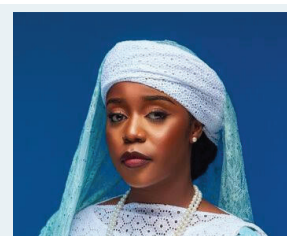




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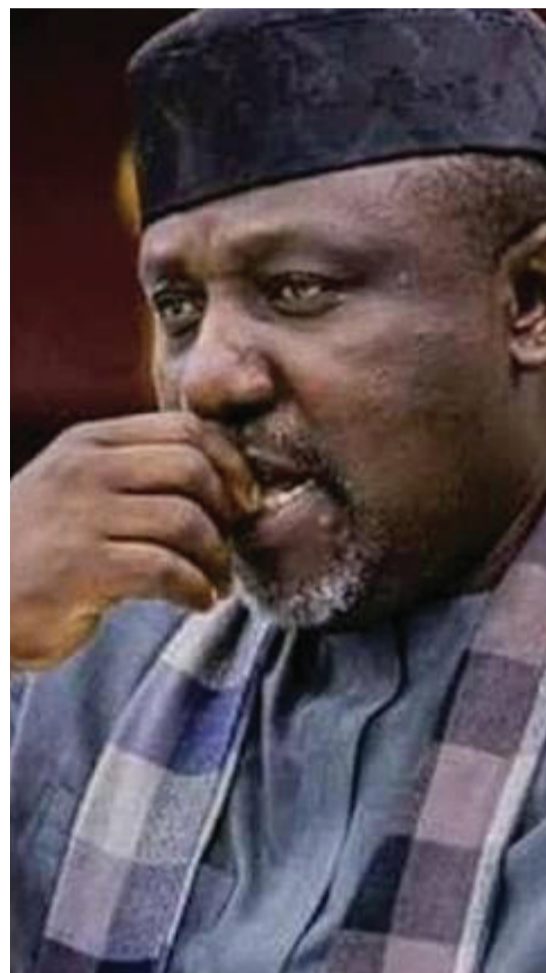
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Bello



Sirika



Okorocho

Indiscriminate Dumping of Dirt in Abuja: A Growing Health and Economic Threat

BY GIFTLUCKSON@
NEPTUNEPRIME.COM.NG

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), especially Abuja, has witnessed a concerning rise in the indiscriminate dumping of dirt and waste in public spaces, residential areas, drainages, and undeveloped plots of land.

While dirt might seem harmless on its own, its uncontrolled disposal is creating serious health hazards, environmental damage, and economic burdens for both residents and the government.

Health Risks

Unregulated dirt dumping poses immediate and long-term health threats.

Breeding ground for disease vectors: Dirt mixed with organic waste attracts mosquitoes, flies, rats, and other pests. These vectors spread diseases such as malaria, cholera, typhoid, and other infections.

Blocked drainage and flooding: When dirt clogs storm drains, rainwater cannot flow properly, leading to floods. Floodwaters can carry harmful bacteria and contaminate drinking water sources.

Respiratory problems: During dry seasons, dirt piles can become airborne dust. Inhaling dust particles can trigger asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions, especially in children and the elderly.

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From Power to the Dock: The High-Profile Trials Defining Nigeria's Anti-Graft War

- Emeziele is accused of misallocating \$2 billion in foreign exchange
- Yahaya Bello is facing allegations of laundering approximately N80 billion in state funds

By Martha Gwary

Nigeria's renewed anti-corruption drive has taken centre stage once again, with a number of prominent politicians and former public officials currently on trial or under investigation by federal agencies. From former governors to ex-ministers and

top financial regulators, the unfolding cases have fuelled intense public debate about accountability, due process and the credibility of the country's anti-graft institutions

Nasir El-Rufai

The most recent high-profile investigation involves former Kaduna State Governor

Nasir El-Rufai. He presented himself at the headquarters of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) following an invitation over alleged financial improprieties during his tenure as Kaduna State governor between 2015 and 2023. In 2024, the Kaduna State House of Assembly

indicted El-Rufai over the alleged diversion of N423 billion in public funds and money laundering, and subsequently called on anti-corruption agencies to investigate the claims. He was detained and later transferred to ICPC custody as investigations reportedly focus on allegations of financial

misappropriation as well as issues surrounding the reported disappearance of some of his critics. Although formal charges have yet to be fully detailed in court, the probe has intensified scrutiny of major infrastructure contracts

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THE SOCIO-POLITICAL GROWTH, CULTURAL VALUES, AND BRAVERY OF THE ATYAP PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN KADUNA



THIS LIFE! >>16

IN THE PAST, SPORTS TAUGHT DISCIPLINE, REDUCED YOUTH RESTIVENESS - FORMER REFEREE, ABBA DADA



An illegal dumping site.

Neptune World

What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself

ABRAHAM MASLOW

The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed

STEVE BIKO



PICTURE OF THE DAY

The Mercedes-Benz in which Nigerian Head of State, General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, was assassinated along with his ADC and driver on Friday, February 13, 1976, is still preserved today at the National Museum in Onikan, Lagos. The car remains visibly riddled with bullet holes and still bears the blood stains from that tragic morning when he was ambushed in traffic during a failed military coup led by Lt. Col. Buka Suka Dimka. Muhammed, who had come to power in 1975, was widely regarded for his bold reforms and anti-corruption stance. His death shocked the nation and led to tighter security measures across the country. Following the failed coup, his deputy, Olusegun Obasanjo, assumed leadership and continued the transition programme toward civilian rule.

RANDOM FACTS

Some mind-blowing facts about the world's most famous authors

1. Mary Shelley's Macabre Keepsake
After her husband, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, drowned in Italy, his body was cremated on the beach. However, his heart reportedly refused to burn (possibly due to calcification from an old illness). Mary Shelley kept his calcified heart wrapped in a silken shroud and carried it with her in her desk drawer for nearly 30 years until she died.

2. The "William Tell" Tragedy of William S. Burroughs

The author of Naked Lunch accidentally killed his wife, Joan Vollmer, during a drunken party in Mexico City. He attempted to play a game of "William Tell" by placing a glass on her head and trying to shoot it off with a pistol. He missed, hitting her in the forehead. He later claimed that without her death, he might never have become a writer.

3. James Joyce: The Linguistic Obsessive

Joyce was so dedicated to his craft that he learned Norwegian just so he could write a fan letter to

playwright Henrik Ibsen in his native tongue. By the time he wrote Finnegans Wake, he was nearly blind. He wrote in huge letters using large blue pencils and crayons while lying on his stomach in bed, wearing a white coat to reflect more light onto the paper.

4. Agatha Christie's Real-Life Disappearance

In 1926, the world's most famous mystery writer became a mystery herself. After her husband asked for a divorce, she disappeared for 11 days. Her car was found abandoned by a cliff, sparking a massive manhunt. She was eventually found living in a hotel under the name of her husband's mistress, claiming she had total amnesia.

5. Dr. Seuss and the \$50 Bet

The classic book Green Eggs and Ham was the result of a bet. Dr. Seuss's publisher bet him \$50 that he couldn't write a book using only 50 unique words. Seuss won the bet (though his publisher reportedly never paid up).

How medical errors and delays in post-operative care killed former first lady Stella Obasanjo

On September 22, 2009, a Spanish doctor, Antonio Mena, was sentenced to one year in prison in Spain for his role in the death of former First Lady, Stella Obasanjo, in 2005.

Stella Obasanjo died on October 23, 2005, from complications following an elective liposuction surgery performed by Dr Mena at the Molding Clinic in Marbella, Spain.

The procedure, which was intended to be routine, ended in tragedy after a series of critical medical errors and delays in post-operative care.

During the surgery, Dr Mena mistakenly inserted a tube used for fat removal into Mrs Obasanjo's abdominal cavity, puncturing her colon and



lacerating her liver. These injuries led to severe internal complications that required urgent medical intervention. The court later found that after the operation, the doctor was not readily available, having turned off his mobile phone.

It was also established that there was a significant delay in transferring Mrs Obasanjo to an intensive care unit. Instead of arranging for an ambulance, Dr Mena transported her in his private

car, a decision that further delayed critical treatment. In September 2009, a court in Málaga, Spain, convicted Dr Mena of negligent homicide. He was sentenced to one year in prison and banned from practising medicine for three years. In addition, the court ordered him to pay €120,000 (approximately \$176,000 at the time) in compensation to Stella Obasanjo's son, Olumuyiwa Obasanjo.

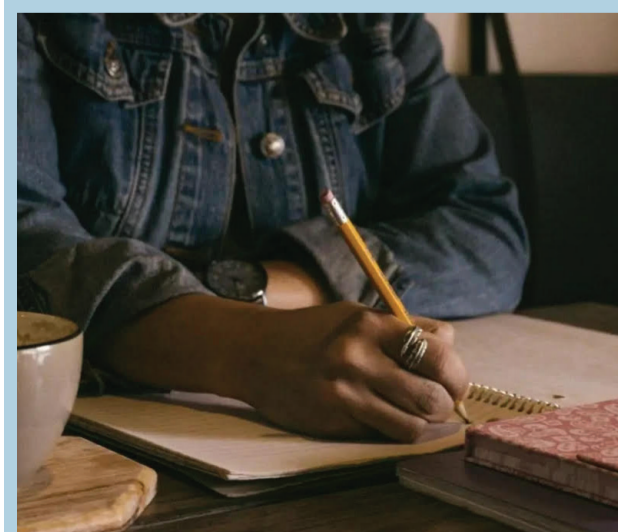


The Girl Who Escaped The Eagle's Nest: A story of survival and the power of nature

In the summer of 1932, a remote Norwegian village was shaken by an event that seemed more like myth than reality. A 3-year-old girl, playing quietly near her home, was suddenly snatched by a massive eagle.

Witnesses described the bird swooping down with incredible speed, digging its talons into the child's clothing, and lifting her into the sky before anyone could react. It was a terrifying moment frozen in time, and within minutes, the entire village had mobilised to search for her. For nearly seven hours, over 200 villagers combed the surrounding forests and rocky cliffs in desperation. Their only hope was to find the eagle's nest—high above the ground and perilously difficult to reach.

Eventually, the child was discovered in the eagle's nest situated 180 meters up a steep cliff face. Incredibly, she was alive and largely unharmed, curled among sticks and feathers, dazed but safe.



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NEWS

From Power to the Dock: The High-Profile Trials Defining Nigeria's Anti-Graft War

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

executed under his administration.

Godwin Emefiele

The former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria faces multiple serious allegations and charges related to corruption and abuse of office. His legal troubles began after his suspension in June 2023. Emefiele was arrested for allegedly owning a shotgun and hundreds of cartridges.

He is accused of misallocating \$2 billion in foreign exchange without proper documentation. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) filed 26 new charges against him, including:

Accepting gratification and receiving gifts through agents. Unlawfully obtaining property and managing funds through proxy accounts.

Emefiele is charged with unlawfully acquiring a 753-unit housing estate in Abuja, allegedly in collaboration with an associate.

Allegations include keeping large sums in proxy accounts, with amounts ranging from ₦167 million to ₦2.94 billion over several years, suspected to be unlawfully obtained.

Emefiele has denied all allegations and is currently facing multiple court cases related to these charges. His legal battles continue as he seeks to contest the accusations.

Yahaya Bello

Former Kogi State Governor Yahaya Bello is facing allegations of laundering approximately ₦80 billion in state funds. The EFCC accuses him of diverting public resources through shell companies and proxy accounts during his tenure as Kogi Governor. Bello has consistently denied the allegations. His legal team has challenged aspects of the charges, including jurisdictional questions, while



El-Rufai

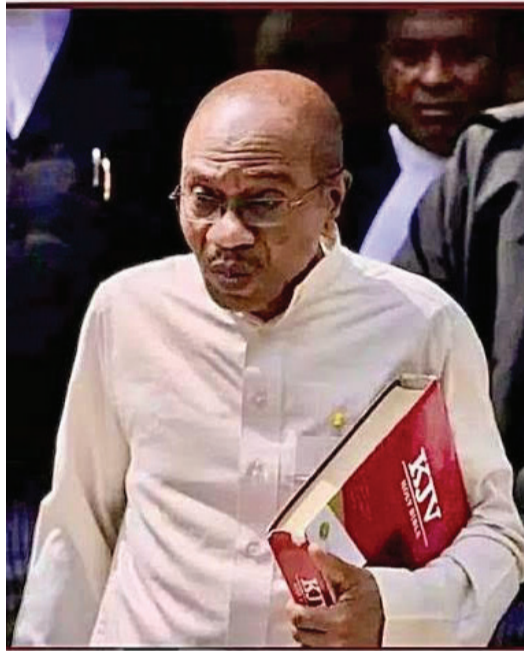
the court continues to hear preliminary and substantive applications.

Abubakar Malami

Former Attorney-General of the Federation Abubakar Malami is also facing EFCC prosecution over alleged money laundering involving about ₦8.7 billion. The charges include claims that public funds were channelled through corporate entities and used for property acquisitions valued far above declared earnings. Malami has denied all allegations and is contesting the charges before the Federal High Court.

Rochas Okorocha

The long-running prosecution of former Imo State Governor Rochas Okorocha centres on allegations that he unlawfully converted public assets and diverted over ₦3 billion in state resources. The EFCC alleges that government properties were transferred to private interests. Okorocha maintains that the assets in question were legitimately allocated and that the charges are politically motivated. Portions of the case



Emefiele

have advanced to the defence stage.

Hadi Sirika

In the aviation sector, former Minister Hadi Sirika is standing trial over alleged abuse of office and contract fraud involving approximately ₦2.7 billion. The prosecution claims that certain aviation contracts were awarded in breach of procurement regulations. Sirika has rejected the allegations, stating that all approvals followed due process.

Saleh Mamman

Similarly, former Power Minister Saleh Mamman faces allegations of diverting about ₦33.8 billion earmarked for major power and hydropower projects. Prosecutors allege that funds intended for infrastructure upgrades were misapplied. Court hearings are ongoing, with forensic financial analysis forming a key part of the proceedings.

Olu Agunloye

The controversial Mambilla hydropower contract has brought former Minister of Power Olu Agunloye before the court. The EFCC alleges



Agunloye

irregularities in the award of a contract valued at approximately \$6 billion, including claims that due process was not followed. Agunloye has denied wrongdoing, insisting that all



Saleh

actions taken were within the authority of his office at the time.

Yakubu Adamu

Bauchi State Commissioner Yakubu Adamu is facing



Adamu

serious allegations related to terrorism financing and money laundering.

He is accused of approving \$2.3 million for individuals linked to terrorist organisations.

Indiscriminate Dumping of Dirt in Abuja: A Growing Health and Economic Threat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Environmental Impact

The environment suffers too, hence disrupting the flow of daily activities in society.

Soil degradation: Irregular dumping alters natural land contours, which affects plant growth and reduces soil fertility in affected areas.

Water contamination: When rain washes dumped materials into rivers and streams, it pollutes water bodies, affecting aquatic life and reducing water quality for communities that depend on these sources.

Urban blight: Accumulations of dirt make neighbourhoods look neglected, lowering the quality of life for residents.

Economic Consequences

The removal and management of indiscriminately dumped dirt is not cost-free.

Increased public spending: The FCT administration

must divert funds to clear dirt from roads, parks, and drainage systems — resources that could have been used for education, health, and infrastructure.

Reduced property values: Areas with visible dumping problems become less attractive to buyers and investors, lowering property values and discouraging economic development.

Business disruption and traffic congestion: Blocked roads and flooded streets can hinder commerce, affecting markets, shops, and transport services.

Why It Happens

Several factors contribute to this challenge. These include a lack of proper waste disposal facilities, especially in rapidly growing residential zones.

Weak enforcement of environmental regulations, allows individuals and companies to dump dirt



Refuse site overflow clogs roads, causing traffic gridlock in Nyanya, Abuja.

without consequences.

Public apathy, where some residents are unaware of proper disposal practices or

dismiss the impact of dirty dumping.

Way Forward

Addressing this issue requires

coordinated action:

Stronger enforcement: Authorities must enforce environmental laws and

penalise offenders.

Public awareness: Community education campaigns can encourage responsible disposal and the use of authorised dumping sites.

Improved infrastructure: The FCT administration can provide designated dumping points and more frequent waste collection services.

Community involvement: Residents should take ownership of their environment by organising clean-ups and reporting illegal dumping.

Indiscriminate dumping of dirt may appear minor, but it fuels serious health, environmental, and economic problems in Abuja. Through stronger policies, public education, and community engagement, the city can reduce dumping practices and build cleaner, healthier neighbourhoods for all.

NEWS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA



Tinubu

PENGASSAN rejects Tinubu's executive order on oil revenue remittance

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has called on President Bola Tinubu to withdraw an executive order sending all oil and gas revenues directly to the federation account. According to

PENGASSAN President Festus Osifo, the order removes the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL)'s authority to deduct operational costs, a role clearly defined under the Petroleum Industry Act.

He described the directive as a "blow to existing oil sector law" that could undermine investor confidence and disrupt the company's ability to meet financial obligations, including staff salaries. Osifo emphasised that while the president can

issue executive orders, such directives should not override an Act of the National Assembly. He urged a policy review, stressing that stability and clarity in the oil and gas sector are essential for both domestic and international stakeholders.

