

FG to Dissolve Boards of Federal Agencies, Parastatals

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

Acting under pressure from supporters pushing for political relevance, the federal government may have decided to dissolve the boards of federal agencies and parastatals, THISDAY has learnt.

However, because some of the positions are tenured, it is not certain how far it would be implemented, but there are strong indications that the Presidency may have given the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), the go-ahead

to dissolve and reconstitute the managements and boards of the agencies and parastatals.

The green light to dissolve to board of parastatals has already alerted political lobbyists who are gearing up to be appointed in the event of the dissolution of the boards of the federal

parastatals.

However, when contacted yesterday on the issue, the Director Information OSGF, Willie Bassey, said he was unaware of such presidential approval.

There are about 42 agencies and parastatals directly under

the supervision of the OSGF, that directly help the government in the daily running of varying and specific, oversight and administrative functions.

The dissolution of the boards is expected to help President Bola Tinubu to shape the agenda of his own administration.

Some senior civil servants who spoke to THISDAY last night, said that it would not be out of place for Tinubu to dissolve the boards of federal parastatals inherited from former President

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Tinubu Asks Press to Hold Govt Accountable

● *Hails new NGE officers*

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Bola Tinubu has charged the media to step up its constitutional responsibility of holding the government accountable to the citizenry, just

as he has congratulated the new President of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), Mr. Eze Anaba, and other elected officers of the professional body.

The president, in a statement entitled: 'As journalism marches

on in the service of Nigeria', issued by his Special Adviser on Special Duties, Communications, and Strategy, Mr. Dele Alake, described the recent Biennial Convention of the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) as an epochal

milestone in the evolution of the journalism profession in the country.

According to him, the peaceful poll by the NGE is a clear signal to the larger society that elections devoid of bitterness and

unnecessary rancour can hold peacefully in Nigeria.

He charged the media to step up its constitutional responsibility of holding the government accountable to the citizenry.

President Tinubu also

promised to collaborate with the press in the task of realising the lofty ideas of developing the country.

Tinubu congratulated the

Continued on page 5

NJC Moves to Appoint Eight Justices of Supreme Court

● *NBA gives lawyers Wednesday deadline to indicate interest*

Alex Enumah in Abuja with agency report

Following the dwindling number of Supreme Court justices, the National Judicial Council (NJC) has started the process of appointing eight new ones to fill the apex court's severely depleted bench, THISDAY has learnt.

In line with this development, the President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mr Yakubu Maikyau (SAN), in an email he addressed to lawyers on Friday, urged interested and suitably qualified lawyers from the regions with openings on the Supreme Court bench to submit their expression of interest to the NBA secretariat in Abuja on or before 21 June.

NJC is expected to fill the apex court's bench to its full complement of 21 justices – a feat the court has never attained.

The number of judges at

Continued on page 5



ROYAL VISIT...

L-R: The Elegushi of Ikate Kingdom, Oba Saheed Ademola Elegushi, Kusenla III; President Bola Tinubu; and the Oniru of Iruland, Oba Abdulwasiiu Omogbolahan Lawal, when the traditional rulers visited the president at the State House, Abuja... recently

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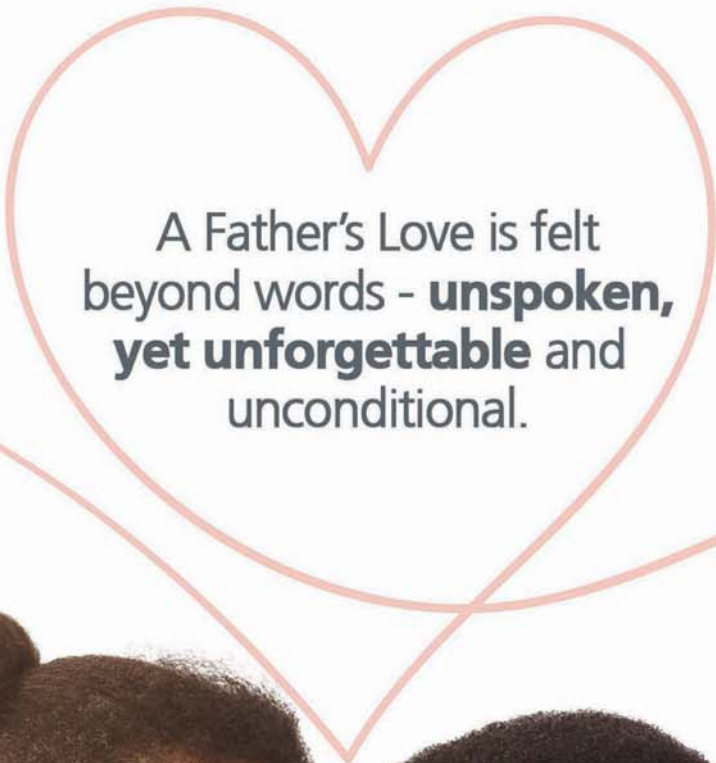
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PRODUCT LAUNCH...

L-R: Brand Manager, Edrington Portfolio, Nigeria, Hammed Adebisi; Ex-BBNaija Star, Atteh Daniel; Creative Photographer and Publisher of Mania Magazine, Kelechi Amadi-Obi; and Chief Sales and Marketing Officer of Aosorwell Limited, Onochia Onyetenu, during the launch of The Macallan M at The Art Hotel in Lagos...recently

CBN Okays eNaira as Payment Option for Diaspora Remittance

James Emejo in Abuja

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has announced the introduction of its digital currency known as the eNaira as a payment option to recipients of diaspora remittance.

The apex bank said the move was in furtherance of efforts to liberalise the payout of diaspora remittance.

The new policy was contained in the bank's circular titled: "Operational Framework for eNaira Payment Option to Recipients of Diaspora Remittances," and dated June 15, 2023.

The circular, which was obtained by THISDAY, was addressed to the International Money Transfer Operators (IMTOs) and the public.

The CBN said the guidelines in the circular signed by CBN Director, Trade and Exchange Department, Dr. Ozoemena Nnaji, would facilitate the payment of proceeds of diaspora remittances to recipients who choose eNaira as a payment alternative.

Under the guidelines, the IMTOs are required to apply for a one-time "No-Objection" to pay out in eNaira from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

The bank shall also provide account details where foreign currency from IMTOs shall be received.

The CBN however, stressed that the receipt of proceeds of diaspora remittance in eNaira remained optional, adding that the option of the digital currency payout shall run concurrently with the

dollar payout.

According to the framework, IMTOs are required to open merchant wallets through the CBN and pre-fund the CBN account with foreign currency.

The central bank will consequently fund the IMTO merchant wallet with eNaira equivalent of the foreign currency earlier pre-funded by the latter.

The CBN further explained that the payment procedure shall involve a sender initiating a diaspora transfer with an IMTO of choice overseas providing details of the beneficiary's wallet.

The IMTO then logs into the eNaira web wallet portal, debits its eNaira merchant wallet, and credits the beneficiary with the eNaira equivalent of the foreign currency sent at the origin at the I&E window rate.

Alternatively, the apex bank noted that IMTO could integrate with the eNaira portal from its platform via API provided by CBN and initiate the transfer of eNaira equivalent of the foreign currency sent at the origin at the I&E window rate.

An initiative of the central bank, eNaira was unveiled on October 25, 2021, by former President Muhammadu Buhari to drive a more cashless, inclusive, and digital economy as well as complement the gains of previous monetary policy measures and fast-growing payments platforms.

The digital innovation is expected to support a resilient payment system ecosystem, encouraging rapid financial inclusion, reducing the cost of processing cash, enabling

direct and transparent welfare intervention to citizens, and increasing revenue and tax collection.

Essentially, the eNaira would

also facilitate diaspora remittances, reducing the cost of financial transactions, and improving the efficiency of payments.

According to the apex bank,

the eNaira remains the country's digital equivalent of the physical Naira.

"The eNaira – like the physical Naira – is a legal tender in Nigeria

and a liability of the CBN. The eNaira and Naira will have the same value and will always be exchanged at 1 naira to 1 eNaira," the bank reportedly noted.

TINUBU ASKS PRESS TO HOLD GOVT ACCOUNTABLE

newly elected President of the Guild, Mr. Eze Anaba, who is the Editor of the Vanguard newspaper, and wished him and other newly elected officials of the guild a most fulfilling and productive tenure in office.

"By its peaceful and rancour-free conduct of elections to elect its new officers, the NGE has sent a resounding message to the larger Nigerian polity that elections for desired offices can be intensely competed for without degenerating into bitterness, acrimony, and needless malice," the statement said.

Tinubu also commended those who lost out in the elections at various levels such as Mr. Bolaji Adebisi for accepting the outcome and pledging support for the winners.

"This is a light that the NGE is showing that the rest of us may find the way to a mature, tolerant, stable, and sustainable democratic culture.

"It is of the utmost importance that the various unions in the newspaper industry such as the NGE, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), and the Newspapers Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN) imbibe the ethos of internal democracy in support of professional integrity for the benefit of good governance, stability and sustainability development in Nigeria," the statement explained.

According to Tinubu, the NGE has, in this regard, made a strong statement for the Nigerian media as a worthy exemplar.

The president, however, urged that elections are not held within the unions in the journalism profession just for the sake of holding elections to appoint new officers of associational offices.

"Rather, the larger picture is to ensure at all times that we place the profession in a prime position to continually fulfill its constitutional obligation of

serving as a watchdog of the people in checking the excesses of government and promoting the greatest good of the greatest number of our people.

He recalled that the press was active in the struggle against the military dictatorship in post-colonial Nigeria, adding that this opposition to autocracy was particularly exemplified in the fierce opposition of patriotic media practitioners to the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election won by the late Chief MKO Abiola.

"The history of the Nigerian media has, since it's epochal role in the struggle against colonial imperialism, been intimately intertwined with the fate of the Nigerian state and her peoples.

"The press was active in the struggle against military dictatorship in post-colonial Nigeria and this opposition to autocracy was particularly exemplified in the fierce

opposition of patriotic media practitioners to the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election won by the late Chief MKO Abiola.

"It is impossible to write the history of the democratic benefits we have enjoyed since the commencement of this dispensation in 1999 without emblazoning the heroic contributions of patriotic sections of the media in gold," he said.

Tinubu insisted that the challenges ahead of the media in playing its role towards strengthening Nigeria's democracy, keeping power continually in check as well as promoting good, responsible, and accountable governance are greater than the paths traversed before.

He pledged the support of his administration in collaboration with the media towards achieving these lofty objectives in the best interest of the country.

NJC MOVES TO APPOINT EIGHT JUSTICES OF SUPREME COURT

the apex court reduced to 13 since August last year, thus overstretching the judges with an increasing workload.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, in September 2022, lamented how the dwindling number of justices had worsened the court's workload.

According to Premium Times, Justice Ariwoola, as the Head of the NJC, has sent notices for the nominations of candidates to fill available slots on the court's bench.

NJC will process the nominations into a shortlist.

The body will then assess and interview the candidates, and send the list of successful ones to President Bola Tinubu for appointment, which is subject to confirmation by the Senate.

Among those that have received the CJN's requests for nominations in the preliminary stage of the appointment process are the NBA, heads of courts, and judges of the Supreme Court.

NBA President, Maikyau (SAN) in an email he addressed to lawyers on Friday, confirmed receiving the CJN's notice on 16 June requesting him "as President

of the Nigerian Bar Association to nominate suitably qualified candidates to be recommended for appointment to the Supreme Court of Nigeria."

Maikyau in his email, urged interested and suitably qualified lawyers from the regions with openings on the Supreme Court bench to submit their expression of interest to the NBA secretariat in Abuja on or before 21 June.

Lawyers with at least 15 years of call to the Nigerian bar are eligible to be appointed directly from the bar to the Supreme Court bench.

The available slots on a regional basis are South-east (two); South-south (one); South-west (two); North-central (two) and North-west (one). Only the North-east, among Nigeria's six geo-political zones, is said not to have a vacant slot currently.

Though Supreme Court appointments are done to ensure regional spread, there is always disparity in the number of representatives of the six regions on the bench of the various courts due to retirements, and deaths which do not follow any particular order.

With the current make-up

of the Supreme Court bench, the South-west has three slots, South-south two; and South-east one. While the North-central has one, the North-west and the North-east have three each.

If all the vacant slots are filled, it will end up giving South-west five slots on the Supreme Court bench, South-south, four, and South-east three.

The North-west will also occupy five slots and North-central, three. The representatives of the North-east on the bench will remain three.

In response to then-acting CJN, Walter Onnoghen's request for a similar exercise in 2017, the NBA then led by Abubakar Mahmoud (SAN), had forwarded the names of nine lawyers for appointment as Justices of the Supreme Court.

The NBA's nominees were: former President of the NBA, Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), Anthony Ikemefuna Idigbe (SAN), Yunus Ustas Usman (SAN), Babatunde Fagbohunlu (SAN), Miannaya Aja Essien (SAN), Awa Uma Kalu (SAN), Awalu Hamish Yadudu, Tajudeen Oladoja and Ayuba Giwa.

However, the attempts to have lawyers appointed to the

Supreme Court bench did not succeed.

The latest call by Maikyau for lawyers to indicate interest is the latest in the series.

Current Supreme Court judges and the geopolitical zones they represent are CJN Ariwoola, Oyo State (South-west); Justice Musa Dattijo Muhammad – Niger State (North-central); Justice Kudirat Motomori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun – Lagos State (South-west); Justice John Inyang Okoro – Akwa Ibom State (South-south); Justice Chima Centus Nweze – Enugu State (South-east); Justice Amina Adamu Augie – Kebbi (North-west); and Justice Uwani Musa Abba Aji – Yobe State (North-east).

Others include Justice Mohammed Lawal Garba – Zamfara State (North-west); Justice Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju – Ondo State (South-west) Justice M.M. Saulawa – Katina State (North-west); Justice Adamu Jauro – Gombe State (North-east); Justice Tijani Abubakar – Yobe State (North-east); and Justice Emmanuel Akomaye Agim – Cross River State (South-south).

FG TO DISSOLVE BOARDS OF FEDERAL AGENCIES, PARASTATALS

Muhammadu Buhari.

They noted that his predecessor also carried out a similar cleansing exercise in 2015 when he approved the dissolution of the governing boards of federal parastatals, agencies and institutions.

Under Buhari's instruction, the chief executive officers of the affected parastatals, agencies and institutions were directed to refer all matters requiring the attention of their boards to the president, through the Permanent Secretaries of their supervising ministries.

Similarly, Buhari had also constituted the boards of the six aviation agencies less than 24 hours to the end of

his administration after the agencies operated without boards for close to a decade, despite that their Acts make the constitution of boards mandatory.

The agencies were the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) and the recently created Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB).

However, the appointments were not confirmed as the ninth Senate could not ratify them before its dissolution and the subsequent inauguration of a new government on May 29.



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NEWS



GRAND RECEPTION...

L-R: Deputy National Chairman (North), All Progressives Congress, Senator Abubakar Kyari; Celebrant and a former Executive Vice Chairman /Chief Executive of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, Prof. Mohammed Sani Haruna; National Chairman of APC, Senator Abdullahi Adamu; and the representative of Governor of Nasarawa State and Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Ubandoma Aliyu, during a reception in honour of Prof. Haruna at New Keffi Hotel in Nasarawa State...yesterday

APC Mobilises Governors to Unite Akpabio, Yari Loyalists

●Governor AbdulRazaq leads reconciliation effort

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Apparently worried that the aftermath of the recent keenly contested election between a former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Senator Godswill Akpabio, and a former Governor of Zamfara State, Senator Abdullaziz Yari for the position of the Senate President may polarise the supporters of the two former governors, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has mobilised the governors to reconcile their loyalists in the Senate, THISDAY has learnt.

Akpabio, who is the immediate

past Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, last week defeated Yari in a keenly contested election to emerge as the Senate President and Chairman of the 10th National Assembly.

Akpabio scored 63 votes against Yari's 46 votes.

With Yari's performance during the election of the Senate President and the issues he raised during his campaigns, the ruling party is concerned that his loyalists may gang up against Akpabio and polarise the Senate, which could hamper the smooth conduct of its legislative business.

While the APC leadership and

President Bola Tinubu had insisted on a southern Christian in their zoning arrangement for the position of the Senate President, the former Zamfara State governor had argued that such an arrangement would deny the North the opportunity of heading any of the three arms of the government since the president who heads the executive arm, and the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), who heads the judiciary arm, are both southerners.

After the election, Yari had also declared that he was defeated by a gang-up of some top government officials and not Akpabio.

In an interview with BBC Hausa service on Friday, Yari said he could have won if there was no 'gang-up' against him led by President Bola Tinubu.

Akpabio because if I knew I would not be up against Akpabio, I would not have joined the race," he said.

When asked who he contested against, he said it included President Tinubu, Vice President Kashim Shettima, and other top government and political officials.

"Everyone was involved. The president was involved, the vice president was involved, the secretary of the government of the federation was involved, the governors were all against me alone, and those that supported me.

"I hope that in his second tenure, the president will allow democratic process to take centre stage in the parliament. He said he has a preferred candidate but the right thing for him as a leader was to accept everyone as his own. He shouldn't show a difference. He said during his swearing-in that he would do right to all manner of people. I should be among those he was referring to but with this outcome, it shows there is betrayal and inducement whether to scare (some senators) or some other ways," he said.

Yari, who was also a former House of Representatives member, however, said he has accepted the outcome of the election in good faith.

He, however, said he has nothing against Tinubu because he believed God decided that he wouldn't be the senate president.

"From that day to me, I know that it's God that decides everything. I know that's not Bola (the president) that decides things. It's God. If God wishes otherwise, I would have emerged, and not even Bola or anyone could stop it," he said.

He said the 10th Senate would look into issues critically for the development of the country.

The ruling party is said to be worried by the aftermath of the election because, with Yari's 43 votes, the former Zamfara State governor can mobilise his loyalists against Akpabio and make the seat hot for the former Akwa Ibom State governor.

To ensure a united Senate, the leaders of the APC have reached out to some of the governors through the Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) and Governor

WEF Raises Concerns over Potential Risks Involved in Crypto Regulations

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has expressed concerns that efforts by individual African countries to implement regulations for the cryptocurrency industry may not be effective unless they are supported by globally-coordinated initiatives to regulate the sector.

In its latest whitepaper, which was released at the weekend, the WEF warned of potential pitfalls for country-led crypto regulations.

In the paper titled: 'Pathways to the Regulation of Crypto-Assets: A Global Approach in May 2023,' the global economic lobby highlighted the challenges posed by the borderless nature of crypto assets, making it difficult for any single jurisdiction to effectively regulate the sector in isolation.

It argued that a coordinated effort among multiple jurisdictions was necessary to address the complexities and potential risks associated with cryptocurrencies.

According to the whitepaper, the anonymity provided by crypto mixers, self-hosted wallets, and decentralised exchanges also complicates regulation, adding that increasing interconnectedness with traditional finance increases potential contagion risks from the crypto industry, which was only recently full of turmoil.

"Crypto-assets and their ecosystem do not always fit squarely into the existing activity-based, intermediary-focused approach of regulation, even where crypto-asset activities mirror those of the traditional financial sector," the organisation said.

Commenting, head of the Centre for Financial and Monetary Systems at WEF, Matthew Blake, said: "The

evolving crypto-asset ecosystem and recent market events have underscored the pressing need for collaboration and the building of robust guardrails.

"While jurisdictions may take different approaches to regulating crypto assets, it is important to foster partnerships between international organisations, national authorities and industry stakeholders to ensure a baseline level of consumer protection and market integrity."

Accordingly, advised that countries should harmonise their understanding and classification of digital assets, set common standards, and establish data-sharing initiatives.

Accordingly, WEF argued that there is yet to be a standard definition or characterisation of crypto assets.

For instance, the UK's revenue authority considers crypto assets to be 'exchange tokens' for use in payment while the European Union (EU) considers them as 'digital assets or property.'

According to WEF, a lack of a common minimum understanding to regulate the crypto assets space will lead to inability to develop ecosystem consensus, and increase in cost for compliance and setting up legitimate global businesses.

The whitepaper generated various classifications of regulatory frameworks to facilitate comparisons.

Two of the classifications mentioned were outcome-based regulation and risk-based regulation.

In outcome-based regulation, the principle of "same risk, same regulatory outcome" is applied, meaning that similar risks should be subject to equivalent regulatory measures.

He said if he had known he would not win, he would not have contested the election.

"I never dreamt of not winning. From the day we started taking count of those with us, we had a number that showed we were in the majority. But you should not forget that I didn't contest against

The Nigerian Navy and the Nigerian Army yesterday reacted to the allegation of the involvement of the military in oil theft in the oil rich Niger Delta region, describing it as spurious and unguarded.

The two arms of the military whom the former Niger Delta militant, Asari Dokubo, frontally accused of being responsible for 99 per cent of oil theft in the region challenged him to name the military officers involved.

In its reaction, Nigerian Navy stated that Dokubo's allegations were the same he had dished out over the years.

It also challenged the ex-militant leader to intimate Nigerians on his level of involvement in oil theft, accusing him of seeking his own pipeline protection contract.

Spokesman of the Nigerian Navy, Commodore Adedotun Ayo-Vaughan, said Dokubo had stayed on the same unfounded allegations over the years.

"This is the same song he has been singing for years. It's not a new narrative from him. He should name

names and also intimate Nigerians of his level of involvement.

"He is also looking for his own pipeline protection contract", he said.

He said going by the efforts of the military in curbing oil theft in the region, Nigeria regained top spot amongst oil producing countries in Africa.

"OPEC, NUPRC and others confirmed just yesterday an increase in oil production in the month of May, only yesterday," he said.

He said the allegation against the military was "spurious and unguarded."

Ayo-Vaughan said oil thieves were angry because the land, maritime and air component of the Joint Task Force, Operation Delta Safe as well as other operations in the South-south zone of the country sustained the efforts to deny oil thieves avenues to sabotage economy through ongoing "Operation Dakartada Barawo" and sustained a relatively safe and peaceful environment for business activities to thrive in the region.

"If Asari Dokubo is seeking some form of relevance and he alleges that there are cabals of military

personnel who are involved in crude oil theft, let him bring the names. Nobody is afraid of getting the names of those involved in crude oil theft. You cannot make such serious allegations and think that we just sweep it down the carpet, there will be an official response from Defence Headquarters on this matter. The Chief of Defence Staff does not condone that, nor those the Chief of Naval Staff under whom I serve.

"The Nigerian Navy as an organisation is actively involved in the fight against crude oil theft and the resources in the Niger Delta. So, for anybody to say there is a cabal of military officers, the only simple thing is bringing the evidence, bring the names", he said.

He further noted that recently "during these operations, troops of Operation Delta Safe in the conduct of Operation Octopus Grip and other operations discovered and destroyed 57 illegal refining sites, a total of N82,445,150.00 only were denied the oil thieves and troops also arrested 16 suspected economic saboteurs.

"Let him bring the names. The

of Kwara State, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, to reconcile Akpabio and Yari's supporters.

THISDAY gathered that AbdulRazaq was asked to mediate and ensure that Yari's supporters give maximum support to Akpabio.

Investigation revealed that it was as a result of this that the Kwara State governor on Thursday evening visited Yari at his residence in Abuja as part of the peace-building efforts.

In a brief statement issued yesterday, the Director of Media of the NGF, Abdulraque Bello Barkindo, said that the chairman of NGF's visit to Yari was to ensure peace and synergy in the Senate.

Barkindo noted that: "On his visit, the NGF Chairman sought Senator Yari's support for the new leadership of the 10th Senate and the Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu".

The statement did not give further details of the meeting but a source privy to the issue told THISDAY that the visit was part of the efforts to ensure that Yari's loyalists do not cause trouble for Akpabio in the Senate.

Nigerian Navy is interested in the names of those involved because the Navy has no tolerance for any form of criminalities whatsoever, not even that height of theft as alleged by Asari Dokubo," he said.

In its response, the Nigerian Army said it had vigorously engaged in the fight against illegal oil bunkering, oil theft, illegal oil refining and other sundry crimes in the region with positive results.

The Director, Army Public Relations, Brig Gen Onyema Nwachukwu, said the Nigerian Army remained vigorously engaged in the fight against illegal oil bunkering, oil theft, illegal oil refining and other sundry crimes in the region with positive results.

He maintained that the intervention had produced positive results.

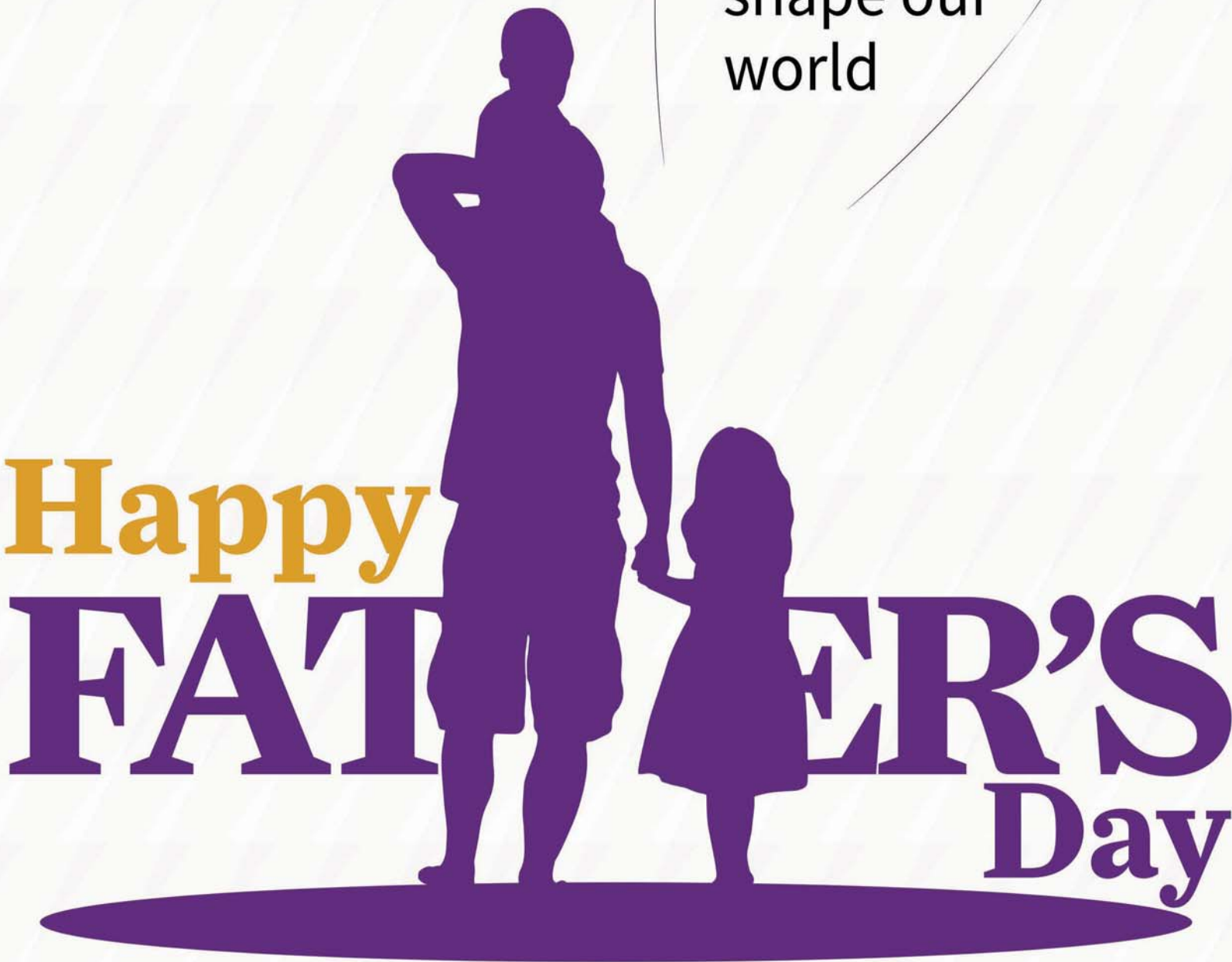
This, he said, was evident in the increase in daily oil production from an abysmally dwindling output in the past.

