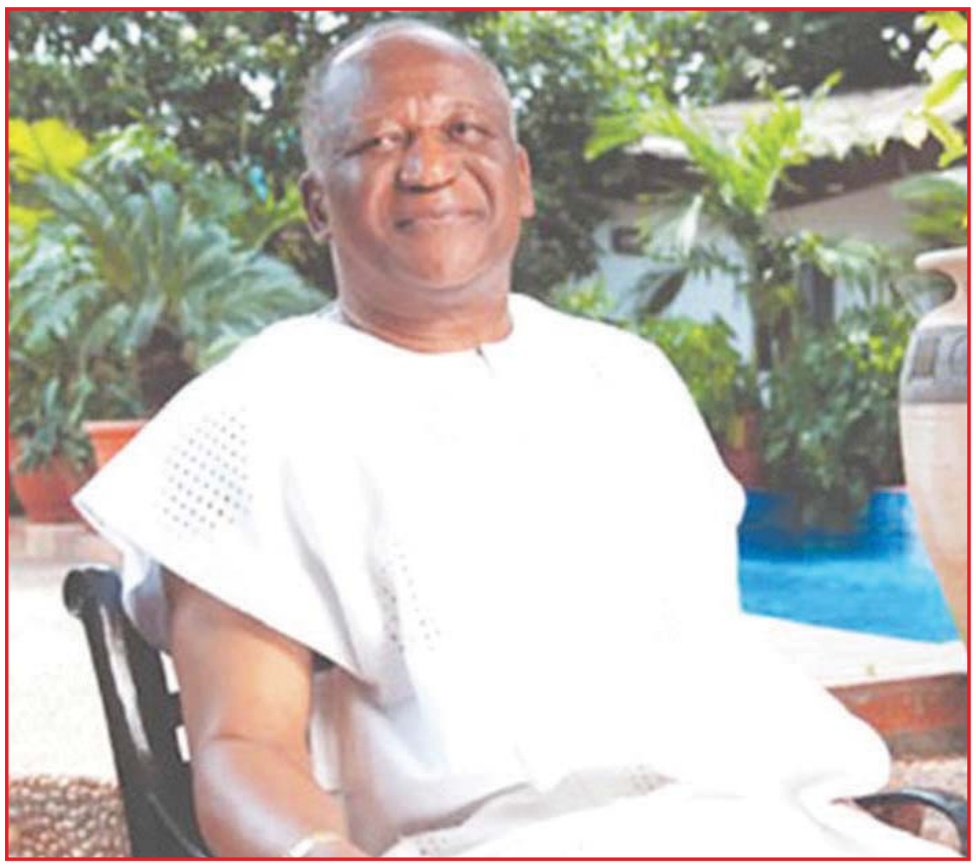
ARTS & REVIEW

A THISDAY PUBLICATION

28. 5. 2023

# In Commemoration of Didi Museum's Journey of 40 Years

As Nigeria's first privately owned museum, Didi Museum, turns 40 this month, **Yinka Olatunbosun** revisits the history that preceded its existence



Jibunoh

Unforgettable was that sad day when the news of the demise of a loved one was received. Edith Jibunoh was only 13. Her brother, Newton Jibunoh, who fondly called her Didi, which was a mispronunciation of the name, would carry her memory on for years by immortalising her with the first privately owned museum, known as Didi Museum. On May 11, 1983, the museum was formally inaugurated within the private residence of the founder, now Dr. Newton Jibunoh, on Akin Adesola Street in Victoria Island, Lagos. The institution was inaugurated by His Royal Highness, Alhaji Ado Bayero, the Emir of Kano, who was also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

But the story behind the making of the Didi Museum ran deeper than personal experience; it was a product of national interest and indeed cultural preservation.

It was created as a matter of necessity and choice. Dr. Jibunoh was on the team that was assigned the task of retrieving Nigeria's artworks and artefacts from Britain before FESTAC '77, in time for the colloquium. Sadly, the British authorities refused to give back the works on the premise that Nigerians could not take care of them.

Subsequently, Jibunoh met with the Oba of Benin, who revealed to him that there were some artworks hidden in Isele-Uku. The Obi of Isele-Uku, in turn, gave Jibunoh the needed replica.

In his personal search, Jibunoh was dissatisfied with the state of the works domiciled at the National Museum. He thought he should do something about it. His appreciation for the arts started when he was a choir boy. While accompanying the white missionaries and their acolytes in the mission of burning native idols, he noticed that the missionaries did not always burn all the gathered idols and deities. They kept some aside, which they took away. Some of those supposedly taken away were only to be found much later at the British Museum.

Although his paths in life took him away from the liturgical, he became famed as a building engineer and was a former chairman of the building and civil engineering firm, Costain West Africa. Additionally, he became a desert adventurer, environmental crusader, and social activist. Also known as the 'Desert Fox', he gained renown for his adventures driving from Lagos to London and back three times: in 1966, 2000, and 2008, respectively.




A close-up view of the museum's Victoria Island, Lagos building



The museum's interior

He asserted himself as an avid art collector by collecting the artworks found in the village. He continued to forge connections with artists and young people, many of whom had grown their practice in the early years of the Didi Museum. It came as no surprise that the inaugural exhibition, with over 1200 attendees, featured two painters, Kenny Adamson and Adam Ajunam, both of whom exhibited over 75 works for the five-day exhibition.

The creation of Didi Museum was to serve as a forum for the research and preservation of arts and culture and the exhibition of contemporary Nigerian art. Additionally, the museum has the projection to create a market for local collectors that would sustain the art market in the long run, promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage.

The then Director-General of the National Commission of Museums and Monuments, Dr. Ekpo Eyo, described the experience as "an excellent first attempt of Ethis kind of venture by a private citizen."

In 1985, the Didi Museum also hosted an exhibition to commemorate the 25th independence anniversary in London, sponsored by British Airways.

The works inside the Didi Museum itself are never for sale. They are intentionally preserved for educational purposes, and this is accentuated by the presence of a mini-library with a wide range of books on African and Nigerian art history, among others. The museum has morphed into a cultural hub, hosting book readings, poetry, and exhibitions and inevitably nurturing the careers of many artists and culture workers, who often called themselves "Didi Museum Children" on the basis of their long years of association with the museum.

As part of the 40th anniversary, another museum of its kind will be opened in Delta State, the home state and current base of its 85-year-old founder.

"Without the art, there is no history, as the art documents our culture and heritage, and therefore the history of civilisations over the centuries," Dr. Jibunoh declared recently at one of the activities marking the 40th anniversary celebrations.

In his speech commending the commemorative exhibition titled "No Art, No History", held at the Nelson Mandela Gardens in Asaba, the current Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, quoted the following excerpts from his late father's speech: "Attempts have been made in the past to establish private museums in Nigeria, but all have faded away. Therefore, we, the custodians of heritage arts, must support this unique effort of Newton Jibunoh."

The new museum, which will serve as the headquarters, will be located at Nelson Mandela Garden, within the premises of the Asaba International Airport.

It is reportedly the second time the museum has attempted to locate itself in Delta State. Some years ago, it opened a branch in Akwukwu-Igbo, the hometown of Dr. Jibunoh, just a few kilometres from Asaba.

**EDITOR** OKECHUKWU UWAEZUOKE/ okechukwu.uwaezuoke@thisdaylive.com



Some of the artist's paintings at the exhibition

# The Irony of Chika Idu's Augmented Reality

**Yinka Olatunbosun**

EXHIBITION

Deepdownin his mind, Chika Idu knew he had to do something about what he saw every time he travelled by boat in Lagos. The multidisciplinary artist who once lived in Ikorodu recalled an experience that would change the thematic structure of his works at the preview of his new solo exhibition at O'DA Art Gallery, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Water travel in Lagos afforded him a rare opportunity to see the side of Lagos that often eludes other city dwellers caught up in traffic. For him to beat the snarling congestion on his way to Victoria Island, he would travel by ferry. His keen eyes settled on the communities along the coastline and how they lived.

"You'd see a young child and an adult defecating into the water," he recounted. "Some are just sitting by the boats anchored to the shore, defecating into the water, while we were just passing by. Within the same perimeter or environment, a lady would come out with a bowl and scoop water from the same polluted water. They cooked with the water. When I saw this, it was very disturbing."

From his findings, he discovered the real people living along the waterways: the Eguns, Ilajes, and Ijaws. These slum dwellers had been at loggerheads with the state because the latter had tried to dislodge them in a bid to reclaim the land. Without state policies protecting such settlers, they become vulnerable and ultimately forgotten.

Idu described the act of reclaiming the land itself as an environmental threat that can destroy the natural habitats along the coastline. The hydra-headed nature of this issue propelled the artist into painting the swimmers in this body of work titled "Into the Deep."

"Even with the environmental abuse, the swimmers are happy doing what they love," the artist said. "The children did not see what I was seeing. I was seeing a disaster, an epidemic."

With a 20-year studio practice, Idu is a master of his own craft, experimenting with light while making distinct marks with his hazy rendition technique of painting. Inspired by the reflection of light through harmattan haze, Idu's artistic perception of his world is an interplay of light and darkness.

His exploration of the 'Swimmer Series" is not exactly new, but this time, the works are layered with a palpable sense of optimism even as they allude to socio-political realities. The visual distortion is indeed a metaphor for the reality that exists in the socio-cultural context of the work.

By exposing the plight of the African child, the 1998 graduate of Auchi School of Art continues to depict an energetic flow between the suspended figures and the textured water as a means to connect the optimism of the people who live in these communities and the hope for the betterment of the spaces they inhabit. Featuring 22 works—four watercolours and 18 oil paintings—the show parades titles such as "The Big Race Towards 2023," "Breath I, II, and III," and "The Simple" I–IV.

The curator for the show and founder of O'DA Art Gallery, Obida Obioha, remarked that Idu's augmented reality is an irony of sorts. "What Chika has found in his studies of these communities is a joyful people who are proud of their home in spite of its conditions. I would go further to say that Chika Idu's augmented reality is the same for Nigeria. Outsiders expect Nigerians to be downtrodden, frustrated, and despondent but, upon meeting us, are always surprised by the energy, vibrancy, good humour, and warmth of the people. I believe we are like Chika Idu's 'Swimmers'. Co-existing in a strange, serene fictional reality where peace and hope reside. This is my respite through it all."

The exhibition, which opened on May 13, runs till June 3.

EXHIBITION

# Children Art Gallery Embraces Inclusion in an Exhibition

**Yinka Olatunbosun**

In an effort to showcase artworks made by talented children, The Children Art Gallery (TCAG) Victoria Island, Lagos, held a group exhibition with the theme, Spark! Arts in Humanity: Uniting through Creativity.

TCAG is a social enterprise representing children under the age of 18. The gallery was co-founded in September 2022 by Phoebe Giffey-Brohaugh, an artist, and Segun Oni, a serial entrepreneur and philanthropist who is passionate about children and their development. The gallery is the first in Africa to exhibit and sell children's artwork.

The exhibition honours the 2023 edition of the National Arts in Health Week held in Lagos.

"We want to really communicate their stories and talk about how art is important to wellness," Giffey-Brohaugh explained. "The proceeds go towards their education and welfare. They can pay for their art supplies and school fees and take care of themselves and their families. We have worked with over 500 children now through workshops and social events, and we exhibit their art."

Most of the exhibiting artists are drawn from underprivileged backgrounds and from among those living with autism and Down syndrome.

Ranging from abstract to drip painting, the artists—the youngest being seven— rendered their varied experiences on canvas in 20 pieces. One of the outstanding pieces at the exhibition, which ran from May 8 to 14, is titled "Unknown", acrylic paint on canvas by Zizah. Limited in speech, Zizah has found expression through art and music.

At a recent media parley, TCAG's co-founder, Segun Oni, revealed that the gallery was built on the need to show his son's unique paintings. His love for children's art is rooted in his son's early interest in drawing and painting. "As time went on with lots of interest in his works, I started to do some research and found out that there was no children's gallery anywhere in the world," he narrated. "So I created one with Phoebe. When we had the first exhibition, which featured most of my son's works at the time, he sold two of his pieces, which essentially covered his school fees that year. I thought, 'This makes sense.' Obviously, he comes from a very comfortable background."

Out of concern for children whose parents cannot afford their education or healthcare, Oni and Giffey-Brohaugh set up the TCAG platform to help them realise value from their creative talents at a young age and support their families. "Then, we started partnering with schools so that they can open up their art department, and where they have very good art works, they bring them here. We are hoping to open in the US by the end of the year."

While Oyinda Fakeye, the executive director of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), who chairs the National Arts in Health Week, underscored the role of the arts in wellness, Christopher Bailey, the Arts and Health Lead at the World Health Organisation (WHO), described the show as "fantastic," even as he commended the organisers for the inclusivity in the array of exhibiting artists.

In a reaction to the show, Nisha Sajnani, an associate professor at New York University and a co-director and co-founder of Jameel Arts in Health Lab, said: "It is about taking works that feel very ordinary and mundane and creating an extraordinary moment out of each piece. I am very inspired and impressed with what they are doing. I can see that this idea can really spread around the world."