Married man bags life imprisonment for raping 12-year-old maid

Justice Rahman Oshodi of the Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Ikeja has convicted and jailed a 50-year-old real estate agent, Harrison Ekeoma, for the rest of his life for raping his 12-year-old maid. Justice Oshodi sentenced Ekeoma to life imprisonment after he found him guilty of unlawfully defiling a 12-year-old girl by having unlawful sexual intercourse with her.

The prosecution informed the judge that the offence, committed around January 2023 at Ogba in Ikeja, violated Section 137 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015.

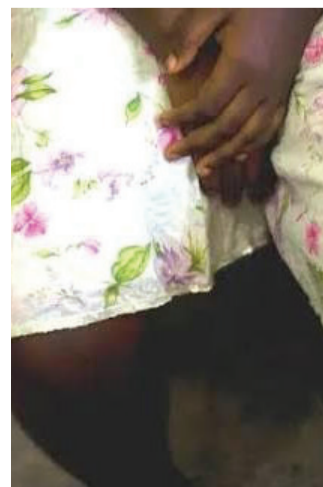
Four prosecution witnesses testified against the convict

while he testified in his own defence. In her testimony, the survivor's mother told the court that she came to Lagos from Enugu in 2022 seeking work.

She stated that she found employment in Ojodu Berger but faced housing problems. The witness further told the court that she entrusted her daughter to the defendant's wife to help with chores and to send her to school. However, whenever the defendant's wife went shopping, he would ask the girl to watch pornography with him and then suggest they do the same.

Police investigations showed that Ekeoma had sex with the girl multiple times at home and

threatened her not to tell anyone until 2023, when she used a security man's phone to call her mother in Ojodu Berger about her ordeal.



Victim

In his judgment, Justice Oshodi held, "I am convinced that the defendant had unlawful sexual intercourse with the prosecutrix."

He added that the prosecution proved its case beyond a reasonable doubt. "The defendant was supposed to be her guardian, but treated her in unimaginable ways. You abused her repeatedly over time. You showed no remorse or apology during the trial," he stated.

The judge, therefore, sentenced Ekeoma to life imprisonment for raping the minor.

The court also ordered that his name be entered into the Lagos State Sexual Offences Register.

Court sentences pastor to death by hanging for landlord's murder

An Akwa Ibom State High Court has sentenced a Living Faith Church pastor to death by hanging after finding him guilty of murdering his landlord, a final-year university student, in a case that shocked residents of Uyo.

The Akwa Ibom State High Court sitting in Uyo on Thursday sentenced Prince Emmanuel Umoh, a 29-year-old resident pastor of Living Faith Church, also known as Winners Chapel, to death by hanging for the murder of his landlord, Gabriel Bassey Edward.

Delivering judgment, Justice Gabriel Ette held that the prosecution proved its case beyond a reasonable doubt, convicting Umoh for stabbing Edward to death inside his residence at Ifa Ikot Ubo-Ifa Ikot Okpon, Uyo.

The deceased was a 500-level Civil Engineering student of the University of Uyo, whose academic results later revealed that he graduated with First Class honours, released after his death.

Court findings showed that Edward had moved into his late mother's property to safeguard the estate and live closer to school. Before her death in December 2019, his mother had established a nursery school on the premises.

Part of the property — a long hall initially built for school use — was later rented to the church for worship at an annual rent of ₦150,000, with the consent of Edward's father, Emanu Bassey Edward, a retired school principal. Prince Emmanuel Umoh was subsequently posted to the branch as its pioneer resident pastor.

Evidence before the court revealed that on December 21, 2020, Umoh was seen entering the compound. Neighbours later testified that they heard loud screams of "Jesus" coming from inside

the premises.

Shortly after, the pastor reportedly emerged wearing a white garment stained with blood, claiming he had fallen while attempting to hang a banner. Gabriel Edward was never seen alive again.

On December 26, 2020, a day after Christmas, his decomposing body was discovered in his room, wrapped in a mat and bearing multiple stab wounds. A butcher's knife was found beside the body.

The court heard that Umoh had unrestricted access to the property after being given a spare key to store church items in the deceased's flat. Following the handover of the key, several household items belonging to Edward's late mother allegedly went missing.

When confronted, the defendant claimed he had lost the key. Locks were later changed, after which the thefts reportedly stopped.

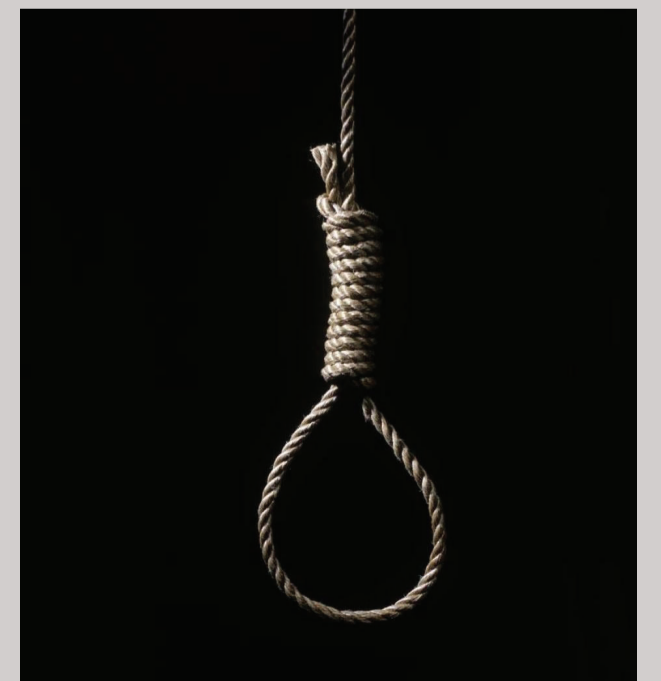
Tensions later developed over rent money paid for repairs, further straining the relationship between the two men.

In a judgment that lasted over two hours, Justice Ette described the case as "deeply sympathetic," recounting the sacrifices made by the deceased's late mother to build the property for educational purposes.

"Life is sacred, and those who represent God on earth should teach that. It is an irony and quite appalling when a man who claims to be the representative of the divine stoops so low as to take a life within church premises," the judge said.

Justice Ette added that individuals who betray public trust pose a grave danger to society.

"Having found you guilty as charged, I hereby sentence you to death by hanging," the court ruled.



A noose

OUR HEART

PDP as death knell of vibrant multiparty democracy in Nigeria

Barring any impediments legally imposed or by a voluntarily taken decision of its officials, the much-awaited national convention of the People's Democratic Party, PDP, would kick off this Saturday in the ancient Oyo State capital of Ibadan. Holding the convention will go ahead despite a court order issued in Abuja, earlier in the week.

Ruling in the suit instituted by a chieftain of the party, Alhaji Sule Lamido, Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court declared that the PDP Ibadan convention lacked all the legal requirements for its conduct.

The judge reinforced his ruling with an order stopping the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, from supervising, monitoring or recognising any outcomes from the planned convention.

Alhaji Sule Lamido had sought the stoppage of the convention because he was unjustly denied the opportunity to purchase the nomination form for the position of National Chairman of the party.

The case of Sule Lamido was merely one of the myriad crises that had dogged the party in the build-up to the convention. There was the gallop of defections of elected governors, legislators and high-profile members to the opposition APC. The cutthroat rivalries between leading lights of the party gravely accentuated the withering of a one-time awesome political platform that stood like a colossus.

The Ibadan convention, even without the legal shackles could not have resulted in a revamped PDP at the end of the day. There were several other debilitating points that could have inevitably led to the completion of the party's demise and obliteration as a force to reckon with in the nation's political matrix. Thanks to Mr Nyesome Wike, the FCT Minister, whose most singular mission has appeared all along, to be the asphyxiation of the PDP.

If the PDP has been taken out of contention in the politics of the country, there are no other options that can effectively perform the functions of opposition to the ruling APC. This summation is evident in the last governorship election in Anambra State.

When the final votes were collated and announced, the PDP and the Labour Party, LP, trailed distantly behind the ruling party, the All Progressives Grand Alliance, APGA. Used as a litmus test of the political weight of the so-called main opposition, it becomes crystal clear that multipartism is very much at the threshold of its exit from the country's democracy.

An even more significant indicator that the nation may be gravitating towards a single-party state is the evident manifestation of the inability of the opposition political parties to fuse into an alliance or a coalition that will have the capacity to give the APC a good fight in 2027. Unless a rare political miracle occurs soon, the much vaunted All

Democratic Congress, ADC, palpably, looks like a stillborn.

The emerging spectacle is a reflection of the inherent character traits of the political elites. The APC, which emerged on the eve of the 2015 elections, essentially as the cobbling together of political forces of divergent backgrounds, seems today, to have become a political behemoth.

This metamorphosis of the APC cannot be divorced from the politics of seeking power wholly for the sake of narrow personal interest. It reveals graphically, the place of corruption and coercion as the real undercurrents of the power play between the elites. It is not ideologically rooted and, it is usually not driven by the altruistic purpose of rendering service for the betterment of the wider society.

For instance, a good number of those who have defected to the ruling party were reported to have been lured because of the prospects of getting reprieve from prosecution over the huge sums allegedly looted from the public treasuries while they were in power.

In certain other incidents, the allure is

the hope of getting "lucrative" political appointments, leading to the acquisition of immense material fortunes. There were recent widely published news reports alleging payment of humongous sums of money to those defecting to the ruling APC. According to the reports, a defecting governor is said to be given 250 Billion Naira, a Senator, One Billion Naira with a defecting member of the House of Reps getting 500 Million Naira.

Even with the Ibadan convention, the fact is that the PDP has rescheduled that stage in its transition that it is practically beyond immediate resuscitative therapies.

Empirically, a multiparty democracy does not, in itself, translate to the attainment of the fundamental goals of democratic governance of enhancing the socioeconomic well-being of the majority of the population. What is guaranteed from the existence of multiple political parties is the freedom of choice and platforms for the divergent opinions, groups and interests in the country. It safeguards against despotism and autocracy.

While some schools of thought regard a one-party state as generally having the trappings of totalitarianism, advocates of rapid development of the social and economic progress of the society, on the other hand, identify it as most appropriate for developing countries. The historically unprecedented leaps and transformations of China under the Chinese Communist Party are given as a typical example.

Once the biggest political party in Nigeria and in Africa, the People's Democratic Party has come a full circle. It is at this stage, a wobbly, tottering political party about to be eclipsed. Its state strikes a note that is more like a funeral dirge rather than sounds of rejuvenation or revival. Sadly, there are no signs of its reincarnation in the aftermath of its demise. Thus, the translation of the present fate of the PDP to a death knell of multiparty democracy in Nigeria.

Ahead of the PDP convention, Sule Lamido said he went to the court to reclaim his right to contest a leadership position within the PDP.

Lamido spoke on Friday during an interview on Channels Television's Politics Today, describing the case as a personal fight for dignity, not a move against the party.

"I went to court not because I have anybody in mind, but I went to get my rights back taken by my party," the ex-governor said.

"The issue is just about my own personality, dignity and honour being restored more than anything else or being in the court."

The former governor expressed disappointment at the state of the PDP, lamenting that love, unity and trust within the opposition party have been eroded.

"I won the case, fair enough, but then again, it is also equally tormenting that the case I won is about my party, about our unity, family," he said.

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NORTH-EAST

BY GIFT LUCKSON
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Buni, NEDC flag off reconstruction of critical Damaturu–Gujba–Magza highway



Buni

Yobe State Governor, Mai Mala Buni, has flagged off the reconstruction of the vital Damaturu-Gujba-Magza Road. The project, undertaken by the North East Development Commission (NEDC), promises to restore a critical artery that has severed the region for over five decades.

Speaking at the flag-off ceremony, Governor Buni emphasised that the highway is

far more than a local route; it is a strategic corridor connecting Yobe State to Southern Borno, Adamawa, Taraba, and several states in the Southeast region.

"This road was constructed over fifty years ago. It is a historic route that has long promoted socio-economic and agricultural activities between our people," Governor Buni stated.

He acknowledged the initial efforts of the administration

of former Governor Senator Ibrahim Geidam, which reconstructed the 77-kilometre road from Damaturu to Magza, a border with Borno State.

However, Governor Buni explained that increased traffic pressure over the last few years had deteriorated portions of the road, necessitating urgent intervention.

Following this development, the governor revealed that his

administration engaged the NEDC in a "speed hunt" to secure funding for the project.

"I am happy to state that our discussions with the commission have been very fruitful, the outcome of which we are witnessing today," Buni said, commending the NEDC for prioritising the request.

The governor highlighted the road's strategic importance to security, noting that it facilitates the movement of troops and equipment, a critical factor in the fight against insurgency.

"Our commitment to road construction is a critical component in supporting security across the state. Beyond security, it is the backbone of our post-insurgency recovery programme, providing our people access to their farmlands and markets," he explained.

Governor Buni expressed gratitude to the Federal Government under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for its support in addressing critical infrastructure needs.

He called on benefiting communities to support the contractors to ensure quality execution and urged the contractors to adhere strictly to the terms of the agreement.

Troops kill terrorists in Adamawa, arrest 62-year-old drone supplier



Suspect

The Nigerian Army says it has arrested a 62-year-old drone supplier at the Madagali motor park in Adamawa State.

The suspect, Dauda Usman Gubula, described as "a terrorist collaborator", is alleged to be responsible for "supplying drones to the terrorists which are used

against troops".

Items recovered from him include two aerial drones, drone accessories and 20 solar power banks.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Sani Uba, media information officer of the Joint Task Force headquarters in the North-East's Operation HADIN

KAI, said troops also killed Abdullahi Mafa, a terrorist commander, during an ambush operation along the Visik river line in Madagali LGA. Recovered items from the neutralised terrorist included an AK-47 rifle and a loaded magazine. Uba said the operations were

part of ongoing efforts, in collaboration with local vigilantes and hunters, to "disrupt Boko Haram supply lines, restore security, and protect communities across the North-East region".

He also shared that on Thursday, "troops of Sector 4 under 28 Task Force Brigade apprehended 28-year-old Ismail Muhammed, a terrorist logistics supplier, in the Visik General area of Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa State".

"Items recovered from the suspect included one AK-47 magazine, rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, military accoutrements and assorted foodstuffs.

"The suspect is currently in custody undergoing further investigation," the statement reads.

"Elsewhere in Sector 2, troops of Operation HADIN KAI, working with local vigilantes and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), repelled insurgent activity in Ngamdu, Borno State, and neutralised a terrorist informant attempting to breach defensive positions.

Logistic items were recovered during these operations."

The military high command commended the troops for their sacrifices and dedication in the fight against terrorism in the North-East, urging them to sustain the tempo.

Gov. Zulum approves N12.9 billion scholarship for 54 students of aeronautics engineering

Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State has approved a N12.9 billion scholarship scheme to sponsor 54 indigenes of the state to study aeronautics and engineering, alongside various professional certifications, at Isaac Balami University of Aeronautics and Management.

The Senior Technical Assistant to the governor on Print and Digital Communications, Abdulrahman Bundi, said in a statement on Friday that the training programme covers basic pilot training.

It includes 10 beneficiaries specialising in Aerospace Engineering, 11 in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, 11 in Mechatronics Engineering, 12 in Software Engineering, and 10 in Systems Engineering.

At a brief ceremony held at the Government House in Maiduguri on Thursday night, he said, "Zulum presented a cheque for N2.5 billion to the institution, covering the annual tuition and associated expenses, with the 5-year total package valued at N12.9 billion".

Addressing the beneficiaries, Zulum charged them to remain focused and dedicated to their studies. He emphasised that the selection process was deliberately designed to ensure equity across the state, with two students chosen from each of Borno's 27 Local Government Areas.

"What matters most is not

just gaining admission, but how focused you will be in your studies. I advise you to remain dedicated and become good ambassadors of our state," the governor stated.

In addition to funding their education, the governor announced an immediate financial support package of N500,000 per student to cover resumption logistics and other incidental expenses.

Giving an overview of the selection process, the State Commissioner for Education, Lawan Abba Wakilbe, revealed that the scholarship attracted interest from across the state. He disclosed that the ministry received over 3,000 applications.

According to the commissioner, the large pool was initially shortlisted to 1,200 candidates, who were then subjected to a written examination, from which the final 54 successful candidates emerged.

"These programmes reflect Governor Zulum's commitment to human capital development, youth empowerment and investment in education," Wakilbe said.

The founder of the university, Isaac Balami, an indigene of Borno State, commended Governor Zulum for the initiative, while assuring the government that the students would receive world-class training.

He expressed confidence that they would be among those who would eventually build the first made-in-Nigeria aircraft.



Beneficiaries

NORTH-EAST

BY IBRAHEEM EL-TAFSEER

Gov. Muhammad flags off construction of Bauchi ultra-modern market

In a bold move to transform Bauchi into a commercial powerhouse in Northeastern Nigeria, Governor Bala Mohammed has laid the foundation for the construction of a modern market designed to stimulate economic growth and empower local traders.