Nwachukwu said the Nigerian Army had zero tolerance for any compromise on the part of its troops and would not condone any act of economic sabotage.

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WELCOME TO ABUJA...

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (right) receiving the Chairman of Oodua Group, Otunba Bimbo Ashiru, at the Presidential Villa, Abuja...weekend.

80,000 Persons Test HIV Positive in Nasarawa, NACA Cries Out

● *Says 5,000 under antiretroviral treatment*

Onyebuchi Ezigbo and Folalumi Alaran in Abuja

The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) has raised the alarm that approximately 80,000 individuals have been identified as HIV-positive and are currently receiving treatment in the state.

Speaking during a recent visit by NACA to Lafia, the Executive Director of Nasarawa State AIDS Control Agency (SACA), Dr. Ruth Bello, however, said the prevalence rate of HIV in the state had dropped to two per cent.

She said the state has scored very high in prevention and treatment with the prevalence rate of HIV now at just two per cent.

In commending Nasarawa State's efforts in HIV prevention and treatment, Bello said: "Approximately

80,000 individuals have been identified as HIV-positive and are currently receiving treatment in the state.

"We have about 80,000 persons now identified with HIV and currently under treatment in the state. We also have a law against discrimination and stigma in the state, which has gone a long way in encouraging marriages between HIV-negative persons and positive persons without infecting each other," she explained.

Bello explained that one other significant progress made by the state was the enactment of a law against discrimination and stigmatisation in the state, which has contributed to fostering marriages between HIV-negative and positive individuals without the fear of transmission.

SACA Executive Director

expressed commitment to eliminating discrimination and stigma, adding that there is an ongoing partnership with religious and traditional leaders to further address these issues.

In her remark, the Coordinator of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), Dr. Esther Audu, emphasised the importance of counseling in HIV treatment.

She explained that counselling plays a crucial role in determining individuals' readiness for treatment, as the news of testing positive for HIV can be devastating and may lead to resistance to initiating treatment.

Audu revealed that over 5,000 individuals are currently undergoing treatment in the state.

The Secretary of the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (NEPWHAN), Nasarawa State

chapter, Ruth Yakubu, also shared her personal story of living with HIV for 18 years.

She maintained that HIV is not a death sentence and revealed that she has an HIV-negative husband and children.

Yakubu attributed the success of the HIV response among her colleagues to NACA's "Undetectable Equals Untransmittable" (U=U) campaign, which emphasises viral suppression.

The Deputy Director of Public Relations and Protocol at NACA, Toyin Aderibigbe, explained that the purpose of the visit was to assess the HIV situation first-hand and engage with relevant stakeholders.

HIV, also known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus, weakens the immune system and hinders the body's ability to combat infections and diseases. The virus can be

transmitted through contact with infected blood, semen, or vaginal fluids.

While there is currently

Eid-el-Kabir: Look out for Crescent Moon, Sultan Tells Muslims

The Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III, yesterday directed Muslims to look out for the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah 1444 AH from today.

Sultan Abubakar, who is also the President General Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), gave the directive in a statement signed by Prof. Sambo Junaidu, Chairman Advisory Committee on Religious Affairs, Sultanate Council, Sokoto.

Dhul-Hijjah is the 12th and the last month in the Islamic calendar in which Muslims perform annual pilgrimage (Hajj) and celebrate Eid-el-

no cure for HIV/AIDS, medication can effectively manage the infection and prevent disease progression.

Kabir festival.

The statement said: "This is to inform the Muslim Ummah that, Sunday, 18th June, which is equivalent to 29th day of Dhul-Qadah shall be the day to look for the new moon of Dhul-Hijjah 1444 AH.

"Muslims are therefore requested to start looking for the new moon on Sunday and report its sighting to the nearest District or village Head for onward communication to the Sultan,"

The statement prayed Allah to help all Muslims in the discharge of their religious duty.

Lawan Didn't Allow Me Finish My Thought, Bulkachuwa Clarifies Remarks About Wife

John Shiklam in Kaduna

The senator who represented Bauchi North in the ninth National Assembly, Adamu Bulkachuwa, has denied that he influenced the decisions of his wife, Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa, while she was the President of the Court of Appeal.

Before he was interrupted by the former Senate President Ahmad, Bulkachuwa, had on the floor of the Senate at the

valedictory session, claimed that he used his position to ask favour for his colleagues from his wife.

"I look at faces in this chamber who have come to me and sought my help when my wife was the President of the Court of Appeal, and I'm sure..."

"And I must thank particularly, my wife, whose freedom and independence I encroached upon while she was in office, and she

has been very tolerant and accepted my encroachment, and extended her help to my colleagues..." he had said.

But in his interview with BBC Hausa, Bulkachuwa said his words were misrepresented, adding that the former President of the Senate interrupted him while he was explaining.

He said, "Well, I was not even allowed to finish, I just started with some words like

thanking her, saying she was patient with me as she was a legal practitioner and I am a politician.

"I wanted to elaborate on the specific nature of the help she provided, as there exists a wide range of support that professionals in various fields, such as legal practitioners, doctors, or engineers, can offer in their respective roles.

"Note that this assistance does not involve any illegal or unethical activities.

"In my relationship with her, I have never imposed upon her professional autonomy or attempted to influence her judgment in handling cases or running her office. Such matters are not even discussed in our home."

Bulkachuwa's comment had elicited outrage, with the former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), calling for the arrest

of the former lawmaker.

"Senator Bulkachuwa's statement at the valedictory of the ninth senate is a monumental disgrace for our institutions. This man deserves to be taken up immediately by the authorities. It is a blight on my confidence in our systems."

"We lost in three courts. Senator Bulkachuwa seems to suggest why," Agbakoba had said in a statement.

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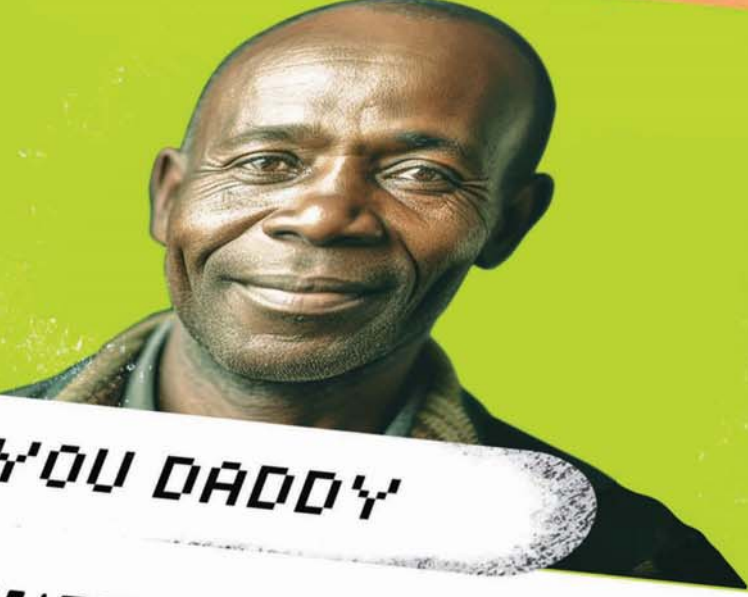
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HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

NEWS



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE EXPERTS...

L-R: Partner, Kenna Partners, Nimma Jo-Madugu; Senior Counsel and former Supreme Court Judge of South Africa, Prof. Mervyn King; Chairman, MTN Nigeria, Dr. Ernest Ndukwe; Chairman, Governance Board, Kenna Partners, Prof. Fabian Ajogwu (SAN); and Chairman, Afrinvest Securities, Fatumata Coker, at the Kenna Partners' breakfast session on corporate governance in Lagos...recently

Nigeria Appeals to Saudi Authorities to Increase Its Hajj Quota

● Hundreds of intending pilgrims stranded at Lagos Airport as Arik Air fails to provide aircraft

Chinedu Eze

Nigeria has appealed to the Saudi Arabian Government to increase its Hajj Pilgrims' quota, in view of the increase in demand for Hajj seats from Nigerians wishing to undertake the religious journey. This came as hundreds of intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia were stranded yesterday at the Murtala Muhammad International Airport, (MMIA) Lagos, as the indigenous carrier, Arik Air, failed to provide aircraft to airlift them to the holy land. Nigeria's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Alhaji Yahaya Lawal made the assertion during an interview at the meeting of Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah. Lawal said at present Nigeria is the fourth or fifth country with the largest number of pilgrims that participate in Umrah and Hajj exercises in the Kingdom, year in, year out. The envoy further reiterated his earlier advice to Nigerian Pilgrims to be good ambassadors of their country and religion by being law-abiding and respecting laid down rules and regulations for ease of interaction while in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the Holy and Spiritual Pilgrimage. He enjoined Nigerian pilgrims to make maximum use of Allah's given opportunity to maximise their temporal and spiritual benefits of

the Hajj exercise. Lawal also called on the pilgrims to diligently utilise facilities put in place to ensure their comfort, well-being and ease of performing the Hajj rites and other religious activities. Meanwhile, hundreds of intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia were stranded yesterday at the MMIA in Lagos, as the indigenous carrier, Arik Air, failed to provide aircraft to airlift them. The affected intending pilgrims were those scheduled to be carried by the private tour operators under the aegis of the Association of Hajj and Umrah Operators of Nigeria (AHUON). Some of the tour operators had booked Arik Air, one of the airlines approved by the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON) for the airlift of pilgrims to the Holy Land.

But when the travellers came to the airport as scheduled, the airline did not provide aircraft. Consequently, the would-be pilgrims started protesting against the delayed airlift at the international wing of the airport and the airline's head office at the General Aviation Terminal (GAT) located at the domestic wing of the airport. Arik Air was allocated pilgrims from AHUON and the airline was to airlift pilgrims from Lagos, Kano, and Abuja zones. The delay due to the non-availability of aircraft has stirred fears that most of the affected intending pilgrims might miss the Hajj as the deadline for the arrival of intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia draws near. The deadline would be marked by the closure of Saudi Arabia's airspace. By noon yesterday, hundreds of

the intending pilgrims were still stranded at the MMIA where they have been sleeping for the past four days, awaiting their airlift. One of the intending pilgrims told journalists that some of them who were to be airlifted since June 14 were still at the airport. They have been sleeping in the mosques and other open places around the international airport and the airport facilities are said to be overstretched with the departure hall crowded. But reacting to the action of the passengers, Arik Air in a statement signed by PR and Communications Manager, Adebunji Ola, said the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria selected Arik Air as the carrier to work with the tour operators for this year's hajj exercise, adding that the airline has already airlifted 374 passengers since it commenced the airlift of pilgrims in both Abuja and

Lagos on Wednesday, June 14, 2023. He disclosed that the airline was allocated about 10,000 pilgrims spread across Abuja, Lagos, and Kano states. "We commenced the airlift of pilgrims in both Abuja and Lagos on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, and we have carried 374 passengers to date. The issues involved in the smooth operation of the airlift are currently being addressed by all parties involved; Arik Air, NAHCON, and the tour operators. We hereby assure the pilgrims that as soon as we resolve the issues within the next 24 hours, the airlift will resume simultaneously in Abuja, Lagos, and Kano. We appeal for the understanding of all concerned and apologise for the inconvenience the slow pace of airlift may have caused the intending pilgrims and all the parties involved," the statement explained.

Guterres Wants Borno's Humanitarian Model Adopted by UN

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri

Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, has expressed his desire for the UN to adopt Borno State's successful humanitarian model. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted the Governor of Borno State, Professor Babagana Zulum, in Geneva, Switzerland, for discussions over the resettlement of internally displaced persons and their livelihoods. According to a statement yesterday by the Borno State Government House Press Unit, the meeting, which was held on Thursday, focused on "IDP solutions plans" with specifics on "Government leadership, community-driven approach, and voluntary return, relocation, and integration." The statement revealed that as part of the meeting, Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres expressed his desire for the UN to adopt Borno State's successful humanitarian model. Guterres' statement was made at a meeting hosted by the Centre International De Conference (CICH) and the Office of the Special Adviser, William Chemaly. The Borno Model is a non-kinetic approach aimed at handling counter-insurgency efforts and addressing humanitarian crises for over one decade, the statement said. Zulum, at the meeting,

highlighted the successes achieved in Borno State through the implementation of his administration's novel approach to the humanitarian situation tagged "Borno Model". Zulum had previously attended a breakfast Strategic Country Update on North-east, which was organised and hosted by the famous Graduate Institute, University of Geneva. The governor engaged over 20 academics, humanitarian, peace, security, and development actors, think tanks, and researchers analysing Borno's practical experiences on the Boko Haram crisis and how the non-kinetic approach yields results. The UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, Mohamed Yahya, also spoke with the Nigerian Ambassador to Geneva making a presentation on Nigeria's stand. Zulum also attended meetings at the UN Palais hosted by Raouf Mazou, the Assistant High Commissioner Operations at the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. The governor, according to the statement, was accompanied on the trip by Borno's focal person for the World Bank's Multisectoral Recovery and Peace Building Project (MCRP), Babazanna Abdulkarim, Principal Secretary at the Governor's Office, Mustapha Busuguma and the Governor's high-level associate on Sustainable Development Partnership and Humanitarian Support, Dr. Mairo Mandara

Presidency: Jonathan Reveals How Kaunda Accurately Predicted His Political Future

Ejiofor Alike

Former President Goodluck Jonathan has revealed for the first time, how the late first President of Zambia and foremost Pan-Africanist, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, gave accurate prophecy on his political progression by predicting 17 years ago that he would become president, at a time nobody thought that such prospect was possible. According to a statement by his spokesperson, Mr. Ikechukwu Eze, the former president stated this yesterday in Pretoria, South Africa, in his keynote speech at the Second Kenneth Kaunda Public Lecture organised by Kenneth Kaunda Children of Africa Foundation. Jonathan also charged African leaders to aspire to live up to the ideals of Kaunda, who he said, was a leading voice in Africa's quest for freedom and unity. He added that the quality of leadership on the continent needed to be improved to ensure that the efforts of the founding fathers like Kaunda towards Africa's freedom, peace, and development were not in vain. The former president further urged African nations to forge functional partnerships and work towards the successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area

(AfCFTA) agreement to enhance development and economic freedom for the continent. Speaking on Kaunda's prayers and prophecy on his political future at the time he was Governor of Bayelsa State, the former president noted that it happened during the late elder statesmen's two-day visit to Bayelsa in 2006, following an invitation he extended to him to participate in his government's work against the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Jonathan said: "I must say it now that Kaunda in the early days of my political career, captured my political trajectory to the presidency in an accurate prophetic revelation that has continued to amaze me till this day. "In 2006 when Kaunda had ended his visit to us in Yenagoa and was returning to Zambia, I remember seeing him off to the Port Harcourt Airport in neighbouring Rivers State. As he stood up and was about to board a vehicle that would convey him to the aircraft, he turned back and said to me, 'Young man, you will be the president of this country one day.' Jonathan said further that when this happened, he and his Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Ambassador Boladei Igali, who was with him "simply looked at each other in amazement, because the presidency was never in our

dreams, at that time." The former President noted however that he "later saw the prediction fulfilled in my life... So, I can say that KK (Kenneth Kaunda) was the man who saw tomorrow as it related then to my political future and fortune, as I eventually became the President of my country, four years after that wish." Corroborating the former President's assertion, the chief executive officer of Kenneth Kaunda Children of Africa Foundation, Sunday Musonda confirmed that he was with Kaunda during the visit, saying: "I was with Dr. Kaunda during that visit to Nigeria. One point I clearly remember was when KK blessed you (Jonathan) and said you would be President of Nigeria one day." Speaking on the continent's political history, Jonathan encouraged Africans to reflect on the defining virtues that motivated leaders like Kaunda to make significant contributions to the continent's development. He stated: "As a young man then, my knowledge of African history was shaped by transformational leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Julius Nyerere, and of course, Kenneth Kaunda. The stories of their resilience and passion for nation-building formed

the basis of contemporary African history. Their strides and sacrificial lifestyles toward their continent have produced many benefits for the continent. "In their prime, these leaders envisioned a continent of hope where its people would be free from every guise of bondage. They committed their lives to actualising their dreams of independence for their countries. The likes of Kaunda could have opted to take sides with the oppressors and feed fat on their spoils, at the expense of the freedom of the people who were in bondage. But they chose the altruistic path of pursuing justice, hope, freedom, and good governance for their people." He further noted that the major issues confronting the continent today are insecurity, weak economies, disunity, poverty, climate change, and poor governance. Making a case for good governance on the continent, Jonathan said: "Leadership has become a major source of conflicts and wars in most of our countries. The leadership recruitment process and our inability to effectively manage political transitions have resulted in avoidable conflicts. Elections in some countries have become a source of instability, largely reflecting the kind of leaders we have in authority."

BUSINESS

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Fuel Subsidy Removal: As Conversations Return to Issues of Palliatives

With all eyes on President Bola Tinubu to unveil his economic palliatives in the aftermath of the fuel subsidy withdrawal, economic analysts list key priority areas in this report by **Festus Akanbi**



A Lagos market...Nigerians await economic palliatives that will bring down the costs of living

Having successfully quelled the initial protest that greeted the removal of the fuel subsidy policy which was announced in his maiden address to Nigerians, analysts said the coast is clear for President Bola Tinubu to unveil the economic palliative programmes designed to cushion the pains and frustrations of the new fuel pricing regime.

In a nationwide address to mark this year's Democracy Day on Monday, the president identified with Nigerians going through a period of economic hardship unleashed by the astronomical hike in fuel pump prices and the attendant high cost of living.

Speaking during the broadcast, he said: "I feel your pain. This is one decision we must bear to save our country from going under and take our resources away from the stranglehold of a few unpatriotic elements."

"I admit that the decision will impose an extra burden on the masses of our people. Painfully, I have asked you, my compatriots, to sacrifice a little more for the survival of our country."

Tinubu, during his inaugural speech on May 29, had told Nigerians to brace up for the immediate removal of the fuel subsidy.

A few days later, the management of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) announced a hike in the price of petroleum and other marketers immediately followed suit with different prices.

However, in his Monday broadcast on the occasion of the June 12- Democracy Day- anniversary, the president promised Nigerians massive investment in sectors that will improve their standard of living.

Tinubu said: "The government I lead will repay you through massive investment in transportation infrastructure, education, regular power supply, healthcare, and other public utilities that will improve the quality of lives."

Cushioning Effects of Subsidy Removal

Analysts lamented that despite the long period of dialogues on the removal of fuel subsidy removal, the necessary investments to cushion the effect of the increase in the pump price of petrol have not been put in place. The consensus is that the increase in the price of petrol would affect Nigerian most directly through transportation inflation and indirectly through many other sectors such as energy, manufacturing, and most importantly, food. It is also believed that the impact will bring a reduction in disposable income across the populace.

They believe that while the last administration did a bit by investing in the construction of roads and rail infrastructure across

the country, the new administration would need to complete these projects very speedily for Nigerians to feel their impacts. This was the position of a Lagos-based economic analyst and Group Executive Director, Cordros Capital, Mr. Femi Ademola.

Investing in Infrastructure

Ademola said that "The provision of physical infrastructure will benefit most Nigerians that reside in the urban centres. However, the residents of the suburban and rural areas would need more government interventions in the provision of basic social infrastructures such as schools and hospitals. The savings from the fuel subsidy removal should therefore be used to invest in transportation infrastructure, educational and health infrastructure, and energy infrastructure."

"There is no doubt that the implementation of the above would take some time and the people would have to bear some pains for some time. Hence, the request for wages and salary increases may not be a totally bad idea. However, increases in salaries will benefit those in formal employment, the informal sector, the unemployed and other vulnerable populations who may not benefit from such salary increases. It may therefore be necessary to consider some conditional cash transfer to the most vulnerable people using an approach similar to the successful "Bolsa Familia" Programme adopted by the Brazilian government."

Targeting the Extremely Poor

However, unlike the experiment of the previous administration that was shrouded in secrecy, Ademola suggested the new administration should adopt a conditional cash transfer that targets the extremely poor families, saying that with this, the effect of the subsidy removal would be well cushioned at the lower ends while the formal sector benefits from the expected improved economic and business activities that should follow the end of the fuel subsidy regime.

However, in his input, the Director and Chief Executive Officer Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise, Dr. Muda Yusuf called for a combination of what he described as direct and indirect policy measures from government and private policymakers.

Yusuf, who is also a former Director-General of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) called for policies that will convince Nigerians that savings from the scrapped fuel subsidy programme are expended on policies and programmes targeted at the people.

Upscaling Power Supply

For instance, while calling for the acceleration of the Presidential Power Initiative to upscale power supply in the country,

Yusuf said state governments and private investors should be supported to leverage the decentralisation of power supply and off-grid power solutions. This, according to him, would reduce the demand for petroleum products [petrol and diesel] for purposes of electricity generation by households and businesses.

He stressed the urgent need for government to put an end to the pricing of gas in dollars for domestic use, especially for manufacturers, adding that necessary urgent steps must also be taken by the government to put an end to this dollarisation framework to ensure moderation in energy cost for the manufacturing sector. He said the recent reduction in the LPG price is laudable, but that the price reduction trajectory should be sustained to ease pressure on households and prevent deforestation.

On the appropriate fiscal policy needed, Yusuf suggested that import duty, VAT, and other port charges on Semi Knocked Down parts for the assembly of mass transit buses should be waived. This, he said, would not only make mass transit buses cheaper but will also enhance industrial capacity utilisation of the vehicle assembly plants in the country.

Reducing Import Duty on Passenger Buses

He also called for a 50 per cent reduction in import duty on passenger buses of 15 passenger capacity and above for the next one year; a 30 per cent reduction in import duty on fairly used cars of engine capacity of 2000cc and below, saying the latter would enhance access of the middle class to vehicle ownership in the light of the high deficit in the provision of public transportation.

He enjoined the government to engage major food processing companies to determine specific policy options for the realisation of this objective. This would moderate food inflation.

"All agricultural inputs – machinery, agrochemicals, fertiliser, etc. should attract zero import duty and zero VAT. This would boost investment in agriculture, especially commercial agriculture. Higher agricultural output would boost food production and ultimately moderate food inflation," he said.

Tax Exemption

He suggested that gross monthly salaries of N200,000 and below should be exempted from payment of Personal Income Tax (PAYE). This, he believes, will give low-income earners some room to improve their spending capacity and reduce poverty.

Saying the private sector needs to be part of the moves to make life meaningful for Nigerians, Yusuf said employers, especially thriving medium and large enterprises, should be persuaded by the government to provide buses for their employees if they are not already doing so. This, he believes, would complement the intervention of government in this respect. Where possible, employers should provide lunch vouchers for their staff.

BUSINESS LAW



Brown



Omiyi

At Last, Seplat Energy Survives Boardroom Intrigues

After several months of boardroom intrigues and power struggle over who controls the soul of one of the leading indigenous oil and gas companies in the country, Seplat Energy Plc, common sense has prevailed and peace has been restored, writes **Wale Igbintade**

Almost three months after the withdrawal of the working permit, Combined Expatriate Residence Permit and Aliens Card (CERPAC) and other visas for the entry or stay in Nigeria of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Seplat Energy Plc, Mr. Roger Brown, the company last week announced that the Ministry of Interior and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) had restored his immigration documents.

The Ministry of Interior had in a letter dated March 3, 2023, signed by the Director II, Citizenship and Business, Akinola Adesina, announced the revocation of Brown's immigration documents based on allegations of racism, prejudice, discrimination and improper immigration status made by certain individuals parading as concerned workers and stakeholders of Seplat Energy Plc.

However, in a statement signed by Seplat Energy's Board Chairman, Basil Omiyi, last week, the company said the Ministry of Interior and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) had restored Brown's immigration documents.

Omiyi added that during the travails, the company cooperated fully with the verification checks conducted by the immigration authorities, which resulted in restored immigration status of Brown.

"In view of the restored immigration documents, Brown can now validly enter, work, and stay in Nigeria and today has resumed his position as CEO of Seplat Energy. The Board and management of Seplat Energy Plc are pleased that Mr. Brown has resumed in his role as CEO, as the company continues to make strong strides in delivering its 2023 operational targets," he said.

The boardroom crisis that rocked the foremost indigenous energy company had resulted in a floodgate of litigations. However, the company and its board members continued to support Mr. Brown through his ordeal, and he kept exercising his duties as the company CEO from the UK office, despite the withdrawal of his work permit.

The crisis in the company was said to have erupted when it terminated the consultancy agreement it signed with Amaze Limited, a firm promoted by its former Chairman, Dr.

ABC Oriako. Seriously aggrieved, he reportedly enlisted some shareholders to fight the company.

However, several suits instituted against the company and its officials at the Federal High Court in Lagos and Abuja respectively have been struck out, the same having been withdrawn by the petitioners.