Visitors at the exhibition

# LIMCAF, Eyeing Collaboration with Art X, Reaffirms Commitment to May 31 Deadline

**Yinka Olatunbosun**

It has been confirmed that the intending participants for this year's Life in My City Art Festival, often known as LIMCAF, have until Wednesday, May 31 to submit their entries. A statement issued recently by its art director, Dr. Ayo Adewunmi, ruled out any extension of the May 31 deadline and stated that artworks not submitted online by that time would not be considered.

This comes as attempts to elicit the interest of Art X Lagos and, consequently, enlist its support for the annual art festival and competition have progressed to an advanced stage.

In an address to a group of young artists at the LIMCAF headquarters in Independence Layout, Enugu, Dr. Adewunmi explained that the theme for this year's edition of the competition, "Fix It", speaks to the state of the many and varied happenings of the world today, which, as everyone can see, is "passing through unprecedented challenges and the need for all persons everywhere to arise to the challenge we are all experiencing by acting well our parts."




Presenting the prize to the last year's edition's overall prize-winner

FESTIVAL

According to the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu art lecturer, "humanity appears to be at a critical stage of unprecedented and rapid change, launching into an unpredictable future in every area of human experience, and this calls for a holistic response from all persons on all sides to "FIX IT!"

This year, LIMCAF returns with intriguing new prizes. In addition to the top prize of one million naira and N500,000 for the existing category categories, three additional special prizes are now available exclusively for female musicians, people with disabilities (PWD), and very young people under the age of 18.

In addition to the prizes specifically designated for female artists, people with disabilities, and very young people, Dr. Adewunmi clarified that all artists who will not be older than 35 by October 28— including, he stressed, female artists, people with disabilities, and very young people—are eligible for the other regular categories as long as they have lived, studied, or worked in Nigeria for at least five years prior. As usual, the following six categories—painting/mixed media/drawing, sculpture/installation art, ceramics, graphics/digital art, photography/video, and textile art/fashion design—will each get a prize.

# An Exhibition in Osogbo for Mama Nike at 72

**Yinka Olatunbosun**

EXHIBITION

An art exhibition, featuring the paintings, sculptures, beadworks and textiles of 13 renowned contemporary Nigerian artists was recently organised by the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding (CBCIU) at the Oba Moses Oyinlola Museum and Photographic Gallery in Osogbo. The exhibition, titled Legendary, is in commemoration of Chief Dr Nike Okundaye's 55 years of exhibiting and promoting traditional and contemporary African art and coincides with the commemoration of her 72nd birthday on Tuesday, May 23.

Featured alongside Chief Nike Okundaye at the exhibition, which opened on Saturday, May 20 and ended on Saturday, May 27, are Chief Jimoh Buraimoh, Chief Muraina Oyelanmi, Dele Fanijo Onibonokuta, Adeyinka Fabayo, Stephen Oni, Olori Ronke Ademiluyi-Ogunwusi, Gbenga Ajiboye, Jide Batik, Abiodun Azeez, Taiwo Adeyeye, John Omidiran and Omoge Alaro.

# CICERO

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## IN THE ARENA

# Determined to Finish Strong

Despite the nationwide insecurity and the global recession-induced economic challenges which are competing to eclipse the giant strides of the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari's administration, **Ejiofor Alike** writes that in addition to the verifiable achievements in the areas of ensuring the country's self-sufficiency in food production, building health facilities and development of infrastructure, among others, this outgoing administration empowered the Nigerian military more than any other previous government since 1999

Three major challenges – insecurity, corruption and economic issues - had confronted President Muhammadu Buhari's administration on assumption of office in 2015.

As part of his campaign promises, President Buhari had promised to tackle these challenges, especially the menace of Boko Haram in the North-east, which was the major security threat he inherited.

But no sooner had the administration assumed office than killings, abductions and cattle rustlings by herdsmen and bandits spread nationwide and escalated to alarming proportions.

This had led to unverified conspiracy theories on how the chieftains of the All Progressives Congress (APC) allegedly imported bandits into the country to destablise Jonathan's government if the then opposition party failed to win the 2015 presidential election.

In addition, foreign herdsmen were also said to have been encouraged by forces close to this administration to invade Nigerian communities on a land-grabbing mission.

Corruption was also a major challenge inherited by Buhari's administration as Nigeria was sliding embarrassingly in the anti-corruption ranking by Transparency International (TI).

Also, with the world assuming the status of a global village, the Nigerian economy was not insulated from the global economic recession occasioned by the plummeting crude oil prices.

These challenges were in addition to the country's decaying infrastructure, which was largely abandoned by the previous administrations.

Eight years down the line, the country has recorded much progress, while efforts to eliminate the remaining challenges remain work-in-progress.

While many believe that corruption became worse under Buhari's government, there is a near consensus that the administration has successfully degraded Boko Haram, which had made the North-east and Abuja unsafe under the previous administration.

It is on record that President Buhari empowered the military and other security agencies more than any other previous administration since 1999.



Buhari

However, as the Buhari-led government was successfully tackling Boko Haram in the North-east, a new form of insecurity fuelled by herdsmen and bandits was spreading nationwide without a proportionate response by security agencies.

As the outgoing president prepares to hand over to the incoming government, hundreds of Nigerians are being killed weekly by bandits and herdsmen in Benue and Plateau states.

The Boko Haram bombs that had made the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, unsafe have been replaced by bandits who abduct the residents of the capital city for ransom.

Buhari also recorded giant strides in agriculture through the efforts of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), which has helped the country to achieve food security.

However, the celebrated self-sufficiency in food production is being threatened by bandits, which kill and abduct farmers nationwide.

Also, his administration's soft handling of herdsmen who destroyed farms and invaded communities has also threatened agricultural activities, as many farmers in many parts of the country are scared to go to the farm.

Verifiable achievements were also recorded in the health sector as the outbreak of COVID-19 had forced the government and the private sector to make huge investments in the previously-neglected country's health facilities.

As the administration winds down tomorrow, many feel that Buhari would be remembered well especially security and justice, the economy, power, housing, and infrastructure.

In the area of security, 38 brand new aircraft were procured for the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) by Buhari's administration between 2015 and 2023.

The list also included 10 super Mushshak, five MI-35 helicopters and two bell helicopters.

With the intervention of this administration, NAF now has in its kitty 12 A-29 Tucano, four Agusta, three JF-17 Thunder and would be expecting another 12 new attack helicopters and 24 M-346 fighter attack aircraft.

Under Buhari's government, NAF had successfully conducted several in-country periodic depot maintenance and avionics upgrades of some of its platforms.

The Nigerian Navy also benefitted from this unprecedented massive procurement of military equipment as more than 400 new platforms are now available.

These include: 200 riverine patrol boats, 114 rigid hull inflatable boats, 22 fast attack boats, 14 unmanned aerial vehicles, four barges, four helicopters, among others.

The Nigerian Navy has established a naval base at Lake Chad in Baga, Borno State and has received approval to establish new naval bases in Lekki in Lagos State, Oguta in Imo State, and Kano.

The Nigerian military had also acquired 700 brand new troop-carrying vehicles all assembled in Nigeria.

The outgoing administration also recruited 20,000 new police officers in two tranches of 10,000, and had commenced the process of recruiting the third batch.

It is on record that no administration since the enthronement of democracy in 1999, has equipped and fortified the military like the Buhari's.

His administration also recorded remarkable achievements in provision of infrastructure.

Under his administration, the Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria (InfraCorp) was established with initial seed Capital of N1 trillion, provided by the CBN, the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) and the Africa Finance Corporation (AFC).

With the N1 trillion equity seed capital, InfraCorp is expected to mobilise up to an additional N14 trillion of debt capital, according to the Presidency.

The 156 kilometres Lagos-Ibadan rail line, purchase of 64 coaches and 21 locomotives, 186-kilometre Abuja-Kaduna rail and the completion of the 327-kilometre Itakpe-Warri standard gauge rail are some of Buhari's legacy projects.

These projects are in addition to the Second Niger Bridge and several ongoing road projects, including the 337-kilometre East-West Road project, awarded since 2006, and scheduled by the outgoing administration for completion this year.

However, these infrastructure developments were achieved at very exorbitant cost – huge debt burden, which many analysts have described as unsustainable.

As President Buhari hands over a largely insecure nation, which is sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines by his alleged mishandling of the country's diversity, he will also be remembered for leaving behind many legacies to the present and unborn generations.

## POLITICAL NOTES



Tinubu

# Will Tinubu Learn from Adamu Adamu's Confession?

Last Thursday's confession by the outgoing Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu that he knew nothing about the education sector when he was appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 should serve as a lesson to the incoming President-elect, Bola Tinubu not to allow ethnic and religious considerations to becloud his sense of judgment in making appointments into his cabinet.

The outgoing President Buhari was accused of nepotism in his appointments and this affected his performance in the last eight years.

In making his appointments, President Buhari was believed not only to have favoured a certain region and ethnic group but also put many round pegs in square holes because of ethnic and religious considerations.

Surprisingly, many sycophants and hypocrites who helped successive Nigerian leaders to fail, had described most of these lopsided appointments of incompetent officials as round pegs in round holes.

It is a shame to Nigeria that the longest-serving Minister of Education since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, Adamu, admitted last Thursday that he knew nothing about the education sector he was appointed to supervise.

At a valedictory session with officials and heads of parastatals of the ministry, Adamu, who served for 91 months, reportedly confessed: "I didn't know anything about the education sector when I was appointed minister except superficially. But when Buhari decided to make me Minister of Education, I called some people to assist me work on a policy document on education because I was a novice in the sector. I shared my idea with them and they assisted me greatly, and I remain grateful to them for these years," the minister said.

No wonder his period as education minister witnessed many rots in the education sector.

It is on record that his tenure witnessed the highest number of industrial actions from tertiary institutions-based unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), and Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (CEASU), among others.

Nigerians will remember his tenure as the period when their leaders lavishly celebrated the graduation ceremonies of their children in foreign universities while the children of the less-privileged Nigerians were at home for several months due to the protracted industrial actions by ASUU.

This is a lesson for Tinubu if he truly wants to rescue Nigeria from the rot of the last eight years.

BRIEFINGNOTES

# Weep Not, Deputy Speaker, Ahmed Wase

After his alleged highhandedness in handling both minority and majority opinions on the many occasions he presided over the plenary sessions of the House of Representatives, the Deputy Speaker, Ahmed Wase, has defied the zoning arrangements of the All Progressives Congress and openly opposed the Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, in a bid to arm-twist the ruling party, ride roughshod over his colleagues and succeed the outgoing speaker, **Ejiofor Alike** reports

The Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ahmed Idris Wase has in the last few days twice questioned the authority of the outgoing Speaker, Femi Gbajabiamila, in a bid to truncate the zoning arrangements of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and emerge as the next speaker against the choice of the ruling party.

Last Wednesday, Gbajabiamila had asked the Chairman of the House Committee on Rules and Business, Abubakar Fulata, to prepare a light order paper for the next day's sitting (Thursday) as the session should close by 2 pm to allow members to attend an event at the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS).

But Wase openly questioned the Speaker's decision, saying "why do we have to shelve a lot of activities that we have just to go and witness the commissioning of a project of NILDS?"

He further argued that the main primary function of the House was to make law.

When Gbajabiamila responded that he personally would like to witness the NILDS inauguration because it was important to him, Wase replied him, saying: "The parliament is about us, not about 'I.'"

While overruling him, Gbajabiamila noted that the altercation was "the first time in history that a Deputy Speaker will be challenging what the Speaker is saying."