The governor stated that the market would eliminate roadside trading and its associated risks.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony in Bauchi, the governor described the initiative as a strategic step toward repositioning Bauchi as a thriving hub for commerce and business.

He said the new market would not only boost commercial traffic but also attract traders and investors from across the country, creating jobs and expanding the state's revenue base.

Governor Mohammed noted that the project, being executed through a public-private partnership arrangement, reflects his administration's commitment to sustainable development.

To him, the market would provide a safe, organised, and modern trading environment capable of accommodating a wide range of businesses, from small-scale retailers to large commodity dealers.

He decried the persistent congestion in the state capital, particularly the growing trend of trading along major roads, which he said poses serious



Gov. Muhammad

security risks and endangers lives.

"This project will address roadside trading, reduce traffic gridlock, and enhance safety for both traders and residents," he said.

The governor further directed that the allocation of shops must be carried out with fairness, transparency, and equity, warning against favouritism or political patronage in the distribution process.

He stressed that genuine traders should be given priority to

ensure the market achieves its intended purpose.

Earlier in his remarks, the Commissioner for Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Sadiq Shira, revealed that the ultra-modern market will feature fully equipped shops, a police station, toilet facilities, a fire-fighting station, and a steady water supply to guarantee safety and convenience for traders and customers alike.

Shira added that the inclusion of critical infrastructure such as security and emergency response units underscores the government's resolve to create

a business-friendly environment that meets modern standards, stating that the project would significantly reduce the risks associated with unregulated trading clusters and improve overall urban planning within the metropolis. The commissioner also explained that the ministry had conducted extensive consultations with trader associations and other stakeholders before the project's commencement. According to him, the collaborative approach ensures that the market design reflects the real needs of business owners while promoting inclusivity and long-term sustainability.



Gov. Fintiri

Adamawa gov't partners with military to reconstruct roads at Gibson Jalo Cantonment

Adamawa State Governor, Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri, has said that his government is partnering with the military to reconstruct some roads at the Gibson Jalo Cantonment, Yola, Adamawa State.

Fintiri made the pledge at the Nigerian Army Social Activities, held at

the Cantonment, where he appreciated the military for their patriotism, courage and sacrifices in defending the nation's territorial integrity. The governor, represented by his deputy, Professor Kaletapwa George Farauta, said the appreciation of the military by the government

and people of the state went beyond mere words, adding that sacrifice by the military was deeply respected.

Farauta said, "We will continue to partner with the military leadership to ensure that selected infrastructure like the road network within the barracks received the attention it deserves.

"We are committed to ensuring that those who protect us are in turn appreciated and provided for. I wish to reaffirm our administration's commitment to rendering the needed support to make you live, move and fight." She urged the military to use

the celebration to recharge their spirits for the onerous tasks of securing communities and the borders of the state.

Earlier, the Commander, 23 Armoured Brigade Yola, Brigadier General Amechi Agwu, in a welcome address, acknowledged the support from the state government.

He reiterated his commitment to the philosophy of advancing the transformation of the Nigerian Army into a more professional, adaptable, combat-ready, and resilient force capable of discharging its constitutional responsibilities within a joint and multi-agency environment.

Highlights of the event included the display of cultural dances and tug of war between the Nigerian Army and the Nigerian Air Force personnel as well as the lighting of camp fire at the Parade Ground venue of the event.

Yobe government cautions against security laxity as Ramadan begins

Governor Mai Mala Buni of Yobe State has convened a security meeting on Wednesday to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for citizens observing Ramadan night prayers. Governor Buni, represented by Deputy Governor Alhaji Idi Barde Gubana, acknowledged the efforts of security agencies in maintaining stability.

The meeting focused on strengthening security across Local Government Areas and the state capital during the Holy Month of Ramadan, particularly with the expected increase in movement for night prayers.

The governor urged residents not to take peace for granted, warning that miscreants might exploit the period.

He reassured citizens that the state's current peace would be sustained.

Addressing journalists after deliberations, the Special Adviser on Security, Brigadier General Dahiru Abdulsalam (Rtd), appealed to the public to support security agencies with relevant and timely information.

He specifically lamented illegal mining in the Gulani axis of Gulani Local Government Area, stating that security forces are handling the situation.

Present at the meeting were heads of the military, police, DSS, NSCDC, NDLEA, Immigration, and FRSC.



Gov. Buni

CUSTOMS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

Customs clarifies role in foreign exchange rate determination, manipulation

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has clarified that it does not determine or manipulate foreign exchange rates used for import and export valuation, insisting that such rates are solely provided by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

In a statement signed by the National Public Relations Officer, Abdullahi Maiwada, for the Comptroller-General of Customs, the Service said exchange rates applied in its digital clearance platform, B'Odogwu, are officially transmitted by the CBN and automatically integrated into the system.

The service explained that B'Odogwu, its Unified Customs Management System, remains the only authorised platform for Customs declarations, clearance and valuation.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the Nigeria Customs Service does not independently determine, generate, alter, or apply margins to foreign exchange rates used for import and export valuation," Maiwada stated.

He stressed that all exchange rates applied within the B'Odogwu platform are official rates electronically transmitted by the CBN, which is the competent authority for exchange rate determination under Nigeria's monetary framework.

"These rates are automatically integrated and uniformly applied across all Customs formations, ensuring transparency, predictability, audit integrity, and full compliance with statutory provisions and national fiscal and monetary policy directives," he said.

The NCS further clarified that the exchange rate of 1,451.63/US\$ reportedly referenced for February 6, 2026, did not emanate from its system.

"It is worthy of note that the



Customs personnel

reported exchange rate of 1,451.63/US\$ for 6 February 2026 did not originate from the B'Odogwu system. That figure was sourced from trade.gov.ng, a legacy public trade information portal that does not reflect live Customs

processing data," the statement read.

According to the Service, the actual exchange rate applied for Customs valuation on February 6, 2026, was 1,365.56 per US Dollar, as officially communicated by the CBN.

Maiwada added that the Service is working closely with the apex bank to strengthen real-time exchange rate transmission through Application Programming Interface (API)-based integration to enhance operational reliability and

system resilience.

He assured stakeholders, including licensed customs agents and international partners, of the Service's commitment to transparency, consistency and facilitation of legitimate trade.

"The Nigeria Customs Service remains firmly committed to transparency, consistency, and the facilitation of legitimate trade, while ensuring strict compliance with national fiscal and monetary policy directives," he added.

Customs projects N9 trillion revenue in 2026

The Comptroller General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Dr Bashir Adeniyi, has projected revenue collections of about N9 trillion for the Service in 2026, as the agency intensifies trade facilitation reforms and expands the deployment of technology to curb cargo diversion and revenue leakages.

Adeniyi, who disclosed this in a chat with journalists, said the final revenue target would be unveiled after consultations with the appropriation committees of the National Assembly.

According to him, the Service has continued to witness improved compliance from stakeholders, noting that more than N100 billion was recovered from traders who voluntarily returned to

regularise underpaid duties after reviewing their records. The CGC described the development as unprecedented, attributing it to enhanced transparency, improved automation, and sustained engagement with operators in the trading ecosystem.

He vowed that the Service would sustain the trend in 2026 and beyond. The Customs boss also revealed that the Service exceeded its 2025 revenue target by about 11 per cent.

He linked the performance to reforms that have made trade processes easier and more predictable, thereby boosting cargo throughput and encouraging voluntary compliance among importers, exporters, licensed customs agents, clearing agents, and freight forwarders at ports and border stations.

On border operations, Adeniyi confirmed the reopening of the Seme Border, describing it as strategic to Nigeria's ambition to serve as a regional transit corridor.

He explained that the decision followed engagements among authorities in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin, as well as consultations involving Niger, culminating in approval for transit cargo movements along the Kébé route.

He stressed that Nigeria was fulfilling its obligations to support landlocked neighbouring countries by allowing transit goods destined for Chad and Cameroon to pass through its territory.

However, he assured that tighter technological controls would be deployed to ensure



CG Adeniyi

that such consignments are not diverted into the domestic market.

Adeniyi further stated that transit operations from major seaports, including Apapa Port and Tin Can Island Port, would continue with enhanced monitoring systems aimed at improving revenue generation and strengthening national security.

The CGC pledged that the 2026 strategy of the Service would prioritise sustained trade facilitation, deeper deployment of technology for risk management and cargo tracking, and stronger partnerships with the trading community.

He expressed confidence that these measures would not only support the N9 trillion revenue projection but also reinforce Nigeria's position as a regional trade hub in West and Central Africa.

PRIME PHOTOS

BY MERCY ADAJE
MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng



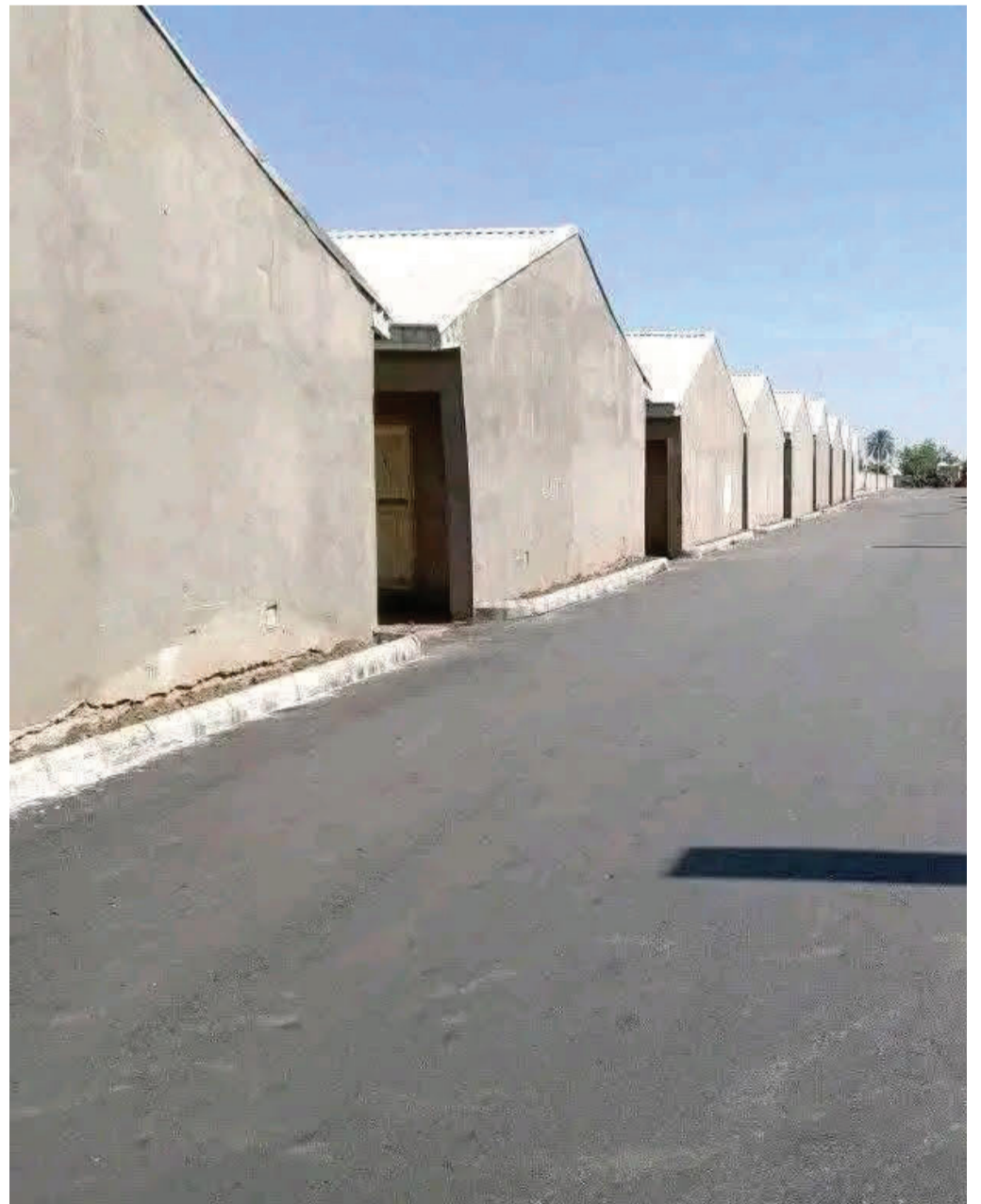
A photograph of Ooni Adesoji Aderemi, the first African Governor of the Western Region, alongside Premier Chief S. L. A. Akintola on inauguration day in 1960



A photograph of former President Shehu Shagari being greeted by Brigadier General Archer Durham upon his arrival for an official visit at Andrews Air Force Base, United States of America, on 7 October 1980.



Governor Agbu Kefas launches Taraba Seed Production Limited in Lau, a landmark initiative aimed at producing high-quality hybrid seedlings for local farmers.



The newly constructed Yola-Town ultra-modern market in Yola South, Adamawa State, was executed by the administration of Governor Ahmadu Fintiri

PRIME10MENT

BY MERCY ADAJE
MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng

Billboard faces backlash for labelling Rema "one-hit wonder"

United States entertainment publication, Billboard, has been criticised on social media after labelling singer Divine Ikubor, popularly known as Rema, a "one-hit wonder".

The post shared recently on the magazine's official X account referred to a June 2025 ranking titled "The 25 Biggest One-Hit Wonders of the 21st Century," where Rema was placed at No. 6 based on the U.S. chart performance of his 2022 global chart-topping hit 'Calm Down', especially the song's remix featuring American superstar Selena Gomez.

After the release of the original "lo-lo-lo-lo-wo-wo-wo" -ing version of 'Calm Down' in 2023, Rema noticed it breaking on the Billboard U.S. Afrobeats Songs chart. He took a chance and recruited Gomez for the female vocal and, shockingly, she accepted. "I had my fingers crossed," he told Billboard, according to reports. The remix of Calm Down shot it into mainstream success, peaking at No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100, according to Billboard.

The publication pointed out that although Rema has since recorded six top-10 entries on the U.S. Afrobeats Songs chart as of June 7, 2025, he has not returned to the Hot 100.

The ranking prompted online responses, with critics arguing that the label does not reflect Rema's broader international success.

Enthusiasts referred to Rema's extensive music record, including tracks such as Woman, Dumebi and Iron Man, and his debut album Rave & Roses, which reached the top 10 of the UK Albums Chart.

They equally stressed his international tours, festival appearances and collaborations with artists such as Chris Brown and 6lack.

Nevertheless, others stood by Billboard's rankings, pointing out that the classification seems to be firmly based on performance within the U.S. Billboard Hot 100, and not international chart achievements.



Rema

Burna Boy, Tems become 1st African artists to hit 8 entries on Billboard Hot 100



Tems, Burna Boy

Nigerian singers, Burna Boy and Tems, have become the first African Artists to have 8 entries on the Billboard Hot 100. This is according to statistics from the Billboard Hot 100, the music industry standard record chart in the United States for the most popular current songs across all genres, published weekly by

Billboard Magazine. Chart rankings are based on sales (physical and digital), online streaming, and radio airplay in the U.S.

Burna Boy and Tems, who missed out on winning the recent Grammys, have pushed themselves to become relevant, thus having numerous collaborations with foreign artists in the

global music space.

At the Billboard chart, J Cole's Bunce Road Blues ft. Tems & Future debuted at #34, while J Cole's Only You ft. Burna Boy debuted at #73.

Also, Burna Boy is the first African artist to have a song on the Billboard Hot 100 for 6 consecutive years. The songs include Loved By You — 2021, Last Last — 2022,

SOTOTW & Talibans II — 2023, Just Like Me & We Pray — 2024, WGFT — 2025, and

Only You in 2026.

It is interesting to note that Burna Boy also has the Most Entries for an African artist on the UK Singles Chart (25) and the Canadian Hot 100 (12).

Indeed, timing and preparation, apart from hard work, are key to excelling in the music industry.

Temilade Openiyi (Tems) has not spent up to a decade in the industry as she rose to prominence after being featured on Wizkid's 2020 single 'Essence', which peaked at number 9 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart following the release of the remix version with Justin Bieber.

She was the 2025 Grammy award winner for Best African Music Performance for her hit song "Love Me JeJe, and has earned 3 Billboard HOT 100 Entries in 2026, the most for any African artist this year.

The song entries are in Raindance, What You Need, and Bunce Road Blues.

Nigeria's Kunle Afolayan partners with Benin Republic to boost film development

Kunle Afolayan has entered a partnership with Société de Productions Audiovisuelles (SOPA) to co-produce films, provide youth training, and develop the film city village in Ouidah.

SOPA is a Benin Republic government-owned production company. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed on Thursday in Lagos in line with a directive from Patrice Talon, President of Benin Republic, aimed at strengthening the country's creative sector.

The Beninese delegation included Sinatou Saka, special adviser to the president on media and audiovisual affairs; Coline-Lee Toumson-Venite, special adviser on arts and culture; Bassirou Ndiaye, CEO of SOPA S.A.; Faissol Gnonlonfin, director of cinema and performing arts at the Agency for the Development of Arts and Culture (ADAC), who represented the minister of culture; and Meto Adoglo, programme manager for storytelling at Sèmè City.

SOPA, established in 2024, was created as a strategic hub to drive the growth of Benin's film and television industry.