For instance, sometime in April 2023, the Nigerian Immigration Service dropped all charges against Seplat. The company also announced that the Lagos Division of the Federal High Court has vacated the ex parte interim orders against Seplat, its Chief Executive Officer, and its Board Chairman.

The aggrieved minority stakeholders of the company had in their application filed before the court sought to withdraw their suit against the company, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Roger Brown, and the Chairman, Board of Directors, Mr. Basil Omiyi, over alleged racism. They had alleged that Brown was running the affairs of the company in an illegal, unfairly prejudicial and oppressive manner.

They equally sought orders restraining the company's Managing Director and Independent Non-Executive Directors from allegedly running its affairs unfairly.

But surprisingly, at the resumed hearing of the substantive suit, the petitioners' counsel, Mr. Ayodele Arotiwa, informed the court that his clients wanted to withdraw the suit, adding that they were no longer willing to continue with the case.

Consequently, Justice Chukwuejekwu Aneke struck out the suit and ordered the petitioners to pay N1 million to the second and third respondents.

Also, less than one week after the aggrieved minority shareholders of the company filed a notice of discontinuance at the court in Lagos and withdrew their suit against the company and its management, a similar application was made at the Federal High Court in Abuja, presided over by Justice Inyang Ekwo.

The minority shareholders in their notice of discontinuance served on the defendants, urged the court to strike out the suit since they have no intention to continue with further hearing of the suit.

The minority shareholders had in a suit numbered FHC/ABJ/CS/626/2023 filed by Juliet Ebere Nwadi Gbaka, Margaret Awobusuyi Funmilayo and Clement Akaeme as 1st to 3rd

plaintiffs respectively alleged that the 2nd to 10th defendants mismanaged and breached the company's corporate governance documents.

Also joined in the suit are the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Datamax Registrars Limited and PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited as 11th to 14th defendants respectively.

The suit was adjourned for hearing of the pending applications, which include the defendants' motion for a stay of execution as well as a motion challenging the jurisdiction of the court to entertain the suit, however, the petitioners served the defendants' motion to discontinue the suit.

Recall that Justice Inyang Ekwo had in an ex-parte order suspended the Managing Director, Mr. Roger Brown, Board Chairman, Mr. Basil Omiyi and directors and secretary of the Board of Seplat Energy Plc, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice filed by three aggrieved shareholders.

The court also gave an order compelling SEC to constitute and appoint suitable persons to run the affairs of the oil company, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice filed by the shareholders.

Dissatisfied, Seplat Energy appealed against the ruling before the Abuja Division of the Court of Appeal and prayed the appellate court to set aside the lower court's ruling in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/CS/626/2023.

The ex-parte application with Appeal No. CA/ABJ/PRE/CV/534MI/2023 was filed by Seplat's team of lawyers led by D.D. Dodo, Bode Olanipekun and Audu Anuga, all Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN).

In a further affidavit in support of motion ex-parte, deposed to by Adoga Moses, a Litigation Clerk, in the employment of Wole Olanipekun & Co, the appellant stated that out of 588,444,561 issued shares of the appellant/applicant, the plaintiffs at the lower court have cumulative shares of 131 units.

In breaking it down, the deponent stated that the 1st plaintiff has 100 units of shares while the 2nd and 3rd plaintiffs have 31 and 30 units respectively.

According to him, "the cumulative percentage shareholding of the plaintiffs who have obtained disruptive orders against the applicant amounts to 0.00002736 per cent.

"The action of the plaintiffs and the orders

granted by the lower court has the implication of diminishing the share value of the applicant who has dual listings on the Nigerian and London Stock exchanges as well as causing panic in the capital market and reducing investor confidence.

"The applicant is at the risk of irreparable damage to its brand, business, investor equity, contractual and statutory obligations if the orders sought are not granted.

"It is in the interest of justice to grant this application and the balance of convenience tilts in favour of the applicant.

Seplat had in its motion on notice argued that it has been the subject of various disruptive shareholder actions qua petitions including Suit No. FHC/L/PET/402/2023 – Moses Igbrude & Ors v. Seplat Energy Plc & Ors. filed at the Federal High Court, Lagos Judicial Division on 8th March 2023; Suit No. FHC/ABJ/PET/8/2023 – Boniface Okozie & Ors v. Seplat Energy Plc & Ors. filed at the Federal High Court, Abuja judicial division on 13th April 2023; and Suit No. FHC/ABJ/PET/626/2023 – Juliet Ebere Nwadi Gbaka & Ors. v. Seplat Energy Plc & Ors. filed on 9th May 2023.

The company further stated that in Suit No. FHC/ABJ/PET/8/2023, the petitioners filed a motion ex-parte seeking to restrain the officials and directors of the appellants from continuing to operate in their employment capacities and upon hearing the said application on 18th April, 2023, the court refused to make same and ordered that the appellants be put on notice.

Ruling on the application a three-man panel of the Appeal Court comprising of Justices Muhammad Mustapha, (presiding), Justice J. G. Abundaga, and Justice D. Z. Senchi, suspended the enforcement of the ex parte orders granted by the Justice Ekwo pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice dated May 12, 2023 and or pending further directives of the court.

Surprisingly, despite these challenges, it did not affect the company. In its 2023 first quarter results, it reported higher revenue of 36.9% to \$331 million.

The company also reported a pre-tax profit of \$86.1 million representing a 3.2% jump over the same period in 2022.

Clearly, the bulk of staff at Seplat cannot wait enough to have Brown back at his seat to continue the reformative standards and objectives he has been setting and achieving for the company.

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Funmi Omotosho: Exploring the Psychology of Financial Success

Fascinated by the intersection between human behaviour and finance, Funmi Omotoso, a serial entrepreneur, management consultant and behavioural and personal effectiveness coach, has delved into the realm of behavioural economics and helped individuals cultivate a positive financial mindset and master the art of financial success, **Vanessa Obioha** reports.

Have you ever wondered why you make certain financial choices? Or pondered why you sometimes buy things on impulse or struggle to save for specific targets? There is an explanation for these actions according to Funmi Omotoso, a serial entrepreneur and a behavioural and personal effectiveness coach. With her educational background in psychology, Omotoso has delved into the intersection between human behaviour and finance with the understanding that financial choices are not solely driven by rationality and logic. Instead, cognitive biases, risk tolerance, emotions, and societal influences play pivotal roles in shaping how individuals manage their money.

"Some people rely on mental shortcuts and biases when making financial decisions," she begins. "Secondly, some people are naturally more risk-averse and prefer safer, low-risk investments, while others are more comfortable with taking risks and may pursue higher-risk opportunities for potentially greater returns."

Furthermore, some individuals have the tendency to prioritise immediate gratification over long-term financial goals. This can lead to impulsive spending, inadequate savings, and difficulty with long-term financial planning. In addition, social influences like peer pressure and societal norms can influence financial behaviours. People may feel compelled to keep up with the spending habits of their peers or engage in conspicuous consumption to fit into certain social circles.

"On top of that, emotions such as fear, greed, and excitement can influence financial decisions. Finally, people's level of financial literacy and understanding can affect their financial behaviours."

As a behavioural coach, Funmi combines her expertise in entrepreneurship and psychology to help her clients make better financial decisions. Through her signature coaching programme, she empowers individuals to identify and overcome psychological barriers that hinder effective money management. These barriers, according to her, include negative or limiting beliefs, such as feeling unworthy of financial success or having a scarcity mindset, lack of financial literacy, and emotional factors like stress, boredom, or seeking comfort. These sometimes lead to impulsive and excessive spending.

Cultivating a positive mindset is one of the ways Omotoso advises her clients to overcome these negative thoughts. She firmly believes that attitudinal change is the foundation of long-term financial success.



Omotosho

"Encouraging individuals to set specific financial goals and developing a plan of action can help people stay on track financially. Challenging and reframing negative thoughts, encouraging positive self-talk and affirmations, practising gratitude for what one already has, and seeking out success stories or role models can help shift negative financial mindset."

She also advises that people set clear financial goals. "This provides a sense of purpose and direction. Define short-term and long-term goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART goals). Keeping your goals in mind can help prioritise long-term financial well-being over immediate gratification."

But does one's personality trait play a significant role in one's financial choices? Omotoso gives an instructive response.

"According to the Greek philosopher, Socrates, an unexamined life is not worth living. Everyone needs to strive for self-discovery and subsequently, self-mastery."

"As a general rule, introverts tend to be organised and disciplined, including financially. So, they are more likely to engage in diligent financial planning, adhere to budgets, and prioritise long-term financial goals. They have the tendency for good financial behaviours

such as saving, investing, and maintaining good credit. However, some introverts tend to be agreeable in nature. This means they value harmony, cooperation, and empathy. Agreeableness can influence financial decisions in terms of sharing financial resources with others, being generous with charitable contributions, or making financial decisions based on social responsibility and ethical considerations."

She continues: "Extroverts are usually sociable, outgoing, and confident. Their financial behaviour may reflect a desire for social status or enjoyment of experiences. They may be more prone to spending on social activities, entertainment, and luxury items. However, the impact of being extroverted on financial behaviour can vary depending on other factors such as financial knowledge and values."

Omotoso's journey into entrepreneurship and behavioural coaching started in her university days. In fact, she believes her career path was meticulously planned by Providence.

"I believe that Providence has a lot to do with my pathway in life. When I was seeking admission into the university back in 1990, I remember that my friends and relations advised me to apply for certain courses because they felt that such courses would help me get quick employment after my study but I insisted that I was going to study psychology. Something inside of me deeply inspired my desire for the course."

This singular decision, she says, formed the basis of her career and has armed her with the basic dynamics of being a behavioural and personal effectiveness coach. Despite obtaining a degree in psychology from Ondo State University and currently studying for her second master's degree, still in psychology at the University of East London, UK, Omotoso's quest for more knowledge has not waned a bit. She reveals that she continues to take courses and attend webinars to replenish her knowledge as she imparts it to her students. She also has an MBA in Marketing (Executive) from the University of Lagos (UNILAG).

For Omotoso, entrepreneurship has always been a natural forte. Her foray into becoming a boss of her own started in 1995 while working in the advertising/commercial department of Raypower Radio.

"I wanted a second stream of income. Though I was a young girl serving as a youth corper, I instinctively knew that I wanted more, and at that time, more meant buying and selling to me."

"So, on weekends, I would go to Balogun market on Lagos Island, to buy fabrics, jewellery, cutlery, and even undies to sell to my co-workers. That meant that at the end of the month, I would get my salary and get out of the salaries of a number of my colleagues who were patronising my business."

"Later on, I started travelling to Cotonou to buy brocade fabrics and jewellery in wholesale quantities. Today, my trading activities have caused me to traverse four continents. It has also helped to hone my marketing skills. I tell people jokingly that I can transport onions to Sokoto and sell them (Sokoto State is the largest producer of onions in Nigeria)."

"Today, I'm not just a novice jack of all trades, I have been trained and equipped on how to grow multiple businesses, how to put system, process and structure in my business, how to

brand my businesses and even become a global brand myself. I now have a website, www.funmiomotoso.com where people can catch up with some of my activities."

Omotoso had an eureka moment in 2018 when she served as a member of the Business Summit Committee of Thriving Business Women Fellowship, organised by one of her revered mentors, Coach Mayokun Oreofe. She was scheduled to interview one of the speakers, Mrs Chinyere Anokwuru.

"I asked her a question about how a person who is multi-skilled and multi-talented can know the particular talent, gift or skill to focus on. Her reply was profound: 'Reach down into your innermost heart and fetch out the gift, interest, skill or passion that resonates most deeply inside the core of your being, that is your primary assignment and your purpose in life.' That was a light-bulb moment for me. Suddenly, I knew that I should become a trainer and a coach."

Her expertise in financial coaching and management has helped her develop strong business acumen.

"Generally, I help men and women to find purpose in life, maximise their potential, minimise their weaknesses and be the best versions of themselves; so that they can feel inspired, uplifted and confident to accomplish their purpose in life, achieve their goals outstandingly and become more productive."

"I do this by training, coaching and behavioural therapy which help my clients to live a purpose-driven life, be most effective and multiply their success."

Specifically, my experience in media, advertising, and management consulting has enabled me to develop a strong sense of business acumen. After identifying the root causes of my client's financial challenges, I take them through a proven, step-by-step guide to help them evaluate financial opportunities, make informed investment decisions, explore multiple streams of income and entrepreneurial endeavours."

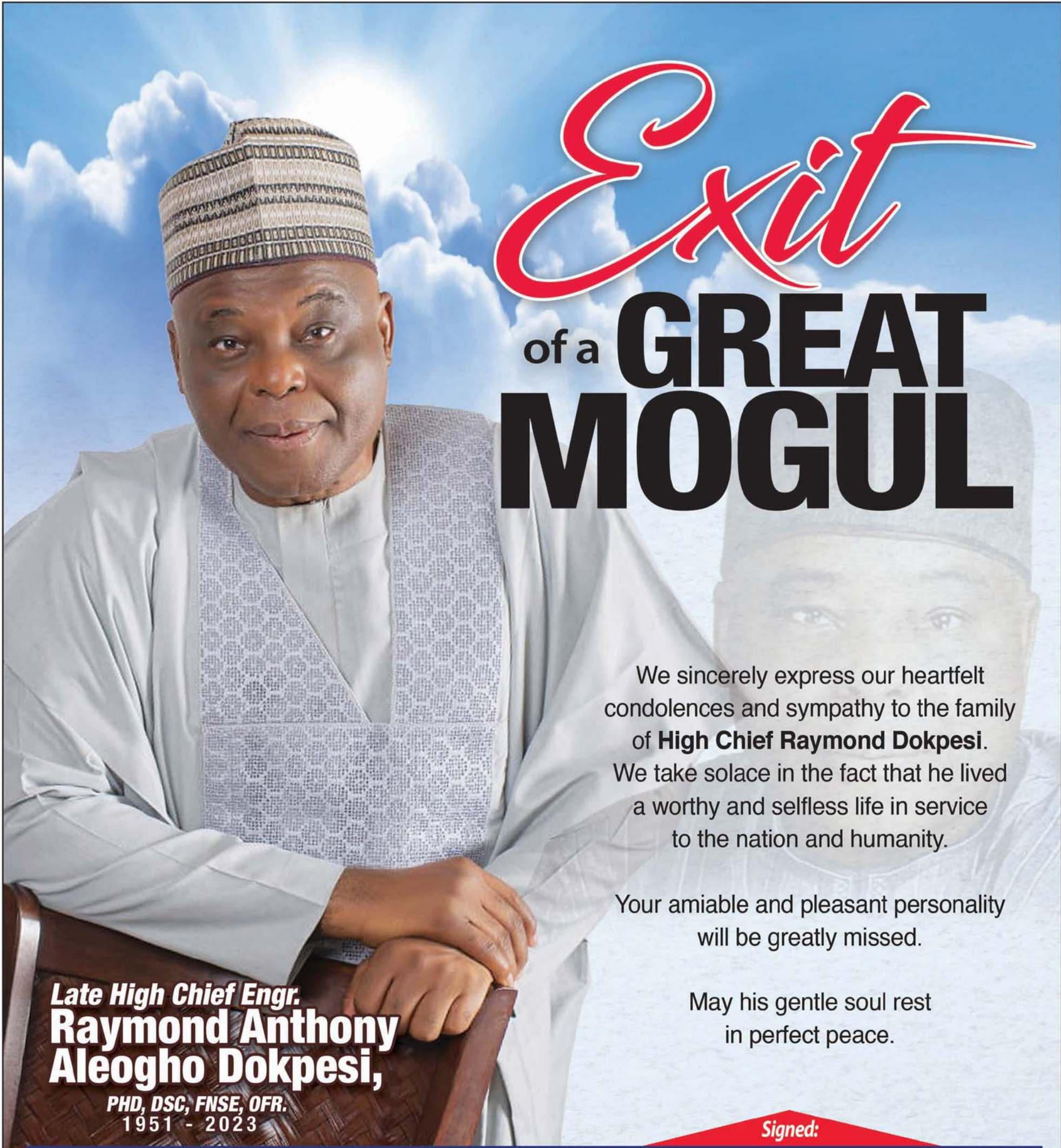
Omotoso's coaching programme has witnessed numerous success stories and transformations. Clients who once struggled with impulsive spending and lacked financial discipline have gone on to achieve remarkable financial stability.

One notable success story is that of a client who enrolled in her coaching programme while running a small sewing business from her living room. Through the Goal-setting Masterclass, she gained clarity on her goals, developed strategic plans, and identified the right actions and strategies to achieve them.

"She got so motivated by the training that within two years, she had two outlets called Salted and Sweetened Couture in Lagos and is currently working on opening a third one in Port Harcourt," Omotoso enthuses.

And the quest for honing her skills continues. Omotoso joined a chapter of the Toastmasters International in Nigeria, Merit Toastmasters, two years ago. She has just been elected the President of that chapter of Toastmasters club. Omotoso says of her election: "I have observed that anywhere I find myself I see myself as a servant pulling out all I have to execute my responsibilities. Interestingly this strategy has always catapulted me into leadership positions."

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**Late High Chief Engr.
Raymond Anthony
Aleogho Dokpesi,**
PHD, DSC, FNSE, OFR.
1951 - 2023

We sincerely express our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family of **High Chief Raymond Dokpesi**. We take solace in the fact that he lived a worthy and selfless life in service to the nation and humanity.

Your amiable and pleasant personality will be greatly missed.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

Signed:

Members of Ajose Agba and Friends of Late High Chief Engr. Raymond Anthony Aleogho Dokpesi, PHD, DSC, FNSE, OFR.

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Otunba Ademola Afolabi
Dr Olasupo Alli Balogun
Odofin Layi Ogunbambi
Engr Lekan Adigun
Bayo Adeyemo
Arch Kunle Bello
Seye Karunwi
Are Waidi Fujah
Engr Rotimi Shelle
Demola Bakare
Dr Bala Yusufu
Sen Gbenga Ashafa
Yomi Tokosi
Marc Bola Opaleye

Amb Aminu A Wisdom
Otunba Alex Onabanjo
Engr Funsho Akinwande
Dapo Kujore
Tunde Enigbokan
Oke Olayiwola
Segun Afadama
Laolu St Matthew Daniel
Deji Odukoya
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Ore Oluwa Salako
Rear Admiral Okanla Oni

Oladotun Oki
Otunba Biodun Okeowo
Fela Ayuba
AIG Charles Cole Rtd
Otunba Yinka Kuye
Harris Enabulele
Moruf Dosunmu
Arc Waheed Balogun
Tpl Yacoob Tito Abiodun
Otunba Babajide Rogers
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Michael Akinwole (Houston)
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Olatunde Atanda-Owo

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Capt Joseph Ugonoh
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Lanre Bombata
Lolade Agboola-Fisher Thomas
Otunba Engr Sina Tychus
Adeniyi Gordon Jacobs
Olatunde Onakoya
Lanke Ademiluyi

HIGH ENERGY COSTS AND THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

MADAKI O. AMEH argues that the current price of petrol is not sustainable



Predictably, the very first decision the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had to take, albeit inadvertently, was the removal of subsidy on PMS. As has been widely acknowledged, this was a forced error in the inauguration speech which the government had to live with in the early hours of the administration, being a Presidential pronouncement. Not wanting to be seen to have misstepped so early, this highly unpopular decision had to be forced through, with devastating consequences for the vast majority of Nigerians, who have now had to grapple with the huge effects of this sudden adjustment to their family budgets, not just on the cost of petrol, but most other commodities and services like transportation, without any increase in their incomes. The more than 200% increase in the cost of PMS on inauguration day has undoubtedly thrown many Nigerians under the bus and heightened their already impoverished state. With zero increase in earnings, such a sudden adjustment in the cost of living will no doubt take its toll on the poverty index of the country, which is already very bad indeed.

The current state of affairs is that people are gradually resigning to their fate and most people have either parked their cars because they just can't afford the cost of petrol, or have resorted to buying just the small quantity they can afford at a time, if only to get by for short distances. This definitely slows down the economy, as mobility will definitely be low and the vibrancy expected of a highly mobile economy such as ours where everyone tries to be up and doing on a daily basis, is gradually being lost. The usually vibrant petrol service stations now look like ghost towns, as there are hardly any activities there anymore.

The point has been made severally that subsidies on their own are not a bad thing, as all economies globally subsidize one critical sector of their economy or the other. It is the manner of subsidizing that makes it either effective or not, and sadly in Nigeria, the government has been subsidizing the oil and gas industry in a wasteful manner all these decades, and needlessly so. The current hardship being encountered by the citizenry is totally unnecessary and self-inflicted, and it is never too late to beat a retreat, for the short and long-term benefits to the national economy.

A number of pundits have hailed the increase in pump price of PMS as the right thing to do to stabilize the Nigerian economy, deregulate the oil and gas industry and prevent smuggling of petroleum products across our ever porous borders to neighbouring countries, but those arguments cannot stand the test of rational scrutiny. The reality is that the current scenario, which drastically increases the cost of living and the cost of doing business in Nigeria is not sustainable, in the very low per capita income and minimum wage situation currently existing in the country. Comparisons between the pump prices of PMS in Nigeria and other countries with higher per capita income

and higher minimum wages is akin to comparing mangoes with oranges, which though similar, are entirely different.

Nigerians have gotten used to expecting less and less from their governments over time, with calls for sacrifice all the time, without a corresponding cut in the visible flamboyant lifestyles of government officials and the general cost of governance at the expense of the Treasury.

As mentioned before in an earlier piece on this subject, stoppage of subsidy payments does not necessarily have to translate to increase in the price of petroleum products dispensed at the pump, if properly handled, using the best available principles of petroleum economics. In fact, the prices could come down drastically, and a uniform pricing can be achieved for PMS, AGO, DPK and Jet-A1, and the positive impact of such a policy on the overall economy can be better imagined. The reality is that all these products need to be better priced because of the advantages available to Nigeria as an oil and gas producing country. As currently applied, there is zero benefit for being a Nigerian citizen living in an oil and gas producing country. And there is no assurance that the recent increase in the price of PMS will suddenly transform the oil and gas industry in Nigeria from its current embarrassing state of being a loss-making business, the only country in the world with such an unenviable status!

Can you imagine what the impact would be if PMS, AGO, DPK and Jet-A1 are priced at N250 and it is still profitable? All the industries grounded due to high cost of diesel and epileptic and expensive power supply will roar back to life; aviation costs will drastically reduce, cooking costs using kerosene will crash, and the cost of transportation will also come down drastically. All these outcomes can still be achieved, in spite of the initial false steps taken by this government on this issue. Having lingered this long, any policy on subsidy requires deep and informed thinking to address it effectively, which sadly has not been the case.

The lame argument that relatively cheap petroleum products prices in Nigeria will exacerbate smuggling at our porous borders is totally inexcusable, as the government cannot punish the entire citizenry for its inability to effectively police our borders in spite of the huge cost of maintaining the Customs, Immigration and other security agencies at our border posts. Moreover, such a scenario opens up new business opportunities for our downstream companies, who will have the incentive to apply for licenses to open service outlets in neighbouring countries where petroleum products from Nigeria can be legitimately trucked to and sold at appropriate prices to earn much needed foreign exchange, thereby eliminating the need for smuggling.

Chief Ameh is a former Legal Adviser and Managing Counsel, Legislative Development with Shell Nigeria and Senior Consultant with Arthur Andersen

A BATTERED PARADISE SEEKS RENEWAL

Bassey Otu should work for the good of Cross River State, writes PAUL OBI

"A good government is known from a bad government by this infallible test: that under the former the labouring people are well fed and well clothed, under the latter, they are badly fed and badly clothed"- William Cobbett, English Journalist & Politician

As Cross River State dust off the past eight ruinous years, those who love the state will now be praying for a supersonic turnaround. A turnaround from a sad tale of governance; ravaging and stealing of Boki forest; turnaround from abandoned projects. A turnaround from infantile lies, bizarre governance and familistocracy straight out of Kakum. Turnaround from insidious budgets blended with grandiloquent titles. Within the last eight years, state annual budgets became a nest of all sorts of perfidious scenes of lawbreaking and lawlessness. It is doubtful if many at the executive branch of the state and Cross River State House of Assembly ever saw the real budgets for eight years. With those insane budgets' titles of blush and bliss and the like, Cross River was blown away to the dryland of pains. The state became a laughing stock among the comity of states. While her neighbours, Akwa Ibom and Ebonyi became Eldorado, Cross River was stagnant, metaphorically transforming her motto from People's Paradise to a battered paradise.

In the midst of these colossal and wanton failures, Cross River elders, especially court jesters and political jobbers in the palace of the environmentalist kept sealed lips for the sake of crumbs. Cross River got burnt from all corners from the man whom the Great Elohim lifted from the slippery hills of Kakum. Instead of governing the state, he battered it and her hapless people. Of a truth, it was a heartless butchery with reckless abandon. It is a history no Cross Riverian wants to remember, ever again. In all, it was a paradoxical ruin of one of the most endowed states in Nigerian.

That is the sordid state the newly sworn-in Governor of Cross River State, Sen. Bassey Otu met. But Otu has his hands full. Cross River State is highly endowed and blessed with natural and human resources. From the historical town of Gakem, to the forest belt of Boki, to Yala, Ogoja, Obubra, Ikum, Etung, Yakurr, Abi, Biase, Akamkpa, Odurpani, to the serene Calabar Municipal down to Akpabuyo, Cross River should not be lacking if her leaders judiciously harness the state's resources. First, the governor must pursue accountability and transparency. It will be disingenuous if Otu's government fails to ask questions about what went wrong in the last eight years. The level of carnage and scorch-earth policies were too excruciating and mind-boggling to wash aside. Second, the government must root for merit and backlist the business of political sycophancy, mostly the claptrap of praise-singers in the corridors of power, and also render foot-on-the-table policy as an aberration.

The recent announcement of early appointments is indicative that the government will tilt towards competence. By headhunting Prof. Anthony Owan Enoh as Secretary to the State Government (SSG) and others, it is glaring that at least Otu wants to shade off the drama of the past years and get serious with governance. Another fundamental issue is that the governor must ensure inclusivity in the administration of the state. Granted, the governor rode to victory on the platform of All Progressives Congress (APC), but it needs to be stated that most of the votes that went to Otu in the State Gubernatorial Election was more of protest votes, a repudiation and reprimand of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) for jettisoning the zoning formula of the state. Without the disruptive politics of PDP, it is doubtful if APC would have had its way. Therefore, inclusivity is vital.