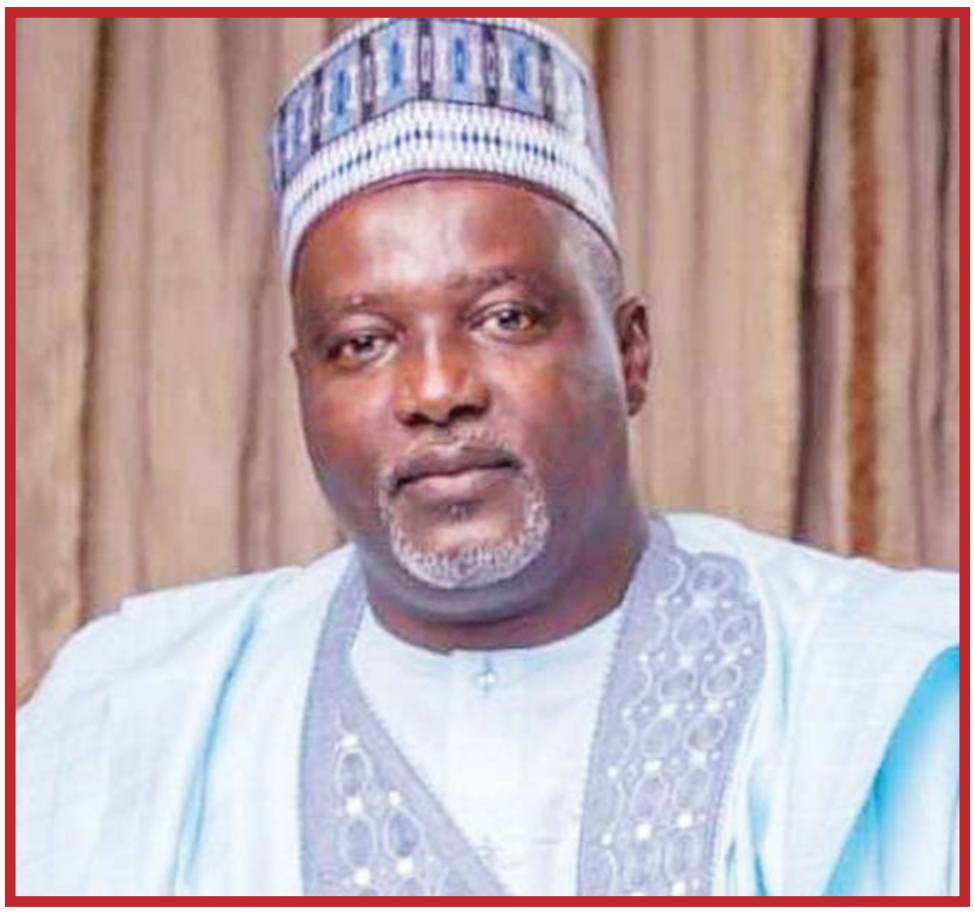
Before the event of last Wednesday, there was a drama on the floor of the House on May 17, 2023, as members bickered over the adjournment of the plenary for the induction ceremony for members-elect of the National Assembly.

Many political analysts had argued that Gbajabiamila adjourned to truncate alleged moves to remove him from office by those opposed to the APC's zoning arrangements.

Wase who is eyeing Gbajabiamila's seat, is believed to be the arrowhead of the opposition against the decision of the APC to anoint Tajudeen Abbas and Benjamin Kalu as the party's preferred choices for the positions of speaker and deputy speaker, respectively, of the 10th House.

But on the many occasions he had opportunity to lead the House in the absence of Gbajabiamila, the outgoing deputy speaker had presided over controversial plenary sessions where he allegedly rode roughshod over his colleagues and exhibited highhandedness.

Many incoming lawmakers believe that with Wase's notoriety in shutting down voices of dissent on the many occasions he had presided over the plenary sessions, it would be difficult for his colleagues to accept him.



Wase

On the occasions he presided over the plenary sessions, he not only denied the minority their say, he also allegedly overruled the majority.

Consequently, many of the plenary sessions he presided over ended in rowdiness and walkouts by some members of the opposition parties and the ruling APC.

For instance, on October 20, 2020, Hon. Shina Peller representing Iseyin/Itesiwaju/Iwajowa/Kajola Federal Constituency of Oyo State on the platform of the APC had attempted to raise a point of order to discuss the #EndSARS protests raging across the country.

But Wase (APC, Plateau), who was presiding over the plenary session refused to recognise the Oyo lawmaker, who walked out in anger.

Wase also incurred the wrath of his colleagues and many other Nigerians in March 2021 when he prevented Hon. Mark Gbillah (PDP, Benue) from presenting a petition against the federal government on an alleged taking over of their lands by herdsmen.

The petition filed by Mzough U Tiv Amerika (MUTA) on insecurity in Benue, Nasarawa, and Taraba states, had accused the federal government of nonchalance towards the injustice done to those who were displaced as a result of herdsmen's attacks.

But Wase rejected the petition, claiming that Nigerians abroad had no rights to file a petition on the crisis.

"If they are in America, could they be an interested party here? Do they really know what is really going on?" he reportedly queried.

However, following the public outrage, Gbajabiamila, later accepted the petition, which was presented a few days later by Gbillah.

Wase, who is perceived to be sectional in his approach to legislative business, had also in July 2021 rejected the report of the Committees on Information, National Orientation, Ethics and Values; Telecommunications; Information and Technology; Justice; and National Security and Intelligence that investigated the federal government's suspension of Twitter operations in Nigeria.

While the Chairman of the joint committee, Hon. Olusegun Odebunmi, was presenting the report, Wase who presided over the session, opposed the report on the grounds that the Chairman of the Committee on National Security and Intelligence, Sha'aban Sharada (APC, Kano), was allegedly not involved in the investigation.

When Odebunmi provided a copy of the signed version showing Sharada's endorsement, Wase still asked if the panel engaged the National Security Adviser, Maj. Gen. Babagana Monguno (rtd), on the matter.

It took the intervention of Gbajabiamila, who sat on the floor as a member, before the report could be considered.

The outgoing deputy speaker also allegedly suppressed the opinion of the majority during the consideration of Clause 52 in the Electoral Act (Amendment) Bill also in July 2021.

When the lawmakers got to Section 52(2), which gives the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) the discretion to adopt electronic voting or any other method of its choice, the Deputy Minority Leader, Hon. Toby Okechukwu, moved a motion for the voting, accreditation and transmission of results to be done electronically.

However, when Wase put the motion moved by Okechukwu to vote, the 'Ayes' had it, but Wase allegedly ruled in favour of the 'Nays' which were the minority.

Consequently, the House became rowdy and the lawmakers adjourned till the next day.

As the consideration of the clauses resumed the next day, Wase assured the lawmakers that Section 52 would be revisited at the end of the consideration.

At the end of the consideration, the Minority Leader, Hon. Ndudi Elumelu raised a point of order that Section 52 should be decided, but Wase shocked his colleagues by claiming that Clause 52 was considered the previous day.

A shocked Elumelu and other lawmakers walked out of the chambers in protest.

With Wase's antecedents, it was not surprising to many that the APC ignored him and anointed Abbas.

By working against his party's decision, the Plateau lawmaker has also demonstrated that the only thing that matters to him is his interest and not that of his colleagues or his party.

His colleagues believe that he is counting on fresh members who are not familiar with his alleged autocratic style of dealing with his fellow lawmakers.

Some of his colleagues accused him of weeping and unjustly attacking Gbajabiamila because he erroneously assumed that he was given doses of the same medicine, which he had administered to others.

## NOTES FOR FILE

### Need to Investigate Doguwa's Case



Doguwa

The Kano State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. M.A. Lawan, last Thursday said there were no substantial evidence to link Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, Alhassan Doguwa, with the electoral violence that swept through his country home.

The incident had reportedly resulted in the death of 15 New Nigeria People's Party supporters.

Briefing reporters in his office in respect of the case, Lawan said: "We are of the opinion that we cannot substantiate charges of criminal conspiracy, mischief by fire and culpable homicide against Ado Doguwa."

The outgoing AG added: "The statement of those that implicated him were full of contradictions. And apart from their contradictory statements, we could not find medical evidence to prove that the death of the deceased persons was caused by Alhassan Ado Doguwa."

Recall that after the incident, Doguwa, who represents Doguwa/Tundun Wada Federal Constituency of Kano State, was detained by the police and charged for criminal conspiracy, and culpable homicide.

When the case was first heard in court, the police prosecutor said Doguwa allegedly committed the offence on February 25 at the Tudun Wada Local Government Area of Kano State.

Justice Yunusa Muhammad him granted him bail in the sum of N500 million, with the condition that the suspect must provide two sureties, one of which shall be a first-class traditional ruler while the other must be a permanent secretary at the federal or state civil service.

Later, the State High Court presided over by Justice Maryam Saboo ordered the state Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Lawan, to immediately file a charge against Doguwa and his other alleged co-conspirators.

Even though Doguwa's supporters have argued that he is innocent of the allegations, many are wondering how will the families of the people who allegedly died in the public disturbance feel when they hear the recommendation of the outgoing AG.

In a country where everything, including the lives of the people is politicised, nobody was expecting that the state All Progressives Congress (APC) led by the outgoing Governor Abdullahi Ganduje would recommend Doguwa, a member of the party, for prosecution.

While many will accuse Lawan of alleged bias in his recommendation, they call on the incoming administration of NNPP to be led by Abba Kabir Yusuf, to thoroughly investigate the case and ensure that those responsible for the murder of the victims are severely dealt with.

CICERO/ISSUE

# New Record in Military Equipment

**Kingsley Nwezeh** examines the unprecedented massive procurement of military equipment by the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration to boost the fighting capacity of the Nigerian Armed Forces



**Armoured tanks for the Army**



**Tucano jets for the Air Force**

More than any other time since the return of democratic rule in 1999, the Nigerian Armed Forces received more equipment and increased weaponry from the federal government during the outgoing administration of President Muhammadu Buhari.

The procurement of more and advanced equipment was designed to contain the spiralling security challenges as the nation battled insurgents, bandits, rogue herdsmen, unknown gunmen, and oil theives in multiple theatres of operation, a situation that claimed over 100,000 civilians and security personnel in 14 years.

**Nigerian Air Force**

The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) acquired 38 aircraft since President Buhari assumed office in 2015.

It procured 12 A-29 Super Tucano fighter jets, 10 Super Mushshak fighter planes, five Mi-35M attack helicopters, four Augusta 109 helicopters, three J-F 17 Thunder jets, two Bell 412 helicopters, and two MI 171-E helicopters.

NAF is also expecting 36 new ones, including 12 A-H1Z and 24 M-346 attack helicopters.

Also, for the first time in its history, under the Buhari's administration, the NAF conducted in-country Periodic Depot Maintenance (PDM) and avionics upgrades of some of its platforms.

It also improved the serviceability status of NAF platforms to from 35 percent in 2015 to 70 percent in January 2023.

NAF also created a Special Operations Command (SOC) and Ground Training Command (GTC).

***The Nigerian Navy***

The Nigerian Navy also acquired more than 400 platforms since 2015. They include: 200 Riverine Patrol Boats and 114 Rigid Hall Inflatable Boats (RHIBs).

It also procured 22 fast attack boats, 14 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles otherwise known as drones, 14 house boats, 14 River Town Boats, 12 Manta Class/Inshore Patrol Craft (IPC), three Whaler Boats, four helicopters, and four Barges/Tugboats.

Others include: 14 House Boats, two Seaward Defence Boats (SDB) and four Capital Ships.

In line with the president's directive, the Nigerian Navy has established a naval base in Lake Chad, Baga, Borno State.

It also received presidential approval for new naval bases in Lekki, Lagos State, Oguta, Imo State and Kano, Kano State.

A naval doctrine command was also established.

With the improvement in the capacity of the Nigerian Navy, the International Maritime Bureau reported that 2021 saw the lowest number of piracy attacks in Nigerian waters.

**The Nigerian Army**

The Nigerian Army also acquired hundreds of new equipment, including VT-4 main battle tanks, SH2 and SH4 battle tanks, MRAPS, ARRV and Mine Sweepers, Infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled howitzers.

Other acquisitions by the army include armoured fighting vehicles,

mountain climber bikes, STI light tanks, among others.

Recently, the Nigerian Army acquired 700 troop-carrying vehicles all assembled in Nigeria.

Two new army divisions (6 and 8 Divisions) were also created to cover new frontiers.

The Nigerian Army also created the cyberwarfare commands and Land Forces Simulation Centre (GSC) in Abuja borne out of an alliance between it and the National Information Technology Development Institute (NITDA).

The army is also involved in ongoing operations nationwide. They include: Operations Hadarin Daji, Hadin Kai, Lake Sanity, Desert Sanity, Safe Heaven and Whirl Stroke.



**Various Platforms commissioned by president Buhari on the 9 Dec 21**



**Armoured vehicles for the police**

**The Nigeria Police**

A presidential communication on the key achievements of the President Buhari-led administration had noted that on June 24, 2019, the president signed into law the Nigerian Police Trust Fund Bill establishing the Nigerian Police Trust Fund (NPTF) to mobilise financing and resources to equip the Nigeria Police.

President Buhari had established a police reform technical committee in the Office of the Chief of Staff to the President to coordinate police reforms.

The president also approved the recruitment of police constables.

The recruitment is ongoing in tranches of 10,000 recruits. So far, 20,000 constables have been recruited while the recruitment of the third batch of 10,000 is ongoing.

The Nigerian Police also launched a new national command and control center in Abuja.

Three months ago as the general election drew closer, President Buhari commissioned a total of 127 operational vehicles for Nigeria Police.

They include: Toyota Hilux Pick Up vans, Zahab Classic Pick Up vans, Mikano Rich-6 Pick Up vans, Anti-Riot Water Cannons, Armored Personnel Carriers (APC), Toyota Land Cruiser Prado Jeeps, Toyota Coaster Buses, Toyota Hiace Ambulances, Mikano Trucks, and Crowd Control Barriers Vehicles.

In the same vein, a cache of arms, ammunition, riot control agents such as tear gas, tasers, stun guns, pepper sprays, bulletproof vests, helmets, and other personal protective equipment procured by the police were also commissioned.

The equipment which included operational vehicles, crowd control and anti-riot gadgets, high capacity desktop and laptop computers were acquired to ensure proper enforcement of electoral laws and seamless electioneering process and stabilising the public space before, during, and after the 2003 general elections and for the purpose of enhancing the capacity of the police to manage civil disorder in line with acceptable national legal framework and global law enforcement protocols.