Afolayan with Beninese delegation

The partnership is built on three core areas: producing authentic African stories for international audiences, offering structured training for young people

in filmmaking and creative production, and developing and managing a world-class film city in Ouidah.

The initiatives will leverage the

expertise of subsidiaries under the KAP Group, including KAP Motion Pictures, KAP Film & Television Academy, and KAP Film Village & Resort.

NEPTUNE PRIME BUSINESS

BY KABIRU AHMAD IBRAHIM (Student at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria)

MARKET SURVEY



Consumers, traders react as food prices change during Ramadan period

Students of the Kongo Campus of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, who majorly patronise the small Tudun Wada Market located close to the campus walls for their daily shopping needs have expressed concerns about fluctuating prices of essential food items.

The market, popularly referred to by students as "Kasuwar Ghetto," serves as a convenient alternative due to the absence of a major commercial market within close proximity to the campus.

Although prices in Tudun Wada Market are reportedly slightly higher compared to larger markets in Zaria, students often consider the cost

and inconvenience of transportation to distant markets and therefore prefer to shop locally.

During a market survey, a trader Malam Abbas, who sells general goods, confirmed that prices of goods have generally declined compared to previous months.

He also described his relationship with student customers as cordial and mutually beneficial, highlighting the importance of students as a major customer base for traders in the area.

Vegetable vendors also reported a significant reduction in prices compared to the sharp increases recorded months earlier.

According to them, vegetables are currently affordable, reflecting a temporary easing of food price pressures.

However, when asked about the prospects of food price inflation in the coming months, particularly during the Ramadan period, a season traditionally associated with increased demand and price hikes in Nigeria, traders expressed mixed expectations.

While some remained optimistic that prices would remain stable, others predicted a possible rise in food and commodity prices due to seasonal demand pressures.

In major markets across Nigeria, a bag of beans that was N50,000 has



gone up to N90,000. Maize that sold between N25,000 and N27,000 is now significantly higher. Local rice jumbo packs approaching 100kg are now selling close

to N100,000, reflecting heightened demand as Ramadan begins. A local measure of beans that previously sold for N700 now costs N1,400. While a 100 kg bag of

White Beans sold a few days ago at N65,000 has gone up to N110,000. A 100 kg of Paddy Rice sold at the rate of N18,000 has gone up to N28,000 to N30,000.

MILESTONE

BY AISHA WAZIRI KIDAJI (Student, University of Maiduguri, Borno State)

Maryam Bukar Hassan becomes first Nigerian to carry Olympic flag

Nigerian poet and United Nations Global Advocate for Peace, Maryam Bukar Hassan, has made history as the first Nigerian to carry the Olympic flag at the opening ceremony of the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. The Olympic flag, a white banner with five interlocking rings, is usually carried by people selected to reflect the Games' message of unity and peace, not competing athletes.

The ceremony held on February 6, 2026, at San Siro Stadium in Milan, featured a group of the organisers described as the "Flag Bearers of Peace."

Those named alongside Hassan included marathon great Eliud Kipchoge, Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade, and Tongan humanitarian Pita Taufatofua, among others.

Reflecting on the moment on Instagram, Hassan said, "Carrying that flag ultimately reminded me that peace is not an event; it is a practice. A daily decision to humanise before politicising, to listen before labelling, and to create spaces through sport, art, education, or policy where dignity is non-negotiable."

She added, "And most importantly: none of us carries peace alone. We carry it collectively through conversations, friendships, collaborations, and simple gestures that remind us we belong to one another. The Olympics gave us the moment. The real work is continuing long after the stadium lights fade." Hassan, also known in the literary space as Alhanislam, was designated the UN's Global Advocate for Peace in 2025, following

years of using spoken word to promote peacebuilding, inclusion, and social change.

Although she did not compete at the Games, her role at the ceremony put a Nigerian voice in one of the Olympics' most symbolic moments, as the organisers pushed a theme centred on harmony and shared humanity.

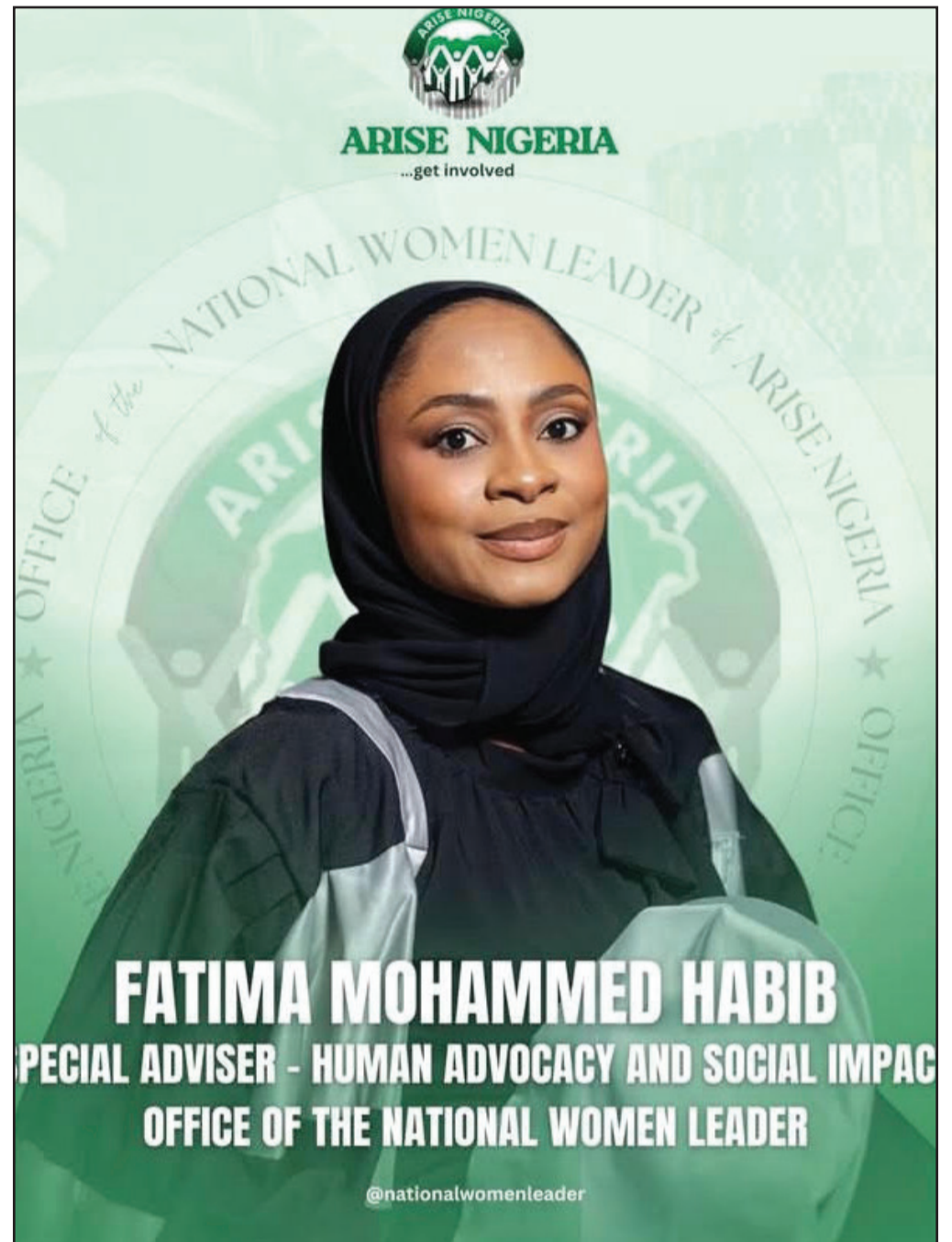
Milano Cortina 2026 organisers had earlier framed the opening night as a global pop culture moment, announcing a lineup that included Mariah Carey, Laura Pausini, Andrea Bocelli, actor and producer Pierfrancesco Favino, and Sabrina Impacciatore of The White Lotus.

They also said the February 6 ceremony, produced by Balich Wonder Studio at San Siro, would stretch beyond the stadium, with Milan and other Olympic territories hosting satellite events and symbolic moments to carry the celebration into public spaces.

Despite plans to "take the Olympics to the city," organisers maintained that the ceremony's main rituals would remain central, including the Parade of Nations and the lighting of the Olympic cauldron. They added that some qualification events would start before the opening ceremony for logistics, but insisted it would not weaken the ceremony's meaning as the official start of the Games.



Hassan



Habib

Fatima Mohammed Habib appointed Special Adviser on Humanitarian and Social Impact at Arise Nigeria

Fatima Mohammed Habib has been appointed as the Special Adviser on Humanitarian and Social Impact to the Office of the National Women Leader of Arise Nigeria, a development widely seen as a strategic step toward strengthening humanitarian advocacy and social development initiatives within the organisation.

Known for her commitment to humanitarian causes and community-driven initiatives, Fatima Mohammed Habib brings passion, insight, and dedication to her new role. Through her work, she has consistently demonstrated a strong interest in addressing social challenges, empowering vulnerable groups, and promoting sustainable community impact.

In her capacity as Special Adviser, she is expected to contribute to the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes focused on humanitarian response, women's empowerment, youth engagement, and social welfare.

Her role will involve advising on strategies that align with Arise Nigeria's mission of national development, inclusiveness, and social justice.

The appointment reflects Arise Nigeria's continued emphasis on strengthening women's leadership and ensuring that humanitarian and social impact initiatives remain central to its agenda. It also highlights the growing recognition of young professionals and advocates who are actively contributing to nation-building through service and leadership.

Observers believe that Fatima Mohammed Habib's appointment will further enhance collaboration between community stakeholders and the organisation, especially in areas requiring social intervention and humanitarian support.

As she assumes this new responsibility, many have expressed confidence in her ability to deliver meaningful impact and contribute positively to the advancement of humanitarian and social development efforts within Arise Nigeria.

HERITAGE

BY TAWHEED YAKUB

The socio-political growth, cultural values, and bravery of the Atyap people of Southern Kaduna

The Atyap people of Nigeria are a culturally vibrant and historically grounded ethnic group, known for their courage, communal solidarity, and deeply preserved ancestral heritage passed down through generations.

Renowned for resilience, integrity, and a strong attachment to their land, the Atyap have maintained their cultural identity despite colonial restructuring, religious transformation, political conflict, and the pressures of modern civilisation.

They are predominantly found in Kaduna State, particularly in Zangon Kataf and surrounding districts such as Atyap Chieftdom, occupying a region characterised by undulating highlands, fertile plains, and savannah vegetation.

These geographical features have shaped their farming system, settlement patterns, defensive strategies in earlier periods, and a strong community-oriented lifestyle. Over time, the Atyap people have played a significant role in the socio-political development of Southern Kaduna, preserving values that emphasise bravery, respect for elders, communal cooperation, justice, and unity.

Historical Background and Origin

Atyap history is largely preserved through oral traditions, clan narratives, praise songs, and ancestral lineage accounts transmitted by elders.

Linguistically, the Atyap language (Tyap) belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and shares historical and cultural connections with other Southern Kaduna ethnic groups.

Traditionally, the Atyap lived in clustered settlements organised around extended families and clans. These settlements were often strategically located for



security during inter-tribal conflicts and strengthened cooperation in farming, defence, and social organisation.

The Atyap maintained relationships with neighbouring groups such as the Bajju, Ham, Hausa, and other Southern Kaduna communities through trade, intermarriage, and cultural exchange, while preserving a distinct ethnic identity.

Leadership was structured around traditional rulers, clan heads, and councils of elders responsible for land administration, conflict resolution, marriage negotiations, religious rites, and community welfare.

Colonial administration altered aspects of governance, yet traditional institutions, particularly the Atyap Chieftdom under the Agwatyap, remain respected and influential within the community today.

Culture and Tradition

Atyap culture is strongly communal and built around kinship ties. Elders serve as custodians of wisdom and moral authority, while youths are expected to uphold discipline, courage, and



communal responsibility. Communal labour, especially during farming seasons, house construction, and harvest periods, is a defining feature of Atyap society. Cooperation and solidarity are deeply valued.

The Tyap language remains central to identity and is expressed through proverbs, folktales, war songs, praise poetry, and ritual expressions. Oral tradition plays a vital role in transmitting ethics, heroism, honesty, and reverence for ancestry. Today, Christianity is

predominant among the Atyap, alongside Islam and remnants of indigenous spiritual practices. While religion has reshaped aspects of social life, many cultural customs continue alongside modern faith traditions.

Traditional music, drumming, dance displays, and symbolic attire remain important during festivals and ceremonies, reinforcing unity and cultural pride.

Marriage Customs

Marriage among the Atyap is regarded as a sacred union that connects not only a man and

woman but also their extended families and clans.

The process traditionally involves family introductions, negotiations conducted by elders, agreement on bride price (often livestock, farm produce, or symbolic items), blessings, and moral counsel to the couple.

Ceremonies are accompanied by music, dance, feasting, and broad community participation.

While polygamy existed in earlier times, religious influence and economic factors have reduced its prevalence. Contemporary Atyap marriages often blend traditional rites with church, mosque, or civil ceremonies, reflecting adaptation without erasing heritage.

Socio-Economic Life

Agriculture remains central to Atyap livelihood. The people cultivate crops such as maize, millet, guinea corn, yams, cassava, beans, and vegetables. Animal rearing, petty trading, blacksmithing, and local crafts have historically supported the economy.

In modern times, Atyap men and women are active in education, civil service, security services, politics, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and other professional sectors, contributing significantly to Southern Kaduna and Nigeria while maintaining cultural ties.

Modern Times

Like many indigenous communities, the Atyap face challenges including youth migration to urban centres, language preservation concerns, economic pressures, land disputes, and social transformation.

However, cultural associations, traditional

councils, churches, and community festivals continue to promote Atyap heritage.

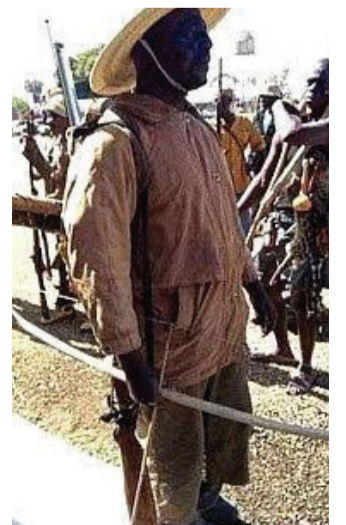
Efforts to document oral traditions and encourage the teaching of the Tyap language among younger generations reflect a strong commitment to sustaining identity in a changing world.

Ceremonies and Cultural Practices

Atyap ceremonies symbolise unity, bravery, spirituality, and ancestral respect. Important cultural events include harvest celebrations, naming ceremonies, marriage rites, funerals, reconciliation gatherings, and traditional festivals such as the Afan (New Yam) Festival celebrated in Southern Kaduna.

These practices reinforce values of diligence, courage, honour, social harmony, and collective responsibility.

From the highlands of Zangon Kataf to urban centres across Nigeria and the diaspora, the Atyap people continue to demonstrate that tradition and modernity can coexist, preserving a proud legacy built on resilience, unity, and deep cultural identity.