More importantly, Cross River suffered a lot in the complete neglect of infrastructural development - most local governments never benefited from any road construction or state-of-the-art project in eight years. For instance, the Boki East

- West Road could not be completed for years, and was left as a mere window-dressing by the last regime. Same is applicable to the rest of the 18 local governments. The most disheartening was the Ogoja - Obudu - Yala - Bekwara Road, among other abandoned projects - that ended up as the woeful signature of that administration. Other unfinished projects like the Cocoa Processing Mill in Ikum; Groundnuts Mill in Bekwara, Rice Mill in Ogoja, among others should be completed and given a new lift. The governor should also realise that the Cross River ecosystem is what makes the state thick. The green economy should be protected by all means. Education also suffered severely, more attention is needed. Otu must therefore set a path for renewal of Cross River.

Instructively, given the precarious situation on ground, the governor barely has any honeymoon. Yet, he can still learn that times have changed. The era of a scavenging political elite culture is far gone. For nearly 63 years, across the federal and state governments, Nigeria's political elites triumphed only in lining their pockets and pilfering the public purse. We thought Cross River was immune from such a rapacious culture of greed. But between 2015 and 2023, the state went through hell and it's now back. But will Otu learn? That's the 25-million-dollar question. Now, Cross River has two leagues of former governors: the good governance clique - Donald Duke and Liyel Imoke and the lonely bad governance club... The outcome of 2023



Cross River North Senatorial Election is a rejection of that bad governance scorecard, and should be an ultimate lesson for Otu. But where will Otu belong?

If recent history is our guide, bad leaders no longer have escape routes. In 2023 general elections, some had their fingers burnt-out, especially by the Obidient's Movement. In Cross River, Governor Otu can steadily use the 2023 election as a guidepost to govern well by being the opposite of the last eight years.

To do so, he can govern without being clannish; he can develop the state without helping himself and his family; he can face governance without being too hard and uncaring. Otu can fight poverty and work for the poor without shedding Crocodile tears in front of Catholic monks and clergy. Himself, a resolute and firm political Iroko, Otu can at least clean Calabar and bring back her glory. He can resuscitate the Obudu Cattle Ranch and Tinapa Resort without suffering the state purse heavily.

Obi is a journalist and media scholar interested in media, elections, politics and democracy

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**

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EDITORIAL

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PALLIATIVES

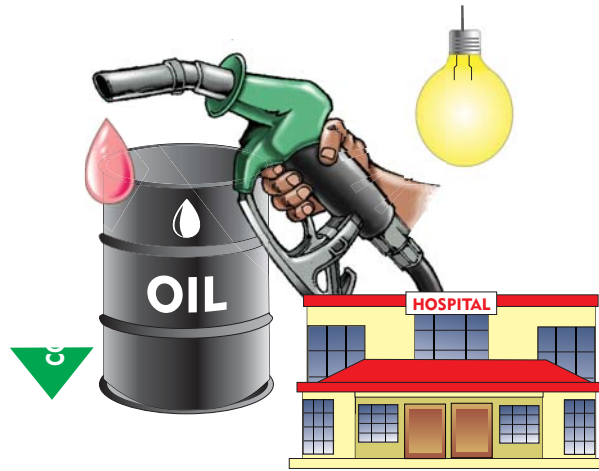
The palliatives must be well thought-out and comprehensive

The removal of subsidy in the downstream sector of the petroleum industry is easily the most potent economic policy measure that will define the reputation of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his administration. With pump prices jumping from N195 to a whopping N550-N600 depending on where you are in the country, land transportation costs have automatically jumped in accord. Food inflation and inflation on other living cost items are bound to follow. The inflationary spiral could be much worse. All this in an economy that the last administration left in tatters. While palliative measures are being discussed with representatives of organised labour, we do not yet have in place the leadership of the government agencies that would implement them.

All arguments around the fuel subsidy issue have come down to their hardship effect and how to ameliorate them. The matter of appropriate palliatives has come to occupy centre stage in public discourse on the matter. Labour is pushing for a substantial increase in the minimum wage now at a miserable N30,000 for those who have jobs. Additional palliatives in the form of subsidized transportation are being advocated. Some state governments have gone ahead to drastically reduce the number of working and schooling days per week.

Regrettably, most of the measures now being canvassed are either familiar, short term or lazy. Reduction of workdays per week will erode the abysmal productivity level of the work forces in the states concerned. Reducing the number of schooling days per week will worsen our already sad educational standards while freeing more youngsters to a bulging army of mischief and criminality. Similarly, the token addition of a few more buses to existing stocks in some urban areas will not substantially ameliorate what is obviously a looming national mobility crisis. An economy with constrained mobility is a looming disaster. Nor does a reduction in bus fares in a few cities address the broad transportation price hike for the broad majority of Nigerians.

Most of our people in rural and semi urban areas



The discussion must see the economy as an integrated complex with urban and rural networks. More importantly, a palliative regime, to be meaningful on a long-term sustainable basis, must take into consideration all the inflationary factors that are likely to become active in the economy soon

move around on tricycles, rickshaws and motor bikes which are all powered by petrol now selling at astronomical prices. Food items and agricultural produce are moved to markets on these devices. Therefore, the contemplated palliatives in order to be sensible and meaningful must be well thought-out, comprehensive and sustainable. The discussion must see the economy as an integrated complex with urban and rural networks. More importantly, a palliative regime, to be meaningful on a long-term sustainable basis, must take into consideration all the inflationary factors that are likely to become active in the economy soon. It is therefore important that concrete measures be put in place before so that the pains of today can ultimately engender shared prosperity.

At the risk of repetition, we reaffirm THISDAY endorsement of the action taken by President Tinubu on fuel subsidy removal. From inception 28 years ago, we have been consistent in highlighting the fact that fuel subsidy is a by-word for waste and corruption. But as we stated recently, a major economic decision

with implications for the social wellbeing of most Nigerians should also not be handled with levity. The inflationary impact and the multiplier effects that place a disproportionate burden on the poor are legitimate concerns, especially in an economy with high incidence of poverty, erratic power supply and inadequate public transport system.

We support ongoing negotiations and engagements between labour, government, and employers. Realistic anticipatory minimum wage adjustments are in order and overdue. There ought to be a formula with a self-adjusting sliding scale for the future so that increases take place automatically as inflation and exchange rates move up or down. In addition, subsidized transportation vouchers need to be introduced for workers in the busiest urban areas.

While it is anticipated that savings from the subsidy removal will be ploughed back into improved social services like education and healthcare, there need to be concrete steps to ensure that this increased investment takes place. Savings from the subsidy removal should not just free up more funds for corruption and waste as we have seen in the past.

SUNDAY NEWSPAPER

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LETTERS

BOLA TINUBU AND THE TASK AHEAD

President Bola Tinubu's first two weeks in office reflects a familiar African fable, epitomized by Roger Bannister, and popularized by Thomas Friedman. According to the tale, every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up, knowing it must outrun the fastest lion to survive. Simultaneously, a lion wakes up, aware it must outrun the slowest gazelle to avoid starvation. The moral is clear: regardless of being a lion or a gazelle, one must keep running when the sun rises.

It remains uncertain whether President Tinubu is the hunting lion or the fleeing gazelle, but what is evident is his sprint in the right direction. However, while the markets are responding positively to his critical decisions, it is important to emphasize that escaping the economic pit dug by the previous administration will require more than mere policy announcements. It demands a Marshall plan and the political determination to follow through.

The tumultuous monetary policy and

incoherent fiscal strategy of the past eight years have left Nigeria with the world's highest unemployment rate, the highest inflation rate in over two decades, and 133 million citizens living in multidimensional poverty. Fortunately, Tinubu recognizes the urgency and appears to have a clear plan to address these issues, albeit underestimating their complexity.

Within two weeks, Tinubu has reversed two of Nigeria's worst economic policies seen in the past two decades, and he has removed the fuel subsidy that has strangled the nation. Eliminating the petrol subsidy and striving for exchange rate unification are crucial steps to attract investors and gain international attention. However, the inability to manage the social impact of these shock therapies could lead to unintended consequences, further stifling growth and worsening poverty.

Undeniably, removing the petrol subsidy and unifying exchange rates will attract significant dollar inflows, improve government finances,

and encourage foreign direct investment. Most importantly, it signals that Nigeria is open for business. While these signs are encouraging, it is equally important to consider that these decisions will exacerbate inflation in the short to medium term, raise interest rates, and erode citizens' purchasing power.

As prices of petrol, transportation, and food inadvertently rise, household consumption will significantly shrink. Household consumption expenditure accounts for the largest share of GDP. Consequently, if household consumption diminishes significantly, the economy will struggle to achieve the proposed 6% GDP growth set by Tinubu's economic team. The situation could worsen, as lower purchasing power and stagnant wages will make it harder for many Nigerians to afford necessities, pushing them below the poverty line.

Nigeria's economic history over the past four decades has shown a strong correlation between

currency devaluation and increased poverty. As the Naira weakens against the dollar, poverty levels have risen. The reason is simple: Nigeria lacks an export-driven economy where a weaker currency enhances global competitiveness. Therefore, beyond the optimism, the unification of exchange rates will likely weaken the Naira in the short to medium term, plunging more people into poverty.

To contextualize this issue, Nigeria sees approximately 10.6 million pregnant women annually, many of whom travel 12km to the nearest primary healthcare centre. The cost of this trip is the primary deterrent preventing many of these women from accessing those facilities, resulting in one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates. Consider the challenges faced by women who now must pay three to four times more for transportation and food.

Ayodele Adio, Managing Editor, Avalon Media Group

INTERNATIONAL

The Incline and Decline of US Supremacy in Global Diplomacy: Europeans' Self-inflicted Problems

Europe has always been largely responsible for global insecurity right from 1618 to date. The 30-year old war that dovetailed into the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 was the genesis. Wars were fought over religious, territorial, commercial, and dynastic interests by various countries from 1618 through 1648. Major participants in the war included Austria, Denmark, Dutch Republic, Holy Roman empire, Poland, Protestant Union, Russia, Spain and Sweden. The war started because the Holy Roman emperor Ferdinand II, as King of Bohemia, attempted in 1619 to impose Roman Catholic absolutism on his domains. The Protestant nobles in Bohemia and Austria objected to it, refusing to be coerced into Catholicism. It was a case of order and counter-order amounting to disorder. Spain and Austria fought on the side of the Catholics while England, Denmark and the Dutch Republic supported the Protestants. Eventually, the Catholics won the war. Negotiations for peace began as early as 1644 in Osnabruck and Munster. Netherlands and Switzerland became self-independent while France became the dominant power in Europe.

The post-war emergence of a philosophical Enlightenment movement in the 18th century was noteworthy. The Movement preached tolerance, freedom, progress, separation of the State and the Church and constitutional parliament. More importantly, the Enlightenment held the basic idea that reason is the primary source of legitimacy, and authority. Its products include the separation of human rights, powers, civil society, and civil rights.

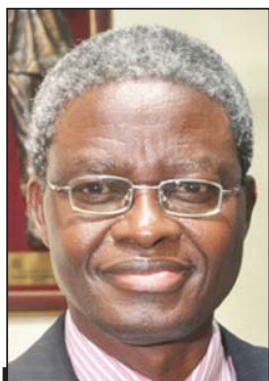
Without doubt, the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia laid the foundation for the state system in international relations. The Congress of Vienna, held from September 1814 to June 9, 1815, reorganised Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. The four main powers that fought to oust Napoleon, Austria, Prussia, Russia and Great Britain, concluded a special alliance by signing the Treaty of Chaumont on March 9, 1814. Even though invitation was extended to all plenipotentiaries to convene in Austria for peace negotiations, the four signatories to the Chaumont alliance treaty reserved their real decision-making for themselves.

In the same vein, the 1818 Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was a high-level diplomatic meeting of France and the four allied powers (Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia) otherwise the Chaumont Treaty signatories, took place to decide on the withdrawal of the army of occupation from France and renegotiate the reparations it owed. Even though the occupation was formally terminated at the conference on 30 September 1818 and France was admitted as a full discussion partner in the European congress system and France's position as a European power was restored, Europe never had enduring peace. The 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war, the First and Second World Wars are clear illustrations of a belligerent Europe. In fact, it has been European of war after war since 1618 until now, the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Declining US Supremacy

US diplomacy in international relations began to be on the incline as from the end of World War I, especially with the 14 Principles of President Woodrow Wilson and the development of International Relations as a new special field of study when it was carved out of Political Science after World War I. President Wilson, in his speech to the US Congress on January 8, 1918, underscored the conditions or principles to guide the final settlement of war claims, as well as to ensure global peace and security. The principles included open diplomacy or agreements without secret treaties, arms reductions, freedom of the high seas, economic free trade during war and peace time, equal trade conditions, adjustment of colonial claims, evacuation of all Central Powers from Russia to enable it define its own independence, and self-determination for oppressed minorities. The principles were internationally recognised as blueprint for peace and peace negotiations in order to end World War I. The principles were also meant to ensure that Russians remained fighting on the side of the Allies. Thus, while President Wilson was much interested in the making of the League of Nations, US congressmen observed that US membership of the League could undermine US sovereignty. Consequently, many objected to US membership of the League of Nations. In spite of this, the development clearly brought the United States into a more constructive engagement in global diplomacy.

The 27 August 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, done in Quai D'Orsay, Paris, is another illustration of the inclining influence of the United States in global diplomacy. The pact, also known as the Pact of Paris, was sponsored by the United States and France and named after the authors: US Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand. The Pact was a General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy. Although the Pact, signed by many countries, including Germany, could not prevent World War II, there is no disputing the fact that the same Pact was used in prosecuting the Nazi leaders during the prosecution of World War II. As at today, can it be rightly argued that war has been renounced as an instrument of national policy? Far from it, war is frequently used for multidimensional purposes and frequently under the pretext of legitimate self-defence and national security and orderliness.



VIE
INTERNATIONALE

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Biden

Perhaps more interestingly, at the end of World War II, the Soviet Union and the United States emerged as Superpowers. By implication, they moved from the ordinary status of a great power to that of superpower, thus leaving countries like the United Kingdom, France, Italy, etc. in the category of great powers. The fundamental difference between a great power and a super power is that a superpower has the capacity to act in full force in any part of the globe militarily, economically, culturally, politically, in fact, in all ramifications. The scope of intervention of great powers is limited and not universal like that of a super power. This factor in itself would later be a major dynamic of the East-West Cold War and particularly Soviet-American rivalry.

It is important to note that the Soviet Union and the United States became Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with the right of veto. The two countries took the advantage of the veto power to advance their national interest more than they did in the maintenance of global peace and security. Being nuclear weapon states is another argument entirely. Western allies seek protection under the nuclear umbrella of the United States and by so doing, sustaining the inclining diplomatic influence of the United States in international relations.

In this regard, the United States is on record to have compelled the British and French colonialists to decolonise based on the principle of self-determination. This placed US diplomacy on the ascendancy. The diplomatic ascendancy was because of new technological developments and feats by both the Soviet Union and the United States on the basis of which there was stiff rivalry. For instance, the United States decided to go to space and came up with the idea of astronauts. The Soviets responded competitively with cosmonauts. Astronaut generally refers to any American or Western European space traveller while cosmonaut refers to any Soviet or Russian space traveller. Cosmonaut is derived from Kosmos, a Greek word meaning universe, and nautes meaning sailor. The Soviet Union adopted cosmonauts officially after Yuri Gagarin successfully went to space in 1961. He was the first human being to be in the space. The late Russian cosmonaut, Valeri Polyakov, logged 437 continuous days in orbit aboard Russia's Mir space station between 1994 and 1995. This has been a world record. The Americans have been responding competitively to the Soviet challenges, and even to the Chinese who refer to their own space travellers as taikonauts. All these developments make US diplomacy very active.

Particularly worthy of mention is the role of the United States in the settlement of the Europeans to normalcy after the end of World War II. The United States came up with the Marshall Plan of assistance in order to consolidate

the Western Alliance. The Bretons Woods institutions were put into place. A new international monetary system was adopted. The capital of the whole world became the United States with particular importance to New York which plays host to the United Nations headquarters.

United States with Africa should also be mentioned. Development assistance was given to enlist support on the side of the west in the cold war against the Soviet Union. Following Nigeria's independence, Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa paid official visit to Washington. He was given a very warm presidential welcome. When the Nigerian Institute of international Affairs was established in 1961, the United States donated books. Nigeria's non-alignment policy was in favour of the US-led western world. To a great extent, African external relations have been largely oriented towards the West, especially in terms of trade, military cooperation, development funding, and technical assistance.

Thus, rising US diplomatic profile is one thing. It is one beginning. The end of the beginning is another kettle of fish entirely. In other words, American diplomatic supremacy is witnessing decline but it is difficult for the Washingtonian authorities to accept this reality. Even at the level of the Western alliance, the transformation of the European Economic Community to European Community and then to European Union following the 1993 Maastricht Treaty is a first impediment to the US inclining diplomatic leadership. The European Union is underscoring European identity and the European Union as another separate centre of power as distinct from the Washington centre. The European Union is not opposed to collaboration with the United States but the basis must recognise the right to separate identity.

The position of France within the European Union is noteworthy. France has always been opposed to the mainmise of the United States even within the framework of the NATO politics. It was because of this that France subjected its military integrative membership of the NATO to prior consent. This position was not found convenient. And for other reasons too, the NATO headquarters had to be moved from Paris to Brussels. This is one pointer to a declining US diplomatic leadership. Let us explicate the decline in the context of the self-inflicted problems of the European countries.

Europeans' Self-inflicted Problems

The starting problem is not simply the arrogance with which the United States is managing international question but particularly the non-readiness to accept that whatever has a beginning must also have an end. American government does not believe in it. American leadership of the world has a beginning and cannot have an end, at least for now. Europeans condone the US policy attitude. In response to this, international uprising against the United States began to mount.

Without any iota of gainsaying, the United States arrogantly, if not recklessly, announces foreign policy that is always very offending. There was the time President Donald Trump came with the policy of America First and the policy of making America Great Again. The implications of the policy of America First, are serious. It implies that in whatever international negotiations that are held, the protection of the US national interest must be given priority. The policy does not allow for compromise. In the eyes of opponents, it is an offensive policy as there is no one ready to sacrifice its own national interest at the altar of the United States interests.

The policy of making America great again directly admits that America has lost its greatness at a point in time. It also recognises the need to restore the lost greatness. This was the policy under President Donald Trump. Under President Joe Biden, the policy does not accept that America has lost any greatness. It is still the America of permanent greatness and this is reflected in the instructional directives often given to other sovereign states of the world.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, because of the vested interest of the United States and the European Union in the conflict, efforts are made to coerce all other countries to support the Euro-American position. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) came up with a Resolution on 2nd March, 2022 which sought to condemn Russia. The resolution is particularly symbolic even though UNGA resolutions are generally not legally binding. It can only influence world opinion. The resolution was adopted within the framework of the first emergency session convened since 1997, that is, since 25 years.

141 countries voted for the resolution condemning Russia. Only five countries – Belarus, Democratic Republic of Korea, Syria, Russia, and Eritrea – There were 35 abstentions. The resolution, 'condemning the decision of the Russian Federation to increase the readiness of its nuclear forces,' and 'expressing concern also about the potential impact of the conflict on increased food insecurity globally, as Ukraine and the region are one of the world's most important areas for grain and agricultural exports, when millions of people are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or are experiencing severe food insecurity in several regions of the world, as well as on energy security,' deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian federation against Ukraine in violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter.

GLITZTRIBUTE

Dokpesi: Farewell to a Passionate Pacesetter

Leaving behind a legacy of establishing the first indigenous shipping line in Nigeria and pioneering the 24-hour broadcast service in Nigerian radio and television, Chief Raymond Dokpesi who died at 71 on May 29 will be remembered not only for his pioneering efforts but his contributions towards embracing the African cultural identity, **Vanessa Obioha** writes

Many Nigerians were not convinced that Chief Raymond Dokpesi had passed on until the programmes of his funeral rites were released last week. For many, it was just like he was out of the social scene for a while. Dokpesi was believed to have died on May 29 after he fell off the treadmill while on a routine gym exercise as he was recovering from a stroke. He was aged 71.

Last week, in conjunction with the People of Agenebode, the Great People of Edo State, the Nigerian broadcasting media, the Board, management and staff of DAAR Communication Plc, the Dokpesi Dynasty, announced his burial arrangements.

From the burial programme released and signed by the Chairman Organising Committee, Senator Ben Obi, it was revealed that a ‘day of tributes’ has been scheduled for Monday, June 19 at the Ballroom International Conference Centre, Abuja, at 4:00 pm. This would be followed by Requiem Mass on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at the Church of Assumption, Asokoro Abuja time, at noon.

On Thursday, June 22, 2023, there will be a Service of Song/Requiem Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, in his hometown in Agenebode, Edo State. This would be followed immediately by his interment at his residence in Agenebode. Shortly after, there will be a reception of the Requiem Mass at St. Peter’s Grammar School Compound, Agenebode. The programme stated that traditional rites will take place on Friday at Agenebode.

Chief Dokpesi had first escaped death when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in 2020. Alongside seven members of his family, they contracted the dreaded disease. But not this time that stroke struck.

Prior to his death, Dokpesi was a habitual pacesetter in the maritime and media sectors. He rose from being a young native of Agenebode, Edo State to achieving lofty dreams. Born on October 25, 1951, to the family of Chief Williams Ayaoghena Dokpesi and Mrs. Alice Aishetu Dokpesi of Agenebode in Edo State, he spent his younger years in Ibadan. Upon completing his primary school education at Ebenezer African Church School, he proceeded to Loyola College, Ibadan and, much later Immaculate Conception College (ICC) Benin City. While in Benin, he started his undergraduate studies at the University of Benin before travelling abroad for further studies.

As a young marine engineer, he travelled far away from his Nigerian roots to Poland for further studies in 1972. There, he received his B.sc, Masters and doctorate degrees from Wysza Szokta Morska Gdynia and the University of Gdansk Sopot, Poland respectively. As the best graduating student in 50 years in Poland in Marine Transport Engineering- finishing off with a first class, he knew he had a lot at stake upon his return to his home country.

Before his adventures in Poland, he had a stint at the Nigerian Ports Authority as Marine Office Cadet in 1969 which invariably prepared him for a courageous career at sea. He would later lecture at the University of Gdansk, Poland before proceeding to Nigeria on the invitation of the then, Nigeria Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon. who was on a State visit to Poland. While in Poland, he demonstrated strong leadership skills, holding positions such as President, Nigerian Students Union Gdansk Poland (1972 – 1974), President, African Students Union, Poland (1973), President, International Students Association, Poland (1974), President, Nigerian Students, Eastern Europe (1974).

Upon his return to Nigeria, he worked



Late Dokpesi

with different government parastatals including the Federal Ministry of Transport and Aviation as the Head of Water Transport Division on Secondment from Nigerian Ports Plc (NTCC) between 1978 and 1983.

He was the Chief of Staff of the old Gongola State Government from October to December 1983 and subsequently the Managing Director of African Ocean Line Limited from 1984 to 1988. He was Chairman of the first indigenous shipping line, African Ocean Line now Baldok Shipping Lines Limited from February 1989-and surprisingly too- till his demise.

As the Executive Chairman of DAAR Communications, he secured the first licence for private radio broadcast in Nigeria with Raypower 100.5FM. In the same vein, Africa Independent Television (AIT), became a trailblazer in curating indigenous homegrown content. All the on-air personalities had a dress code: strictly African. Remarkably, AIT glamourised African culture through its programming and in-house policies.

Chief Dokpesi’s knowledge of marine engineering provided a launch pad for his intervention in the broadcast sector. His initiatives were anchored on the introduction of 24-hour transmission on both radio and television right from inception as well as the introduction of Cyber and Chroma technology for television operations and digitalised audio and video signals on both radio and television. Through his efforts, AIT became the first African broadcast station to transmit to the United States of America (USA). Other subsidiaries of DAAR Communications include a digital multi-channel direct-to-home subscription TV, DAARSAT and Faaji FM which broadcasts in Yoruba and Pidgin-English.

A consummate author, Dokpesi boasts

numerous professional qualifications and a portfolio of national assignments. He is also a recipient of several national and international awards including Dr. Kwame Nkrumah Africa Leadership Award and Gold Medal for Excellence in Business Practice, awarded by the Foundation for Excellence in Business Practice, an organ of the United Nations based in Geneva, Switzerland. He is also the recipient of the prestigious Institute of Directors (IoD) 2007 Entrepreneurial Award.

His chieftaincy titles include Ogiorumoa of Weppa-Wanno – 1986, Araba of Osooroland 1987, Osese of South Uneme – 1990, Gbobaniyi of Ilawe-Ekiti – 1994, Oganigwe Umu Orji Ako Nibo – 1999, Sardaunna of Kpaduma, Abuja 2002 and Ezomo of Weppa Wanno Land, 2003.

Asides from being decorated with many traditional titles, Dokpesi has a colourful life decorated with women. In one of his last interviews with journalists, he remarked that polygamy is one of his greatest regrets.

In recognition of his several patriotic roles and contribution to the country in academic publications, broadcasting, sports, and the growth of Nigerian entertainment – music and Nollywood and entrepreneurship, he was conferred with a National Honour of the Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR) in 2008.

A member of Island, Ikoyi and Apapa clubs, he will be remembered as an avid reader, researcher, philanthropist and humanitarian.

It was not a life devoid of troubles for Dokpesi. When he was arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in 2016 on charges relating to money laundering and breach of the Procurement Act in relation to the disbursement of N2.1 billion from the Office of the National Security Adviser

(ONSA) under Colonel Mohammed Sambo Dasuki (rtd), most of his detractors had thought that his end had finally come

As the case was taking an unfavourable dimension, he stood strong and in the end, he was discharged and acquitted by the Court of Appeal, which in a unanimous judgment held among others, that the EFCC failed to establish a prima facie case against him.

Justice Elfreda Williams-Dawodu, who delivered the lead judgment, held that the ingredients of the offences alleged in the seven-count charge were not established by the prosecution as required by law. She further held that there was nothing in the evidence of the 14 witnesses called by the prosecution to persuade the court to compel the appellant to enter defence in the charges where ingredients of the offence were not provided.

Following his acquittal, a Federal High Court in Abuja presided over by Justice John Tsoho ordered the EFCC to remove his name from its watch list.

In his ruling, Justice Tsoho was of the view that there was no justification for the EFCC to retain his name on its watch list since no criminal charges or allegations were pending against him.

The judge, who is also the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, noted that retaining the politician’s name on EFCC’s watch list amounted to disobeying an earlier judgment of the Court of Appeal, Abuja, which quashed the alleged N2.1 billion fraud charges against him.