The Nigeria Police Trust Fund had, in 2021, donated the controversial N11 billion worth of equipment to the Nigeria Police.

About 120 out of the 200 Buffalo vans procured by the NPTF were inspected by the government officials.

Speaking at the inspection, the then head of the agency, Ahmed Sokoto, said that the NPTF had also taken delivery of police operational vehicles, security and medical equipment amounting to N8 billion as part of the N11 billion equipment already purchased.

"The 200 buffalo vans cost NPTF over N7 billion. So far, NPTF has received 120 out of the 200 vehicles procured, the remaining vehicles will be delivered sooner than later.

"The vehicles are well equipped and rebranded. However, some others are still undergoing rebranding to reflect NPTF colours and logo," he reportedly said.

Some equipment inspected at that event were 190 ballistic helmets and 640 pieces of bullet proof vests procured by the fund under the 2020 intervention.

Sokoto stated that 640 pieces of bullet proof vests and the 190 helmets cost the NPTF over N435 million.

The equipment was later dogged by allegations that most of it were sub-standard. The matter later ended up at the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

**The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency**

Under the Buhari-led administration, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) had in 2021 launched Nigeria's new National Drug Control Master Plan 2021-2025.

Between 2021 and 2022, the agency arrested 24,000 drug traffickers and 29 drug barons and ensured the conviction of 3,400 offenders.

The NDLEA also seized more than 5,500 tons or 5.5 million kilogrammes of assorted illicit drugs.

The value of drugs seize d amounted to N450 billion while 772.5 hectares of cannabis farms were destroyed.

Overall, the government's efforts aimed at boosting the arsenal of the armed forces improved the capacity of the security forces, contributing significantly to the surrender of over 100,000 insurgents and their families in the North-east and the renewed determination of the security agencies to contain security challenges facing the nation.

Conversely, available security data shows that out of the of the 6.5 million small and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria, only 450,000 are in the hands of security forces, a situation that forced government to establish a weapons center for the mopping up of small and light arms.

In spite of these efforts, the slaughter of innocent women and children by herdsmen is yet to be contained. The herdsmen are still on rampage.

It is expected that the incoming administration will demonstrate act of good faith in tackling the menace of foreign herdsmen who invaded and sacked many Nigerian communities.



Nigeria: Medical outreach for health and wellness in Africa

# Unfinished Business in Health Sector

In spite of enormous challenges facing the country's healthcare delivery system, the outgoing administration of President Muhammadu Buhari made some significant interventions in key areas, **Onyebuchi Ezigbo** writes

It is on record that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari rallied the other two tiers of government and the private sector to make huge interventions in the previously-neglected health sector during the outbreak of COVID-19.

With the outbreak of the dreaded virus, both the government and the private sector raised huge funds to equip the various hospitals across the country to contain the pandemic and other health challenges that were previously neglected.

Also, as part of the efforts of the outgoing President Buhari-led administration to address the serious health challenges posed by the cancer disease and the lack of facilities to manage patients down the aliment, the federal government successfully deployed $10 million from the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority to build a world-class Cancer Treatment Centre at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, (LUTH) in 2018. In addition, the government spent another $5 million to establish special Modern Diagnostic Centres at the Aminu Kano University Teaching Hospital in Kano as well as at the Federal Medical Centre in Umuahia. A further intervention was also made by the federal government to reduce the financial burden on cancer patients through the establishment of Cancer Treatment Support Programme in 2019 in partnership with the private sector to help patients access quality medical care at a relatively low cost.

In 2022, the government approved 12 more hospitals to join the seven that were already providing low-cost treatment for cancer patients.

Another milestone recorded by the administration was the establishment of the National Emergency Medical System and the Emergency Ambulance Scheme. The introduction of this hospital care initiative will no doubt improve on the response time for treatment of patients especially during emergency situations. Another area the outgoing administration excelled in the health sector was the effort to check further spread of HIV-AIDS in the country.

Under President Buhari's administration, the federal government launched a N62.1 billion HIV trust fund as part of efforts to reduce funding gap and also place more people living with HIV on treatment. Speaking during the launch held at the Banquet Hall of the State House, Abuja, the Director-General of the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA), Gambo Aliyu, said the fund would help the country fight the HIV epidemic. Aliyu said the fund was a sustainable financing mechanism for the mobilisation and deployment of domestic private sector resources to address the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV in Nigeria.

However, it was not all bed of roses for the health sector as the country has also recorded very worrisome health indices. Recently, Nigeria's Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo said the country presently loses 2,500 children under the age of five everyday due to largely preventable causes.

He said that 80 per cent of these death burdens occur in the primary health care and community levels. The vice president blamed this infant death on lack of skilled birth attendants. In his speech at the launch of community-based Health Research Innovative Training And Services Program (CRISP) by the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) recently, Osinbajo said the better way to tackle the challenges of health care delivery in Nigeria than to close the gaps on the equitable availability of skilled health workers in our Primary Healthcare Centre facilities.

In the same vein, health workers have had cause to embark on strike over unfulfilled agreements and Memorandum of Understanding.

Health Workers under the umbrella of the Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) and Assembly of Healthcare Professional Associations (AHPA) have declared an indefinite strike beginning from last Thursday. Addressing a press conference after the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of JOHESU, National Vice Chairman, Dr. Obinna Ogbonna said the strike was necessitated by the federal government's inability to respond to the grievances of the workers despite a series of appeals and representations. He said that members in federal health institutions nationwide had been directed to withdraw their services indefinitely commencing on Thursday, May 25, 2023.

**The federal government successfully deployed $10 million from the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority to build a world-class Cancer Treatment Centre at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, (LUTH) in 2018**

FOR THE RECORD

# MUHAMMADU BUHARI:

# I am Leaving Office with Nigeria Better in 2023 Than in 2015



Buhari

My fellow Nigerian brothers, sisters and friends of Nigeria.

I address you today, in my last assignment as a democratically elected President of our great and well-endowed nation, with a deep sense of gratitude to God, a great deal of appreciation to the Nigerian people and a modest sense of fulfillment.

Today we mark and celebrate another peaceful transition of power from one elected government to another in our steady march to improve and sustain Nigeria's democracy.

This year we witnessed the most keenly contested presidential elections since the First Republic and this demonstrates that our democracy is getting better and more entrenched with each election.

We must as a nation improve and sustain gains we make in the electoral process, on an incremental basis for Nigeria to take its rightful place among Nations.

Our democracy provides for, allows and encourages seeking redress for perceived injustices, enabling some candidates and political parties that did not agree with the results to go to court.

Irrespective of the outcome of the various cases, I urge all parties involved to accept the decision of our courts and join hands to build a better Nigeria.

I salute the doggedness and resilience of all the presidential candidates and their political parties for believing in our judicial system by taking their grievances with the election results to court.

In the course of the campaigns, we had argued and disagreed on how to make Nigeria better but we never disagreed or had any doubts that Nigeria has to be better.

As your President, I call on all of us to bring to bear the strength of our individualism, the power of our unity, the convictions of our beliefs to make Nigeria work better and together with one spirit and one purpose.

To my brother, friend and fellow worker in the political terrain for the past ten years - Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu -, I congratulate you on the realisation of your dream, which was propelled by a burning passion to put Nigeria amongst the leading nations of the world.

You have indeed worked for this day and God has crowned your efforts. I have no doubt that your passion for excellence, reliance on competence, fairness in relationships, commitment to equity, loyalty to the country and desire for Nigeria to be globally relevant would come through for you, under God's guidance, as you lead our country to levels higher that I am leaving.

You are the best candidate among all the contestants and Nigerians have chosen well.

The last eight years have been an exciting experience in my desire and commitment to see a Nigeria in which public goods and services are available, and accessible within a united, peaceful and secure nation.

Fellow Nigerians, on the strength of your overwhelming support for me and my political party, I started this journey with a great deal of promise and expectation from you. I never intended to be just politically correct but to do the correct things that will make meaningful impact on the lives of the common Nigerian.

This high expectation was not misplaced because, like the ordinary Nigerian, I had grown tired of watching the country progressively moving away from the path of correctness.

To ensure that our democracy remains resilient and our elected representatives remain accountable to the people, I am leaving behind an electoral process which guarantees that votes count, results are credible, elections are fair and transparent and the influence of money in politics reduced to the barest minimum. And Nigerians can elect leaders of their choice.

We are already seeing the outcome of this process as it provided an even playing field where persons without any political God-Father or access to money defeated other well-resourced candidates.

The Nigerian economy has become more resilient due to the various strategies put in place to ensure that our economy remained afloat during cases of global economic downturns.

You would all recall the supply chain disruptions and economic downturn that the world witnessed between 2020 and 2022 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The deftness of our response to the pandemic still remains a global best practice.

Furthermore, we increased the ability of the poor and rural Nigerians to earn a living, provided more food for millions in our villages and gave our women opportunities to earn a living.

Young men and women in urban centres were also supported to put their skills into productive use. Our administration also provided an enabling environment for the private sector to engage in businesses for which their return on investments is guaranteed.

The private sector proved a strong partner in our drive to build a resilient and sustainable economy as evidenced by the growing number of turn-key projects in various sectors of the economy.

In the course of revamping the economy, we made some difficult choices, most of which yielded the desired results. Some of the measures led to temporary pain and suffering for which I sincerely apologised to my fellow countrymen, but the measures were taken for the over-all good of the country.

Mindful of the need to ensure adequate infrastructure to drive economic growth, we completed age-long projects and processes notably amongst which are the Petroleum Industry Act, completion of some power projects, completion of the second Niger bridge and various important roads linking cities and states.

Our battle to ensure that all Nigerians live in a safe and secure environment has achieved considerable results. As I complete my term in office, we have been able to reduce the incidences of banditry, terrorism, armed robbery and other criminal activities considerably.

To sustain the gains made so far, I call on all Nigerians to be more vigilant and support the security agencies by ensuring that our values defined by being your brothers' keeper govern our actions.

Up-till now, I still grieve for our children still in captivity, mourn with parents, friends and relatives of all those that lost loved ones in the days of the senseless brigandage and carnage. For all those under unlawful captivity our security agencies are working round the clock to secure their release unharmed.

Fellow Nigerians, you know how dear the desire in my heart is, to rid the country of corrupt practices that had consistently diminished our efforts to be a great country.

I did pursue this commitment relentlessly, in spite of the expected push back. I am happy that considerable progress had been made in repatriating huge sums of money back to the country and also taken over properties illegally acquired from our common wealth.

To improve service delivery, we began the implementation of a number of reforms aimed at producing an Efficient, Productive, Incorruptible and Citizen-oriented (EPIC) Federal Civil Service and the results are beginning to show.

On the international scene, Nigeria's influence continues to grow as exemplified by notable Nigerians occupying headship and leadership positions in renowned global bodies.

Our democracy is built on and continues to thrive on the principles of separation of powers. The leadership and members of the National Assembly deserve my appreciation for their patriotism which did not detract from their roles as a check to the executive arm.

I also want to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to a good number of Nigerians who provided their support and encouragement to help me navigate the exciting journey in moving Nigeria forward.

I cannot and will not forget the millions who prayed for me during my illness in my first term of office. I am constantly praying for you and for Nigeria to thrive in peace.

As I retire home to Daura, Katsina State, I feel fulfilled that we have started the Nigeria Re-Birth by taking the initial critical steps and I am convinced the in-coming administration will quicken the pace of this walk to see a Nigeria that fulfills its destiny to be a great nation.

I am confident that I am leaving office with Nigeria better in 2023 than in 2015.

I thank you all. And may God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

***• Being a farewell speech by President Muhammadu Buhari on May28, 2023.***

ENGAGEMENTS

with Chidi Amuta
e-mail: chidi.amuta@gmail.com



# Beyond the Radiance at the Square

The bare concrete parade ground of Eagle Square will tomorrow be animated by the symbolism of state ritual. Like most structures in Abuja's homeless architecture, Eagle Square was originally designed by soldiers in power as a tribute to the legacy of parade grounds, a venue for rehearsing their trade. It has now become a favourite open air theatre for political drama of a democratic variety.

In the periodic rituals of party conventions and changes of governments after elections, Eagle Square has found a new meaning and a conferred symbolism. Endings and beginnings of dispensations and administrations are now staged here every four years. With the passage of time and the gradual consolidation of Nigeria's quirky democracy, Eagle Square parades and succession rituals are fast assuming the status of resonant festivities of state survival. In the process, a hitherto useless concrete open air afterthought by Julius Berger has become a place where elected leaders go to hand over power to their successors. As symbolisms go, Eagle Square is now in competition with the equally meaningless assemblage of concrete slabs called the Abuja Gate. There is another one: the lifeless concrete floor where our presidents go on Armed Forces Remembrance Memorial Day to lay wreaths at the grave of the Unknown Soldier!