HISTORICITI

BY FALMATA MA'AJI MUHAMMAD
(Student at Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt)



The Timeless Majesty of Baalbek: Lebanon's city of grandeur and civilisation

Baalbek is an ancient city in Lebanon located in the eastern part of Lebanon's Beqaa Valley. It is renowned for its massive Roman temple ruins, most notably the Temple of Jupiter and the Temple of Bacchus. The complex of temples at Baalbek is located at the foot of the south-west slope of Anti-Lebanon, bordering the fertile plain of the Bekaa at an altitude

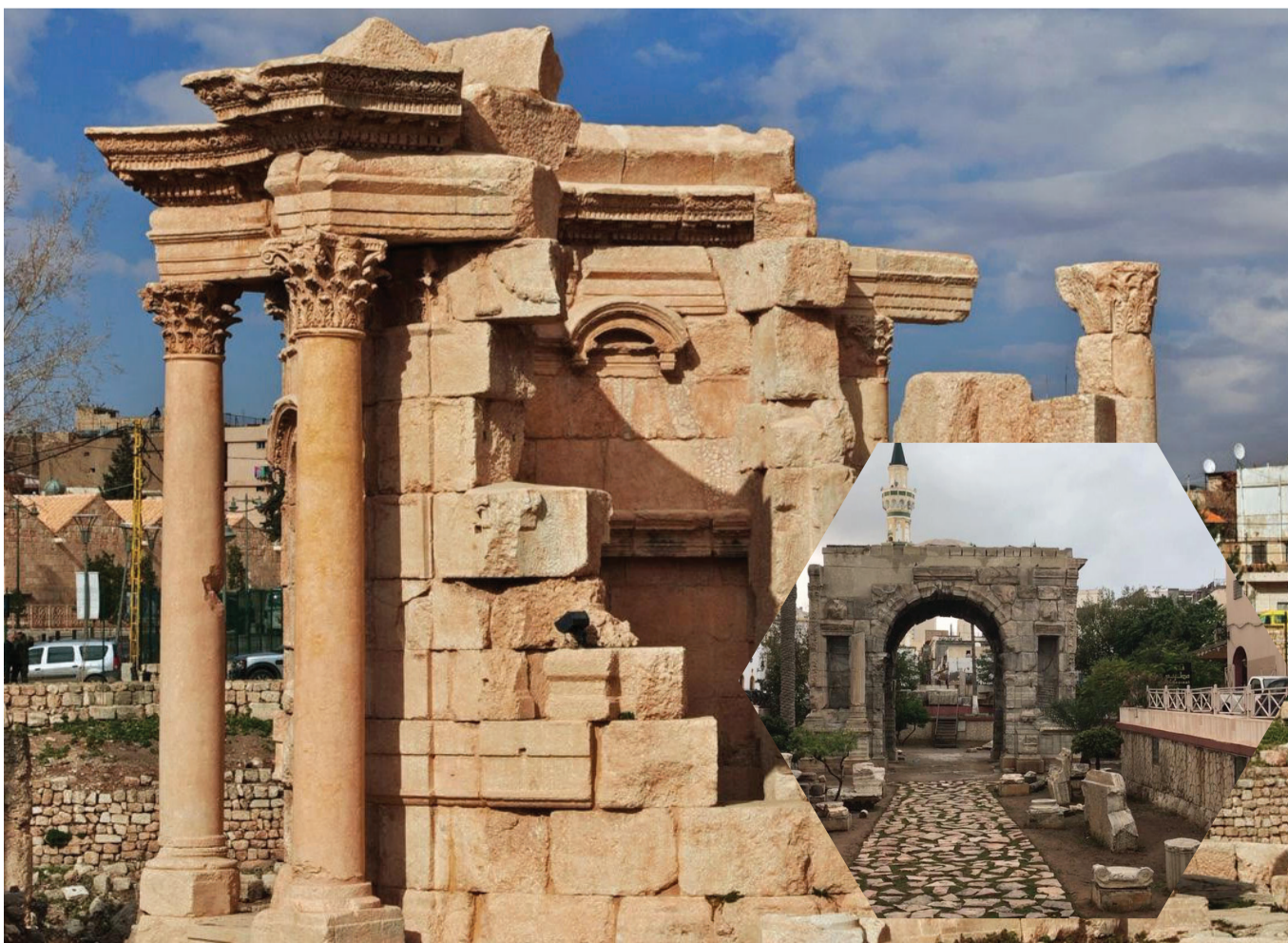
of 1150 meters. These monumental structures stand as enduring symbols of the city's grandeur and its pivotal role in the history of civilisations. **Historical Storyline** Baalbek began as a sacred Phoenician site before the Greeks renamed it Heliopolis, the "City of the Sun." It flourished under Roman rule, with colossal

temples like Jupiter and Bacchus showcasing unmatched grandeur. As Christianity spread, the city's sacred spaces were reshaped, and later, the Arab conquest in the 7th century introduced Islamic influence, marked by the Umayyad Mosque. Over time, Baalbek endured Mongol invasions and devastating earthquakes, leading to

decline under Uthman and modern periods. Its ruins continue to echo the voices of empires, faiths, and civilisations that once thrived there. **Cultural Significance** In 1984 Baalbek was added to UNESCO as a city of cultural and architectural importance, signifying its background history and enduring legacy. During its civilisation, it

became a ground floor for hosting the international music festival, where artists from around the globe perform. Through all changes and challenges, Baalbek still stands as Lebanon's proud heritage. **Tourist Site and Architecture** The first stop is usually the Temple of Jupiter, where six colossal columns rise nearly twenty meters high, a breathtaking reminder of Roman power and engineering. Just beside it, the Temple of Bacchus impresses visitors with its intricate carvings and

remarkably preserved structure, offering one of the finest examples of Roman temple design in the world. Next is the Hotel Palmyra, a 19th-century landmark that has hosted explorers, writers, and dignitaries. Nearby lies the famous Stone of the Pregnant Woman, a massive ancient monolith weighing over 1,000 tons, considered one of the largest stones ever quarried. The Temple of Venus, also known as the Round Temple, is another highlight of the complex. Its unique circular architectural layout sets it apart from the grand rectangular temples, showcasing the diversity and creativity of Roman design in Baalbek.



ROOTS

BY GIFT LUCKSON
GiftLuckson@neptuneprime.com.ng

Belinda Sutton: The remarkable Ghanaian slave who won the first reparation petition

Belinda Sutton (born 1713 in Africa), also known as Belinda Royall, was a woman born in what is now Ghana who was enslaved by the Royall family at the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford, Massachusetts, USA.

Background

Additional details of Sutton's family life are under ongoing research. Baptism records for a son Joseph, and a daughter Prine, appear in church records. Belinda was abandoned by Isaac Royall Jr. when he fled to Nova Scotia at the beginning of the American Revolution.

In Royall's will, several enslaved people are listed, but Belinda was unique in his wishes.

Powerful Petition

In February 1783, Sutton presented a petition to the Massachusetts General Court requesting a pension from the proceeds of her enslaver's estate.

The vivid petition text was crafted to describe Belinda's kidnapping in Africa and subsequent hardships and to condemn the practice of slavery. Some scholars suggest that she was assisted by Prince Hall, a local free African-American anti-slavery activist of the Revolutionary War era.

Other scholars point to the wider Black community and the collective knowledge of prior legal cases in the Commonwealth.

The first petition request suggests that Sutton was the major supporter of her daughter.

Victory and Pension

As a result of this petition, an annual pension of fifteen pounds and twelve shillings was awarded to her, and approved by John Hancock.

This pension has been cited as one of the first cases of reparation for slavery and the slave trade.

In the 1788 petition, she is referred to as a "widow" and uses the last name Sutton. Subsequent petitions to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts indicate that after two initial payments, the pension payments were not forthcoming.

She continued to petition for the back payments until a final filing in 1793. Later, legal documents refer to the Royall servants' deaths having transpired, but when and under what circumstances remain unknown at this time.

Legacy

Belinda's petition was reprinted in 1787 with her authorship credited, by publisher Mathew Carey, accompanied by an anti-slavery essay "Address to the Heart, on the Subject of American Slavery" in the publication The American Museum.

In 1832, William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper The Liberator referenced "Balinda" and her petition in an article called "Capacity of Blacks". In her 1980 poem "Belinda's Petition," Rita Dove gives voice to a woman first enslaved at age 12: "Lately your Countrymen have severed / the Binds of Tyranny," she says, adding simply, "I would hope you / would consider the Same for me."

Ta-Nehisi Coates' essay "The Case for Reparations" in 2014 called back to Belinda's story and petition.

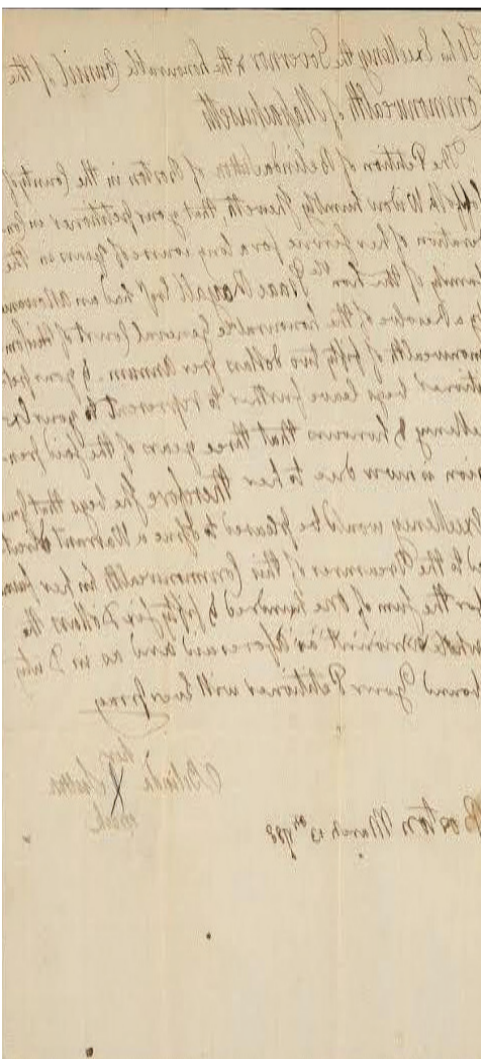
Honour by Harvard

In 2022, Harvard Law School inaugurated a Belinda Sutton Distinguished Lecture series and conferences honouring the work of Belinda Sutton and other enslaved people who contributed to Harvard University's establishment.

The series is organised by Guy-Uriel E. Charles, director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice.




The first lecture was delivered by Professor Martha S. Jones, entitled "What's So Hard about Hard Histories?" Harvard Law School has also agreed to provide support for the Isaac Royall House and Slave Quarters and to collaborate on research and education programmes.

A Black History Month programme in 2023, with a theme of Black Resistance, celebrated Sutton's legacy. "Remembering Belinda Sutton: Resistance, Activism, and Reparations" at the Royall House and Slave Quarters consisting of a discussion of the 1783 petition, a musical performance, and a discussion of "Belinda Sutton and Black Women's Radical Activism in 18th Century Massachusetts".



183.

ONWARD TO VICTORY!

HEADQUARTERS OF THE

Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty & Pension Association

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Office—No. 708 Gay Street, NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.

To all Local Ex-Slave Associations in the United States We Come Greeting, as General Manager and Promoter of the movement, which has had so much opposition and more combats in its own circle than any other organization of the present day:

I have devoted two years of my time wholly to this cause, trying to secure public sentiment in favor of a law to pension Ex-Slaves, being passed by Congress. We believe that we have justly merited a pension for past wrongs this Government has perpetrated upon us. During the days of slavery, we were sold, worked and treated as property.

THIS LIFE!

BY MARYAM SALEH ISA (Student at Yobe State University, Damaturu)

In the past, sports taught discipline, reduced youth restiveness - Former referee, Abba Dada



Dada

Abba Baba Dada was born in Potiskum local government area of Yobe State. He holds a Diploma in Estate Management from Federal Polytechnic Damaturu and an HND in Estate Management from Kaduna Polytechnic. Driven by his passion for teaching, he later earned a B.A. (Ed) in English from the University of Maiduguri. He taught at Adamu Chiroma Private School, Potiskum, for 15 years and also worked with Globacom as a supervisor overseeing security operations under Malako Guard across

Bauchi, Yobe, and parts of Borno State.

Neptune Prime: Can you tell us about your early life and how you first became interested in sports?

Abba: We were brought up in sports. Here in Potiskum, people call me Abba Express or Baba Express. During my days at Kaduna Polytechnic, we had a lecturer called Kabiru Magaji. Whenever football discussions were going on, my voice was always the loudest. He overheard us many times and later began to

recognise my voice.

He advised me to join refereeing. When I agreed, he gave me a letter to submit to Madam Hauwa Queen when I returned to Yobe. She was the chairperson of the Referees Council at that time. After returning to Yobe, I did not submit the letter until after two years. Later, Sani Potiskum noticed my enthusiasm and asked me to join refereeing because they had a shortage of manpower. That was how my journey started.

My name later became known in the sports arena in Yobe State. Whenever you mention Abba Express, people recognise me. I am a member of the Nigerian Referees Association. On weekends, we go for Keep Fit running, and at the end of every year, we go to Abuja for running competitions to qualify for national events.

Neptune Prime: What kind of sports were popular during your youth, and which ones did you personally engage in?

Abba: In those days, football was the most popular sport, followed by Dambe and Kokawa. Those ones required physical strength, so we did not participate in them. We were more involved in Langa because we attended Almajiri school, and Almajirai found it entertaining and competitive.

From the female side, there was Gada, who played a significant role. There were also other sports like Kalangu, but most parents did not allow children to participate, and those who did were sometimes labelled in the community.

Neptune Prime: Can you share some of your most memorable moments or achievements in sports?

Abba: Yes, there are many. Sports are about victory. Anyone who has lived in Potiskum for over forty years knows our team, Rufa'i Bebs. We were very young at the time, and people admired us and came out to watch our matches. Being part of that team is

an achievement I am proud of. Most of my achievements in sports came through refereeing.

Neptune Prime: How did sports shape your discipline, character, and outlook on life?

Abba: Sports made us known and respected. From our primary school days, we noticed that people involved in sports were given special consideration in the community.

Neptune Prime: Were there challenges you faced as an athlete in your younger days, and how did you overcome them?

Abba: Football is addictive. No matter how important something is, once it is time for football, everything else is dismissed. One major challenge was balancing the Almajiri school with football.

Our father was focused on Islamic education and did not excuse football. Even our Malam sometimes detained us to prevent us from going to play. Another challenge was balancing football with hawking. Our family was in the potash soap business called Shagari ya kasa. Hawking affected our football time, so sometimes we made local arrangements to sell together and then go to play.

Neptune Prime: How were sports viewed by families and the community during your time compared to today?

Abba: Sports were viewed as contradicting religion, so many parents did not support them. Also, the level of skill and competitiveness then was higher than what we see today. Watching matches at places like the Senior Science Football Field in Potiskum was like

watching television.

Food was provided at football entrances, and students were given sportswear based on their houses with different colours.

Neptune Prime: What values from sports do you think young people today are missing or need to learn?

Abba: In the past, children who regularly went to the football field were rarely involved in drug abuse. Sports taught discipline. If a child was warned that he would be reported to his coach, he corrected himself immediately.

Football can be talent, but it is also learnable. First, identify your skills. If you have talent, develop it. If not, learn it as a skill. When a child shows talent, people should invest in that child to encourage them.

Neptune Prime: How did you manage to combine career and sports, and what advice would you give young people who want to combine education, career, and sports?

Abba: I told myself that time was moving fast. I am approaching 52 years, so getting a sustainable job has become important. That made me decide to stay at Alma'arif College, where I feel valued and understood. My sports activities now come casually and do not affect my work.

For young people, combining education, career, and sports is not easy, but it is possible. They should try to balance both and remain determined.

Neptune Prime: Finally, what message would you leave behind for future generations?

Abba: Future generations should fear God in whatever they do, because they will be held accountable for every action.

In those days, football was the most popular sport, followed by Dambe and Kokawa. Those ones required physical strength, so we did not participate in them



HUMANIST

BY JAMEEL LAWAN YAKASAI



Beneficiaries

Foundation equips 200 vulnerable women with practical skills for financial independence

The Seyceecilia Foundation has launched "Project Arise", a flagship empowerment initiative designed to equip 200 widows and vulnerable women in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with practical business skills, mentorship and entrepreneurial support to enable them to build sustainable livelihoods and achieve long-term economic independence.

The initiative, implemented in partnership with the Abuja Enterprise Agency (AEA), commenced on February 9, 2026, at the Agency's headquarters in Abuja.

The one-week intensive programme is structured to provide a holistic support framework for widows and vulnerable women, combining hands-on vocational training with foundational business

education, mentorship, and enterprise development support.

At the opening ceremony on Monday, the founder of the Seyceecilia Foundation, Oluwaseye Babatunde, reiterated the group's commitment to advancing the economic and social empowerment of underserved women in Nigeria.

She said in the face of Nigeria's current economic realities, marked by rising living costs, limited access to capital, and shrinking livelihood opportunities, targeted investments in women have become not only necessary but urgent.

According to her, empowering women with relevant skills and entrepreneurial capacity remains one of the most effective pathways

to strengthening families, communities and local economies.

"Project Arise represents our belief that when women are given the right tools, training and support systems, they not only transform their own lives, they lift entire communities," Babatunde said.

She added that the foundation would continue to design and implement programmes that go beyond short-term relief and focus instead on building lasting economic resilience among women.

She emphasised the importance of strategic partnerships in achieving sustainable impact, noting that collaborations with institutions such as the Abuja Enterprise Agency are critical to scaling results and ensuring that interventions are both

practical.

In his remarks, the managing director of the Abuja Enterprise Agency, De Chudi Lugwuada-Ezirigwe, applauded the foundation for its timely and impactful intervention, describing "Project Arise as a beacon of hope for women in Nigeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem."

Ugwuada-Ezirigwe reaffirmed the agency's commitment to supporting the initiative, noting that the AEA will provide technical, institutional and logistical backing throughout the duration of the programme to ensure participants derive maximum value from the training.

Project Arise will run from February 9 to 13, 2026, and features practical, hands-on training in income-generating skills such as soap making,

confectionery production, leather works, and other market-relevant vocational trades. In addition to skills acquisition, beneficiaries will also receive mentorship, basic business management guidance, and entrepreneurial support aimed at helping them start, structure, and sustain their own enterprises.