As his family prepares for his final rites of passage which will commence tomorrow, many Nigerians are still coming to terms with the news that the patriarch of maritime and a leading private broadcast media owner in Nigeria is no more. For those who knew him closely, his legacies will live long in their hearts.

GLITTERATI

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

18.6.2023



Senator Oluremi Tinubu

A Journey to Nigeria's Political Seat of Power

Impeccably dressed in sky-blue lace which rested perfectly well on her slim frame, she exuded confidence combined with oratory strength as she wrapped up her third term in the Senate during the valedictory session last week. The First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu is not new to the corridors of power, having served as the first lady of Lagos State when her husband was governor for eight years. She would later serve in the Senate for 12 years before moving to the Presidential Villa. **Funke Olaode** chronicles the political journey of Senator Tinubu to the Aso Rock Villa, Nigeria's political seat of power.

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COVER

...Moving to the Higher Realm

From her heyday as the number one woman in Lagos State to becoming Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu's imprint in Nigeria's political landscape is revolutionary. Without mincing words, she has become a permanent fixture in the socio-political path of Nigeria. Besides from marrying a powerful man, Senator Tinubu has carved a niche for herself as a supportive wife, mother, pastor and politician.

As the wife of Nigeria's President, Bola Tinubu, she may be one of the oldest first ladies in Nigeria. The educationist who hails from Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, is neither a new kid on the block nor a greenhorn when it comes to political power. Senator Tinubu has been hobnobbing with power since the advent of democracy in 1999 when the current president was elected governor of Lagos State under Action for Democracy (AD). She was barely 39 years old.

Eloquent, beautiful with an impeccable minimalist fashion sense, Senator Tinubu captured the hearts and souls of Lagosians, particularly the youths and women. Quite frankly, the office of the first lady is one which many critics believe is 'unconstitutional.' Still, it was popularised by the late Maryam Babangida through her Family Support Programme (FSP).

Since then, subsequent first ladies have followed the tradition with the introduction of various programmes targeted at empowering women.

As soon as the mantle of First Lady fell on the then Mrs. Tinubu, she swung into action without trying to 'outdo' her husband by playing a supportive role.

As Lagos State First Lady, Senator Tinubu carried out various humanitarian programmes targeted at youths and students. Here, her career as a teacher played a critical role. Her New Era Foundation projects had impacted the lives of Lagos State students irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds. The Spelling Bees Competition has produced the First Day Governor in Lagos State and several other students through this life-changing experience have moved to conquer their world through outstanding career exploits. The legacy continued long after her husband's exit from the corridor of power.

Apart from being the founder of the New Era Foundation, she is also the Grand Matron of the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO).

When her husband's tenure ended in 2007, Mrs. Tinubu was playing the doting wife, mother and supportive ally to the husband who had become a 'big political' figure in the history of Nigeria. As Tinubu himself is known as the Lion of Bourdillon, his wife is named the Lioness just as their home in Ikoyi has become a mecca of sorts for those seeking political office and relevance.

But in 2010, Mrs. Tinubu was again in the spotlight. Her 50th birthday celebration staged at Eko Hotel and Suites on Victoria Island was so grand that she even claimed that it was a political launch pad.

Less than a year after, Mrs. Tinubu was seen at the centre having won the primary under the APC to represent Lagos Central in the Senate. This was in 2011. And for three consecutive terms, Senator Tinubu was in the Senate calling the shots until May 29, 2023, when she moved to the higher realm as her husband was sworn in as President of Nigeria.

In her political journey, Senator Tinubu gave kudos to her husband for his support. At the valedictory session, she said: "My thanks will go to my husband for giving me the support. He gave me the freedom to be myself and to be able to make the contributions I felt were necessary for our people, especially the women and the youth."

She continued: "I did all that was required of every legislator, motions, bills, and even some bills that were passed into law. I can only just be grateful to God for what he has done



President Tinubu and wife during the Inaugural Ball



and for the people I met here even though we might not understand each other. I believe that we can build a nation that even our young ones will be proud of," she said.

She also acknowledged God in her 12-year journey at the upper legislative chamber.

"God sustained me for three consecutive terms, from the 7th assembly to the 9th and I wonder how I did it. At the time, I even thought that let me retire and face my family because serving the nation takes a lot of sacrifices from home, your children, and even your better half. It is a privilege to serve the nation."

As a staunch Christian, Mrs. Tinubu further immersed herself in the works of God by enrolling at Bible College and was ordained as a Pastor at the Redeemed Christian Church.

Her ordination took place in 2018 during the church's 66th annual convention themed 'Dominion'. Since then, she has carried the mantle of her faith as a Pastor preaching the gospel.

Senator Tinubu's pastoral effort came to the front burner during the presidential inauguration church service held at the National Christian Centre, Abuja. It was a gathering that drew dignitaries including past heads of state, Christians from other denominations, members of different government agencies and parastatals, and outgoing and incoming government officials. In what could be termed a sermon rather than remarks, Mrs. Tinubu quoted the bible intermittently and ended her speech with her devotion to the nation thus: "I promise you on this altar that with your help, with the help of God, we will set this nation on the right path."

Born on September 21, 1960, Nigeria's First Lady began her educational career at Our Lady of Apostles Secondary School Ijebu-Ode where she obtained her West African School Certificate (WASC) in 1979, and Post Graduate Diploma from The Redeemed Christian Bible College in 2010.

Senator Tinubu received a Bsc in Education from the University of Ife. Prior to that, she had earned a National Certificate of Education (NCE) in Botany and Zoology from the Adeyemi College of Education.

As first lady, she established the New Era Foundation, dedicated to establishing centres for all round development of young ones and promoting public awareness on environmental health and community service.

In 2011, she joined politics and was elected to the Senate during the 7th assembly. Senator Tinubu was one of over 100 senators elected in the 8th Assembly in 2015. Six of these were women. At the 2019 general elections, she retained her senatorial seat representing Lagos Central, making it her third tenure in office.

Her contributions to nation building haven't gone unnoticed. She was listed alongside Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Tony Elumelu and other prominent personalities for the Eko Excellence Awards in 2019. She also received the award for the most impactful female senator at The Guardian-organised International Women's Day Summit 2021.

She is a firm believer in investing in society's human capital. Her Youth Empowerment and Skill Acquisition Scheme in collaboration with Good Boys and Girls Empowerment Scheme (GBGES) has produced 1,172 beneficiaries. About 164 youths were trained on various skills and received start-up kits and capital of about N40,000 each.

While in the Senate, she introduced several bills. In March 2021, Senator Tinubu proposed a bill to reform the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) to make it a more viable entity.

As Mrs. Tinubu resumed at the Aso Rock Villa as First Lady on June 5, 2023, all eyes are on her as she rolls out her pet projects which many believe would revolve around women empowerment, financial inclusion, curbing violence against women, girl-child education and the youth.

Many are also wondering if she would replicate the First Day President in Abuja just like she did during her tenure in Lagos? Fingers crossed!

HIGHLIFE

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



Bello

Dagger in
Yahaya Bello's
Smiles

Power is an influential force capable of changing even the strongest individuals. Unfortunately, this truth has often been overlooked by many, leading to their eventual downfall. Those involved with state governors, like Yahaya Bello of Kogi State, would be wise to heed this lesson, take necessary precautions, and safeguard their lives, status, and property before it's too late.

Reports from Kogi indicate that Governor Bello has decided to dismiss several officials, including the Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr. David Apeh, Special Adviser to the Governor on Emergency Management, Mr. Danladi Isah-Yunusa, and Maryam Salifu, Part-time Chairman of the Kogi State Hotels and Tourism Board. This move by Bello demonstrates his adherence to high standards, which may potentially lead to the replacement of a significant number of government officials in the state.

Critics of the governor argue that the dismissals lack genuine justification. Despite the immediate implementation of these dismissals, no official reason was provided by the governor's office. This has led skeptics to believe that Bello is merely asserting his power in a superficial display of authority.

Regardless of the truth behind these dismissals, there are valuable lessons to be learned. Firstly, a governor like Bello, who refers to himself as a 'White Lion,' is unpredictable. Secondly, every smile he presents may conceal hidden motives, ready to strike if an individual falls short of his expectations. In such cases, the recipient of his wrath will be ruthlessly cut down without mercy.

Numerous individuals have already experienced the consequences of this lesson. It is allegedly the reason why Bello is both respected and feared, solidifying his position as a tyrant across the 21 local government areas of the state in the hearts of many Kogites.

However, with the upcoming Kogi State gubernatorial election, the tide may soon change, potentially surprising Bello and his supporters. Only time will tell if this prediction holds true or not.

For Former
Lagos
Governor,
Ambode,
the Storm is
Over at 60

Ultimately, a person's life is shaped by a combination of positive and negative experiences. Those who survive and thrive through these experiences emerge as superior individuals among their peers and partners.



Ambode

Former Lagos Governor Akinwunmi Ambode exemplifies this wisdom as he celebrates his 60th birthday, signifying that he has weathered many storms and successfully overcome them.

Ambode's milestone of turning 60 holds

significant meaning. Despite serving only one term as governor, he is still held in high regard by the people of Lagos. In fact, a considerable portion of the population considers him a victim of unfortunate circumstances, favouring him over governors from other states who served full eight-year terms.

The truth is that Ambode is no longer the pitiable figure he was once portrayed as. Lately, he has regained a newfound radiance among his peers. By all measures, he is now seen as a successful individual. Having reached the age of 60, he stands as a political pillar in Lagos. Even if he chooses to lead a quiet and peaceful life, his impact will not soon be forgotten.

However, it is more likely that Ambode will continue to chart his own course, riding the waves in whatever direction he desires. Recent events have brought the spotlight back to him. Notably, he was seen attending a book launch, eschewing his previous habit of shying away from the paparazzi. Additionally, he celebrated his mother's 90th birthday in Epe, inviting numerous dignitaries to partake in the joyous occasion.

Clearly, at 60, Ambode has transformed into a different man. He is no longer the individual who withdrew from the public eye in 2020 due to his truncated gubernatorial ambition. Instead, he has emerged as a reborn eagle, a master of the times and the traditions of the social scene, embracing his new chapter with grace and poise.

Cheering News from Babangida's Home

Legacies hold a significant place in human history, allowing individuals to pass down their values and beliefs to future generations. Maryam Babangida, the esteemed First Lady of Nigeria and wife of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida has left behind a multitude of remarkable legacies. However, her latest accomplishment stands out as the most noteworthy, with the potential to endure the test of time.

Maryam's vision has materialised once again with the establishment of El Amin University in Minna, Niger State. The approval received from the National Universities Commission indicates that the dream of Nigeria's first influential First Lady has been realised.

Much credit for the fulfilment of this dream goes to Maryam's son, Dr. Muhammed Babangida. He dedicated a decade of hard work to the institution, gathering momentum and drawing lessons from those who came before. The coming generations will recognize

that El Amin University came into existence because of the vision of a single individual.

Those familiar with the achievements of the Babangida children in honouring their late mother's legacy hold great admiration. Aisha Babangida, in particular, has played a pivotal role in manifesting the dreams and goals of the Babangida matriarch, focusing on women and child empowerment and bringing immense pride to her family.

With these remarkable achievements, IBB has every reason to feel content. Seeing his children breathe life into his late wife's dreams and aspirations allows him to sigh with satisfaction. It is no wonder he remains strong despite his advanced age. Besides occasionally commenting on the nation's politics, he maintains a firm grip on his household, contributing to making things even more brilliant than they would be otherwise.

The Babangida household stands as a testament to their exceptional achievements—a family of overachievers, leaving an indelible mark on Nigerian history.



Babangida



Iyegbu a.k.a Obi Cubana

The Mystique of Obi Iyegbu ... The Cubana
Chairman's Path to Success and Acclaim

In many ways, wealth is like a whistle that can expose an individual and show them to be something other than what they really are. For Obinna Iyegbu, the businessman and socialite that has come to be known as Obi Cubana, this whistle has thrown him off course in the minds of many people who believe that the source of his wealth is unclean. But the man is indeed a businessman, one with foresight beyond his age.

It was not long ago that Obi Cubana organised a remarkable burial ceremony for his mother, capturing the attention of many. The event featured the slaughter of over 40 cows to accommodate the vast number of guests in

attendance. What stood out about Obi Cubana was his inclusivity, as he welcomed people from all walks of life without discrimination, earning commendation from many. Yet, controversy and unfounded rumours also arose.

A cursory investigation would reveal the origin of Obi Cubana's wealth. He is the founder and proprietor of the Cubana Group, a series of businesses that began with the establishment of Ibiza Club in Abuja in 2006. Within three years, Obi Cubana had also founded Cubana, a renowned nightclub in Owerri, Imo State.

From the hospitality club in Owerri, Obi Cubana's wealth has steadily grown.

In Abuja, he oversees establishments such as Cubana Signature, Puzzo, Caledonian Suites, Crave, Hustle and Bustle, and Grand Cubana Hotels. His influence has extended to Lagos with venues like The Grind, Montana, and Pablo. Opium By Cubana can be found in Owerri, while Cubana Gustavo is located in Enugu.

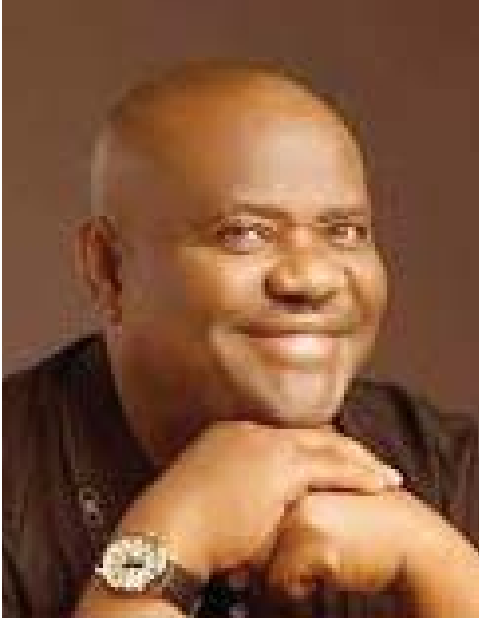
Obi Cubana has received numerous awards in recognition of his achievements. Since 2016, he has been honoured with prestigious accolades, each year reaffirming his business acumen and success. A few days ago the dark and handsome dude and his beautiful wife celebrated their 15th wedding anniversary.

Will Wike Get Ministerial Appointment under Tinubu?

Politics is an ever-present entity that defies predictability and guarantees no certainties. The possibility of Nyesom Wike, the former governor of Rivers State, receiving a ministerial appointment in the new administration remains known only to President Bola Tinubu, who keeps his decisions close to his chest.

Wike played a significant role in the previous presidential election, causing disruptions within his own party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Originally an aspirant of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Wike ended up being a thorn in the side of his party. Ultimately, he contributed to the defeat of the PDP candidate, Atiku Abubakar and seemed to pitch his tent with Atiku's opponent, Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

With Tinubu declared as President, albeit amid ongoing legal challenges, Wike has openly expressed his happiness, proclaiming that he made the right choice. His frequent visits to the presidential villa



Wike

have made him one of President Tinubu's regular guests, alongside other governors who followed a similar path.

These visits have prompted critics to question President Tinubu's stance on Wike's intentions. Concerned that Wike may be vying for a ministerial position, these critics urge the President to carefully consider his decision before granting such a role to Wike.

Wike, in response, has dismissed the idea, claiming that he has served for eight years and desires some rest. However, only a few are convinced of the sincerity behind his statements. After all, it is rare for anyone to turn down power when it is offered freely. Given Wike's previous betrayal of Atiku and the PDP, which he seems unconcerned about, he cannot be regarded as a saint.

Only time will reveal whether Wike will indeed secure a ministerial position in the new administration. It would not be surprising if he did, considering the circumstances.

Adesua Dozie Higher Calling



Dozie

A new era dawns upon the Nigerian corporate landscape and pivotal appointments made during this time are expected to shape the future trajectory. Adesua Dozie is among those chosen to lead this new era, as she has heeded the call to serve in expanded roles of greater significance.

Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPN) and Esso Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited (EEPNL), both affiliates of ExxonMobil, are the trailblazers of this corporate transformation in Nigeria. Their astute vision, demonstrated in the past, has once again come to the fore as they appoint Dozie as the Vice-Chairman of their Boards.

Prior to this appointment, Dozie had already served as an Executive Director and General Counsel for MPN and EEPNL. Despite joining MPN as recently as 2019, her swift promotion from General Counsel to Executive Director within a month speaks volumes about the trust and confidence placed in her by both organisations.

Dozie boasts an impressive track record as a senior Legal Advisor with over 20 years of experience, having worked across diverse industries throughout Africa. Her exceptional grasp of legal frameworks has endeared her to forward-thinking business executives, attracting the attention of prominent multinational companies across the continent. MPN and EEPNL, recognizing her value, have astutely retained her services.

Dozie is undeniably a transformational leader, with a focus not only on immediate growth but also on fostering a sustainable culture of productivity. She has effectively empowered others to fulfil their obligations in the past and continues to do so.

The selection of Dozie by MPN and EEPNL can be hailed as a resounding success, as they have secured a valuable asset. In turn, this appointment represents a significant calling for Dozie herself, indicating her pivotal role in shaping the future of these organisations.



Iloghalu

Chinwe Iloghalu: Proving Her Mettle in the Banking World

Talent and diligence have always been recognised as key factors in achieving business success. Individuals who possess these qualities are celebrated for their potential to lead corporate affairs, and Chinwe Iloghalu

is a shining example. Her recent appointment as the Executive Director of Lagos and Corporate Banking at Polaris Bank heralds exciting and promising days ahead for the bank's informed shareholders.

The Nigerian corporate landscape has witnessed a significant shift with women taking the reins of governance. Iloghalu's inclusion on this board further exemplifies this positive trend. Leveraging her wealth of experience, Polaris Bank is poised to reach new heights in the coming months, surpassing

its peers and silencing the skeptics. Iloghalu is a well-known figure in Nigeria's corporate world, having actively participated in the banking industry for over 25 years. During this time, she has held leadership positions for at least 15 years, showcasing a commendable track record of achievements.

Prior to joining Polaris Bank, Iloghalu served as a General Manager and Regional Bank Head at Fidelity Bank PLC. Before that, she made significant contributions to the growth and consolidation of Zenith Bank's operations in Lagos. Her earlier tenure at Ecobank also played a pivotal role in positioning the institution as a top-tier player in the sector. These banks remember her for her visionary thinking, excellent communication and persuasion skills, as well as her ability to understand and meet the needs of stakeholders and clients.

With Iloghalu at the helm, Polaris Bank can expect smoother sailing. Her decisive and responsive approach to addressing challenges will position the bank competitively and provide the impetus needed to surpass its peers and predecessors. Undoubtedly, better days lie ahead for Polaris Bank under Iloghalu's leadership.

Yari Finally Eats Humble Pie

As with any political competition, the outcome is often unpredictable. In the case of the leadership of the 10th National Assembly, the contest has concluded, and Godswill Akpabio has emerged as the victor. Consequently, all other candidates are left with no choice but to return home, unable to hide their disappointment and bruised egos.

Akpabio's ascension to the position of Senate President in the 10th National Assembly is both surprising and unsurprising. Despite facing numerous attempts to unseat him, Akpabio's unwavering ambition compelled him to forge alliances with individuals in positions of power, including some with whom he would not typically associate. However, it is evident that his determination alone was inadequate to help him overcome the efforts of his rivals, particularly Abdulaziz Yari.

Akpabio initially appeared to have the best chance of becoming the Senate President. However, Yari swiftly gained momentum for several reasons. Allegedly, Yari was able to gather support from around 60 senators who were willing to back him against

Akpabio. Additionally, Akpabio's accusations that the assembly could potentially breed corrupt practices were exposed, supposedly motivating some of his former supporters to switch sides and join Yari's camp.

Nevertheless, the current situation underscores the fact that political contests cannot be reduced to simplistic binary outcomes. Numerous complexities at play go beyond surface observations and immediate assessments. It is also evident that Yari lacked a deep understanding of the intricacies of the game, resulting in his current humbled position.

However, Yari is not the sole individual compelled to accept defeat in the wake of Akpabio's victory. Several others find themselves in a similar predicament, though Yari has been the most vocal rival of the former Akwa Ibom Governor. Consequently, nobody can—or is willing to—usurp his position as the top loser.

It is hoped that others can learn from this experience. While being outspoken during a political contest may have its advantages, the risks involved are equally humbling.



Yari

It's looking like Baba wants to put us to shame o. We that screamed to the high heavens that 'over our dead body' before this 'kind' person becomes our President. It appears that ever since he came to power, Baba has deliberately gone ahead to shame us with the deliberateness of his moves. I watched him the other day, speaking to a delegation from the Nigerian Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) and the grogginess that characterised the campaigns, the drooling of his speech, making it look like he was unstable, had all but disappeared. He spoke on the need for every Nigerian child having an opportunity to be educated even the Boli seller's child. \I was impressed o. Nigerians have been mostly impressed. In a few days, he has removed subsidy- something that very strong leaders from Obasanjo to the almost dour Buhari could not dare, he has made some strategic appointments, defanged the ill-fated and 'okobo' NLC, introduced the student loan and Education Bank, moved against the CBN Governor and just as I am writing this column, thrown Mr. Bawa, the EFCC Oga into the dustbin, making him the

Tinubu Has Surprised Us



Tinubu

latest guest at the DSS office. Instantly, the economy seems to be responding with the NGX reporting massive gains, the price of domestic gas crashing, daily usage of petrol reportedly dropping by over 60% and the crash of the dual exchange rate, seeing the Naira gaining strength at the markets. If he continues at this pace, some of us may just begin to think very seriously about sending a comprehensive apology for all the abuse and 'terror' we have thrown his way. But as my brother Ola would say, "Edgar, me I no dey carried away o, the man gets to prove himself at the courts on this him election. When he win for there, then you fit come back. For now, na siddon look me I dey." For me however, the jury is out on this. Should this his initial performance blur the very odious cloud of his past and colourful trail towards the Presidency which has gifted us with a possible entry into the Guinness Book of World Records as the most 'funny electioneering process ever'? Yes, the election that threw up this Baba.

GODSWILL AKPABIO MADE IT

That our new Senate President made it to the much-coveted position has filled me with a bittersweet feeling. His ascendance has thrown me into a spastic confusion as I no know how to react again. By now, you should be expecting me and most Akwa Ibom people to be very giddy with excitement and pride abi? This is the highest we have ever gone at the federal level. Prior to this was Etim Inyang at the Police station and even that one ended in ridicule, when he could not hold down the dreaded Lawrence Anini, making General Ibrahim Babangida to ask him, "my friend, where is Anini?" Before then, we had Clement Isong at the CBN. After these two it's been mostly the system ignoring us or just throwing some very funny and irrelevant positions towards us despite our major oil wells and the constellation of very erudite and intelligent people that populate the state. Now we have the Senate Presidency, the third in command and na Godswill come get am. A very colourful politician

with tricks like a failed magician up his sleeve. He calls himself the uncommon politician and truly moves around with an uncommon penchant of really not having any well driven penchant for values and vision. He did creditably well as governor of our state but his stint at the Senate and the ministry were just a funny walk in the park of self-interest induced voyeurism. Is this a celebration for Akwa Ibom? Make I just keep quiet.

ORJI KALU: WEEP NOT ADULT

Kai! I would have entered a big trouble o. When I saw the headlines, 'Orji kalu weeps,' I wanted to fire. What is he weeping for, I asked? Another headline screamed, 'Nigeria has not been fair to me.' By this time, I had already sharpened my pen to blow him into bits but this God that I am worshipping that has never failed me, stopped me at 4am as I was writing this column. The Holy Spirit said to me, "My son, why not watch the clip first before you write yourself into purgatory." So, I went straight to YouTube and watched the clip. Kai! I follow the Chief Whip weep o. "I employed 13,800 Nigerians, I have three factories in Lagos, two in Otta, three in the east and yet I am a thief?" Kai. Kai. Kai. By this time, his voice broke as he continued: "They ruined my business, tried to kill me and sent me to prison."

Oh mbok, by this time, even me had joined him in tears. "Oh those who sent me to prison know why they did. I survived and today I want to thank those of you who stood by me," he ended in tears. Kai, such a touching episode mbok. I pitied him o, I really pitied him o as I watched him shed very hot tears o. I felt his pain and also felt like just going to him and hugging him and saying, "Weep not adult." Kai!

ABDULRASHEED BAWA: A TALE OF BANANA PEEL

I think it was the Senate Presidency that the theory of banana peel was linked but it is looking like it is the chairmanship of the EFCC, the corruption fighting agency set up by my hero, Chief Obasanjo, that truly owns the analogy. Almost every chairman of the place has been disgraced out of the office with the boyish looking Mr. Bawa being the latest victim. Much wasn't really expected from him, especially if you took into contention stories of his colourful past especially in his Port Harcourt days, so I was not really surprised last night as the news filtered into the space that he had been suspended indefinitely and invited by the ever so efficient DSS to answer some questions. The way this DSS dey go, be like say even Estate Chairman wey dem mistake suspend go also get dem invite. I am

beginning to wonder wetin police dey do now apart from seeking life jail for Seun Kuti. Anyway, Mr. Bawa has gone the way of his predecessors in obvious shame and I really do wish him well, because I liked him. I swear, I really liked him for his boyish handsome looks but alas na the same bla bla black sheep. Na wa.

ABDULLAHI GANDUJE: AN ATTEMPTED SLAP

Those days during the heady and mad days of the military junta, they will tell you that it is not only executing a coup but also thinking it is an offence punishable by death. As a result of this wonky thinking, a lot of brave soldiers lost their lives and careers. So, this one that Ganduje did not only think it but said it, then he has committed a capital offence. Saying that if he came across the great Kwankwaso of the red and white stripe cap fame, he would slap him means that he has already committed the offence and



Akpabio



Kalu



Bawa



Ganduje

appropriate measures must be taken in this wise. My recommendations. Since boxing as a sport has died in our country, a fight should be organised with these two overfed and obviously almost jobless politicians as the main gladiators. The fight can be held in a neutral place like Uyo during the happy hours where subsidised drinks will be sold to the spectators by the state government. The fight would be televised live with a pay per view element which should raise money for all the ‘Almajiri’ in Kano that have suffered in the hands of these two. This is what you get from a system that never throws up its best and quality in leadership. When ‘gargoyles’ get thrown up into leadership, what you get is a circus of the absurd. Simple. We really have to start taking ourselves much more seriously in this country. I swear.