Old and new statesmen, dignitaries of all hues, emissaries from the courts of kings and helmsmen from far and near will gather there tomorrow to see Buhari go and Tinubu come. An impressive display of Nigeria's permanent sense of ceremony will see soldiers march in countless formations. The air force may risk sending up pilots into the air to fly in formation. Assorted dance troupes from all corners of the country will showcase our rich variety and diversity. It all comes down to one thing: the use of ceremony to consolidate the legitimacy of democratic leadership succession and a display a sense of order.

Gradually, by the sheer force of repetition, we are seeing the cultivation of a tradition of orderly power succession. People contest elections and either win or lose somehow. Those who win prepare to assume power. Those who may not have won but feel entitled to a victory song are asked to 'go to court'!. The courts take their time to do whatever they wish with the instruments at their disposal.

It does not matter how imperfect the electoral contests are or the quality of leadership that emerges in each season, the order of state and society as well as the continuity of the nation are sustained in an emerging tradition of rites of state passage.

As part of the banality of seasonal shifting of state furniture, the outgoing president shows the new man of power round the office and residence of the presidency. The incoming First Family measures new drapes and arranges to write off the palatial furniture in the Villa. The incoming president and the outgoing one agree a transition arrangement. The new president learns how to be president by moving to Defense House where he gets used to the rituals of daily presidential routine. The months of transition allow the new president time to choose a team out of the multitude of lobbyists and hustlers swarming around him. The rituals and routines of power succession are part and parcel of the orderliness that distinguishes a working democracy from the disorderly power grabs of anarchic successions.

Above all this, however, the ceremonies that will take place at Eagle Square tomorrow must be understood for what they are. They are rituals in the service of order. Order is in turn the surest guarantee of the survival of the state without which all our strivings as a society could evaporate in the swirl of anarchy and a descent into a state of nature. As A. Kaplan puts it in his new book, The Tragic Mind, "It is the panoply and mystique of power and hierarchy that reinforces order."

Events like the recent coronation of the British king or the inauguration of the US President every four years are not pointless hollow rituals. They are instead part of the consolidation of the tradition of order and continuity without which a society is swept away in the vortex of disorder and casual pedestrianism. The British writer Tony Tanner puts it more pointedly, "Authority requires awe from which emerges legitimacy."

Yet our ceremony must go beyond the ossified conservative variety that we witnessed with either the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II or the coronation of her son as King Charles III. While museum type adherence to tradition serves to maintain and sustain extant monarchical traditions, a republican democracy still needs the ceremony and pomp of statehood for a different set of reasons. A republican democracy such as ours forged from an amalgam of disparate national traditions needs the ceremonies of an artificial unified nationhood for many reasons. Our citizens need to look forward to periodic ceremonies of leadership renewal. People need to get used to certain fixed rituals as emblems of nationhood. We need the ceremonial reaffirmations of the bonds of community. We need a consolidation of the symbols and rituals of oneness so that national unity becomes second nature.



Tinubu

Through the military parades and displays of strength, we are reassured that the sovereign is in tact and strong enough to protect us all from dangerous compatriots and hostile adversaries. Watching the march pasts, the parade of armed services emblems, the tidy uniformity of steps and formations of service personnel, the awe of state overwhelms the onlooker. On sober reflection, it dawns on you that the ceremonies of statehood are a consummation of the idiocy of the nation state as an artificial construct. They dress it up to appear powerful, frightful and coherent. But in reality, it is all make belief!

Nonetheless, as a celebration of order, the ceremonies of state reassure the citizenry that leadership is in tact and alive to its responsibilities. Order is disrupted when leadership is doubtful and sovereignty is shaky. Anarchy is not necessarily the absence or total collapse of responsible leadership. It also includes woeful governance, a fundamental departure from civilized codes of organizing society. Disrepair or disequilibrium in the state of affairs in a nation marks a departure from order. When the normal order of things is replaced by pervasive abnormality, disorder becomes the new normal.

The origins of such disorder date back to ancient times. Greek tragedy is our readiest showcase. When in Sophoclean tragedy the king goes astray, the polity and society are unhinged. Anarchy ensues. Epidemics and curses rage unhindered. The angry gods are only assuaged and ordered is restored when the old reign ends and a new order is emplaced. A new order ensues when the monarchy is restored. The restoration of order is celebrated through ceremony, dance and displays.

Tomorrow's ceremony of succession is perhaps not quite like any other one in recent times. But the outlines are familiar and resonate with classical models. In today's Nigeria, order as a feature of our national life is on recess. Very few Nigerians can bear witness to normalcy as we once knew it in the last eight years. As we speak, our nation dangles on a precipice between treacherous survival and a perilous anarchy.

The place we once called home is not quite like what we all used to know. Fear lurks in every street corner and every highway. Our urban neighbourhoods have become the abodes of violent gangs and dangerous cults. Our rural areas are swarming with militias of no nomenclature. Our tertiary institutions established for learning the secrets that have transformed other nations into abodes of sweetness are now hotbeds of cybercrimes and dark bloody rituals. The faiths that ought to prepare our people for salvation through brotherhood and fellowship on earth have been invoked by devilish power mongers to divide us along all known lines.

Mr. Buhari as president for eight years may have given of his best to the nation as he now repeatedly insists. But the results on the ground speak of a yawning gap between what was promised and what has been delivered. Maybe the odds were against his best efforts. Maybe some numbers just failed to add up. It is even possible that he and his crew hardly knew the landscape well enough. In order to change a given reality, you must master it in order to dominate it let alone bend it to the popular will. We expected. We waited. And we hoped. We remained patient along the way. But at this hour of exit and renewal, there is no sweetness here or anywhere in the vicinity.

As we await the parades and fireworks tomorrow, this tragic and depressing reality is the fierce urgency of this hour. This dark sack cloth is the backdrop for the elaborate ceremonies that will regale dignitaries and guests tomorrow. But the essence of tomorrow's inauguration must not be lost in the symbolism of the moment of ceremony.

Therefore, beyond the pomp and displays that will happen in Abuja tomorrow, both our leaders and citizens must see beyond the glitz of the day. We expect to hear in the words of the presidential inaugural address definite take-aways and memorable words to hold on to. The day belongs to the incoming leadership of Mr. Tinubu and Alhaji Shettima. Perhaps this is the moment that Mr. Tinubu was anticipating when he exclaimed "Emi lokan"- It is my turn. It is his turn to renew our hope, to reactivate the commitments that have kept us together despite odds. He needs to go beyond any suggestions of a personality cult in the making to utter words to kill the mocking bird of campaign season animosity and madness.

Beyond words, we need deeds to redefine our nationhood. It is not just a restoration of a semblance of order in our normal daily existence that is urgently required. That is a necessary starting point. Nigerians now need to step out of their homes and be sure to return safely. People need to travel our highways and be certain to get to their destinations without the risk of being kidnapped or murdered. The poor of today need hope that tomorrow will uplift their situation. The next generation of Nigerians must not continue to live life encaged in the helpless knowledge that even they too will bequeath poverty to their own children. Purpose must replace futility if Mr. Tinubu is to justify his feeling of entitlement to aspire to presidential power. Otherwise he will have wasted his time and that of every other Nigerian.

Our schools need to be open year round to impart knowledge and not disperse ignorance and deepen superstition. The sick and infirm must seek and find succor and healing in clinics, health centres and hospitals that cure rather than kill people who seek their help. All these and more are the minimum irreducible demands of the moment to begin reversing the disorder that the departing dispensation unleashed on us as a legacy.

But beyond these immediate and choking challenges, a serious new leadership must take another look at the Nigeria in which tomorrow's succession ceremony is taking place. After a brutal civil war, Nigeria was remade in accordance with a new national order in 1970. Structurally, the nation was reconfigured from regions into states. Psychologically, a new sense of reconciliation and renewed unity was inaugurated. Economically, the oil boom was born to empower government and people to tackle the things that money could buy-infrastructure, human capital development, international sagacity etc. The new Nigeria was one in which young Nigerians embraced education because there was a job waiting at the end of the road. While that order prevailed, it seemed as if there was indeed a Nigerian dream which was attainable in a life time. The honest worker knew he would earn enough to save for his children's education and perhaps a modest retirement home in the village.

Our new post war national order was guaranteed by a strong federal might presiding over states that could hardly pose a political threat to that authority.

Today, that order has literally dissolved. Separatist pressures from ethnicities, regions and communities now freely threaten the dwindling might of the federal guarantor of a receding national order. That previously overwhelming might is now easily outgunned and overrun by all manner of fierce contenders. Guns and uniforms that used to confer superior authority by frightening citizens into conformity are now two akobo at the roadside market and readily in the hands of casual thugs and free ranging cultists.

The monopoly of control over economic resources has been burst as marauding gangs of thugs and official armed agents help themselves to resources ranging from oil to precious minerals in far flung locations. There is a thriving separate market specializing in 'Zamfara gold' in Guangzou, China! Our entire ungoverned spaces are squarely in the hands of vicious armed non state militants. Sometimes, the official security forces equipped with costly weapons of war have had to seek the help of local hunters armed with charms, amulets and Dane guns to ward off roving gangs of marauders and killers armed with AK-47s and GPS devices.

The power of the social media with a cacophony of millions of loud discordant voices has drowned the previous authoritative voice of the government which is now often lost for direction and message. The alternative power of information carried by cheap cell phones in literally every hand portends a transfer of the power of information from the high and mighty to the low and many. A new society has been born complete with its own values and powers of choice. The youth that Nigeria can hardly provide for are redefining the Nigerian dream through the immense creative profitability of technology as well as its potential for devastating criminality. Our children are now being taught to count money in billions. Anything less glamorous depresses them into open revolts.

The power of overwhelming corruption has blurred the distinction between government coffers and private treasure vaults. In Nigeria, both are literally one and the same. In some quarters, the state and its treasures have been privatized. As a defining force of the Nigerian political and economic ecosystem, corruption defeated and humbled Mr. Buhari and even took him hostage without a whimper. How Mr. Tinubu defines corruption and approaches it will perhaps be the most interesting engagement of his presidency.

The beauty of tomorrow's ceremonies is that they will quickly yield place to the stark realities of a new era: Nigeria AB, Nigeria After Buhari. Interesting days indeed.

# BACKPAGE CONTINUATION

## IN THE MATTER BETWEEN MATAWALLE AND EFCC

of the grounds listed by Matawalle, this Court has nonetheless found it necessary to make a public policy pronouncement in the interest of all, hoping that our learned friends will stop misleading the public.

The argument that a federal body cannot look into the finances of states is as misleading as it is disingenuous. Item No 6 on the Exclusive Legislative List of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) vests banking regulations in the Federal Government. Pursuant to this constitutional provision, the National Assembly exercised its authority by enacting the EFCC Act, 2004, granting the agency the power under Section 6(b) to investigate all financial crimes including advance fee fraud, money laundering, counterfeiting, illegal charge transfers, futures market fraud, fraudulent encashment of negotiable instruments, computer credit card fraud, and so forth.

Thus, any transaction that passes through the banking system is, by virtue of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution, subject to federal regulation. It is, therefore, illogical to accuse the EFCC of poke-nosing into the finances of states whereas it is able to probe transactions that go through the financial system. If state funds were to be spent in such a way and manner that would not involve the banking system, the EFCC would be legally barred from looking into such transactions. In the real sense, therefore, what the EFCC does is to investigate and prosecute acts of money laundering that went through the financial system, no matter the individual, agency, or tier of government involved.

If the contrary were to hold true, we may as well conclude that if a vehicle belonging to a state government and driven by an employee of the state kills a citizen on the federal highway, the driver could not be prosecuted by the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) since it is a federal body. Insofar as the crime is committed in an area under federal jurisdiction, it does not matter if the offending driver were an employee of a state or the car were the property of the state government. I am, therefore, satisfied by the combined reading of the 1999 Constitution and the EFCC Act, 2004 and hereby declare that any crime that passes through the banking system is a federal offence.

Let me now determine Issue No 1 as raised by Matawalle, viz: whether the EFCC should be probing only governors and their commissioners whereas federal government officials are also corrupt but the anti-graft agency is looking the other way. This raises a basic question: can the EFCC walk and chew gum at the same time? I hold so. It is not a matter of either/or. The EFCC should go after governors, federal officials and whoever violates the money laundering laws. Going after Matawalle should not stop the EFCC from going after federal officials and going after federal officials should not stop the agency from going after Matawalle. I, therefore, order the EFCC to go after all of them.

On Issue No 2, as to whether the EFCC should not also show evidence of federal corruption, I acknowledge that a former minister is currently in custody over money laundering allegations, as confirmed by the EFCC in its response. It is also to my knowledge that a serving accountant-general of the federation was arrested over allegations of N109 billion fraud. I am further aware that many federal officials are being questioned or put on trial over allegations of fraud and money laundering. It would seem Matawalle has specific persons in mind whom he thinks are being treated as sacred cows. The applicant may be well right but that cannot extricate him from the allegations against him.