The training is taking place at the Abuja Enterprise Agency Headquarters in Abuja, and forms part of the Seyceecilia Foundation's broader strategy to promote women's economic inclusion, enterprise development, and community-level resilience across Nigeria. The Seyceecilia Foundation is a Nigeria-based non-profit organisation committed to advancing the social and economic empowerment of underserved women and

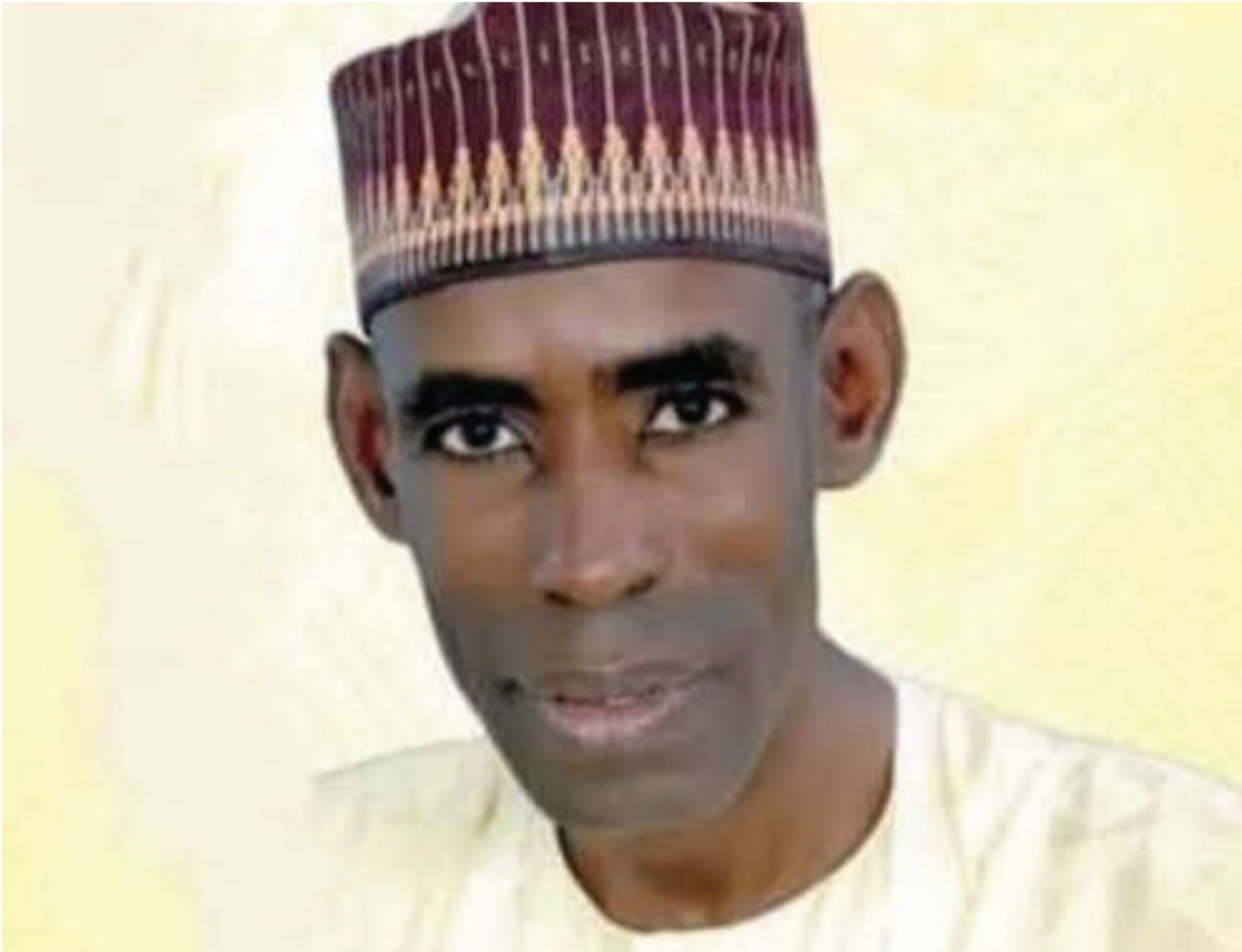
vulnerable communities.

The Foundation designs and implements strategic interventions focused on skills development, entrepreneurship, livelihood creation, and capacity building with a strong emphasis on long-term sustainability and impact.

Through partnerships with public institutions, private sector actors, and development stakeholders, the Seyceecilia Foundation works to create pathways for women to achieve financial independence, strengthen their families, and contribute meaningfully to community and national development. Its programmes prioritise practical solutions, inclusive growth, and dignity-centred empowerment for women across Nigeria.

FEATURES

Nasir El-Rufai and the politics of calculated attrition



Engr. Gwarzo

By Engr. Bello Gwarzo Abdullahi, FNSE

Nasir El-Rufai has never occupied the middle ground of Nigerian politics. He evokes strong loyalty and equally strong criticism. From his days as Director-General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises to his tenure as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory under Olusegun Obasanjo, and later as two-term Governor of Kaduna State, he cultivated a reputation for intellectual sharpness, calculated risk-taking, and a willingness to confront entrenched interests head-on. That disposition is captured vividly in his memoir, *The Accidental Public Servant*. In it, he recounts a formative childhood encounter with a primary school bully named Sunday. Rather than describing a dramatic triumph, he framed the episode as a disciplined campaign of endurance—what he termed “calculated attrition.” He did not overpower the bully; he simply refused to yield. Through persistence and steady resistance, he altered the balance of power over time. That anecdote was more than a childhood memory; it was a psychological blueprint. It revealed a worldview anchored in confrontation when necessary, methodical resistance under pressure, and an instinctive refusal to submit to perceived overreach. In hindsight, the story reads

like a thesis statement for the career that followed—and perhaps for the chapter now unfolding. Throughout his public service trajectory, this pattern remained consistent. As head of privatization reforms and later as FCT Minister, he positioned himself against political “godfathers” and bureaucratic inertia. In Kaduna, his reforms—whether in education, civil service restructuring, or fiscal management—were bold and often polarizing. Admirers saw conviction and courage; critics saw rigidity and abrasiveness. What neither side could reasonably accuse him of was timidity. Today, Nigeria’s political climate is intensely charged. Public anxiety is growing over the health of democratic institutions, the shrinking space for dissent, and what many perceive as an emerging culture of political intolerance. In such an atmosphere, opposition figures are not merely rivals; they are viewed through lenses of suspicion and strategic calculation. Allegations assume political color almost instantly. Institutional processes are interpreted as instruments of leverage. Silence is weakness; defiance is rebellion. Against this backdrop, El-Rufai’s recent travails—legislative probes, political estrangement, and realignments—must be situated

within a broader national mood. There is a visible hunger among Nigerians for an opposition that is organized, articulate, and fearless enough to check the excesses of incumbency. Democracy is sustained not by unanimity but by contestation. If the Sunday episode symbolized endurance against a stronger adversary, the present moment mirrors that same logic. The strategy appears familiar: rebut allegations publicly, challenge processes institutionally, and frame adversity as politically motivated. Whether one agrees with his stance or not, the consistency is unmistakable. It reflects a long-standing philosophy—absorb pressure, recalibrate, and persist. The outcomes remain uncertain. Sustained pressure could consolidate his standing within opposition circles, particularly among those who believe the ruling establishment is drifting toward hegemonic dominance. Conversely, if institutional findings prove adverse, the reputational cost could be heavy. A third possibility is strategic repositioning within an evolving coalition landscape, as Nigerian politics rarely remains static for long. Yet beyond the individual lies a deeper question: can democracy thrive without a credible, forceful opposition? When citizens begin

to speak openly of creeping authoritarian tendencies or the risk of a de facto one-party state, it signals not merely partisan dissatisfaction but institutional anxiety. A healthy republic requires counterweights—voices capable of interrogating power without fear. Whatever one’s assessment of Nasir El-Rufai, it is difficult to dispute that he brings intellectual vigor, administrative experience, and combative energy to any arena he occupies. He blends analytical sharpness with political daring and speaks with blunt clarity. In a period when many Nigerians are yearning for effective opposition to preserve democratic balance, figures with such attributes inevitably become central to the conversation. The Sunday story was never about defeating a bully; it was about refusing surrender. Whether that philosophy will translate into renewed opposition strength or further polarization remains to be seen. What is clear is that Nigeria’s democracy will ultimately be shaped not only by those who wield power, but also by those willing to challenge it—persistently, strategically, and without retreat.

By Engr. Bello Gwarzo Abdullahi, FNSE.
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From the Sahel to the World: Are the eyes of global science now on Yobe?

By Abubakar M. Kareto

It’s one thing to hear about development; it’s another to see it! Watching this video of the BioRTC in Damaturu makes me incredibly proud.

No doubt, it is pleasing to know that Yobe State is home to one of Nigeria’s most advanced and specialised medical research facilities, known as the Biomedical Science Research and Training Centre (BioRTC).

The world-class centre, located in Damaturu was inaugurated in January 2026, specialising in neuroscience, infectious diseases, and chronic kidney disease. This centre is equipped with Nigeria’s first laser scanning confocal microscope. The centre houses equipment valued at over ₦10 billion. Researchers from numerous states in Nigeria and surrounding African nations have been able to conduct top-tier medical research thanks to this medical research centre.

Putting such ambitious projects definitely cannot be achieved without the involvement, commitment and determination of Governor Mai Mala Buni and Prof. Bukar Maina, the pioneer and the current Director of the Centre.

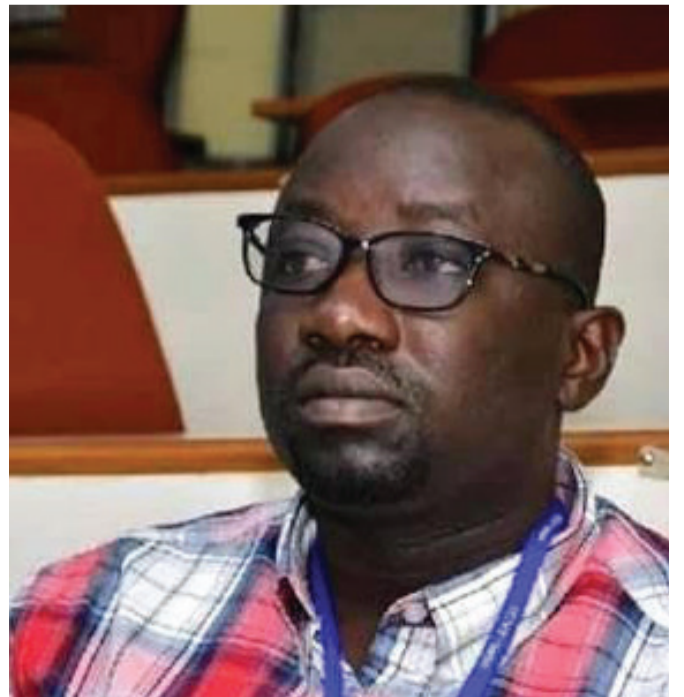
Governor Mai Mala Buni always values merit and the unlocking of young talents, as exemplified

by his collaboration with Professor Mahmoud Bukar Maina. His singular focus has reversed “brain drain”, enabling a UK-established scientist, Bukar Maina, to return and establish a world-class research facility in Yobe, transforming it into a regional research hub attracting international scientists. This isn’t just hype but rather unprecedented success achieved.

Major breakthroughs at the centre are, for example, in public health, the discovery of scientific evidence linking CKD to water/soil toxins in Gashua. In Technology, it provides the first-ever confocal microscopy services in a Nigerian university. In education, the centre has trained over 1,000 scientists from across Africa in advanced bioimaging. Once more, the centre has given the Yobe community a chance to acquire international recognition and established Yobe as the Francis Crick Institute’s (UK) principal partner.

Lastly, indeed, the BioRTC isn’t just a Nigerian lab; it is a global powerhouse solving African health mysteries from the heart of Northern Nigeria and is a testament to what happens when political will meets scientific excellence. In Nigeria, we can achieve miracles with appropriate leadership in place. Kudos to Governor Mai Mala and Prof. Bukar Maina.

Abubakar M. Kareto is a Public Affairs Analyst.



Kareto



SPORTS

BY MUHAMMAD KUKURI,
MuhammadKukuri@neptuneprime.com.ng



Osimhen

“Napoli treated me like a dog” - Osimhen speaks on viral TikTok video

Victor Osimhen claims that Napoli “treated me like a dog” before severing ties with the Serie A champions in 2024. Despite being a prolific presence for the Italian outfit, helping them to a domestic title in 2023, the Nigerian international striker was brutally mocked by his own club in a racist social media video that ultimately paved the way for him heading out of Naples.

Proven winner Antonio Conte took charge of Napoli in the summer of 2024 and wanted Osimhen to remain at Stadio Diego Armando Maradona. The 27-year-old had already made up his mind by that point that he would be moving on, with Juventus making a play

to keep him in Italian football. The Nigerian frontman has told Gazzetta dello Sport: “I could have been in two other top Serie A clubs today. (Ex-Juventus director) Giuntoli called me to take me to Juve before negotiations with Galatasaray began. I spoke with a couple of people from the club. They showed interest, but I knew that he (Napoli President Aurelio De Laurentiis) wouldn't let me leave. In any case, the interest was definitely there. And when Juventus call, regardless of everything, you sit down and listen.”

Osimhen's relationship with Napoli chief De Laurentiis had broken down by the time that an initial loan agreement was struck with Turkish

giants Galatasaray. He was Serie A's top scorer in 2022-23, netting 31 goals across all competitions, but things went downhill quickly.

In September 2023, Napoli openly mocked Osimhen on their social media channels after seeing him miss a penalty against Bologna. The content of said posts attracted plenty of criticism and left Osimhen mulling over his options.

He added: “I feel sorry for the fans, also because I never spoke about what happened before. Some of them even came to my house asking for an explanation. I asked them to put themselves in my shoes. After Napoli posted that video on TikTok, something broke. “Anyone can miss a penalty,

and anyone can be mocked for it. Napoli did it only to me, and with certain kinds of insinuations as well. I was the victim of racist insults, and I made my decision. I wanted to leave. I deleted the photos of me wearing the Napoli shirt from my Instagram, and they took the opportunity to turn the fans against me. And to think that, for me, my daughter is more Neapolitan than Nigerian.

“No one ever publicly apologised for what happened. After that famous video, Edoardo De Laurentiis called me several times. That's it. Meanwhile, rumours were going around that I arrived late at training, and that I argued with teammates. They're all lies. I'm sorry for the fans, but I understand and admire them: they support the club, no matter what. For them, Napoli comes before everything.”

Osimhen did sign a contract extension with Napoli in December 2023, but those terms were only agreed upon in order to keep his price tag high. He knew that he would not be staying on in Naples.

He went on to say: “We had a gentleman's agreement according to which I could leave the following summer, but the commitment was not fully respected on the other side. They tried to send me anywhere to play, but they treated me like a dog. Go here, go there, do this, do that. I worked so hard to build my career, and I couldn't accept that kind of treatment. I'm not a puppet.”

Conte was unable to talk Osimhen into staying. He added on those discussions: “Of course, even if some people said he didn't want me. Are we serious? Which coach at that moment wouldn't have wanted me? As soon as he arrived, Conte called me into his office and said he was aware of the situation but that, despite everything, he wanted me to stay.

“I said I would have liked to work with him, but then I had made my decision: I didn't want to keep working in a place where I didn't feel happy.”

Saka becomes best-paid Arsenal player

Arsenal star, Bukayo Saka, has signed a new five-year contract making him the best-paid player at the Premier League club.

According to Sky Sports, Saka's deal was due to expire in June 2027, but with the new contract, the footballer will stay at the club until 2031.

The England international has played more minutes than any other Arsenal player since Mikel Arteta's appointment in 2019. Although he is on a 15-game goalless run, he is one of the most important players in the club.

He last scored for the Gunners on December 3 in a 2-0 home win over Brentford.

The London-born Nigerian joined Arsenal Football Club Academy at the age of eight and broke through to the first team. He made his senior team debut on November 18, 2018, in a UEFA Europa League match against Vorskla Poltava.



Saka

Nigerians cling to hope for 2026 World Cup lifeline

Following the crushing defeat of the Super Eagles by the Congolese on penalties in November to book their place in an intercontinental qualifier for the finals in Canada, Mexico and the United States, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) submitted a complaint to Fifa in December, arguing that Leopards players such as Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Axel Tuanzebe - both former England youth internationals - were ineligible because Congolese law does not allow dual citizenship.

While a section of the Super Eagles fanbase is hoping the side could secure a lifeline, others are questioning the fairness of a potential qualification by appeal.

Fifa has confirmed the matter is under review but the world governing

body has not issued a timetable for a ruling and the NFF has moved to quash speculation that its complaint has been thrown out.

“Any claims that a ruling has been made are false,” NFF director of communications Demola Olajire said.

“Fifa has not communicated any verdict to us or to the Congolese federation.”

At the time of the appeal, NFF general secretary Mohammed Sanusi argued DR Congo had breached Fifa's regulations.

Tuanzebe and Wan-Bissaka also subsequently featured for the Leopards at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Morocco.

“The Congolese rule (law) says you cannot have dual nationality but some of their players have European



Fans

and French passports,” Sanusi stated.

“Our intention is that Fifa was deceived into clearing them.”

The Congolese Football Federation rejected the NFF's challenge, branding the petition as an attempt to “win via the back door”. The Leopards will face either New Caledonia or Jamaica in March's intercontinental play-off, with the winner progressing to the expanded 48-team World Cup and joining Group K alongside

Portugal, Uzbekistan and Colombia.

This is not the first time African qualification campaigns have spilt into courtrooms and committee rooms.

Such episodes often expose the tension between Fifa's statutes, which prioritise sporting nationality as recognised by the governing body, and national laws which may impose stricter definitions of citizenship.

