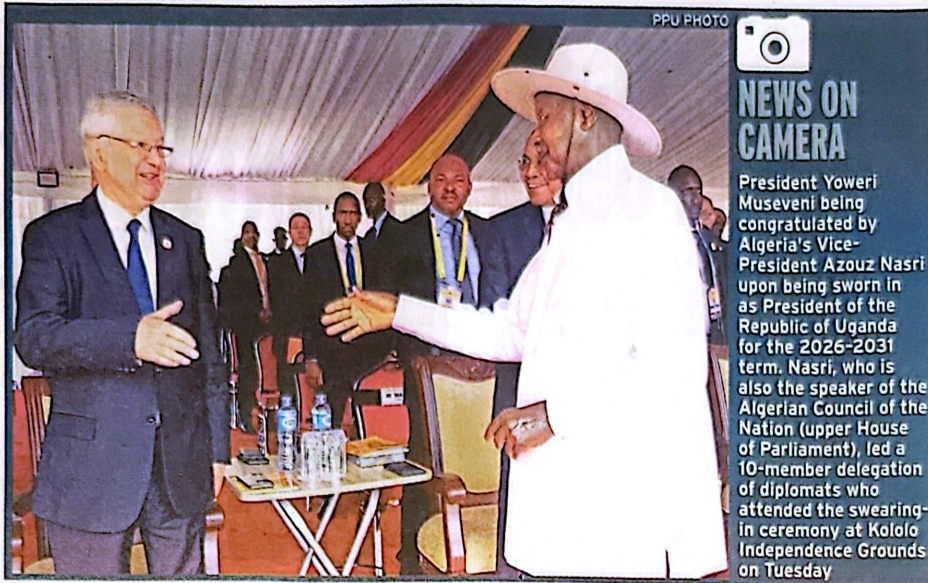




NEWS ON CAMERA

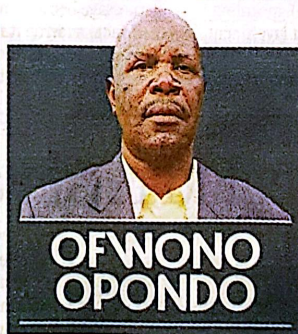
President Yoweri Museveni being congratulated by Algeria's Vice-President Azouz Nasri upon being sworn in as President of the Republic of Uganda for the 2026-2031 term. Nasri, who is also the speaker of the Algerian Council of the Nation (Upper House of Parliament), led a 10-member delegation of diplomats who attended the swearing-in ceremony at Kololo Independence Grounds on Tuesday

THE FISHER OF MEN, MINISTERS AND NRM'S NEW CHAPTER

Having dissolved his cabinet and sworn in on Tuesday, President Yoweri Museveni left a huge air of suspense, and everyone was wondering what the next direction would be. The over-zealous politicians, especially those elected to the 12th Parliament, are foaming at the sides of their mouths. Some have been moving about openly lobbying whoever they think has access to the ears of those they foolishly think matter, to be put in the next cabinet.

The trousers and skirts of those who were in the expired cabinet are now loosened in the trembling anxiety of what follows, having enjoyed freebies of the last five years feeding from the public trough with an exaggerated sense of self-importance. Museveni, the fisher of men and women, has been a master in his games. He calculatedly leaves the air to swirl around him and his decisions, which often provide room for comen to pounce on unsuspecting victims with ambitions to join the cabinet. Dubious phone calls allegedly from State House and intelligence agencies lure victims into extortion errands to be profiled for ministerial appointments.

The outgoing fishermen cabinet, as Museveni described it at the start of his last term, was politically prudent for the President, but wanted to show the public that yearns for efficient and credible public service delivery. A whopping 27 were ex-officio, especially from Buganda, which had denied Museveni and NRM votes in 2021. In the era of political correctness



and trepidation, someone has to bell the cat. When the top leaders in that cabinet chose to keep their heads low in Parliament, for fear of being bullied or tormented by the opposition, or even vocal NRM MPs, disappointed by their lacklustre performance, the NRM must conduct a thorough self-introspection of its purpose and direction. Some Ugandans think that there were, perhaps, many square pegs in round holes, and that needs fixing in the coming season.

And while appointment of the cabinet is the exclusive territory of the President, they ought not be a revolving door for appeasement.

Having sworn in MPs, the real politics for speakership, deputy speaker, and the selection of leadership for various committees has to begin in earnest. The NRM must hold a firm line to ensure that its official candidates endorsed by the Central Executive Committee and the parliamentary caucus win. The selections, especially

of chairpersons, deputies and whips, should be done with a mind to purpose if the NRM and indeed the Government is to improve on their various mandates. The NRM has, for long, tolerated under-performance, corruption, opulence, negligence, and abuse of authority by its own leaders, thereby undermining itself and causing widespread public frustration, which must be rectified.

To reclaim its vanguard role, the NRM must take the forefront in holding our own Government and leaders to the highest standards of diligence in policy making, performance, transparency, and accountability because by doing so, the so-called opposition will be relegated to a lame-duck status.

The demand for good governance, democracy, and the rule of law should be in the NRM realm, rather than mimicking or playing catch-up with opposition charlatans on these important issues. If ministers and NRM MPs cannot confidently articulate the policy positions of their government, it is not surprising that the public believes we are not up to the task of making things better.

Every scandal or mistake degrades any sense of difference with the old Uganda People's Congress and the sordid Idi Amin regime. NRM and Museveni have been the empty vessel in which Ugandans had placed their hopes for renewal, and should avoid becoming the vessel in which to dump their cumulative resentment of politics and politicians. NRM must not become a sanctuary for arrogance.