On Issue No 3, as to whether the EFCC has a moral right to call Matawalle corrupt whereas its boss allegedly demanded a bribe of $2 million from him, this court holds true a maxim: "He that comes to equity must come with clean hands." But the legitimate and legal way for Matawalle to resolve this claim is to provide the evidence to the appropriate authorities. The EFCC chairman does not enjoy immunity in any form and is subject to accountability procedure by any of the arms of government. In this instance, we hold that Matawalle has the right and duty to present the requisite evidence to the police or any anti-graft agency for necessary action as soon as possible in the national interest.

I hold that Matawalle cannot, in citing the ground of equity, get any comfort from making a counter allegation against the EFCC chairman. In Loughran v. Loughran, the Learned Judge Brandies J. said that "equity does not demand that its suitors shall have led blameless lives". There are other maxims this Honourable Court of Public Opinion would like to draw to Matawalle's attention, namely "equity will not grant relief from a self-created hardship", "no one is entitled to the aid of a court of equity when that aid has become necessary through his or her own fault", and "a court of equity will not assist a person in extricating himself or herself from the circumstances that he or she has created".

In its counter-petition before this Court, the EFCC accused Matawalle of money laundering. It says the real issue is that Matawalle is being investigated by the EFCC over allegations of corruption, award of phantom contracts and diversion of over N70 billion. The agency alleges that Matawalle sourced the funds as a loan from an old generation bank to execute projects across the local government areas of Zamfara state. The agency further avers that over 100 companies received payments but there is no evidence of service rendered to the state. Some of the contractors have allegedly made "startling revelations" to the EFCC on how they diverted the funds to private pockets.

According to the EFCC, the contractors confessed, under interrogation, that they were directed to convert the funds to dollars and pay into the accounts of a commissioner and some aides of the governor. One contractor allegedly collected N6 billion on a N10 billion contract without rendering any service. Another was said to have collected over N3 billion to supply medical equipment but N400 million went to a Bureau de Change. The contractor allegedly said it was to buy dollars for Matawalle. If these allegations are indeed true, it would aid my elementary understanding of one of the many reasons for the demand pressure on dollar and why the exchange rate keeps going up.

Having carefully studied the arguments of both parties, this Honourable Court of Public Opinion hereby orders Matawalle to return to Nigeria from Egypt, where he is currently chilling out, to answer his father's name. The EFCC has accused him of money laundering. He too has accused the EFCC chairman of demanding a bribe. This Court holds that it is settled in law that he who asserts a fact must prove the existence of that fact. Therefore, justice will be best served if (1) Matawalle urgently returns to prove his case against Bawa and (2) Matawalle exercises his right to defend himself before a Court of Law. Finally, I order both parties to immediately cease their media war.

I make no order as to costs.

# And Four Other Things...

### BYE BYE, BUHARI

I know this expression is overused, but it felt like yesterday that President Muhammadu Buhari assumed power. After eight years that looked like an eternity, he will bow out tomorrow. Whatever has a beginning must have an end. A lot has been said on his performance. Some say he failed. Some say he did well under the circumstance. We will never come to a consensus. But I would say he did well in improving infrastructure, reforming critical laws (of particular note being CAMA and Petroleum Industry Act) as well as growing agriculture, but he struggled with economic policy and security, which, for all you care, are the most obvious and paramount to most Nigerians. Mixed.

### MAY 29 IS HERE!

The journey to May 29, 2023 effectively started in May 2022 when the parties picked their presidential candidates. The victory of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in the February 25 poll is being challenged at the tribunal by his closest rivals, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Mr Peter Obi, who both claim to have won. In the absence of any law preventing the candidate declared as winner from being inaugurated while the outcome is still being challenged, Tinubu will be sworn in as the president tomorrow. We had the most toxic electioneering in our history, with some wounds looking like they will never heal. But in all the rancour, Nigerians have remained largely peaceful. Miracle.

### DANGLING SUBSIDY

Congratulations to Alhaji Aliko Dangote on the inauguration of his mega refinery after several setbacks amid billions of dollars pumped into the project over the years. All is well that ends well. However, I need to sound a note of caution to Nigerians who expect petrol to be cheaper because we are now refining at "home". There are many things to factor into our enthusiasm. Will crude oil be sold to the refinery in naira or in dollars? Will it be at the international price? If crude is sold to him at a subsidised price, that means there is still subsidy. Local refining won't bring an automatic end to subsidy but it can address other problems such as product availability, jobs and FX conservation. Oily.

### JUSTICE FOR DEBORAH

A year ago, Ms Deborah Emmanuel, a 200 level student of home economics at Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto, was murdered and set ablaze allegedly by religious extremists for "blasphemy" after asking her classmates to stop posting religious materials on their WhatsApp group. A year after, insult has been added to injury with the trial of the suspects, Bilyaminu Aliyu and Aminu Hukunci, terminated for lack of diligent prosecution by the police, who never showed up in court during the hearings. This was like killing Deborah all over again. This is either a manifestation of the crass incompetence typical of the police or a conspiracy to kill justice. Whatever, it is disturbing. Sad.

## TINUBU AND MATTERS OF URGENT NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

two candidates won, it is unlikely that this scenario would have been avoided given how competitive the 2023 presidential election was.

The complication, however, is that this means that a significant majority of the voters did not choose the winner—66.23% in Shagari's case and 63.39% in Tinubu's. The extra complication is that this sizeable majority in Tinubu's case coincides with significant ethnic, religious and demographic constituencies. This makes a compelling case for prioritising accommodation, not as a political ploy to secure legitimacy or acceptance but as the right thing to do. Tinubu should make peace with the fact that some people will never accept him as the winner of the election or as their president. It goes with the terrain. Late President Shagari had to contend with this in a section of the society and the press even after the Supreme Court confirmed him the winner of the 1979 elections. Tinubu should do right by all, irrespective of their attitude to him.

The instinct to adopt a winner-takes-all approach is natural and there will be the temptation to see appointments as spoils of war. This will not only be wrong but can potentially exacerbate the growing sense of hurt and alienation by sections of the country. It is thus important that the president, in words and in deed, treats all segments of the country fairly and equally, including those that didn't vote for him and especially under-represented groups like women, youth and people living with disabilities. Over-compensating will not be a bad idea in the interest of peace and unity.

The second area I want to highlight is the need to tackle widespread insecurity in the country. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. But suffice it to say that without security, whatever progress is recorded in other areas will be undermined. Also, securing life and property is a core and constitutional responsibility of the state and a public good



Tinubu

that can best be delivered by the government. In addition, tackling insecurity was one of the few major areas that the candidates and the voters agreed should be a high priority during the campaigns.

Despite the best efforts of the outgoing government, Nigeria is today confronted with what has been aptly described as generalised insecurity. All the six geo-political zones are battling with one form of insecurity or the other. It is very important to build on what has been done to significantly reduce the incidence of and the fatalities from conflicts, crimes and terrorism in Nigeria.

This will mean having a more nuanced understanding of the drivers, triggers and manifestations of insecurity in the country, improving the quality of actionable intelligence and acting on time, enhancing coordination, improving resourcing, increasing accountability and reviewing our security architecture to ensure that our armed and security forces are up to the current and future security challenges. Also, some of the security issues will demand deft political engagement.

The third area is the economy, which to put it mildly is not in a good place. Almost all, if not all, economic indicators are worse than they were eight years ago: GDP growth rate, inflation rate, interest rate, unemployment rate, poverty rate, public debt, budget deficit, excess crude account etc. The new government needs to take some urgent steps to facilitate job creation and poverty reduction and to bring our public finances to good health. The federal government needs to improve revenue collection, spend more smartly, and block wastes/leakages. Some of the urgently needed measures will not be painless or popular. Some of them will be resisted, for both genuine and purely political reasons.

One of such is the ruinous and suboptimal petrol subsidy, which is billed to gulp as much as N6.7 trillion if kept for the entire year. If the 2023 budget stays at N21.83 trillion, this means that petrol subsidy alone will consume 30.69% of the budget and 63.87% of the expected N10.49 trillion revenue for the year (which is likely not be realised in full.) But the fact that petrol subsidy is an obviously and very inefficient use of public resources and a major burden on our public finance does not mean that its removal will not be resisted. The fact that the major candidates promised to implement full deregulation also does not mean they will not make common cause with those opposed to its removal.

Petrol subsidy removal is always going to be contentious for a number of reasons, including the probability of further spike in inflation, the disproportionate negative impact on the poor, Nigerians' attachment to 'the only thing they enjoy from their country' and lack of trust in government. Petrol subsidy is thus not purely about economics. The government needs to have the skills and the courage to remove it, the humility to engage in frank dialogue with Nigerians and the discipline to implement an efficient and accountable programme for reinvesting the savings from petrol subsidy removal.

Some tax handles need to increase, the tax net needs to be widened, oil production and oil revenues need to significantly go up, some tax expenditures and waivers need to go, multiple exchange rates need to end, revenue generating agencies need to remit more and cost of collection for some fat and extravagant agencies needs to be removed or significantly reduced. The leakages and wastes must be addressed and revenues should be significantly bumped up. The instinct to resort to borrowing or to literally just print money should be contained. We cannot borrow our way out of this fiscal hole. According to the World Bank, Nigeria expended 96.3% of its revenue on debt service in 2022. This is not sustainable, and we need to make the necessary adjustments before we are forced to.

The economy is the fulcrum for everything else, both for the country and for the citizens. As the Americans would say, it is the economy, stupid. To signal that he gets it, Tinubu needs to appoint proper managers of the economy, and very early too.

The narrator in Ben Okri's 'The Famished Road' notes dreamily that "a dream can be the highest point of a life." True. Now, Tinubu has achieved his highest dream. It may be for long, and it may not. No matter how long it lasts, he has the onus to make it count for Nigeria, and quickly too. The clock starts counting from Eagle Square.

NEWSXTRA

# Appeal Court Suspends Judgment Sacking Alex Otti

**Ibrahim Garba** in Kano

The Kano Division of the Court of Appeal has granted an order for a stay and suspension of the judgment of a Federal High Court in Kano State sacking the Abia State Governor-elect, Dr. Alex Otti.

The court also granted the governor-elect leave to appeal as an interested party against the judgment of Justice Mohammed Yunusa delivered on May 18.

The three-man panel of the court led by Justice Ita Mbaba granted Otti seven days from Saturday within which to file the notice of appeal as an interested party. The other two justices are Justice Uche Onyemenam and Justice Usman Musale.

They granted the application after listening to Abiodun Owonikoko, SAN, who represented the appellant (Otti) alongside Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Ken Ahia and Bashir Muhammad.

The respondents, Ibrahim Haruna Ibrahi, Labour Party, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), were not represented in court, despite being served.

The order for a stay and suspension of the judgement was granted, pending the hearing and determination of the appeal for which leave had been granted

The appellant was also ordered "to give an undertaking for damages in the sum of two million naira in favour of each of the respondents in the event of failure by the appellant to file or diligently prosecute the appeal in terms of the proposed notice of appeal containing ten grounds in Exhibit AO4".

It will be recalled that on May 18, Justice Yunusa had held "that the Labour Party had carried on with its activities in the selection for the general election in a manner that is at variance with mandatory provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 which renders its participation in the General Elections of 2023 in Kano & Abia states as null and void.

"That the failure of the party to submit its register of members in Kano & Abia states is in crass breach of the provisions of Section 77(3) of the Electoral Act 2022 and the purported elections of the Labour Party is invalid, null and void and of no effect

The court had also held "that the void primary elections of Labour Party cannot produce eligible candidates to be sponsored by the party in the general election and the participation of the candidates in Kano and Abia states is of no money and a waste of time.

"That the votes cast for all the candidates of the Labour Party in Kano and Abia states in the General Elections of 2023 are wasted votes".



**CONGRATULATIONS…**

L-R: Wife of the sponsor, Mrs. Emeka Okonkwo; the couple, Mr. & Mrs. Ikechukwu Mbadugha; and the Sponsor and Chairman, Emmyfrank Nigeria Limited, Chief Emeka Okonkwo, at the wedding of the couple in Festac Town, Lagos recently.

## IG Redeploys Katsina PPRO for Assaulting Female Journalist

The Public Relations Officer of Katsina State Police Command, Isah Gambo, has been transferred a few days after an alleged assault on a female journalist, Rukayyah Jibia.

The Inspector-General of Police, Usman Baba, ordered the transfer of Gambo, a Chief Superintendent of Police, to Zone 14 Police Headquarters in the same Katsina State.

However, it cannot be established whether his transfer is connected with the assault or not.

Gambo is among the list of the 15 police officers affected by the latest posting.

Rukayyah Jibia had raised the alarm over alleged threats to her life by the police.

The journalist had posted a video on TikTok, faulting the arrest and subsequent parading of four teenage female vendors whom the police command claimed are sex workers.

Rukayya was alleged to have been dragged to the palace of the Emir of Katsina, following the brush with the PPRO.

But in a post, Gambo wrote: "Alhamdullillah! After seven years of excellent stewardship as PPRO Katsina Police command and with my subsequent elevation to the rank of CSP, the Inspector-General of Police, has ordered my posting as PPRO Zone 14, Katsina.

"I will be supervising the Public Relations units of Katsina and Kaduna states command. Alhamdullillah, Masha Allah," Gambo wrote in a post.