Past rulings suggest that Fifa tends to lean on its

own regulations but each case rests on its own specific facts and documentation. Fifa statutes set out the conditions under which a player may change the national association they represent.

Under these rules, a player may ask to change the association they represent only once and the process requires a written and substantiated request which must be approved by Fifa's players' status committee.

While Fifa requires a

player to hold a passport for the new nation they wish to represent, it is possible for them to also hold another passport.

That discrepancy between domestic laws and Fifa's eligibility framework may have fuelled the legal ambiguity upon which Nigeria's hopes hinge.

The NFF argues that some Congolese players held European passports, a point not directly accounted for in Fifa's eligibility checks, and contends that if those domestic laws were breached then the players should not have been cleared to participate.

The petition also suggested that Fifa may have been provided with incomplete or misleading documentation when eligibility approvals were sought for the players, a claim which, if upheld, could raise wider governance concerns.

With a decision expected from Fifa, a ruling in Nigeria's favour could prompt closer scrutiny of player documentation for other African nations, with federations keen to avoid similar challenges.

SALUTE TO SERVICE

BY MERCY ADAJE
MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng

Sierra Leone honours Nigeria's CDS, Olufemi Oluyede, for outstanding contributions to peace

President Julius Bio of Sierra Leone has conferred the prestigious Grand Commander of the Order of the Rokel on Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff, Olufemi Oluyede, an army general. The award is in recognition of his outstanding contributions to peace and stability in Sierra Leone. The decoration was performed during a colourful parade marking the 17th Armed Forces Day of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces in Freetown. This was disclosed in a statement by the Director of Defence Information, Samaila Uba, in Abuja. Speaking on the award, Mr Bio said it was in recognition of Mr Oluyede's service under the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), as well as the sacrifices of Nigerian officers and soldiers who played critical roles in ending Sierra Leone's civil war. In his citation, the Sierra Leonean authorities noted that Mr Oluyede served as a Platoon Commander at the residence of the then



Oluyede

Head of State between 1992 and 1994, where he demonstrated exemplary leadership, professionalism and commitment to the protection of government institutions.

According to Mr Uba, the ceremony also honoured other distinguished military figures, including former Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, Martin Luther Agwai, alongside se-

nior officers from Kenya, Guinea, the United States and the United Kingdom. "During the event, special tribute was paid to the Nigerian Armed Forces for their courage and

solidarity under ECOMOG, with Sierra Leone commending Nigeria's decisive role in restoring peace and safeguarding civilians during the conflict. "The honour further un-

derscores the enduring military and diplomatic ties between Nigeria and Sierra Leone, as well as Nigeria's leadership in regional peace support operations," he said.

Gideon Gwaza Orka, the 1990 coup attempt and the execution of forty-one other military officers

Gideon Gwaza Orkar was born on 4 October 1952 and became one of the most controversial figures in Nigeria's military history. He is remembered for leading the abortive coup of 22 April 1990 against the administration of Ibrahim Babangida. The uprising, which unfolded in Lagos, involved the seizure of the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, key military installations, and an assault on Dodan Barracks, which was the seat of military authority and residence of the Head of State. Although Babangida was present during the attack on the barracks, he escaped through a rear exit, enabling loyalist forces to regroup and suppress the rebellion within hours. In the broadcast that followed the initial success of the mutineers, Orkar announced the formation of a new government and controversially called for the excision of five northern states from the federation. This declaration shocked the nation and further hardened opposition to the coup. By the end of the day, federal forces had regained



Orka

control. Orkar and dozens of collaborators were arrested, tried before a military tribunal on charges of treason, and sentenced to death. He and forty-one others were executed by firing squad on 27 July 1990. Or-

kar was the ninth child of Levi Orkar Chi and was of Tiv origin from Apir village in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. He received his early education at primary schools in Apir and Wadata, and later

attended Boys Secondary School, Gindiri, in Plateau State. While enrolled in Higher School Certificate classes, he applied for military service after seeing a recruitment advertisement. In 1972, he enlisted in the

Nigerian Army as cadet number 682 and began officer training with the 12th Regular Combatant Course at the Nigerian Defence Academy in Kaduna. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant

in December 1974 and posted to the Nigerian Army Armoured Corps. Over the course of his career, Orkar served in several formations across the country. He participated in Nigeria's peacekeeping mission in Chad in 1978 and held postings in Kaduna, Enugu, Bauchi, and Ibadan. In 1986, he attended Senior Officers Course 9 at the Command and Staff College in Jaji, a prestigious institution for advanced military studies. He later commanded the 22 Armoured Battalion in Saki, Oyo State, and was eventually appointed to the Directing Staff at the Command and Staff College, Jaji, which was his last posting before the 1990 coup attempt. The failed uprising marked the dramatic end of his life and career. His execution in July 1990 closed a turbulent chapter in Nigeria's era of military rule, but the events surrounding the coup continue to generate debate among historians and political analysts about the nature of dissent, regional tensions, and power within the Nigerian armed forces at the close of the twentieth century.

SOCIALS/FASHION

BY FARIDA ABBA

QUICK STATISTICS ON FASHION

99%
Of Women are not aware of underskirt or patroning such!

45%
of Women avoid bras due to advanced methods of sewing blouses

23%
Nigerians women replaces panties with tight!

78%
of Nigerians patronise native attires

78%
patronise nature attires

79%
of Nigerians can't live without jeans

84%
of Nigerians still patronise fairly used cloths, bags and shoes

79%
of Nigerians patronise can't dress without jeans



The Nigerian fashion landscape has undergone a radical transformation, moving beyond the traditional “Iro and Buba” to a sophisticated era of “Accessorised Ankara.” Once strictly a textile for clothing, Ankara has evolved into a high-fashion medium for bespoke bags, shoes, and luxury accessories. This shift isn’t just about style; it’s a celebration of cultural identity fused with modern craftsmanship.

The Craftsmanship: Beads, Embroidery, and Beyond

What sets modern Ankara accessories apart is the level of intricate detailing. Artisans and designers are no longer just “wrapping” items in fabric; they are treating the print as a canvas for hand-beaded couture and delicate embroidery.

Beaded Accents: Designers like Lisa Folawiyo have pioneered the use of hand-beading to elevate simple prints into shimmering masterpieces.

Surface Cording & Embroidery: Modern accessories often feature surface embroidery that follows the fabric’s geometric patterns, adding a 3D texture to structured bags and clutch purses.

Trending Ankara Accessories

The versatility of the fabric allows it to be adapted into almost any functional item:

Statement Footwear: From vibrant Ankara sneakers for a casual look to elegant high heels paired with matching purses, Ankara shoes are a staple for the modern Nigerian “Baby Girl” or “Classic Man”.

The Power Bag: Ankara is now found in everything, from professional laptop bags and structured totes to red-carpet-ready stone clutches.

Everyday Essentials: Backpacks, fanny packs, and even book covers and phone cases are being crafted from the fabric to offer a pop of colour to daily life.

Why the Trend is Exploding

Sustainability & Local Support: By choosing Ankara accessories, consumers are supporting local artisans and textile manufacturers, fostering growth within Nigeria’s fashion economy.

Personalisation: Unlike mass-produced leather goods, each Ankara accessory is often unique due to the varied placement of patterns on the

The reimagination of Ankara prints from fabric to accessorised masterpieces



fabric. **Affordability with Class:** Ankara offers a way to look expensive and stylish on a budget, making luxury-looking items accessible to all social classes.

Pro Styling Tips

To avoid a look that is “too busy,” fashion experts suggest:

The Pop of Colour: Pair a neutral outfit (like a white dress or black suit) with an Ankara clutch and matching shoes to make the print the focal point.

Matching Sets: For formal occasions, use

a matching bag and shoe set to create a cohesive, regal aesthetic.

Minimalist Jewellery:

When carrying a heavily beaded or embroidered Ankara bag, keep other jewellery simple (such as

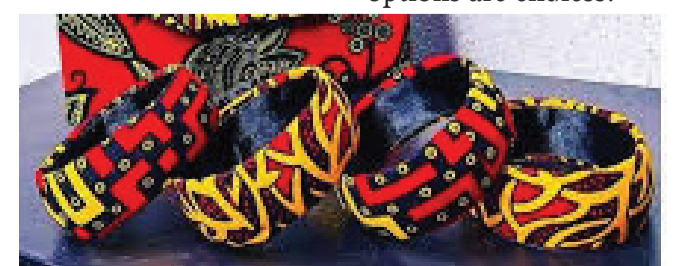
gold hoops or a watch) so that it doesn’t compete with the accessory’s detail.

Ankara isn’t just for clothing anymore. This vibrant African print is taking over the accessory game, adding a pop of colour and culture to bags, shoes, and more. From clutters to backpacks, and sandals to statement jewellery, Ankara is being reimaged in creative ways.

Designers are going all out, combining Ankara with beads, embroidery, and other textures to create truly unique pieces. It’s not just about making a fashion statement; it’s about showcasing African heritage and creativity.

Whether you’re looking to add a subtle touch of Ankara to your outfit or go all out with a bold, head-to-toe look, these accessories have got you covered

Pair an Ankara clutch with a solid-coloured dress, or rock a pair of Ankara shoes with a matching outfit – the options are endless!



TO FEATURE ON OUR FASHION/SOCIAL PAGE!
You can send your pictures to neptuneprime2233@gmail.com

TECH WORLD

BY MUHAMMAD KUKURI
MuhammadKukuri@neptuneprime.com.ng

GAMESCIENE

Dubbed the 'sickest ever' video game because players only have one aim - to massacre as many people as possible in a 'genocide crusade', Hatred is the second game in history to get adults only rating.

GADGETADDICT

Obviously inspired by the iPhone's glass touchscreen display, the Iconoclock, which is a wall clock that points out each hour with approximations of familiar app icons. Its crystal face delivers a similar jet black yet glossy background as the ubiquitous smartphone.

web update

African leaders highlight Africa's AI ambitions at AU Summit

African leaders used the AU Summit in Addis Ababa over the weekend to sharpen the continent's technology agenda, with Ethiopia positioning artificial intelligence (AI), digital infrastructure and connectivity as pillars of Africa's economic future.

Opening the 39th African Union Summit, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed outlined an ambitious vision to place Africa at the forefront of the global AI race, anchored by Ethiopia's plan to launch what he described as Africa's first AI-focused university.

"In 2020, Ethiopia established Africa's first Artificial Intelligence Institute. Building on this foundation, we are preparing to launch an AI university anchored in the philosophy of Medemer, purposeful collaboration, to unite human values with machine intelligence and position Africa as a global leader in the age of intelligence," Abiy told delegates. "He framed AI not as a standalone sector, but as a cross-cutting enabler for governance, industry and social development. "Every river we manage, every city we design, and every digital platform we deploy must generate resilience, opportunity and dignity," Abiy said.

He further linked digital transformation to Agenda 2063's long-term prosperity goals. Beyond AI, the high-powered AU summit discussions highlighted digital identity, cross-border connectivity and telecom expansion as critical building blocks for an integrated African market.

Ethiopia's Digital 2030 roadmap, including its Faida digital ID ecosystem, was cited as a model for secure, interconnected public services. Abiy pointed to aviation and telecom infrastructure as key accelerators for economic development across the continent. "Through Ethiopian Airlines, we connect people and markets. Ethio Telecom is expanding partnerships across Africa to bridge the digital divide," he said.

The Ethiopian leader added that large-scale infrastructure projects are designed to anchor Africa deeper into global value chains. The broader summit tech agenda also touched on regulatory harmonisation, digital trade and data governance, with leaders emphasising that continental cooperation is essential to avoid fragmented digital markets.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the need for inclusive innovation, telling delegates that Africa's digital rise must be "people-centred and opportunity-driven," while African Union Commission Chair Mahmoud Ali Youssouf

Stressed coordinated policy frameworks to accelerate adoption. "AI capability, digital infrastructure and unified regulation are no longer optional ambitions, but strategic imperatives shaping the continent's competitiveness in the intelligence era," he said.

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FG seeks strategic collaboration with Russia in artificial intelligence, robotics

The Federal Government of Nigeria has begun strategic discussions with the Russian government to drive an artificial intelligence-powered economy and expand technology-driven employment opportunities in Nigeria.

Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, Kingsley Udeh, shared this update in a statement on his verified X page.

Udeh hosted Max Petrov, trade commissioner of the Russian Federation, at the ministry's headquarters in Abuja on Wednesday.

He said the meeting reinforced the federal government's commitment to deepening high-impact bilateral cooperation with Russia, as part of Nigeria's strategy to accelerate an innovation-driven, technology-powered economy.

"Our discussions focused on translating diplomacy into measurable technological outcomes that support economic diversification,

job creation and global competitiveness," Udeh said. According to the minister, the engagement explored collaboration in artificial intelligence, robotics, renewable energy technologies, and advanced engineering.

The discussions also focused on digital transformation and smart systems, with particular emphasis on research, development, and technology transfer.

"We also examined structured partnerships in STEM education, scholarships, academic exchanges and technical training in priority areas such as robotics, drone technologies for agriculture and industrial automation," Udeh said.

He noted that the government intends to ensure effective knowledge transfer, capacity development, and the commercialisation of innovation to drive national growth.

According to Udeh, the Russian delegation expressed strong confidence in Nigeria's innovation potential and readiness to move from dialogue to implementation. He added that the ministry will continue to facilitate

enabling policy frameworks, joint technical working groups, and actionable programmes that deliver tangible outcomes, attract technology-driven investment, and position Nigeria as a leading innovation frontier in Africa.

responsible AI adoption that creates measurable social and economic change across the continent," she added. The event featured keynote sessions and panel discussions offering in-depth insights into Generative AI, Agentic frameworks and their role in global sustainability.

Participants also engaged in hands-on workshops focused on building, deploying and scaling AI tools. She noted that a startup and product showcase would highlight African-built AI solutions, while structured mentorship and networking sessions would connect early-stage founders with experienced practitioners and industry leaders.

The conference attracted software and AI engineers, data scientists, business leaders, educators, policymakers and students, with a focus on promoting inclusive, ethical and sustainable AI adoption. Meanwhile, organisers disclosed that AI in Action Now 2026 offers organisations opportunities to gain visibility among decision-makers and emerging AI talent on the continent.

Ibiyode, while reaffirming the vision behind the event, highlighted that Africa's digital future must be driven from within. "Africa's digital revolution must be homegrown. Whether you're building solutions, shaping policy or mentoring young innovators, this is your platform. Together, we're not just discussing the future, we're building it," she said.



Udeh with Russian delegation

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Stakeholders advocate for homegrown approach to Africa's digital revolution

Founders, developers and technology leaders have converged in Lagos for the AI in Action Now 2026 conference, an event aimed at accelerating practical, homegrown artificial intelligence solutions across Africa.

Convener and chief executive officer of CarbonAI Ltd UK, Debola Ibiyode, said the initiative is designed to move conversations on artificial intelligence beyond industry hype to real-world impact.

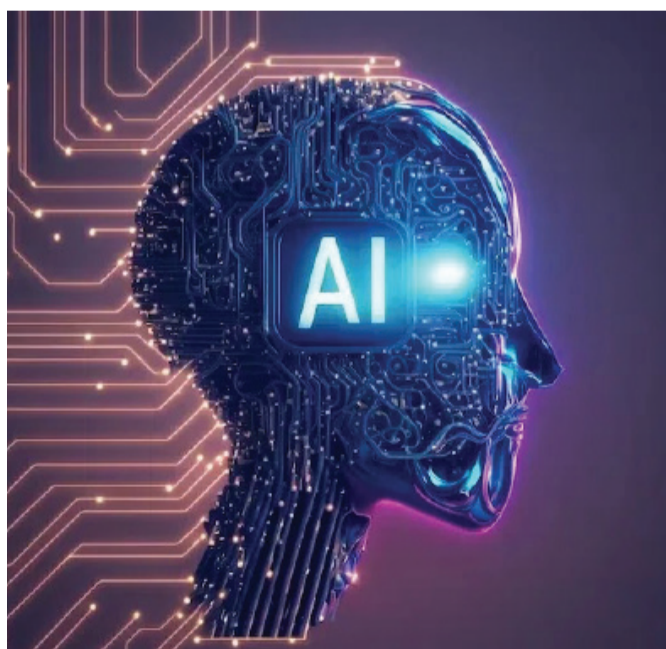
Speaking in a statement issued in Lagos, Ibiyode said the conference, which focused on productivity, innovation and sustainability under the theme "Driving Productivity, Innovation, and Sustainability— Building the Future in AI Together," was held on January 22, 2026, in Lagos.

According to her, the platform is tailored for builders and decision-makers seeking to deploy AI solutions that address Africa's economic and social challenges.