AKIN KEKERE-EKUN: A PERFECT GENTLEMAN AT 70

Come July 1, one of the most respected and highly intelligent Nigerians will be 70. Mr. Akin Kekere-Ekun was Managing Director of the very successful Habib Bank and former Chairman of the Technical Committee on Privatisation. Mr. Keks as he is fondly called has lived a remarkable life of quiet achievement. He has continued to contribute to discussions especially on the economy, leadership and others in his very quiet and non-intrusive manner. Not for him the boisterousness that comes with public life but a deliberate and very sublime engagement to strategic circles as he continues to quietly yearn for good governance. I hear there will be a lecture on said date and I have been invited which has made me deeply honoured. I always used to say that there are five Nigerians I respect phenomenally and Mr. Keks is on that list. Happy birthday my Oga and may God keep you for us o. We still have much to learn from you sir.

HILDA BACI: IT'S RAINING CHEFS

Since my sister has carried her beautiful self to cook herself into the history books, all sorts of chefs have been coming out of the wood works to attempt a copy. You see why Nigerians will never seize to amaze? From Ekiti and I hear Ibadan, some funny people have been cooking boli and dundun in an attempt at denigrating the mean feat that took over five years of meticulous planning and training to achieve. As I watched these funny people serve their guests in rubber spoons and on disposable packs with the food looking like what you see in those documentaries on famine in Africa, I began to wonder just what all of this is about. The closest explanation I can



Sanusi II

KHALIFA MUHAMMADU SANUSI II: SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN

It first started as a campaign promise, then it filtered into mainstream media after the elections were won and now it is looking official. The new Governor of Kano is looking very seriously at the events surrounding the dethronement of my great ruler and leader, Khalifa Muhammadu Sanusi II with a possible bid to a ‘rethronement’ - if there is a word like that. I had once asked the great Khalifa, “how do you feel about this dethronement?” And he looked straight into my eyes and said, “Edgar, it is the will of Allah and I submit to it in totality.” If you have never met this regal man, I think you should. You should all try to spend just five minutes with him before you retire. His clarity, boldness and deep spirituality will surely get to you. Sitting at his feet

and listening to him speak on the economy, spirituality and leadership will make you begin to see yourself like the dunce that you are. His brilliance is unmistakable and his stubbornness – which put him in so much trouble will amaze you. His love for the girl child, his fight against poverty and his penchant to look at his own grouping – aristocratic and political leadership - pointing an accusing finger at them as the source of our perpetual slavery will make you gush with admiration. Well, fingers crossed on the matter of his ‘recall’ because as far as I am concerned, Khalifa is now bigger than the highly revered throne in Kano as in my eyes and in the eyes of the world, he is now the Khalifa of the world. We are in prayers, Your Highness.

give to this is that they portend nothing but a mild irritation and should be treated as such, like the way you treat a bad rash. Well-done my dear sister especially with the affirmation of the record, even with the cancellation of seven hours by the Guinness people. Well-done my sister, your courage, strength and fortitude gave you the record, making Nigerians very very proud of you. Mbok don’t mind those ones cooking guguru and epa and charging people N1,000 to eat. Na wa.

PORTABLE ZAZU: A PROPHET WITH NO HONOUR

This musician is an unlikely prophet looking dishevelled and riotous. He can be best described as dirty-looking and illiterate. But in his chaos, he continues to make credible inroads in the music industry and also in life. I saw a video of him that was really engaging and spoke to life. Apparently after getting tired of the ‘advisers’ - his wife’s friends’ who have been advising her to leave him - he came out to announce that he had slept with at least 10 of the so-called advisers after which he dared his wife to take their advice and see what would happen. You see, this is the reality of life in most relationships, be it marriage or just boyfriend and girlfriend. Once there is a small problem, her friends will move in - leave home, how can he slap you, how can he be cheating, he doesn’t give you chop money, he has not sent you to France, his mother is wicked. They will always end it with, “what are you still doing there? Me, I have gone since o.” Then they will start calling your wife, Ruth ‘aboko ku’, all in an attempt to get her out of your house. This is what Portable has addressed in his illiterate manner with all wisdom. These ‘advisers’ are usually the first to jump in once the sad woman takes their advice. They will position themselves and be ‘chopping’ on the side even as they taunt and provoke the wife to leave an otherwise good man just because he had made the fatal error of impregnating the housemaid. Although most men will not sleep with ten of the wives’ friends like Portable, the lesson in his speech is very clear. Our women should better have sense and face the reality of their situation without the egging of friends who are not in the relationship with you. My advice is to focus on your man and be the best you can be for him even if he is doing some exploration in between the legs of your sexy housemaid. Just keep being the doting housewife, because your reward is in heaven. Kai, I don run o.



Habeeb Okikiola a.k.a. Portable



Baci

SOCIETY WATCH

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When TB Joshua was Remembered



Late TB Joshua

‘When a great man dies, for years the light he leaves behind lies on the paths of men’ - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

To say that the late Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua, otherwise known as TB Joshua, of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) was a great man is definitely stating the obvious. Since he died in 2021, the light he leaves behind has continued to shine on the path of many he left behind while his sweet memories continue to linger on.

Little wonder he was remembered by many whose paths had crossed his during his time on earth. The man of God would have been 60 last week, June 12, 2023, but he died in the same month of June, 5th precisely. Since he died in 2021, he has continued to be in the hearts of many of his loved ones as well as his numerous disciples. As expected, many were awakened with a flood of laudation from his loved ones and admirers on June 5, the second year of his death. The encomiums reached a crescendo on Monday, June 12, for the 60th posthumous birthday of the late Ondo State-born prophet. The posthumous birthday was honoured by several men of God. It was held in his church’s main auditorium in the Ikotun-Egbe area of Lagos State. At the event, the late gospel preacher’s lifestyle during his time was described as worthy of emulation.

No doubt, whenever the history of Christendom in Nigeria is written, the story of the late Prophet will no doubt get a good mention and space. Although he was rejected even by his ‘brothers’ in Christendom, who described him as a wolf in sheep’s skin, his many wonderful miracles ultimately dragged many to his church and put Ikotun on the world map. Despite this, TB Joshua rose above all the condemnations and tribulations to become widely known across Africa, Israel and Latin America. Joshua was awarded various accolades, notably among them was the Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) conferred on him by the Nigerian government in 2008.

Tinubu Completes Dream Palatial Palace



Bourdillon Street in Ikoyi, Lagos does not host Nigeria’s seat of power. Yet, it is one of the most talked about exotic locales in the country. The reason is not far-fetched!

In the past few years, the upscale and usually serene neighbourhood has witnessed a lot of transformation that gladdens the hearts of passersby, visitors, residents and so on. Even operators in the real estate industry will give an arm and a leg to have a share of presence in the area, as everywhere you turn, several eye-popping buildings, luxury skyscrapers housing several corporate offices, and massive shopping malls pull your attention.

But very soon, stakeholders will begin to weave another exciting story about Bourdillon, courtesy of President Bola Tinubu, whose dream of owning a palatial mansion in the area has come to fruition.

This is coming about 20 years after Tinubu, famously known as Jagaban, swelled the number of proud house owners in the swanky location.

But unknown to many, his current residence, though a Mecca of sorts, lacks any traits of exhibitionism typical of persons in his social class.

For him, the urge to move into a more beneficial building has been most compelling. Thus, in his determination to actualise this dream, he made a bid to acquire the old house meant for a former British High Commissioner to Nigeria in 2003. But surprisingly, he lost the bid to Leo Stan Ekeh, the e-commerce guru.

Tinubu had reportedly commenced the construction of this edifice on a massive land that runs from Bourdillon Street to Oyinkan Abayomi Road, former Queen’s Drive, a few years ago. But immediately he resolved to vie for President, he reportedly directed respective workers at the site to work like Trojan to deliver without fail.

As gathered the architectural masterpiece that has now been completed oozes taste, wealth and opulence. Not a few who have sighted it attest to the beauty of the wondrous palatial palace.

The eye-popping edifice, painted all white and with his symbolic cap engraved on its externals, has multiple rooms, including an expansive living room.

Laudable Works of Businesswoman, Zaynab Otiti-Obanor

“Personally, I have always seen humanitarian work as part of everyone’s responsibility, I believe that we all can offer something to help another. To change the world is to first change our thought towards giving, and it has to be a collective movement.”

The above quote has been the driving force behind Zaynab Otiti-Obanor. The stylish woman is living up to her first name Zaynab which means munificence. The equally gorgeous woman believes that regardless of where you are in life, there is something that you can offer, and that you mustn’t wait to be rich to be able to save the world.

For her, the act of generosity must first start from our willingness to develop a kind spirit. This is where she derived the inspiration to start her foundation, Queen Zaynab Foundation.



Otiti-Obanor

As gathered by Society Watch, the Foundation has recorded tremendous success in the last few years since it was launched. She has tried in her own little way to set women in rural communities up in small businesses. The foundation has also given scholarships to kids from elementary levels to the university, giving aid to urgent needs of families, and rendered free medical care to a few communities in need.

But wait for it, she has also done what many other NGOs haven’t done, by building solar-powered systems to generate clean and safe water for many rural communities in Nigeria.

The dazzling damsel is also a global personality with a keen interest in rural development and social entrepreneurship, which has inspired most of her investments and work in her recent contributions to the urban development of rural areas.

In August 2017, during the UNGA week, she was awarded a ‘Humanitarian of the Year’ by Kechies Project, an organisation that concentrates on girl child education that she has fiercely contributed towards.



Okengwu

Houston Mayor Honours Nigerian Businesswoman, Ifeoma Okengwu

Have you wondered why the name, Ifeoma Okengwu keeps popping up in public discourse among other Nigerians in Houston, Texas? It is because she has put smiles on the faces of many around her.

The beautiful woman is often spoken about because of her uncommon philanthropic gestures, a situation that has endeared her to a lot of Nigerians in the Diaspora. The real estate guru is loved, especially by the less privileged and the elderly who are the major beneficiaries of her philanthropic gestures.

Society Watch gathered that following her unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the community, the Mayor of the City of Houston, Sylvester Turner, last month honoured the businesswoman by declaring May 2, 2023, as ‘Ms. Ifeoma Okengwu Day’ in Houston. This we gathered is a special way of honouring anyone that has had commendable humanitarian gestures.

As revealed, the Mayor in a statement, urged all citizens to join in honouring and thanking Ms. Okengwu for her dedication and service to the community.

The declaration issued by the Mayor described Okengwu as a remarkable businesswoman and entrepreneur who has made significant contributions to the community whose property company has served as inspiration for those in the community to realise that they can achieve their dreams and who has truly made a difference in the lives of many. It was also disclosed that her property company has been instrumental in the development of affordable housing for low-income families, in addition to the revitalisation of distressed neighbourhoods that improve the quality of life for all.

ARTS & REVIEW

AT THIS DAY PUBLICATION

18. 6. 2023



Goatherd/ Goatherder



Stallion Mistress

An Artist on a Path Lined with Colourful Milestones

Evolving a signature style early in his artistic career has paved Emmanuel Idowu's path to a promising future. **Okechukwu Uwaezuoke** writes

Who could miss the obvious fact, from just a cursory glance at Emmanuel Idowu's acrylic on canvas paintings, that he has a thing for the colour red? The 2019 art education graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University affirms that whenever he goes in quest of the colour red, he typically seeks for three different shades of the colour. The colour is so rich in his eyes that he finds it easy to add yellow and orange to achieve a variation. This is in addition to the fact that it sometimes works well with green in a manner that appeals to him.

It is indeed the compelling earthy-redness of his 2023 paintings, "The Stallion Mistress," "After Dinner," "Goatherd/ Goatherder," "Evening Meal," "Young Weavers," "Dreamers' Market," and "Calabash Market," that first grips the viewer's attention and invites him to a closer look.

Another feature of these paintings, which becomes evident upon closer contemplation, is their subtle mosaic-like motif, a technique the artist seems to have recently patented. He attributes this technique to his exposure to pointillism literature, through which he learned about the ground-breaking aesthetic features developed by the well-known French painters Georges Seurat and Paul Signac in Paris in the middle of the 1880s. Then he read as much as he could on colour harmony and separation. These became his initial influences, even before he encountered Mufu Onifade's

Araism Movement.

"This exposure allowed me to experiment with a stylistic approach that involved blending small strokes of colour, ultimately leading to my mastering the art of visually blending colours," he says.

Perhaps there could be no better way to explain the fact that Idowu's encounter with Araism happened just as he was attempting to domesticate the ideas he had gleaned from his readings than as a deft weaving of fate. "Though I didn't study under him, I discovered my own means of separating colours with black run-on lines with the skillful use of an acrylic marker and brush. The juxtaposition of these two techniques brought about my current technique."

Of course, it helped that he was heavily influenced by African folklore, particularly by his Yoruba history, spirituality, and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, he expresses admiration for a number of internationally renowned greats, including Van Rijn Rembrandt, Johannes Vermeer, Jan Steen, Frank Tenney Johnson, and Pablo Picasso. As for the local role models, he names Akinola Lasekan, Abiodun Olaku, Mufu Onifade and Jonathan Imafidon.

Then there is his preference for the quick-drying acrylic medium, which gives his works a unique gloss. He occasionally uses it for his watercolour paintings in addition to finding it more handy than oil paint, in part because the latter has none of the latter's disagreeable scent. Since it is also water-based, like watercolour, all he needs to do is combine it with more water.

So far, the 31-year-old is encouraged by the fact that his works seem to have found favour



Idowu

in the eyes of both local and foreign aficionados and collectors. And with his participation in several art fairs and exhibitions, his inevitable rise to stardom seems to be only a matter of time. Among the most rewarding art competitions and exhibitions he had been featured in, Next of Kin and Life in My City Art Festival (known as LIMCAF) stand out. In the series five of the former, held on March 28, he won the overall best prize worth N500,000. His first participation in the latter, which was in 2018, saw him make the top 50 qualifiers. Thus armed with

a better understanding of the competition, he won one of its endowed prizes – namely, Dr Pius Okigbo Prize for Technical Proficient – the following year.

Thanks to that LIMCAF award, Idowu was, as one of that year's top six winners, selected to be part of an all-expenses-paid trip to the Senegalese capital city, Dakar, for its art biennale, popularly known as Dak'Art.

A debut solo show organised by LIMCAF and curated by its creative director, Dr. Ayo Adewunmi, was another perk of winning the award. This was part of a send-off celebration held in his honour at the LIMCAF Secretariat immediately after his National Youth Service Corps programme. "Most of the paintings I produced at the LIMCAF secretariat during the pandemic lockdown were displayed, and many were sold out. The proceeds from the sales helped me set up my studio in Ondo after I returned to the South-west. LIMCAF had been really helpful in the promotion of my career."

From initially copying Supa Strikers comics at age 8, while he was still in primary school, Idowu easily brushed aside the distractions of his creativity-stifling environment to emerge as one of the most promising artists of his generation. He recalls drawing on discarded cartons and old calendars and drawing with charcoal and coloured crayons.

Choosing art as a career path while he was still in secondary school, the Osun State native stayed the course until he became a full-time studio artist and illustrator. He anticipates a brighter future career, which would see him hobnobbing with the industry's leading lights.

EDITOR OKECHUKWU UWAEZUOKE/okechukwu.uwaezuoke@thisdaylive.com



TO GREAT MEN WHO MAKE EXCELLENT ROLE MODELS

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IN THE ARENA

Now that Akpabio, Abbas Have Emerged

Strident assurances by the new Senate President, Senator Godswill Akpabio, and House of Representatives' Speaker, Tajudeen Abbas that the 10th National Assembly will not be a "rubber stamp" of the executive have to be proven by its critical legislative engagements going forward, writes **Louis Achi**

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu probably would have been quietly amused listening to Senator Godswill Akpabio who emerged president of the 10th Senate attribute his victory with a straight face to "God Almighty, the creator of the universe," in his inaugural speech.

It still could not be denied that there was a divine providence in Akpabio's emergence as President of the Senate given the fiercely fought battle with the brave 'rebel' Senator Abdulaziz Yari, the former governor of Zamfara State who pushed the contest to the wire.

But President Tinubu could also validly claim sole choreography rights of the Akpabio project.

In Senator Akpabio's words: "It is time now to go forward with the task set before us as a collective body - the promulgation of laws and enactments for the well-being and security of the country and as a check on the executive arm of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in our oversight functions.

"...Our laws must therefore, align with the vision of Mr. President to protect and provide for our people at the innermost core of their essence while our actions must also guarantee the best and most efficient use of our national commonwealth.

"...We must, therefore, as a Senate, rise to partner with His Excellency the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and provide the required legislative framework and legal environment for him to anchor the policies and programmes that he espouses for the country," Akpabio explained.

If the former governor of Akwa Ibom State and ex-Minister of Niger Delta Affairs who scored 63 votes against Yari's 46 votes spoke with some restrained flourish, the new Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, spoke with more bombast.

Abbas, who addressed journalists on Tuesday after meeting with President Tinubu at Aso Villa, Abuja, said his victory as the speaker of the 10th House had put to shame those who doubted his chances of winning.

He dismissed concerns that the 10th House would be a "rubber stamp," insisting that the National Assembly won't allow the executive arm to take decisions against the interest of the public.

His words: "Well, if you talk about rubber stamp, look at the acceptance rate of those who elected



Akpabio



Abbas

us across party lines.

"So, if they felt that we are going to be a rubber stamp, do you think they will elect us? No. They believe that we will safeguard the sanctity of the National Assembly.

"As legislators, we will always separate our independence and we will relate and be able to harmonise with the executive where necessary. But where there is conflict of interest where we feel that the executive is or wants to do something that is not in the interest of the public, they know that we'll stand up against that," Abbas declared.

Just as in the case of Senators Akpabio and Barau Jibrin, Tinubu had also endorsed Abbas as Speaker and Ben Kalu as his deputy. Several aspirants that had opposed Abbas subsequently stepped down at the last-minute following the president's intervention.

Other aspirants like Sada Soli and Miriam Onuoha who did not officially announce their withdrawal from the race, later voted for Abbas.

Abbas, who represents Zaria Federal Constituency of Kaduna State, emerged as Speaker with 353 voice votes, while his opponents, Idris Wase

and Aminu Jaji, polled three votes each in the election where 359 members voted. Abbas was voted for by lawmakers from all the political parties in the House.

There is however, anxiety as many Nigerians believe that the 10th National Assembly may turn out to be Tinubu's rubber stamp given the president's overarching influence in installing its leadership.

This belief was reinforced last week by a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, who declared that the era of the legislature standing against the "tyranny" of the executive is long gone.

According to him, "Without sounding a bit pessimistic, I believe that the days of standing up to executive tyranny in the legislature have long faded. These days, there is no road to Damascus. I think redemption or salvation is very far."

The former speaker said members of the executive should desist from interfering in the election of presiding officers of the National Assembly.

His words: "Taking the position we are advocat-

ing requires resistance. Now, resistance is not by comfort, it entails suffering and sacrifice and when you resist, you tend to lose a lot.

"Any democracy that cuts itself off from checks and balances severs its lifeline and then bleeds to death. Why should someone who has been elected into an executive position seek to control the emergence of the leadership of the parliament that is supposed to be independent?" he queried.

However, if significant gloom is perceived to have enveloped the election that produced the principal officers on account of alleged massive executive interference, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, a Tinubu protégé, provides a flip perspective to lighten the pessimism.

"The outcome of the elections, which all of us have seen, has reflected real democracy. The elections were very transparent and reflected the views of all the members-elect. They (lawmakers) have been able to choose their leaders freely, justly, and equitably. I am indeed proud of them," the governor added.

The issue of legislative independence as a critical hedge against executive tyranny has dominated political discourse for decades - and with good reason.

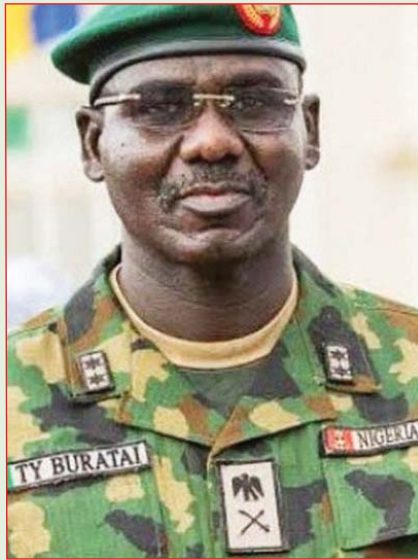
It could be recalled that separation of powers is one of the devices used by the Euro-American systems of government to protect the rule of law and prevent exercise of arbitrary power by the sovereign. This doctrine is anchored on checks and balances among the three arms of government which Nigeria modeled her democracy after.

Today, many legitimately wonder if indeed the principle of separation of power applies to the country's governing system beyond structural rhetoric. Besides the judiciary, how independent is the legislature, which is the key symbol of every democracy?

The palpable collusion between the ninth National Assembly led by Senator Ahmad Lawan and former President Muhammadu Buhari's administration had the ultimate impact of whittling down the freedoms guaranteed by the country's constitution. The extreme national debt trap it facilitated is a point of deep national shame and danger.

Now that Akpabio and Abbas have emerged as leaders of the 10th National Assembly, despite the legitimate reservations by critical stakeholders, they must indeed assert their independence to facilitate the bold transformation of Nigeria's troubled situation.

POLITICAL NOTES



Buratai

Can Buratai Provide an Antidote to Insecurity?

Many Nigerians are shocked that since President Bola Tinubu assumed office, the promoters of a former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Buratai (rtd), have renewed their campaigns for him to be appointed into another strategic security position.

The campaigns started last year after the former army chief, who is now the Nigerian Ambassador to Benin Republic, spoke as a guest lecturer at a one-day symposium on National Security, organised by Arewa House in Kaduna.

At the event, Buratai had surprisingly called for dialogue between governments and armed groups. He argued that a growing practice of engaging in dialogue with all parties to a conflict had emerged since the mid-1980s.

While his speech at the occasion endeared him to those who are now promoting him, others were shocked that the recommendation he made was contrary to his conduct while he was the army chief.

The question agitating the minds of some people is: At what stage did he realise that governments need to dialogue and negotiate with agitators to end insecurity in the country?

Many recalled that the army under him was characterised by impunity, brutality and extra-judicial killings of agitators and protesters between 2015 and January 2021, according to the various reports of rights groups, including Amnesty International.

Some military officers also had their promising careers abruptly terminated by unjust compulsory disengagement from service.

It is on record that he compulsorily disengaged 38 senior officers unjustly in one fell swoop without following due process. When the courts and members of the National Assembly ordered the army to reinstate some of the officers, he was accused of displaying his alleged disdain for rule of law by bluntly refusing.

The Zaria massacre of Shiites in 2015 was also to his

discredit. The army under him used 'Operation Crocodile Smile', and 'Operation Python Dance' to provoke the once peaceful and now proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to establish an armed wing.

Some of his military operations in the southern parts of the country were considered unnecessary and only provoked violent agitations and generated tensions because of their human rights abuses.

The human rights record of the army under him was so abysmal that many had threatened to write petitions against him to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Many Nigerians believe that Tinubu needs fresh hands and should not reopen healed wounds by recycling some of those who allegedly contributed significantly to the division of Nigerians along ethnic and religious lines.

It is also believed that some of the people scheming for positions in the present administration had already given their best in the fight against insecurity.

BRIEFINGNOTES

One Boat Mishap Too Many

By allowing public transportation in Nigerian waterways, which is nearly as risky as the highly regulated air transport to be run like the common road transport business, the federal and state governments have demonstrated their flagrant disregard for the lives of the poor users of this mode of transportation, **Ejiofor Alike** writes

Boats used for local water transportation have become major slaughterhouses in Nigeria with mishaps common on Nigerian waterways due to lack of effective regulation and supervision, which encourage frequent overloading and lack of maintenance.

The latest tragedy occurred on Monday at Egbu village, in the Patigi Local Government Area (LGA) of Kwara State when a boat overloaded with over 250 passengers, mostly guests, returning from a wedding ceremony at Egboti village in Niger State, capsized.

Though the Kwara State Police Command's spokesperson, SP Ajayi Okesanmi, said the tragedy claimed 103 lives, the traditional ruler of Patigi, Ibrahim Bologi II, reportedly disclosed that the dead victims were 110.

Chairman of the Transition Implementation Committee of Patigi LGA, Mohammed Liman, also confirmed that 110 passengers died in the mishap.

The Area Manager of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) in charge of Niger-Kwara areas, Akapo Adeboye, attributed the boat accident to overloading and turbulent winds.

He claimed that the agency had been educating boat operators to desist from overloading their boats with passengers.

Having failed woefully to protect lives and property, governments at various levels in Nigeria have helplessly resorted to mourning and commiserating with victims of every tragic incident instead of taking deliberate, drastic and decisive actions to avert loss of precious lives.

It was not surprising that the Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Rafiu Ajakaye, commiserated with the people of Patigi on the tragedy.

Also reacting, the Governor of Niger State, Mohammed Bago, through his Chief Press Secretary, Ibrahim Bologi, sympathised with the bereaved families and urged boat passengers to always wear their life jackets when travelling.

President Bola Tinubu has also expressed sadness over the boat mishap, and directed the relevant authorities to "unravel the immediate and remote causes" of the accident and provide immediate relief and assistance to the survivors and families of victims, according to a condolence message signed by the State House Director of Information, Abiodun Oladunjoye.

Last Monday's incident that claimed 110 lives was not the worst of its kind as 160 passengers had died in a similar boat mishap that happened in Kebbi State on May 26, 2021.

The boat capsized in Ngaski LGA of the state, while the victims from the state were going to a market in neighbouring Borgu LGA of Niger State.



The Area Manager of the NIWA in Yauri, Yusuf Birma, told reporters that overloading caused the mishap.

According to him, the boat, which was also carrying 30 Bajaj motorcycles, broke into two pieces.

Birma lamented that "the boat involved is a wooden boat, which is old and very weak but these people will not listen when we sensitise them to reduce the number of passengers they are carrying with the boat."

Boat mishap is also common in other states as the government has refused to pay a serious attention to it apparently due to the fact that it is the lives of the poor that are being wasted since this means of transportation is not patronised by the high and the mighty in the society.

For instance, in April 2021, no fewer than 29 children from Gidan Magana village in Sokoto drowned in Shagari River when their vessel capsized on their way to fetch firewood for their families.

In July 2022, a passenger boat capsized on the waterways in Ikorodu LGA of Lagos, killing two people.