## Emir of Kano Inaugurates World-class Hospital in C'River

**Bassey Inyang** in Calabar

The inauguration of legacy projects of Cross River State Governor, Prof. Ben Ayade continued yesterday with the unveiling of the state of the art 140-bed Obudu-German Specialist Hospital, by the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero.

The monarch said it was a self-fulfilling experience and honour for him to have travelled to Cross River to commission the hospital.

He said: "It is a great honour for me and the entire people of Kano Emirate to be here in Cross River to the Commission, not just this hospital but other projects of His Excellency.

"Cross River is blessed to have Ayade as a son. His achievements are not talk shows, they are real. This hospital is one of his signature projects.

"I have been around the world and there is no difference between this hospital and the standard hospitals in Saudi Arabia and Europe. So I appeal to the management of this hospital to maintain the standard."

Also at the inauguration, the governor explained that the hospital was established by his administration in partnership with the Coscharis Group.

He disclosed that the hospital was conceived to make Cross River the number destination for medical tourism in Nigeria.

Ayade said: "Here, you have a situation where you have the best equipment, best facility and best personnel. With the ambience of Obudu Cattle Ranch and the serenity of the atmosphere, I can tell you that medical tourism will thrive here at Obudu-German hospital."

On the occasion, the Chairman of Coscharis Group, Dr. Cosmas Maduka described the medical facility as second to none in Nigeria.

He further stated that the Obudu-German hospital was comparable with any German hospital in the world.

He eulogised Ayade as a visionary for conceiving the idea of the hospital in 2020 and bringing it to reality three years later.

Maduka challenged sceptics "to please visit this hospital and see things for yourselves."

## Uche Nwokedi's Memoir, 'A Shred of Fear' on Spotlight at CORA Book Trek on May 31

The May edition of the monthly literary series CORA Book Trek is set to hold on Wednesday, May 31 at Roving Heights Bookstore in Landmark Place, Water Corporation Drive, Oniru, Victoria Island. The event, which is a book review session, will feature Uche Nwokedi's debut memoir, 'A Shred of Fear.'

Nwokedi will be reading from his book, A Shred of Fear alongside friends drawn from the culture community. The memoir is a childhood account of survival and hope through the trauma of war. Young Uche relives with humour some untold details of the war from the point of view of a child survivor.

Aged seven when the war began, he and his family would spend the next three years as refugees in their own country. A Shred of Fear brings dramatic events vividly to life. More than a war story, this compelling narrative is a tale of courage through a dark period.

The CORA BookTrek is a fortnightly author-audience interface, featuring readings, reviews and discussions of select books of searching historical and contemporary insight into the African condition. The objective is to deepen literary appreciation and audience engagement with the published text.

The author who is a senior advocate of Nigeria is a Principal Counsel at Uche Nwokedi & Co.

He cut his teeth at Ashland Oil Company Nigeria as a Legal Officer and later proceeded to Rotimi Williams Chambers as Senior Counsel.

With over 35 years of post-call legal experience, Uche has made his mark in International Commercial Arbitration and Commercial Law, with specialty in oil and gas industry transactions. Before joining the Board of FirstBank, he was the Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of Nigerian Oil and Gas Cases, Chairman, Pound Road Media Limited, and Founder and Chairman, The Playhouse Initiative for Youth Development, a non-profit foundation exploring creativity for youth empowerment.

A graduate of University of Lagos, he is a member of Chartered Institute of Arbitration and Maritime Arbitrators Association of Nigeria, former member of the Executive Council of The Maritime Arbitrators Association of Nigeria.

## Court to Decide Famuagun's Validity as New Araba of Ado Ekiti

**Gbenga Sodeinde** in Ado Ekiti

The selection and installation of Mr. Fasina Famuagun as the new Araba of Ado Ekiti has stoked a legal contest over alleged breach of nomination process.

Chief Famuyibo E. Kayode and Chief Olu Atetedaye (plaintiffs) instituted the legal battle, seeking sought a declaration that Famuagun has not been duly and validly selected and installed as the Araba of Ado Ekiti

They made the declaration in a writ of summons filed before the court, averring that Famuagun's selection and installation was in accordance with the Constitution of Onifa and Orisas, Ekiti State and age long tradition, practice and procedure.

The plaintiffs, who are herbalists and Ifa priests, averred that there is an Ifa/Herbalist Constitution, Ado Ekiti Branch which governs and guides the members in the selection, appointment and installation of the Araba in Ado Ekiti.

In the 20-point statement of claim, it is averred that presently, Chief Olalere Adankara of Area B Onola Quarters, Ado Ekiti, is the most senior member of the group and that the selection, appointment and installation of Araba is the prerogative of members, while the Ewi of Ado Ekiti has no role to play in the processes.

The claimants further averred that on May 16, the respondent began to parade himself as the new Araba of Ado Ekiti because of the intervention of the Ewi of Ado Ekiti.

They contended that the respondent has not fulfilled the mandatory and strict selection processes as contained in the constitution of the group and that he was not installed as the new Araba of Ado Ekiti in consonance with the constitutional provisions and age long tradition of the group.

In the writ issued on their behalf by Otunba Sunday J. Ochayi the counsel to the claimants, the plaintiffs are seeking a declaration that Fasina Famuagun has not been duly and validly selected and installed as the Araba Ado Ekiti and an order of the court on the respondent to stop parading himself as the Araba of Ado Ekiti.

The plaintiffs are also asking for N20 million as general damages against the respondent for the injuries suffered by the claimants as a result of his violation of the constitution of the group.

## House'll Experience Stability under Abbas, Kalu, Say S'West Professionals

**Kemi Olaitan** in Ibadan

The League of Southwest Professionals (LSP) yesterday threw its weight behind the aspirations of Tajudeen Abbas and Benjamin Kalu, to become the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the 10th House of Representatives respectively.

In a statement by its Communications Director, Mr. Abiodun Yusuf, the league said the experience and productivity of the two lawmakers would be helpful to the Nigerian legislature and make it safe.

The statement read in part: "On the basis of competence and capacity, Abbas, the member representing Zaria Federal Constituency who has an unassailed record in the number of bills sponsored by a private member, should ordinarily be primed for higher responsibility because a man is as good as his last job."

The statement said having assessed the aspirations of all the contenders to the Speakership position, the group came to the conclusion that Abbas will together with Kalu, bring a wealth of experience, maturity and act as bridge-builders between the legislature and executive arm of government.

"As a patriotic group, the League of Southwest Professionals has watched with consternation at the degeneracy in democratic discussion, the downward spiral in public discourse and reduction regrettably of these discourses to ethnicity and religion, rather than competence and capacity.

"We are not unmindful of the diversities in tongues and tribes, but we believe in the strength embedded in our diversity as a people. May we remind Nigerians that in the 8th and 9th Assembly, Abbas has to his credit 43 and 73 Bills to his credit as a member of the House of Representatives.

"We do not also believe that the only way to prove legislative activism is to adopt a combative approach.The 10th Assembly members deserve to get their due and it will only take a leadership that can negotiate on behalf of members, is to ensure that these gains are achieved without rancour", the statement said.

As a non-profit making civil society pressure group determined to advocate for the betterment of professionals, the statement said the survival of entrepreneurship given the perennial challenges bedevilling the ease of doing business in the country.

# SUNDAYSPORTS

Edited by: **Duro Ikhazuagbe**
email:Duro.Ikhazuagbe@thisdaylive.com

# U20 World Cup: Flying Eagles Crash Against Brazil, Qualify for Next Round

Brazil's U20 team defeated Flying Eagles 2-0 at the ongoing FIFA U20 World Cup in Argentina last night to maintain the tradition of never losing to the West African side in their five encounters to date.

As it happened in four previous clashes in 1983, 1985, 1987 and 2015, the Ladan Bosso led Flying Eagles lost 0-2 to the Junior Samba Boys in their final Group D game in Buenos Aires to finish third on the log on same six points as Brazil and Italy. They were only separated by goals difference.

From leading the standing, Nigeria dropped to third spot, allowing Brazil to go on top of the table, while Italy, who beat Dominican Republic 3-0, finished second.

With their huge point haul, Nigeria will be among the four best third placed sides to process to the last 16 round of the tournament.

On Matchday 1, Nigeria struggled to beat debutante Dominican Republic 2-1, while Italy shocked Brazil 3-2. The Flying Eagles shot to the top of the table on Matchday 2 when they overcame Italy 2-0, while Brazil restored their status as pre-tournament favourites by white-washing Dominican Republic 6-0.

## Djokovic Shocked By Nadal's Plan to Retire



Nadal (L) and Djokovic

Novak Djokovic said on hearing long-time rival Rafael Nadal announce he intends to retire in 2024 has made him question how long he too will continue playing.

Djokovic, 36, could win his 23rd major title at the French Open, pulling him clear of the injured Nadal and taking the outright men's singles record.

"It made me wonder about my career and how long I might play," said the Serb.

"When he announced he is going to have his last season, I felt part of me is leaving with him too."

Nadal has won a record 14 titles at Roland Garros but misses the clay-court Grand Slam for the first time in 19 years because of a long-term hip injury.

When announcing his withdrawal,the 36-year-old Spaniard said he would stop playing for the foreseeable future in an attempt to return for a planned farewell season in 2024.

Djokovic and Nadal have created one of the most enduring rivalries in tennis history, playing each other 59 times - a record on the ATP Tour - and sweeping up the sport's most significant prizes between them.

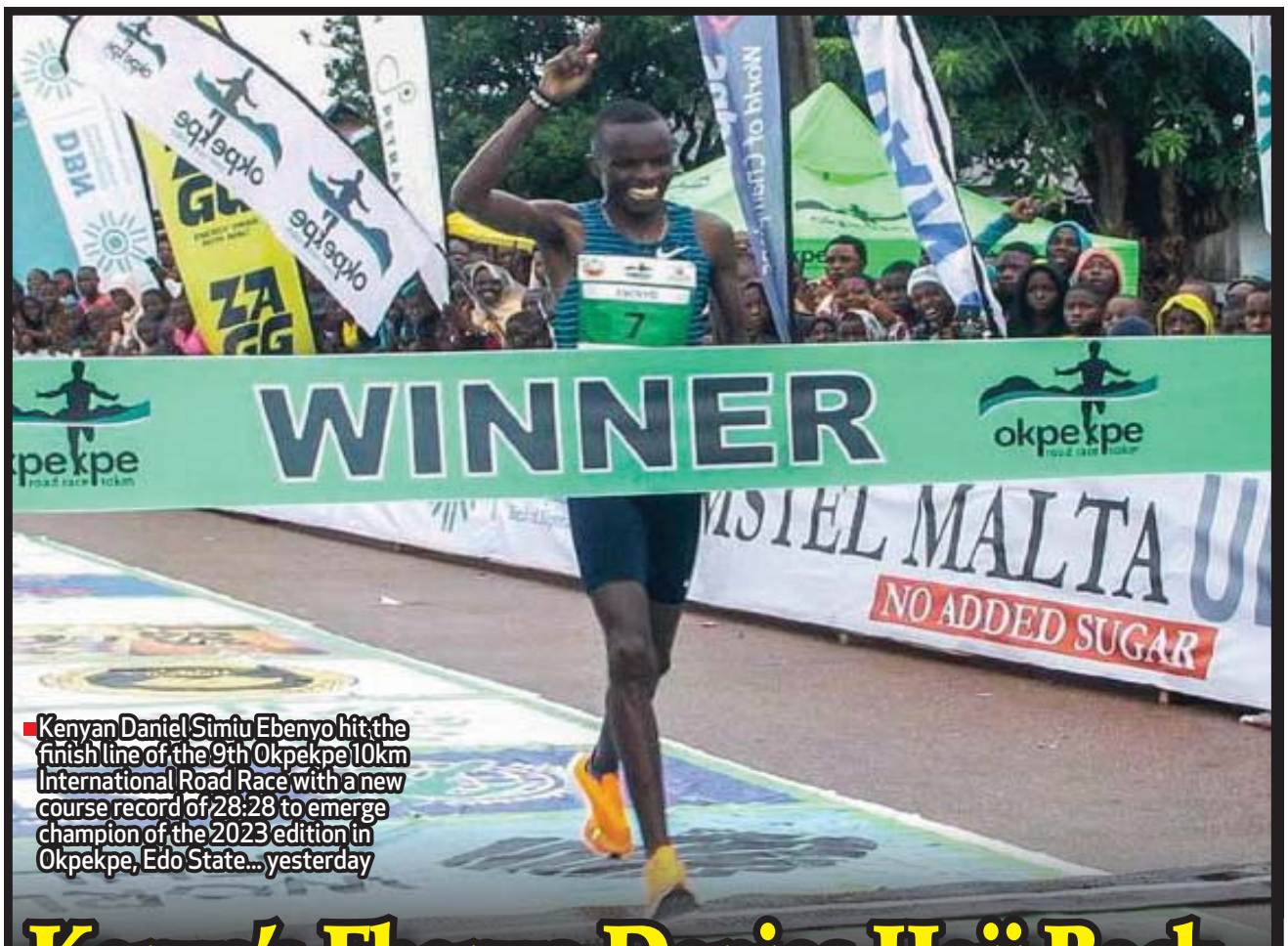
Since the pair each levelled and overtook Roger Federer's mark of 18 majors, they have been tussling to finish on top.

"Because of the rivalry that we have, I feel he was one of the most impactful people that I have had in my career," said Djokovic, who equalled Nadal's 22 majorsby winning the Australian Open in January.

"He has been a great motivational factor for me to keep playing and keep competing, to keep pushing each other and who's going to achieve more.

"So that news came as a shock to everybody.

"It made me think about my career. I'm not going to make any announcement today, but reflecting on it, I felt a little bit emotional about what he was saying."




Kenyan Daniel Simiu Ebenyo hit the finish line of the 9th Okpekpe 10km International Road Race with a new course record of 28:28 to emerge champion of the 2023 edition in Okpekpe, Edo State... yesterday

## Kenya's Ebenyo Denies Haji Back-to-back Feat at 2023 Okpekpe Race

**Duro Ikhazuagbe**

**Kenya's Daniel Simiu Ebenyo at first attempt yesterday erased gold-labeled Okpekpe 10km International Road Race course record of 28 minutes 36seconds with a new 28:28 and pocketed the $20,000 bonus attached to the feat.**

**The 27-year-old East African was clearly the pre-race favourite having just a forthright ago risen to become the 14th fastest man in the world. He won the Istanbul Marathon and another title at the Kip Kieno Classic at home in Lenya before arriving for his first race in Nigeria.**

**On a wet morning in the mountainous Okpekpe setting in Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State, Ebenyo denied Ethiopian Yasin Haji the opportunity to go into history books as the first champion here to successfully defend his title back-to-to. Haji finished third in 29:34 behind another Kenya, Brian Kwemoi ( 28:40). The second and third placed runners got $8,000 and $5,000 respectively.**

**Although Ebenyo was confident before the race without letting out his race plan for the day, he was however full of smiles and laughter not only winning the $13,000 prize money for the winner, he by his feat of a new course record added $7,000 bonus to his haul.**

**"I am very happy that I won the Okpekpe race at first attempt," began the Kenyan. " I thank God for the win ," gushed Ebenyo shortly after crossing the finish line.**

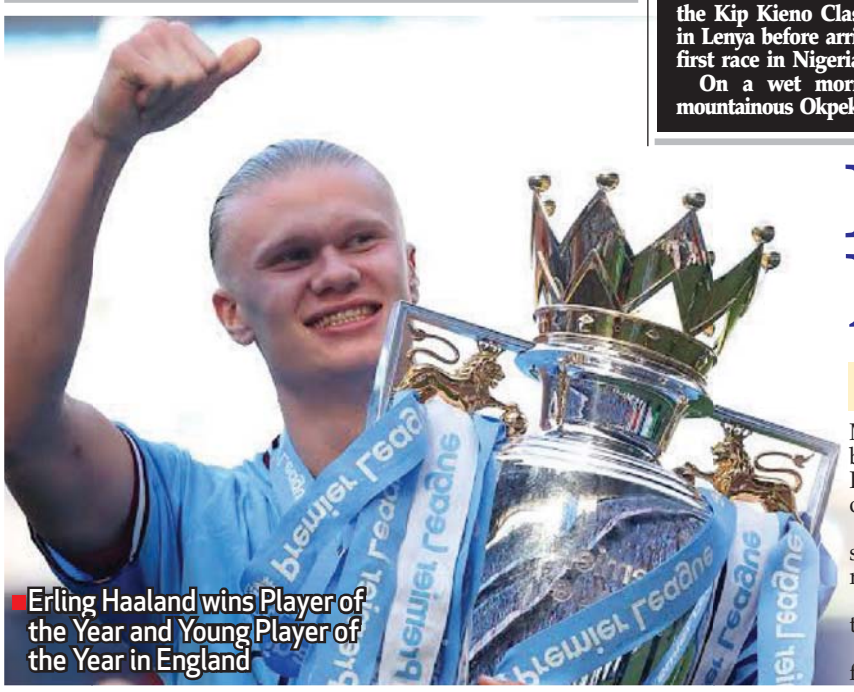
**In what would have been another Kenyan picking the top prize in the women's category of the 2023 Okpekpe road race, winner, Caroline Kipkirui who emerged champion competed under the flag of Kazakhstan having switched alliance to the Eastern European country recently. She clocked 32:38 to set another course record in that women's race.**

**Ludwina Chepngetich (32:53) and of Kenya and Ethiopia's Bertukan Welde (33:06) settled for the second and third places respectively to win $8,000 and $5,000 respectively.**

**Constant decimal in the country in the long-distance races, Ismael Sadjo confirmed his status once again as he won the Men's category for Nigerian runners ahead of Stephen Joshua and Francis James.**

**In the women's category, Patience Dalung hit the finish line first ahead of Akusho Lydia, and Deborah who were second and third positions respectively.**

**Promoter of the Okpekpe 10km Road Race, Mike Itemuagbor, admitted that the race has elevated a rural community like Okpekpe to be recognised globally as athletes from different countries now found it exciting and rewarding to participate in the event.**



Erling Haaland wins Player of the Year and Young Player of the Year in England

## Haaland Wins Premier League Player of the Year

### *Also named Young Player of the Year*

Manchester City's Erling Haaland has become the first player to win the Premier League player and young player of the year awards in the same season.

The 22-year-old striker's 36 goals have seen him break the Premier League record for most goals in a season.

Overall, he has scored 52 goals during the campaign.

"I am honoured to have become the first player to win both awards in the same season - thank you to everyone who voted for me," said Haaland.

Haaland, who received the most combined votes from the public and a Premier League panel, joined City from Borussia Dortmund last summer and has helped the club win a third successive top-flight title.

He has already been named the Football Writers' Association (FWA) men's footballer of the year.

"It has been an incredible first season in the Premier League and lifting the trophy last weekend in front of our fans at the Etihad was a very special moment for me," added the Norway international.

City are also on course for the Treble as they will face Manchester United in the FA Cup final on 3 June before playing Inter Milan in the Champions League final on 10 June.




THISDAY

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**MISSILE**

***Ortom to Buhari***

***"The president recently apologised to Nigerians; we accept the apology but he must be told that he failed woefully and Nigerians are feeling the impact of that failure because we are all suffering"***

*– Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom, describing the Muhammadu Buhari administration as the worst in Nigeria's history.*

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# In the Matter Between Matawalle and EFCC

Alhaji Bello Matawalle, outgoing governor of Zamfara state, recently filed a petition in the Court of Public Opinion regarding his face-off with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and its chairman, Mr Abdulrasheed Bawa. He listed the following issues for determination by the Court: (1) whether the EFCC should be probing only governors and their commissioners whereas federal government officials are also corrupt but the anti-graft agency is looking the other way (2) whether the EFCC should not also show evidence of federal corruption to the world (3) whether the EFCC has a moral right to call him corrupt whereas its boss allegedly demanded a bribe of $2 million from him.

I herein quote Matawalle's words in his interview with the BBC Hausa Service: "It is not just to always blame governors. It is not only governors who have treasury, the federal government also has. What does the EFCC boss do to them? As he is claiming he has evidence on governors. Let him show to the world evidence of those at the federal level. If he (Bawa) exits office, people will surely know he is not an honest person. I have evidence against him. He requested a bribe of $2 million from me and I have evidence of this. He knows the house we met. He invited me and told me the conditions. He told me governors were going to his office, but I did not. If I don't have evidence, I won't say this."



**Matawalle**

The EFCC and Bawa, as respondents, have filed a cross-petition and raised the following issues for determination in the Court of Public Opinion: (1) whether the public should not ignore Matawalle's petition and ask him to answer questions over allegations of money laundering running into N70 billion in a state ravaged by poverty, disease and banditry (2) whether EFCC can be adjudged to be going after only governors when a former minister of power is currently in its custody answering questions on an alleged N22 billion fraud (3) whether Matawalle should not produce and submit to the appropriate authorities evidence of his allegation that its chairman demanded bribe from him.

I proceed to quote the words of Mr Wilson Uwujaren, the EFCC spokesperson: "Matawalle's recourse to mudslinging is symptomatic of a drowning man clutching at straws. But despite the irritation of his phantom claims, the Commission will not be drawn into a mud fight with a suspect under its investigation for corruption and unconscionable pillage of the resources of his state. If Matawalle will be taken seriously, he should go beyond sabre-rattling by spilling the beans – provide concrete evidence as proof of his allegations. Again, the commission wishes to alert the public about plans by some of the alleged corrupt politically exposed persons to flee the country ahead of May 29."

In this Honourable Court of Public Opinion holden at my house somewhere in Lagos state, Nigeria, I have carefully read and considered the arguments in the respective briefs on these issues. But there are preliminary comments I want to make before determining the substantive issues. This Court has taken judicial notice of the resuscitation of the campaign that EFCC, being a federal agency, does not have the constitutional power to look into the finances of states. Although this is not part

**Continued on page 45**

# WAZIRI ADIO

POSTSCRIPT



# Tinubu and Matters of Urgent National Importance

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu will take charge as the 16th President of Nigeria from tomorrow. Except and until the courts decide otherwise, he will, for the next four years, be the leader of Africa's most populous country and largest economy. Tinubu has made no secret of the fact that occupying the highest office in the land is his life-long ambition. Though his name did not get on the ballot until the 2023 electoral cycle and he did not even feature once as an aspirant until last year, Tinubu has reportedly been on this presidency project since 2007. Sixteen years after, he now has his coveted prize, but clearly in challenging economic, social and political circumstances that many would not have imagined when he started dreaming years ago.

He wanted the job badly, now he has it. Now, he has to show that he is up to the task and that the 16-year quest was not solely driven by personal ambition. It is setting up to be a turbulent period. And he should expect no understanding or sympathy. He is not likely to get any. In fact, he should expect strong and sustained hostility in some quarters, given the temper and the outcome of the 2023 polls. His administration may not even have a honeymoon period, or may have the shortest ever. So, he should brace himself for a cold reception. Yet, he should be ready to give the game of his life. Nothing short of an A-Game will do for this period.

Tinubu has no option but to hit the ground running. He doesn't have the luxury of time that others had. He needs to announce his major decisions quickly and clearly. He needs to name his cabinet and other key appointees with despatch, and give his team members clear deliverables and timelines. Leaders are as good as their teams. Tinubu's capacity to move the needle in these challenging times will depend largely on the competence and credibility of his key appointees. The team also needs to be inclusive to ensure proper reflection of our plurality. There would be pressure to give priority in appointments to people from his ethnic stock or from his party or to people who helped him to power. That is the road to ruins. He should avoid it like a plague. He should go for the best hands available not just within his party but also across and beyond party lines.

As president, he has his job well cut out for him. There is a lot to do, and there will be the temptation to want to do so much at once. This is another trap that he should resist. He will need to prioritise, and not spread too thin. While not ignoring other areas, he will need to identify three to five key sectors that his administration wants to focus intensely on. His choice of the priority areas should be guided by the potential to address key and multiple national challenges.

The ultimate decision is his, but I will reiterate here three areas that I had highlighted in previous interventions on this page.

The first is the need to prioritise national healing. Over the last few decades, Nigeria has become an increasingly divided country. This is largely due to the failure to embrace and sustain healing as an urgent national priority and to stick to equity as an abiding article of faith. Also implicated here is the unchecked machination of those who manufacture, magnify, manipulate and mobilise identities for narrow ends. Electoral contests provide one of the biggest playgrounds for identity entrepreneurs, especially in electoral cycles that expose our natural and manufactured cleavages.

The 2023 electoral cycle was a classic test-case, and as feared, it exposed our papered-over divisions. The same-faith ticket of the ruling party (which cannot be divorced from Tinubu's ambition) triggered the open and secret mobilisation of religious identities for electoral purposes. Regional, ethnic and generational identities were also thrown in the mix, highlighting various shades of entitlement mentalities and elevating the electoral value of combustible identities.

Stripped of some remarkable surprises/ exceptions that should be held up as markers of progress, the outcome of the 2023 presidential poll largely exposes how our politics is still wedded to primordial sentiments. Apart from regional bloc votes in most of the north east, south east and south west, there were dangerous campaigns about: 'your own is your own'; 'two Muslims are better than one'; and the candidate of the church. This is bad news for a country still struggling with managing its diversity. The post-election phase remains one of the most toxic ever.

The climate is complicated by the fact that for the first time in the 4th Republic, the winner of the presidential election did not poll up to 50% of the valid votes cast. Two things must be emphasised here: one, scoring more than 50% of the votes cast is not a constitutional requirement—what is required is to score the highest number of votes and to meet the spread requirement, which is at issue for the first time in this republic; two, a winning candidate securing less than 50% will always be a probability once the election is very competitive, as we had in 1979 when Alhaji Shehu Shagari polled only 33.77% of the votes cast and still became the president. By comparison, Tinubu scored 36.61% of the valid votes cast in 2023. Had any of the other

**Continued on page 45**

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