The boat named "R & N 2" was said to have experienced a mechanical fault barely 200 metres away from Ikpado ferry terminal in Ikorodu after setting off to its destination on Lagos Island, according to the General Manager of Lagos State Waterways Authority (LASWA), Oluwadamilola Emmanuel.

In the same month, only four bodies were

recovered from a boat mishap involving 16 passengers in the Ojo area of Lagos.

The four bodies, which were among the passengers in a W19 fibre boat, were recovered at Mile 2 area.

The Area Manager of NIWA, Sarat Braimah, had promised that the agency would produce a transportation code that would spell out the regulations on inland waterways.

Her statements implied that there had been no transportation code for the users of the Nigerian waterways.

Also in the same month, many passengers in a boat travelling to a popular Saturday market also died in a boat mishap at Zumba in Shiroro LGA of Niger State.

In December 2022, a boat mishap at a jetty in a Badagry community in Lagos State claimed the life of a 32-year-old man.

The mishap occurred at the jetty when two boats, one coming from Badagry and another coming from Lagos, collided at a jetty in Akarakumo.

In January 2023, at least 15 passengers died after a boat ferrying more than 100 passengers returning from a farm on the River Niger, broke into half as it approached Samanaji village in Koko-Besse district in Kebbi State.

The political administrator of the district, Yahaya Bello Koko who confirmed the recovery of 10 bodies, noted that the boat was overloaded with passengers "beyond its capacity."

However, on February 20, 2023, no fewer than 17 persons escaped death after a commercial

passenger ferry named Fazma Logistics, loaded with 17 passengers, which left Ikorodu ferry terminal en route Ebute Ero, capsized near Third Mainland Bridge close to the Bariga ferry terminal in Lagos State.

Before last Monday's incident in Kwara, 15 children had drowned in May 2023, while 25 others were missing when their overloaded boat capsized in Shagari River in Sokoto State.

The local administrator of Shagari District, Aliyu Abubakar said the youths were on their way from Dundeji village in the state to collect firewood in the bush on the other side of Shagari River when their boat sank.

To avert the death of innocent poor Nigerians in avoidable boat accidents, the governments at various levels should stop mourning and commiserating with the victims and give water transportation the same level of attention given to air transportation since both involve almost similar risks.

Former President Muhammadu Buhari had while expressing sadness over one of the boat accidents in Tijana village of Munya LGA of Niger State in June 2021, called on the transportation authorities to ensure strict adherence to safety regulations on the nation's waterways.

He also urged that lessons from this accident should help prevent a future occurrence.

However, boat accidents have continued unabated as the government seems to have learnt any lesson since the high and mighty do not patronise this mode of transportation.

NOTES FOR FILE

Abbas and His Wives' Drama



Keyamo

A mild drama ensued at the House of Representatives on Tuesday as the wives of the new Speaker, Tajudeen Abbas, shoved each other aside in their efforts to take what each considered as her rightful position during the swearing in ceremony. The incident occurred after Abbas had been elected speaker by a landslide.

Abbas had defeated Idris Wase and Sani Jaji to win the election after polling 353 votes, while each of the other two contestants got three votes.

All seemed to be going well when Abbas was ushered to the stage to take his oaths of allegiance.

The Deputy Clerk of the House, Kamoru Ogunlana, recited the oaths for the new speaker to respond to.

Abbas was flanked on his left by one of his wives and a lawmaker representing Doguwa/Tudun Wada federal constituency in Kano State, Alhassan Ado Doguwa.

The routine event was, however, interrupted by another wife of Abbas, who barged to the podium and attempted to shove the other wife aside for her to take a position beside her husband.

But her co-wife resisted her and with the intervention of Doguwa, who shifted a little, the wife that came first moved to the left hand side and stood between Doguwa and the speaker, leaving the other wife at the right hand of the speaker.

The action appeared to have embarrassed Abbas, who halted his oath rendering to exchange

heated words with the wife who came last.

Abbas, a prince from the Zazzau emirate who holds the traditional title of Iyan Zazzau, was a primary school teacher, a polytechnic and university lecturer before his foray into politics in 2010. He holds a master's degree and a PhD in business administration.

What the video clearly portrayed to many Nigerians is that despite his accomplishments, he does not enjoy peace at home. For the wives to put up such embarrassing behaviours in public showed that their animosities started from home.

The new Speaker needs to warn his wives not to bring domestic squabbles to public functions to avoid embarrassing him.

Confession That Exposes Rot in Judiciary

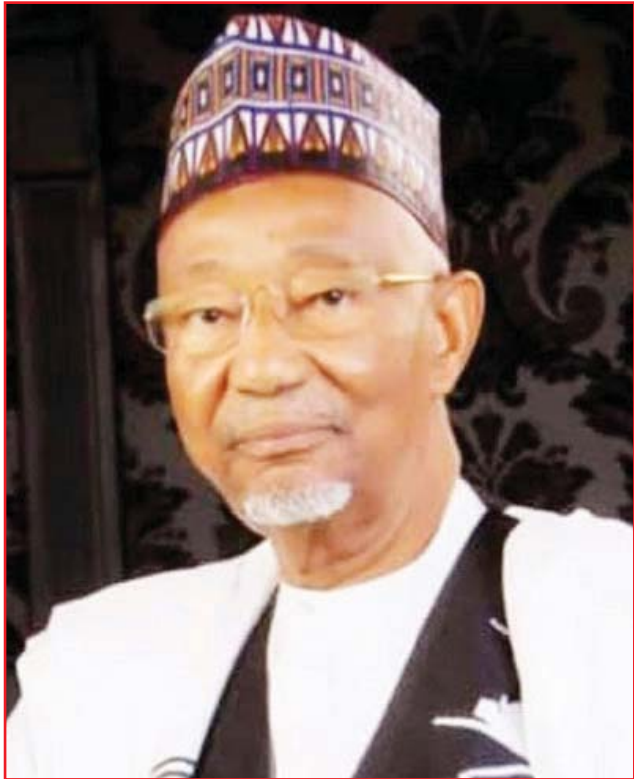
The confession by a former Senator, who represented Bauchi North, Adamu Bulkachuwa, at the valedictory session of the ninth Senate penultimate Saturday, was a big shame to the Nigerian judiciary as it has further exposed the rot in the system and the extent to which the course of justice is being perverted, **Ejiofor Alike** and **Wale Igbintade** report



Justice Ariwoola



Justice Bulkachuwa



Senator Bulkachuwa

A former senator who represented Bauchi North senatorial district in the Senate, Adamu Muhammad Bulkachuwa, threw a bombshell at the Senate penultimate week, revealing how he used his wife to help his colleagues in the Senate.

Bulkachuwa confessed to have influenced the decisions of his wife, Zainab, while she was serving as a judge and President of the Court of Appeal to deliver favourable judgments for himself, his colleagues and other politicians.

Speaking during the Senate valedictory session, the former senator shocked his colleagues when he admitted that he encroached on his wife's independence to apparently manipulate justice in favour of some senators.

Senator Bulkachuwa, 83, the spouse of Justice Bulkachuwa was elected senator during the 2019 general election on the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Justice Bulkachuwa retired from the Bench after clocking the statutory retirement age of 70 years for justices of the Appeal Court in 2020. She presided over many election cases.

Speaking at the session, Bulkachuwa looked around at the faces of his colleagues and said: "I know - I look at faces in this chamber whom have come to me and sought for my help when my wife was the President of the Court of Appeal and I am sure..."

It was at this point that the former Senate President, Dr. Ahmad Lawan quickly interjected and said, "Distinguished Senator Adamu Bulkachuwa, I think I will advise that you just round off and sit down."

Some senators who were obviously embarrassed also shouted at him and challenged him to mention names but he declined, insisting that, "we know ourselves."

An apparently apprehensive Lawan also interrupted him again, saying "but this kind of insinuation will mean that there was favour; there was this and the rest of it; I don't think it is a good idea."

But Bulkachuwa, who was determined to make his point politely refused to give up.

Responding to Lawan's comments, he said, "well, Mr. Chairman, I must say that okay, to round off, since that is what you want me to

do, I will do that and I must thank particularly my wife whose freedom and independence I encroached upon while she was in office and she has been very tolerant and accepted my encroachment and extended her help to my colleagues."

At this point, Lawan interrupted him for the third time, saying, "Distinguished, please I don't think this is a good idea going this direction; it is not a good idea, please."

Lawan's interventions and the shouts of disapproval by other senators forced Bulkachuwa to end his speech abruptly, saying, "well, Mr. President, I will say 'thank you' and I will sit down."

Before her retirement, many Nigerians were not satisfied with his wife's handling of some cases.

For instance, in 2019, the main opposition party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, had filed an application asking Justice Bulkachuwa to recuse herself from the presidential election tribunal hearing their petition, against the election of President Muhammadu Buhari. One of the grounds for the application was that Justice Bulkachuwa is the wife of Senator Bulkachuwa, a prominent card-carrying member of the APC and then senator-elect for Bauchi North senatorial district which was a political party involved in the suit.

The video of Senator Bulkachuwa's confession has since gone viral on social media, with many Nigerians lampooning the former lawmaker and his wife for desecrating the judiciary. They also feel that the confession has revealed how deeply rotten, corrupt, unfair and insincere the judiciary in the country has become.

For some time now, observers believe that the judiciary, once revered, is now in the doldrums. People no longer have confidence in the institution.

There are other allegations that judges and justices sitting on some cases are or were induced or put under undue pressures "from above" to pervert the course of justice.

Senator Bulkachuwa's rare confession serves as a validation of the suspicion of bias the opposition PDP had against Justice Bulkachuwa after she appointed herself to head the five-member panel of the Presidential Election Petition Court in 2019.

To show how bad things are in the judiciary, lawyers and retired judges have all joined in

criticising the rot in the sector.

One of the most recent criticisms came from a former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mr. Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), who expressed his waning confidence in the Nigerian judiciary, blaming his decision on the recent judgments coming out of the courts.

The senior lawyer who spoke as a guest during a television programme monitored by THISDAY, recalled the good days when one could easily predict the outcome of a case by analysing available facts with the law.

He described the Supreme Court's decision on the former Senate President, Dr. Ahmad Lawan as the silliest judgment.

Agbakoba also cited the apex court's judgment on Imo State, where according to him, "everything was turned upside down."

In the past, renowned lawyer, Chief Afe Babalola (SAN) had lamented how corruption had dented the image of the judiciary, noting that it was regrettable that Nigerians were no longer reposing confidence in the judiciary despite the acronym that it is the last hope of the common man. He posited that experience in the past had shown that "our bitter experience is that election petitions have inflicted severe injuries and damage on both the electorate, the judiciary (which has been brutalised and called all sorts of names) as well as the political class."

According to Babalola, "time was when a lawyer could predict the likely outcome of a case because of the facts, the law and the brilliance of the lawyers that handled the case. Today, things have changed and nobody can be sure."

Before his demise on November 16, 2012, the renowned retired Justice of the Supreme Court, Kayode Eso, had once taken a long view of Nigeria's judiciary and concluded that the institution was full of judges and justices who ought not to have been there in the first place. He lamented the all-important arm of government stinks of corruption.

Meanwhile, Agbakoba has described the former senator's confession as a "monumental disgrace". In a statement, he called on security authorities to take

up the matter immediately.

Agbakoba who revealed that he represented Usman Tuggar in relation to disputed elections between him and Senator Bulkachuwa for Bauchi North senatorial but lost the case up to the Supreme Court, added that the senator's statement was a blight on his confidence in the judiciary.

"Senator Bulkachuwa's statement at the valedictory of the ninth Senate is a monumental disgrace for our institutions. This man deserves to be taken up immediately by the authorities. It is a blight on my confidence in our systems. I represented Usman Tuggar in relation to the disputed elections between him and Senator Bulkachuwa for Bauchi North senatorial. We lost in three courts. Senator Bulkachuwa seems to suggest why."

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has called on the Inspector General of Police (IG) and the Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) to immediately invite Senator Bulkachuwa for interrogation and proceed to prosecute him accordingly over his comments.

In a statement issued, NBA President, Mr. Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau (SAN), said the statements by the senator were clearly admissions that he did attempt to and/or actually perverted the course of justice/interfered with due administration of justice, which makes him liable to be investigated and prosecuted even on his admission.

Another lawyer, Malcolm Omirhobo, said Bulkachuwa's confession "portends danger to the dignity of the judiciary."

Omirhobo, a human rights lawyer, said the senator's remarks showed the "phony judgments" that emanated from Justice Bulkachuwa and the appellate while she served as its president.

A former Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Prof. Chidi Odinkalu, while reacting to Bulkachuwa's statement, alleged that Justice Bulkachuwa was "neither honourable nor interested in justice."

Odinkalu opined that Justice Bulkachuwa's subversion of justice, as revealed by her husband, has "tarnished" the image of serving judges whom he said would be seen as "trading judicial decisions in their bedrooms."

He urged serving judges to speak up and insist on an independent inquiry into Senator Bulkachuwa's revelation.

ENGAGEMENTS

with Chidi Amuta
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Tinubu's Road to Somewhere

Within a fortnight in power, President Bola Tinubu may have set the tone and tempo for what promises to be a dizzying presidency. Right from the inauguration ground at Eagle Square, he could not suppress his anxiety to be in power and in control at the same time. Most classical concepts of power lament that it is hard to be in power and in control simultaneously. Tinubu seems out to smash that conundrum from the outset. His immediate predecessor was in office, a bit in power but hardly ever in control.

To be in office, in power and in absolute control may well be the feature that sets Tinubu apart among the pantheon of Nigeria's elected leaders. In fact, the haste and immediacy in his tone and temper places him closer to the tradition of our past military leadership. This is the tradition popularized by the late General Murtala Muhammed ("with immediate effect"). It is a haste to right the wrongs, to correct the path of national leadership and followership by restoring a path of sanity lost by recent deviations. This haste to reform, to correct and get the system to obey a leader's deeply felt reformist zeal usually cuts both ways. It might end up as both the leader's unique selling point as well as the source of the mistakes and errors that may make or mar his legacy in the fullness of time. For Tinubu, the clock has started ticking!

In rapid succession, he has used an off-script proclamation right at inauguration ground to take off the controversial and long-standing subsidy on gasoline. This single policy measure has put the already troubled Nigerian economy into an initial tailspin. Inflation has automatically jumped to the mid-22.4% as gasoline prices have skyrocketed by 300% and more. Transportation costs have gone up while food inflation and general inflation have obeyed the laws of the market.

Organised labour has flexed its familiar muscle by threatening a general strike that was quickly stopped by government through the courts. It is a measure of Tinubu's luck with the Nigerian public that the resistance to gasoline price hikes has not yet produced a general social upheaval. Nigerians seem to understand the logic of the subsidy removal but are anxiously awaiting palliative measures to cushion the pain. The hope is that the proceeds of the subsidy removal will be ploughed into more social investment in education, health and infrastructure instead of being creamed off by thievish politicians and crafty bureaucrats.

With commendable courage and fresh reformist zeal, Mr. Tinubu has also abolished the dubious multiple exchange rate regime. This was a convenient mechanism with which his predecessor bribed cohorts and indirectly powered grievous corruption through arbitrage and uncontrolled patronage. The overvalued Naira has fallen in value overnight while the foreign exchange market has been further liberalized by opening up the market to multiple sources of supply ranging from the banks to the bureaux de change. The anticipation is that a widened and liberalized foreign exchange market will encourage the freeing of foreign currency held by individual citizens, politicians, companies and others to eventually drive down the exchange rate to a more friendly territory. More importantly, this reform of the exchange market should, over time, encourage more external investment and foreign participation in the economy freed at last from lack of transparency and dubious manipulation by government. Over time, it is expected that a more reasonable and sustainable market-driven exchange rate will emerge.

Taken together, both the fuel subsidy removal and the unification of the exchange rate regime are clear indications of much needed reform of the Nigerian economy in the direction of a more sensible open market. The logic seems to be that you need a functioning market before you can decide on whether it is working or not. Enlightened economic policies will, over time, create a more elite-friendly atmosphere in which perhaps the middle class can begin to return. It is expected that middle class creature benefits such as consumer credits, basic indicators of prosperity such as new homes, new cars, affordable holidays and the restoration of the swagger of the middle class. The expectation is normal that when the economy is working, the benefits will trickle down to the popular masses thus making the president a little more popular and acceptable across board. These benefits will of course require some time to translate into perceivable benefits.



Tinubu

Intandem, Mr. Tinubu has signed a Students Loan Bill that had been on the presidential in-tray. This should grant access to borrowed funding for indigent students in tertiary institutions whose career goals may be threatened by lack of funds. This legislation in its present form may make it impossible for the target students to access any loans as the conditions are both stringent and unrealistic.

Surely, a bit more thinking needs to go into the implementation of this loan scheme lest the expediency of policy be sacrificed at the altar of populist politics. But even with its defects, this bill indicates a concern for the welfare of youth in line with what he promised during the campaigns.

The indirect political benefit of these economic and social reforms is to earn Mr. Tinubu both the elite consensus and popular acceptability which he needs to consolidate his legitimacy and general acceptability. A president who came to power in a storm of still raging electoral disputations and with a little over 30% popular vote count cannot rest on his oars when it comes to mining elite consensus and courting popular support.

In the direction of troubled institutional leadership, Mr. Tinubu has suspended the troublesome Central Bank of Nigeria Governor, Mr. Godwin Emefiele. He has allowed the secret police, the DSS, to cart the ambitious fellow into detention and possibly a series of lengthy interrogations. No one knows exactly what Mr. Emefiele is being grilled for but the public harbors a cocktail of grievances against Mr. Emefiele's conduct as the custodian of our collective treasury. He scored a first in being the first Central Bank governor in Nigeria to sit in office while carrying a party card and expressing active interest in vying for the office of president. He is also one CBN governor to have openly canvassed a series of partisan policy preferences as against transparent objective economic policies.

On his own, Emefiele is a fertile source of multiple tales and scandals. Ranging from meddling with lucrative exchange rate deals and contracts to floating opaque agricultural loan schemes to illiterate farmers who can no longer tell whether they got any loans or made any repayments to the Central Bank. He committed the less heinous crime of sometimes openly insulting state house reporters. Some less gracious beer parlor versions of the Emefiele saga accuse him of colluding with former president Muhammadu Buhari to confiscate the monies of Nigerians under the disastrous Naira redesign gambit.

In the process, both men impoverished most Nigerians overnight while promising the redesigned Naira notes that hardly ever came. Unverified rumours, including those once canvassed in court by the DSS fingered the man in matters as dangerous and frightful as terrorist financing. All these are ahead

of a formal charge and possible arraignment of the man before a competent court. The best service to the rule of law is to quickly complete interrogations and investigations and arraign the man to prove his presumed innocence in open court.

As if that is not enough, Mr. Tinubu has also suspended and commenced investigation of the youthful but influential head of the anti-graft agency, the EFCC, Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa. Here again, a halo of conspiracies and scandals shroud the young man's arrest and ongoing investigation. Immediate former governor of Zamfara state, Mr. Matawalle, had a shouting match with Mr. Bawa at the exit door over alleged a \$2 million gratification negotiations that did not quite go well. There have also been leaks of stratospheric hotel expenses incurred by the youthful chairman somewhere as well as unprofessional interests in assets seized from corruption-related persons. Since Mr. Bawa himself assumed office under the smoke trail of a predecessor fingered for similar infractions, Nigeria's anti-corruption crusade may have come to ahead somehow. An agency set up to fight corruption has itself become a cesspool of ranking corruption.

Mr. Tinubu's pace of reform is likely to earn him much needed political capital and international acceptability. Already, influential media opinion at home and abroad have already acknowledged his commendable pace and direction. At home, he has struck a decisive difference from his predecessor who needed many months after being elected to make even a single appointment let alone announce any policy initiative. It took Mr. Buhari more than six months to put a cabinet in place and even longer to fill other strategic federal positions.

On the contrary, Mr. Tinubu has hit the ground running. He has taken most of these major reform measures and decisions even without having a cabinet or government in place. He has made a number of commendable appointments at the level of presidential advisers. It is expected that his cabinet nominations will follow the same track.

For a president who campaigned on the basis of continuing with the legacy of Mr. Buhari, his fellow partyman and political mentor, these developments and paces are issues. They are bold drastic reversals of the Buhari style and spirit. As against Mr. Buhari who was known for most of his eight years in office as "Baba Go-Slow" at home and abroad, some international media headlines have already dubbed Mr. Tinubu "Baba Go-Fast". Nigerians have taken note and are watching. What Mr. Tinubu is doing and the pace of his actions do not quite look like those of a president who is likely to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor no matter the close personal relationship they may have.

Clearly, by the strategic positions of those he has suspended or fired and his sheer pace of

policy decisions, Mr. Tinubu has struck a decisive difference from the lacklustre, slovenly and rather tepid Mr. Buhari. It is too early to fathom how the political camp of the vindictive Buhari will respond to Tinubu's early breaking of franks. But there could be some kicks and backlash from the dead Buhari presidential horse.

At the level of realpolitik, Mr. Tinubu's preferences have been reflected in the choice of leadership of the 10th National Assembly. Last Tuesday's leadership contests in the National Assembly was a litmus test of Mr. Tinubu's political sagacity. In the process of pushing his preferences in that contest, he may have empowered some political Czars that will either facilitate his clout with the National Assembly or return to haunt his own political path in the days ahead.

It is noteworthy that soon after being chosen as Senate President, Mr. Akpabio paid homage to the home of immediate past Rivers State governor, Mr. Nyesom Wike. I hope Mr. Tinubu watched that footage closely. Tinubu may soon need to compare notes with Atiku Abubakar on Mr. Wike's reliability as a political ally.

Nonetheless, for good or for ill, Tinubu has a kindred spirit in the election of Mr. Godswill Akpabio, the free wheeling and dealing former governor of Akwalbom state and Minister of the Niger Delta and sole prefect of the NDDC as Senate President. The indication is that in the years ahead, there is more likely going to be a serious engagement between the executive and the legislature. But even then, there was noticeable disquiet both inside the ruling APC and among the opposition parties about the choices that were made on the NASS leadership. It is an indication that we are not likely to have a rubber stamp legislature but one in which deal making and negotiations by hard headed political animals is likely to produce better legislative compromises.

Nonetheless, Mr. Tinubu's hurried reform pace and measures are not likely to go without some resistance or even political consequences. In the economic front, both the fuel subsidy regime and the multiple exchange rate regime were driven by deep seated business, political and bureaucratic mafias and their deep interests. The long-standing fuel subsidy regime created and sustained an army of emergency billionaires and powerful oligarchs. Some of them had no other business than the massive subsidy heist with its dubious documentations and opaque accounting systems. When the oil subsidy regime was first exposed, it was discovered that the accounts of even hair dressing salons in obscure locations were credited with huge subsidy deposits that embarrassed the real owners of the salons.

The same was the case with the multiple exchange rate regime. Quite a number of "businessmen" were people with high value political connections who made huge amounts from arbitrage and foreign exchange racketeering. All it took was to be allocated foreign exchange on paper by the Central Bank at the official exchange rate of N430 to the dollar which the beneficiary then sold off at the parallel market rate of N750 to the dollar or near that. The arbitrage recipient could make billions of Naira just by making a few phone calls to instruct his bankers accordingly without leaving the comfort of his/her bedroom.

These interests are deep. Big business is involved. Big money is at stake. By last Friday, some analysts indicated that three leading Nigerian financial oligarchs may have lost close to \$6 billion each in a single day from the merger of exchange rates. No one knows exactly how much major oil traders have lost in the last fortnight from the removal of subsidy on gasoline. The interests involved in these losses are a network of economic, political and bureaucratic special interests. The deep state is already rattled. Their fighting methods and capacities are often nasty and far reaching. Having become so used to huge easy money over the years, the probability that these interests will fight back politically is quite high.

As the encomiums build up for Mr. Tinubu's speedy reformist style, I see some major roads to somewhere for Mr. Tinubu. He could be speeding up Nigeria's return to true development after the last eight horrible years. He may be driven by the need to catch up on Nigeria's lost time in the direction of sensible development. It could also be a journey to reverse the tragic missteps of Mr. Buhari's lost eight years and thus salvage whatever is left of the integrity of the APC.

Mr. Tinubu could also be openly inviting a head on collusion with the forces of Nigerian business as usual whose interests are likely to be deeply hurt. Whichever road the Tinubu presidency travels from here, I can only repeat the caution that formed the title of my column last week: Watch the thorns and "Mind the Gaps", Mr. President!

BACKPAGE CONTINUATION

TINUBU: LOOKING BEYOND THE INITIAL ADULATION

'Baba go-fast,' a play on the 'Baba-go-slow' tag handed on two of his predecessors. Even when the removal of the two subsidies may fall into the category of stroke-of-the-pen reforms, Tinubu has earned all the plaudits coming his way. As Barack Obama once said: "if it was easy, it would have already been done."

As Tinubu enjoys the praises, he needs to speed up action on how to cushion the attendant pains of the reforms and impose greater clarity on these policies.

To be sure, removing the two subsidies will negatively impact prices, even if in the short run, and the poor will bear a disproportionate part of the burden. KPMG has projected a 6% rise in inflation in June on account of petrol subsidy removal alone. This was without factoring the additional impact of the potential increase in the price of crude oil in the international market and the fall in the value of the Naira. This combo may end up producing multiple assaults on the standards of living of those with fixed incomes especially those in the lowest income-bands who spend almost all of their earnings on food and transportation.

Prices of goods and services are north-bound already. The promised reliefs need to be as swift as the speed of Tinubu's reforms. They also need to be significant, comprehensive and concrete. Otherwise, those singing "Baba go-fast" today will tomorrow, without missing a beat, be shouting "Baba, go away." Even for those who come into office with huge political capital, public adulation can be that fickle. It is the 'Hail Caesar, Nail Caesar' thing.

Also, it is important not to mistake removing petrol subsidy in part or in full for full deregulation of the downstream

sector. Government needs to snap out of being fixated on prices and volumes of petrol and start treating petrol like any other good whose prices can rise and fall based on market realities (Prices of kerosene, used mostly by the poor, and diesel, used for long-distance transportation of goods and food items, have long been deregulated). Government's focus in the downstream sector should be on providing a regulatory framework for robust competition, quality control, and consumer protection.

In the same vein, the CBN needs to address the mixed messages in floating the Naira and insisting on a prohibition list. Competitive markets and restrictions do not go together. Besides, trade issues are better addressed through trade policies, not through monetary tools. Also, government needs effective communication on the rationale for and expected outcomes of both policies. There is a risk that overselling the expected outcomes may create a problem down the line.

Apart from these two critically acclaimed policies, President Tinubu has also signed three key laws—a constitutional amendment on harmonised retirement age for judges, and the laws on electricity and student loans. He has also approved the immediate suspension of the heads of the CBN and EFCC, and appointed ten key aides (the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, the Chief of Staff to the President, and eight special advisers). He has met with key stakeholders and led key negotiations, including with the leadership of the labour unions and health workers. His preferred candidates also emerged as principal officers of the National Assembly, a confirmation of his famed political muscle.

All considered, Tinubu appears to be settling in well. There are a few rough edges but he is yet to run into any major bump despite having taken some potentially explosive decisions. He created his own honeymoon period and has made very good use of the window. He chose to frontload some of the difficult decisions. This strategy has panned out well so far. However, he needs to note that while timing is important in governance, so is sequencing. There is a limit to how much heat the system can take at once, especially when there is no immediate relief or gains or they are abstract while the pains are immediate and vivid. It may be useful to note that humans are wired to remember pains more than pleasure. He will thus need to consider phasing the pains and delivering tangible quick wins.

It is still early days, and there is so much more to be done, most of which will take more than just approving a memo or saying the right things or merely telegraphing political will. Tackling lingering insecurity is one of such urgent and tasking bits. Other harder parts of governance include growing the economy, facilitating the creation of millions of quality jobs annually, improving the quality of and access to education and health, expanding physical infrastructure, tackling oil theft, diversifying exports and sources of foreign exchange, multiplying government revenues, making government more effective and efficient etc. etc.

Most of these will require original thinking, right-headed policies/approaches, and diligent and consistent execution. He will lighten the tasks by surrounding himself with the best and the brightest who will in turn multiply options for him as well as take the heat off him. A leader is only as good as the quality

of the people around him.

It is good that the president has started constituting his team. He should appoint other members of his core team with despatch so that he can delegate the heavy liftings to the experts in the different sectors and free up space for the big picture and overall coordination. It will be nice for his ministerial list to be ready by the time the Senate resumes from recess on July 4th. He should also consider going a step further by assigning portfolios to the names of his nominees. This will make the Senate confirmation hearings more robust and better focused than the perfunctory exercises that we witnessed in the past. This is assuming that the hearings would not be turned into the usual comedy of 'bow-and-go'.

While a president will need to balance different considerations and interests, President Tinubu and Nigeria will be best served if he resists the temptation to use political appointments to reward only loyalists and those he is indebted to. For the key cabinet and other positions, he needs to go for competent and credible hands that are available to help him realise his vision and agenda. And apart from emplacing a coordinating mechanism, he needs to give specific assignments to his key appointees and have regular review sessions with them to hold them to account and to ensure that they remain on track.

Nigerians are justifiably impatient people. The present euphoria with removing this policy or that person will naturally wane. Before long, Nigerians will start asking: "Baba Remover/Suspender, what else are you offering us?" In anticipation, Tinubu thus needs to promptly engage the second gear of governance.

NUHU RIBADU AND NSA'S STATUTORY MANDATES

processing and dissemination towards warding off threats to the wellbeing of the nation. These the NSA does while harnessing the potential of the various intelligence agencies of the country to work together in attaining national security objectives.

It is necessary to point out that the National Security Agencies Act (CAP 278) established three principal agencies: the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and the State Security Service (now known as the Department of State Services (DSS)).

Section 4 of the National Security Agencies Act, 1986, which disbanded the erstwhile Nigerian Security Organisation and created these three intelligence agencies in its place, specifically empowered the President, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, to appoint a Coordinator on National Security. Section 4(2) of the Act states that: "The Coordinator on National Security shall be a Principal Staff Officer in the Office of the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces."

Similarly, Section 4(3) of the Act defines the roles of the Coordinator on National Security to include advising the President on matters concerning the intelligence activities of the (created) agencies; making recommendations in relation to the activities of the agencies to the President as contingencies may warrant.. and doing such other things in connection with the foregoing provisions of this section, as the President may determine.

Section 1 of the National Security Agencies Decree, 1986 (INSTRUMENT NO. NSA 1) specifically transfers the functions of the Coordinator on National Security to the National Security Adviser.

Therefore, from the foregoing, the primary responsibility of the NSA, who is a statutory member of the Presidency, the National Security Council and the Federal Executive Council is to advise the president on matters concerning intelligence activities and making recommendations to him on issues of national security.

Meanwhile, in response to the challenges of Boko Haram terrorism, the Terrorism Prevention Act 2011, as amended in 2013, was signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan. The document in its Part I, Section 2(1) states that, "The Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) shall be the coordinating body for all security and law enforcement agencies and under this act shall (a) provide support to all relevant security, intelligence, law enforcement agencies and military services to prevent and combat acts of terrorism in Nigeria", among other tasks.



Ribadu

The Act also gives ONSA the mandate to "ensure the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive Counter-Terrorism Strategy and build capacity for the effective discharge of the functions of relevant security, intelligence, law enforcement and military services."

In line with the foregoing, the former NSA Sambo Dasuki established the Counter Terrorism Centre (CTC) in 2012, which is located in the ONSA and he followed this up with the unveiling of the National Counter Terrorism Strategy Document (NACTEST) in 2014. The soft approach document details the national strategy for the fight against terrorism while allotting tasks to every intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies in the country, alongside other government bodies having any role to play in this battle.

The non-military strategy to counter-insurgency was to complement, not replace efforts of troops in fighting terrorism. The soft approach strategy identifies poverty, social injustice, isolation and sectarianism are among the causes of insurgency, while the solutions included prison reform,

economic development, peace talks and educating the public.

It is necessary to reaffirm the fact that inter-agency cooperation and synergy are central to the objectives of the ONSA. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999, as amended, spells out the roles of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN), the Police and other security and paramilitary agencies in assisting the civil authority to maintain law and order. The Nigeria Police Force is recognised as the lead agency in the maintenance of internal security in Nigeria, as enshrined in CFRN 1999, Section 214. However, the AFN is usually invited to restore law and order where the NPF is overwhelmed.

The Armed Forces Act, the Nigeria Police Act, National Security Agencies Act and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Act, among others, further define the roles and administration of these agencies. Therefore, these laws provide the institutional framework for inter-agency collaboration between the AFN and other agencies in internal security operations in the country.

The roles of the NSA, as contained in the National Security Agencies Act, transcends that of the mere coordination of the three major intelligence agencies, as the establishment Act for the office empowers the Adviser to act in such other matters on security as the President and Commander in Chief may deem fit.

The President is empowered by the Constitution, under Section 218 (1) to superintend over all affairs of the armed forces. He is further empowered by Section 218 (2) of the legal ground norm to delegate powers to any member of the armed forces concerning the operational use of these forces. This power, therefore, gives the Minister of Defence or Chief of Defence Staff responsibility over the armed forces on behalf of the Commander in Chief.

The Constitution equally empowers the President or any other minister he may empower, to direct the affairs of the Police in the maintenance of law and order. Therefore, at the discretion of the President, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) reports to him directly or to a minister.

In situations of national emergencies, the NSA retains the coordinating power and uses its instruments, resources and other means available to coordinate the activities of security services, including other components of government that are required to bring about stability to the situation. The NSA briefs the President on the outcomes of operations and in liaison with the various constituents of the national security architecture, advises the President on the next courses of action.

At the strategic level, inter-agency cooperation is fostered by intelligence shared at the monthly sittings of the Joint Intelligence Board (JIB) at the ONSA. It is a melting point of intelligence sharing, involving all players in our national security system. This includes the intelligence arms of the armed forces, intelligence agencies, police and other para-military agencies and indeed the heads of key Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) of government that are tasked with the maintenance of law and order.

While President Ahmed Bola Tinubu has named Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, who undoubtedly has acquired the wealth of experience necessary to discharge this remit, as his Special Adviser on security, it remains to be seen if the chosen nomenclature would play any significant role in enabling or restricting his ability to carry out the designated obligations of his new office.

•Shuaib is the author of 'An Encounter with Spymaster' and 'Award-winning Crisis Communication Strategies' yashuaib@yahoo.com



PRAISE COMMITTEE MEMBERS...

L-R: Former PDP governorship candidate in Anambra State and Chair Unusual Praise, Onitsha, Mr. Valentine Ozigbo; Chairperson, Unusual Praise 2023 Ambassadors' Gala Committee, Mrs. Ifeoma Nwuke; the Parish Priest, Catholic Church of Divine Mercy, Lekki, Monsignor Paschal Nwaezeapu; Unusual Praise 2023 Chairman, Dr. Okey Nwuke; and Vice Chair, Unusual Praise, Onitsha, Mrs. Augustina Igboke, at the Unusual Praise Ambassadors' gala night...recently

MUBO PETERS

Conduct Credible Polls in Bayelsa, Kogi, Imo, NNPP Tasks INEC

Juliet Akoje in Abuja

The New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) yesterday challenged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct credible elections in the forthcoming governorship elections in Bayelsa, Kogi and Imo States.

NNPP also tasked the INEC to adequately test-run the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) to avoid what he called awkward story of glitches, hitches and manipulations that characterised the 2023 general election.

NNPP's National Publicity Secretary, Agbo Major made the remarks at a news conference in Abuja yesterday.

At the news conference, Major explained that NNPP demanded free, fair, credible, transparent, inclusive and peaceful governorship elections in Imo, Kogi and Bayelsa States.

He added that the INEC should provide a free playing field to all political parties and their candidates participating in the polls and ensure the people's mandates are respected.

"The electoral umpire should

adequately test-run its bimodal voters accreditation system to avoid the awkward story of glitches, hitches and manipulations that characterised the 2023 general election leading to numerous petitions at various election petition tribunals across the country challenging the outcome of the polls"

"Every vote matters and should be counted and count in the overall results. This is the only way to consolidate the nation's

frail democracy and reaffirms Nigerians' confidence in the electoral process"

The national publicity secretary furthermore said the National Working Committee had directed aggrieved members who suspended the Imo State chairman, Charles Duruimo to rescind their action

Major explained that the national leadership of the party led by Alhaji Abba Kawu-Ali had stepped into the matter to

amicably resolve it.

"Recently, there is a leadership disagreement in the Imo State Chapter of our great party in which the state chairman, Chief Charles Duruimo was purportedly suspended by aggrieved officers in the State over alleged anti-party activities.

"Duruimo dismissed his removal, stating that his leadership had earlier suspended the officers and members involved in the plot to sack him"

"The national leadership of the party led by Alhaji Abba Kawu-Ali has stepped into the matter with a view to amicably resolving it in the interest of the party and the good people of Imo State who desire a new and better Nigeria on the platform of NNPP.

"Accordingly, the National Working Committee directs that status quo should be maintained in the Imo State Chapter Executive led by Chief Charles Duruimo"

Kalabari King, Tonye Princewill's Father, Passes Away

The royal family in the Kalabari Kingdom has announced the death of its King and His Serene Majesty, King Prof. T.J.T Princewill, Amachree the XI and Amanyarabo of the Kalabari Kingdom.

In a statement on behalf of the family, Prince Tonye T.J.T. Princewill, said, "The King has departed. Long live the Kingdom."

"It is with a very heavy heart that I am formally announcing the departure of my father, our King and His Serene Majesty, King Prof. T.J.T Princewill, Amachree the XI and Amanyarabo of the Kalabari Kingdom."

"He was not just my father, he

was also my best friend," Princewill said of his closeness to the late King.

Princewill, who is a politician and businessman, noted that "Earlier today, the Buguma Council of Chiefs and the Kalabari Council of Chiefs were formally briefed, all in accordance with Kalabari tradition, thereby opening the door to our now officially informing the world, as the cart cannot be put before the horse.

According to him, further announcements will follow in the days and weeks to come, but we call on you for your prayers and your well wishes, not just for the family, but for the entire Kalabari Kingdom. "He'll truly be missed."

Pa Akosile, Afenifere Chieftain, Dies at 88

Afenifere chieftain and the Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ekiti State, Asiwaju George Olanrewaju Akosile has died at the age of 88 years after a brief illness.

Akosile, the Asiwaju of Igbara Odo Ekiti, was until the time of his passage Chairman of the Ekiti State Government Appointments Committee created by Governor Biodun Oyebanji to search for and recommend the best and most qualified indigenes who will serve in his administration.

The widely respected elder, who served at the topmost level of the civil service in Ondo State before his foray into



Late Akosile

politics, is survived by children and many grandchildren.

Among his children is Abimbola Akosile, Development analyst and former News Editor, Sunday Title, THISDAY Newspapers Group.

Uwaleke Urges FX Rates Unification without Massive Distortions in Price Level

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The President of Association of Capital Market Academics of Nigeria (ACMAN), Prof. Uche Uwaleke, has advised the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to ensure that the ongoing unification of the exchange rates of the naira does not cause massive distortions in the general price level.

Uwaleke, also former Commissioner for Finance in Imo State, expressed his support for the coalescing of the rates, noting that it would help forex market

to be more transparent.

He expressed the views in a position paper he made available to THISDAY prior to the unification of the rates last Wednesday.

Uwaleke, a former Head of Department, Banking and Finance, said: "Let me say upfront that I support the unification of exchange rates which makes for a more transparent forex market.

"But I think that the CBN should implement that in a way that does not cause massive distortions in the general

price level.

"In this regard, a sudden free float of the naira is not advised given that the economic fundamentals required to support a naira float are still very weak especially in relation to sources of forex."

He noted that it is rather early to bank on sustainable capital inflows from foreign direct investments due in part to insecurity and the overall inconducive environment of doing business in Nigeria.

"This sudden naira devalua-

tion may draw foreign portfolio investments which is part of the reason the stock market is surging.

"But we also know that portfolio investments are hot money and do not represent a sustainable source of forex inflows.

"In consideration of this therefore, I would advise that the unification of exchange rates should not be a one step process but should be implemented over a period of time however short it may be," he explained.

Place Priority on Homegrown Technology, Ex-NASENI Boss Advises Tinubu

A former Executive Chairman of the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), Prof. Maiwalima Mohammed Sani Haruna, yesterday asked President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to place priority on homegrown technology.

Haruna said only technology could ensure sustainable industrial development contained in Tinubu's Renew Hope Agenda.

He also said the Students

Loan Bill signed into law by the President will provide equal opportunities for the youth.

Haruna spoke in Keffi at the grand reception in his honour by the Coalition of Youth Groups in Nasarawa State.

He said: "The determination of His Excellency, Mr. President to populate his cabinet with competent professionals with proven track records is undoubtedly a renewal of hope for the nation.

"I urge Jagaban to prioritise the implementation of homegrown science, technology and innovation as well as capacity and skill acquisition and development. This is the only way for sustainable industrial development contained in his Renew Hope Agenda."

He commended the president for signing the Students Loan Bill into law to give equal opportunities to the youths in the

country.

Haruna added: "Let me use this opportunity to commend President Ahmed Bola Tinubu, for signing the Students Loan Bill to facilitate quality affordable education towards poverty eradication and equal opportunities for the youth.

"This demonstrates Mr. President's love for the youth and understanding of the role of education in nation building."

HURIWA Asks Tinubu to Constitute Independent Probe Panel on Oil Theft

The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) yesterday called on President Bola Tinubu to set up an independent panel to unravel the unending mystery surrounding oil theft in Nigeria and probe oil bunkering and allied crimes, especially from 2015 till date.

In a statement by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel

Onwubiko, HURIWA said the government should not spare the culprits identified at the end of the probe but name and shame them and sanction them severely.

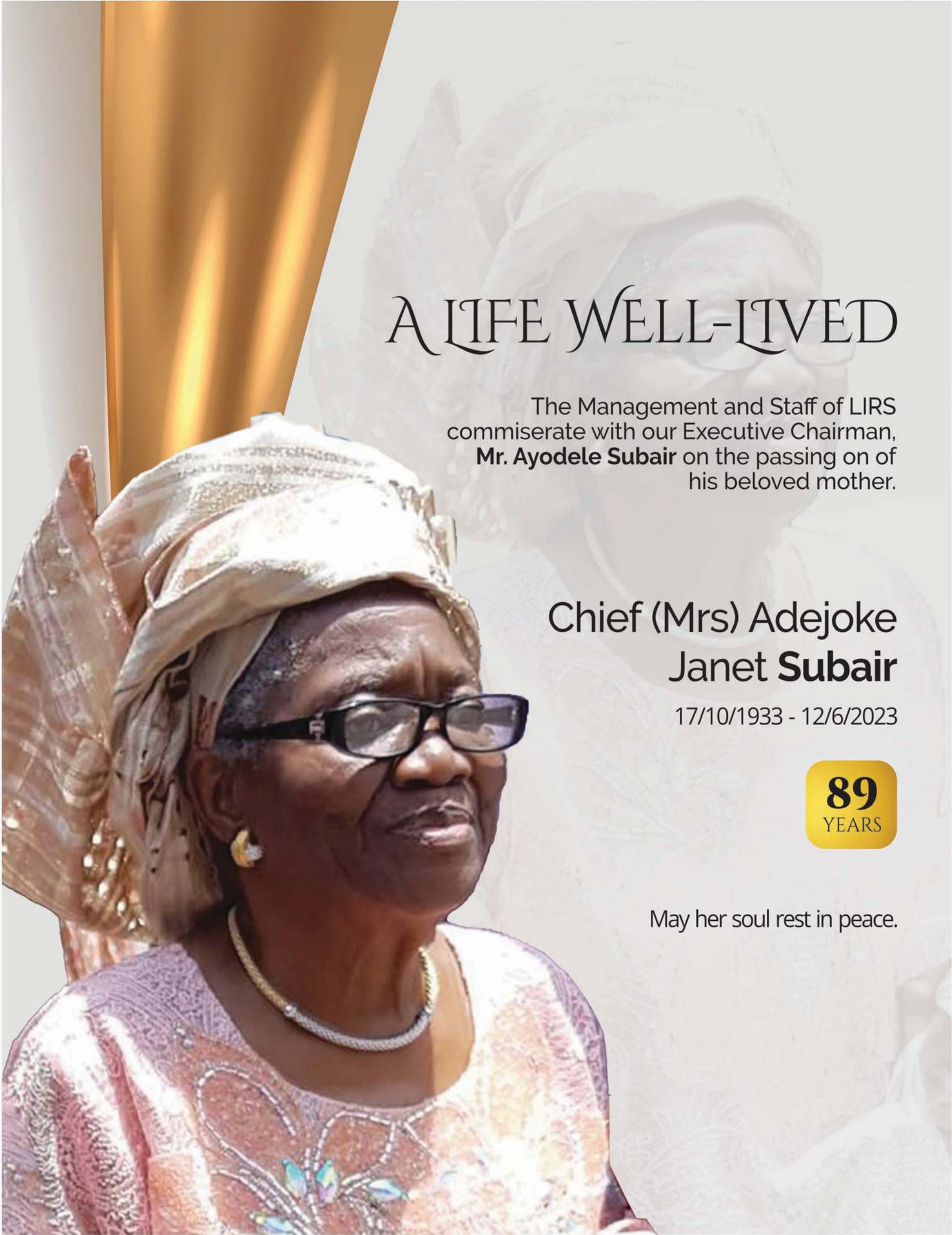
The group's call comes hours after the allegation by prominent Niger Delta leader, Mujahid Asari Dokubo, who accused the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Navy of being culpable of oil theft in the oil-rich Niger Delta area.

Dokubo, who met the President on Friday at the Aso Rock Villa, Abuja, said, "The military is at the centre of oil theft and we have to make this very clear to the Nigerian public that 99 per cent of oil theft can be traced to the Nigerian military, the Army and the Navy especially."

"The Army and Navy are behind oil theft. They intimidate civil defence, who are by law expected to protect

installations. They tap directly from the oil head. What has been happening in the last eight years is unprecedented anywhere in the world.

"The livelihood of the people is being destroyed. The main culprits are the army and navy. There are notorious army commanders who are known to be the ones behind oil bunkering," the former militant stated.



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MISSILE

Yari to Tinubu

"The president was involved, the vice president was involved, the secretary government of the federation was involved, the governors all against me alone and those that supported me" – A former Zamfara State governor, Abdulaziz Yari, lamenting that he ran against Tinubu, Shettima, APC governors, not Akpabio.



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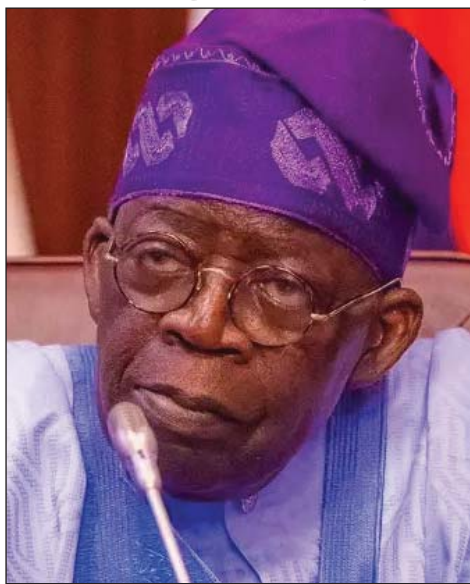


Tinubu: Looking Beyond the Initial Adulation

President Bola Tinubu has taken some consequential actions in less than three weeks in office. Some of his actions and pronouncements have infused governance with a greater sense of urgency, energy and direction. The markets and some segments of the critical press have taken due notice, and some are gushing over him. Not a few of his ardent critics are turning. And increasingly, some members of the populace that will bear the brunt of some his swift reforms appear to be cheering him on, salivating even for the next thing that will be decreed 'gone' or the next person that will be, with immediate effect, 'suspended, then arrested.'

The consensus, even if grudgingly conceded in some quarters, is that the president has bolted out of the starting line.

A big chunk of governance is signalling. Mr. Tinubu appears to have understood and mastered this well. This flair, combined with his accessibility and political network, has surprisingly bought him some needed space and goodwill. The projection by some analysts, myself inclusive, that Tinubu was unlikely to benefit from a honeymoon period has turned out unfounded. But whether



Tinubu

rightly projected or not, no honeymoon lasts forever. Initial surprise and excitement will fade, especially as short-term gains may not outweigh lingering and additional pains. Tinubu needs to anticipate this phase and stay ahead of the curve.

To start with, his bold and necessary steps so far should be acknowledged. He called out time on the ruinous, ineffective and inefficient petrol subsidy right from his swearing in at Eagle Square on May 29th. Yes, the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 mandates the deregulation of the downstream sector of the petroleum industry. But the same government that passed the landmark law sought an 18-month moratorium on deregulation. And true, the 2023 budget has provision for only six months of petrol subsidy.

So, technically, petrol subsidy was already on its way out due to a combination of the dictates of the law and lack of budgetary provisions. But someone had to officially certify its end. It takes some nerve for Tinubu to opt to do this on Day One. He dared where others dithered, casting away what has become a millstone around Nigeria's neck. And it takes some dexterity to have handled the expected pushbacks without major political and economic disruptions. At least for now.

The move to unify the foreign exchange rates, which Tinubu also signalled in his inaugural speech, falls in the same category. The multiple exchange rates created opportunities for arbitrage and corruption,

dampened investors' confidence in the Nigerian economy, and restricted investment and forex flows into the country. On Wednesday, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) directed that forex trading would henceforth take place at the Investors and Exporters (I&E) window on a "willing seller, willing buyer basis." Basically, this means the Nigerian Naira will exchange for other major currencies at a price to be determined by the market, not at the artificially capped one which was available to only a few people.

Removing petrol subsidy and unifying the exchange rates had long been advocated by economists, public finance experts and multilateral institutions. Both reforms were needed to increase fiscal headspace for the government and to steer badly needed investment towards the country. But previous governments either developed cold feet or folded under pressure. Tinubu has taken on both under three weeks in office. This is commendable.

He has been applauded by critics, analysts, renowned investment banks and international financial institutions. A foreign news agency asks rhetorically, excitedly even, if Tinubu is

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YUSHAU A. SHUAIB

GUEST COLUMNIST



Nuhu Ribadu and NSA's Statutory Mandates

Recently when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu announced his Special Advisers and named Mallam Nuhu Ribadu as the adviser on security, many were confused if this designation would be the same as that of the National Security Adviser (NSA).

In my previous article entitled, 'The person needed as President Tinubu's NSA,' I mentioned that while most past holders of the position were retired Army officers, national security issues are actually beyond the exclusive ken of the military. Security has evolved to largely encompass developmental issues, which now involves more holistic approaches that could be non-kinetic and essentially strategic in nature, beyond the mere prosecution of armed solutions and deployment of boots on the ground in counter-attack operations.

On the nomenclature of Ribadu's designation, whether this is as a Special Adviser, a National Adviser or Presidential Adviser, there has only been one Security Adviser in the country, who is also a member of the National Security Council.

Born on November 21, 1960, Ribadu was an intelligence police operative, who came to the

national limelight as a star prosecutor at the Oputa Panel which was created to investigate human rights abuse during the military era.

He was thereafter Chairman of the Petroleum Special Revenue Task Force (PRSTF) before he became the pioneer Executive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the agency of the Federal Government tasked with countering corruption and fraud in the country.

Ribadu's pragmatic approach to intelligence gathering and crime-fighting while in EFCC earned him global recognition and awards, leading to the de-listing of Nigeria from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) List of Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories, its admission into the prestigious Egmont Group, and the withdrawal of the US Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FINCEN) Advisory on Nigeria.

Once a visiting fellow at the Center for Global Development, a TED Fellow, and a Senior Fellow in St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, UK, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu was in exile during President Yar'Adua's administration, before he returned to the country in 2010 and declared his intention to run for President of Nigeria under



Ribadu

the platform of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). In 2011, the retired Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) was adopted as the

presidential candidate of the ACN, a party sponsored by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Before Ribadu's recent appointment, other former retired police officers had been appointed as National Security Advisers in the country. They included Gambo Jimeta from Adamawa State, during the tenure of Military President Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, and Alhaji Ismaila Gwarzo (also first DG DSS/SSS) from Kano State, during the period of and then Chief Ernest Shonekan and General Sani Abacha.

Yet, a number of retired officers of the Nigerian Army – though never from the Navy or Airforce – have equally held this post, from General Aliyu M. Gusau, to Colonel Lateef Kayode Are (who functioned in the capacity briefly), General Abdullahi Mohammed, General Sarki Mukhtar, General Owoye Andrew Azazi, Colonel Sambo Dasuki, and currently General Mohammed Babagana Monguno.

Unlike many who easily construe the remit of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) as one coordinating a fighting force on behalf of the government, its essential mandate however consists of intelligence gathering,

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