"AI in Action Now 2026 is designed as a high-impact platform where deep-tech innovation meets real-world

application. The conference explores how Large Language Models, Agentic AI frameworks and Generative AI can be harnessed to power Africa's transformation," Ibiyode said. She stressed that the era of endless discussions about artificial intelligence has passed,

noting that the conference is aimed at stakeholders ready to build, apply, and lead. "We aren't chasing hype or funding, we are chasing real impact. Our mission is to empower budding founders to turn ideas into deployable solutions while championing



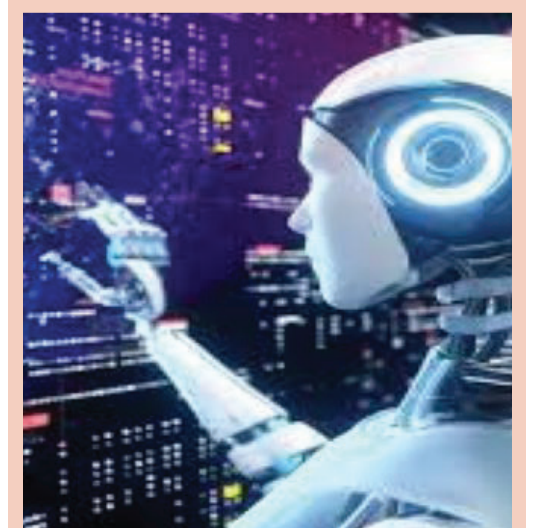
AI

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Artificial intelligence.

WORLD NEWS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

Peru impeaches president over irregular appointments of women, shady business deals

Peru's Congress on Tuesday impeached interim president Jose Jeri, the Latin American country's seventh head of state in 10 years and only the latest to be toppled over graft claims. Jeri, 39, was accused of the irregular hiring of several women in his government and of suspected graft involving a Chinese businessman.

Jeri has been in office since last October, taking over from unpopular leader Dina Boluarte, who was also impeached amid protests against corruption and a wave of violence linked to organised crime.

Prosecutors last week opened an investigation into "whether the head of state exercised undue influence" in government appointments. Jeri has protested his innocence.

Jeri, who was at the time the head of Peru's unicameral parliament — was appointed last year to serve out the remainder of Boluarte's term, which runs until July, when a new president will take over following elections on April 12.

He is constitutionally barred from seeking election. Jeri has found himself in the spotlight over claims revealed by investigative TV programme Cuarto Poder that five women were improperly given jobs in the president's office and the environment ministry after meeting with Jeri.

Prosecutors said there were in fact nine women. Jeri is also under investigation for alleged "illegal sponsorship of interests" following a secret meeting with a Chinese businessman with commercial ties with the government.

Some observers have pointed to possible politicking in the censure of Jeri just weeks before elections for which over 30 candidates — a record — have tossed their hats into the ring.

The candidate from the right-wing Popular Renewal Party, Rafael Lopez Aliaga, who leads in opinion polls, has been among the most vocal in calling for Jeri's ouster.

Congress is now set to elect its own new leader on Wednesday to replace a caretaker in the post. The new parliament president will automatically take over as Peru's interim president until July.

"It will be difficult to find a replacement with political legitimacy in the current Congress, with evidence of mediocrity and strong suspicion of widespread corruption," political analyst Augusto Alvarez told AFP ahead of Tuesday's vote.

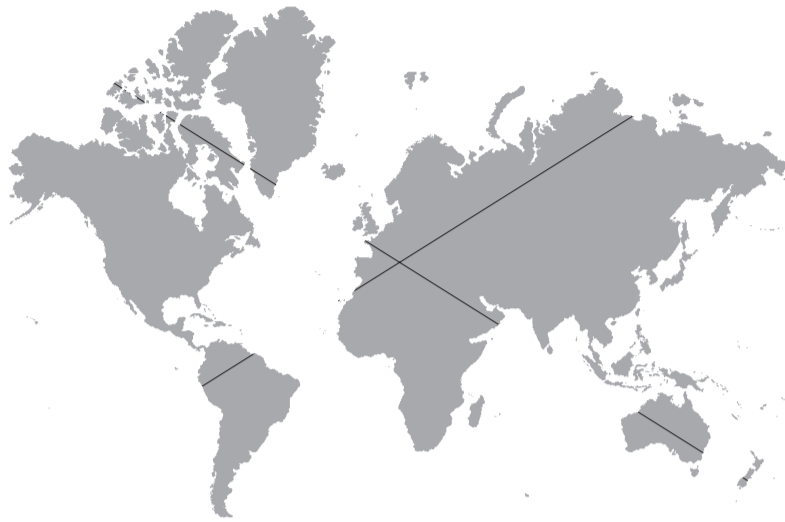
Peru has now burned through seven presidents since 2016, several of them impeached, investigated or convicted of wrongdoing.

The South American country is also gripped by a wave of extortion that has claimed dozens of lives, particularly of bus drivers some shot at the wheel if their companies refuse to pay protection money.

In two years, the number of extortion cases reported in Peru jumped more than tenfold from 2,396 to over 25,000 in 2025.



Jeri



Trump says talks with Iran on nuclear programme are progressing but challenging



Trump

US President Donald Trump has said the world will know within the next 10 days whether the United States will secure a new agreement with Iran or move toward military action.

Speaking during the inaugural meeting of his newly formed Board of Peace in Washington, DC, Trump described ongoing negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme as "very good" but historically challenging. He stressed that the US must reach what he called a "meaningful deal," warning that failure to do so could result in "bad things."

His comments come amid heightened tensions in the Middle East. The US has reinforced its military presence in the region, even as American and Iranian officials reportedly made progress during talks held in Switzerland.

Tehran, however, has issued a stern warning. In a letter to António Guterres, Iran's mission to the United Nations said it would consider US bases in the region legitimate targets if they were used to launch attacks against the country. While accusing Trump's rhetoric of raising the risk of conflict, Iran maintained that it does not seek war.

Trump revealed that his special envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, who is also his son-in-law, recently held productive meetings with Iranian representatives. Still, he acknowledged the longstanding difficulty of striking a durable agreement with Tehran.

A day earlier, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt urged Iran to seize the opportunity for diplomacy, saying it would be "very wise" for Tehran to reach a deal.

Originally conceived as a body to help end the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and oversee reconstruction efforts, Trump's Board of Peace now appears to be expanding its focus beyond a single conflict. Observers have questioned

whether the board, which includes roughly two dozen countries, is intended to rival or sideline the United Nations.

Tensions have been further inflamed by previous US strikes on three Iranian nuclear facilities in June last year. Reports suggest the White House has recently reviewed additional military options. American forces have stepped up deployments in the region, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln.

However, the British government has not authorised the US to use UK military bases for potential strikes on Iran. In past Middle East operations, American forces relied on RAF Fairford and Diego Garcia.

Satellite imagery indicates Iran has reinforced key military facilities. Meanwhile, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has posted warnings on social media, suggesting that while US warships pose a threat, Iran possesses the capability to retaliate decisively.

Within the US, resistance to potential military action is emerging in Congress. Democratic Representative Ro Khanna and Republican Representative Thomas Massie have pledged to push for a vote under the 1973 War Powers Act, which empowers Congress to check the president's authority to engage in armed conflict.

Khanna warned that a war with Iran, a nation of approximately 90 million people with substantial air defences and military capacity, would be "catastrophic" and could endanger thousands of US troops stationed across the region.

Despite these concerns, similar efforts to curb presidential war powers have previously struggled to gain sufficient support in Congress, leaving the administration with considerable latitude as tensions with Tehran continue to escalate.



Victims

Mother, baby burned alive in India over witchcraft allegations

Police in eastern India have arrested four people after a woman and her 10-month-old son were allegedly burned to death by a mob in Jharkhand on suspicion of practising witchcraft.

The victims, identified as Jyoti Sinku and her infant son, were attacked in Kudsai, a remote tribal hamlet about 250km from the state capital, Ranchi. Jyoti's husband, Kolhan Sinku, was also assaulted and sustained severe burn injuries. He is currently receiving treatment in the hospital.

Authorities say the accused are in custody and have not yet made public statements. A special police team has been formed to track down other suspects believed to have taken part in the attack.

According to police accounts, tensions in the village had been rising following a series of incidents, including reports of sudden cattle deaths and the illness of a local man, Pustun Birua. Birua had reportedly suffered from anxiety and fainting spells. His wife, Jano Birua, said she sought help from an informal healthcare provider due to the family's financial constraints and lack of access to formal medical services.

After Birua died on Tuesday evening, rumours allegedly spread that Jyoti Sinku had used witchcraft and was responsible for his illness. That same night, a mob of about a dozen people, including several women, stormed the family's home and set it ablaze.

Speaking from his hospital bed, Kolhan Sinku said he had pleaded with the attackers to resolve any grievances through the village council, but they ignored him.

Based on statements from the husband and another relative, police have registered a case of murder and criminal conspiracy.

Data from India's National Crime Records Bureau shows that more than 2,500 people — most of them women — were killed across the country between 2000 and 2016 over allegations of witchcraft. Such attacks are frequently reported in impoverished tribal regions, where superstition remains widespread and limited access to healthcare often fuels reliance on unqualified practitioners. The incident comes just months after five members of a family in neighbouring Bihar were allegedly killed and burned over similar accusations.

Police in Jharkhand say they plan to launch awareness campaigns in rural communities to combat superstition and prevent further such tragedies.

DID YOU KNOW?

BY VIVIAN OKAFOR

The cornea, the clear, front layer of the eye lacks blood vessels, making it one of the only body parts that receives oxygen directly from the air instead of the bloodstream.

The cornea is unique as the only living tissue in the human body completely devoid of blood vessels, which enables its vital transparency for vision.

Instead, it receives essential nutrients and oxygen directly from tears, the aqueous humour, and the surrounding air. It is not, however, the only non-vascularised structure, as dead tissue like hair/nails and specific tissues like cartilage lack direct blood supply.

The absence of vessels prevents light blockage, maintaining crystal-clear vision.

It relies on direct diffusion for oxygen and nutrients.

Because it lacks a direct immune response from the blood, it relies on tears for protection, and low oxygen (hypoxia) can occur, especially with improper contact lens use.

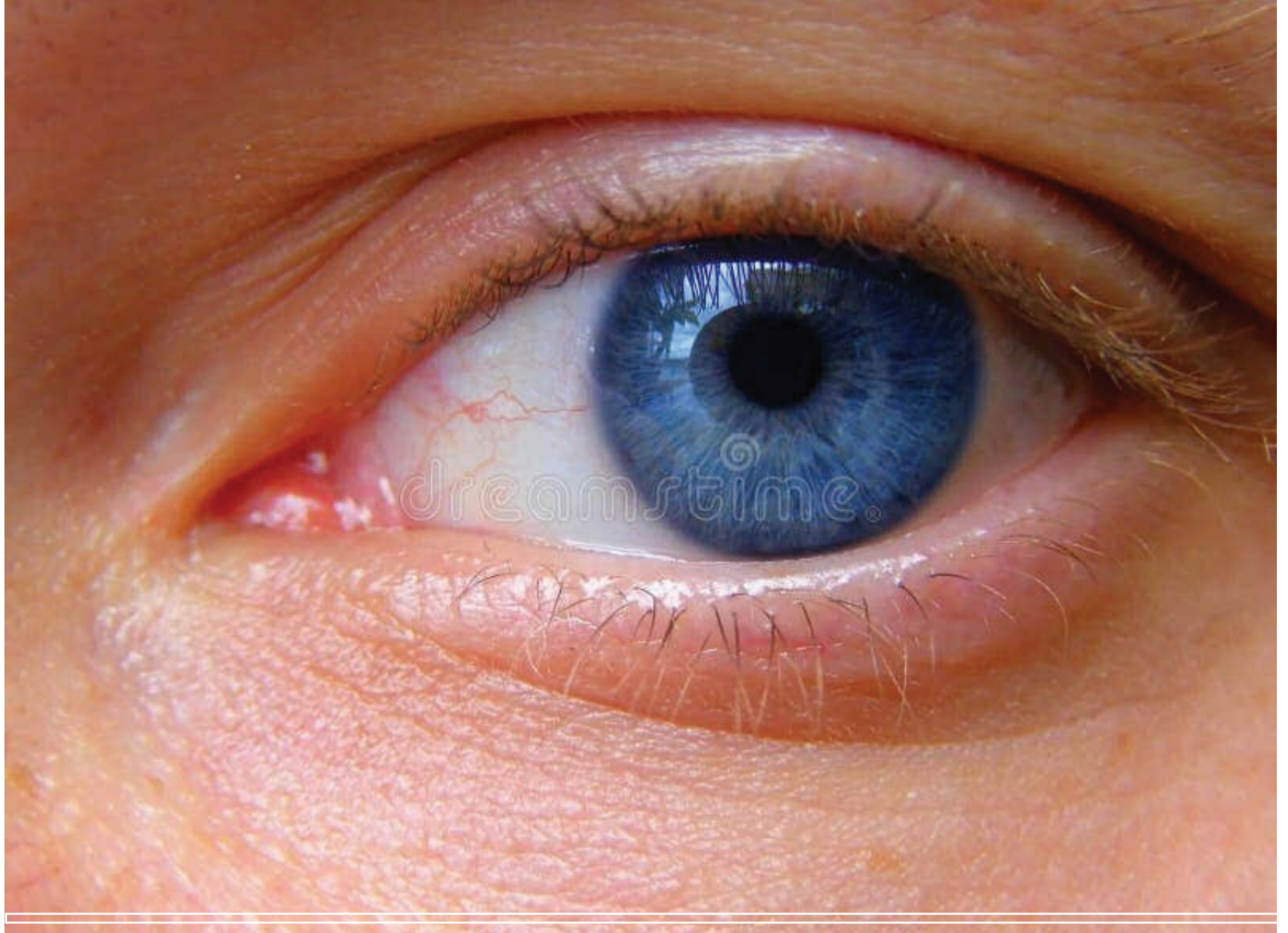
While the cornea is the only living tissue without blood vessels, other areas without direct blood supply include cartilage, the epidermis (outer skin layer), and tooth enamel.

According to an article on the US National Centre for Biotechnology Information website, the cornea can't contain blood because it must remain transparent – otherwise we would be blind. Blood is opaque, and we can't see through it.

A 2010 study about oxygen distribution in the human eye found that when our eyelids are open, the oxygen levels near the inner surface of the cornea are produced by the cornea consuming oxygen from the air.

So the cornea does get its oxygen from the air. This has led to concern that wearing contact lenses could limit the amount of oxygen the cornea receives.

The cornea is the only body part without blood supply



Trees communicate with each other

Trees communicate through a complex underground, interconnected network of fungi known as the "Wood Wide Web" or "mycorrhizal network".

They share nutrients, water, and warn neighbouring trees of dangers like pest attacks or drought. This system allows for cooperative survival, with older "mother trees" supporting younger seedlings.

Underground, fungi create mycelium threads that link tree roots, allowing them to exchange carbon, water, and nutrients.

When attacked by pests, trees can send chemical warnings to nearby trees through this network, prompting them to release defensive chemicals.

The largest, oldest trees act as hubs, sending resources to younger, shaded, or sick trees. Trees also release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air to alert other trees to dangers.

In times of stress, trees can share resources with neighbouring trees, even those of different species. This symbiotic relationship suggests forests act as a single, interconnected organism rather than a group of isolated individuals. However, far from getting in



each other's way, fungi and trees live in harmony and have developed a form of mutual aid that makes one believe that one would not live without the other, and vice

versa, or with the greatest difficulty. The two exchange organic matter and minerals, with the fungi drinking the water captured and stored by the tree roots.

When a tree, say a beech, is attacked by caterpillars, parasites or simply a deer that has come to graze on its leaves or buds, it immediately warns its congeners of the

danger that has arrived. Like birds, which utter easily recognisable cries when a predator enters the vicinity, trees warn each other. They are only slower, but

the information passes from the branches to the roots, via the trunk, and from the roots to those of the other trees to which they are connected.

LIVING LEGENDS

BY AISHA AUYO
AishaAuyo@neptuneprime.com.ng

Ahmad

Aishah Ndanusa Ahmad, Accountant, Finance Expert

Aishah Ndanusa Ahmad (born 26 October 1976) is a Nigerian accountant and finance professional. She is a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria having been appointed on 6 October 2017, replacing Sarah Alade, who retired in March 2017.

She was confirmed by the Nigerian Senate on 22 March 2018. On 6 December 2022, Ahmad was re-appointed deputy governor for a second five-year term and subsequently confirmed by the Senate on 14 December 2022.

However, on 15 September 2023, she was removed from office by President Bola Tinubu alongside three other deputy governors for alleged corporate governance failures at the Central Bank of Nigeria. Ahmad was born in Lagos, to a Nupe Muslim family from Bida, on 26 October 1976. She attended St. Catherine's Primary School, Surulere Lagos, and Zarumai Primary School, Minna Niger State, before proceeding to

Federal Government Girls' College, Bida, for her secondary education.

Ahmad graduated with a B.sc degree in Accounting from the University of Abuja and went on to obtain an MBA in Finance from the University of Lagos and an M.sc in Finance and Management from the Cranfield School of Management.

She is an INSEAD Certified Board Director and a recipient of the Economic Development Certificate from the Harvard Kennedy School. She is also a Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst (CAIA) and a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) charterholder. Before her appointment at the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2018, Ahmad was an accomplished banker, investment manager, financial expert and corporate executive, having served as Executive Director of Retail Banking at Diamond Bank Plc.

Ahmad started out in the private sector as an auditor at Z.O. Ososanya &

Company, and then as Chief Financial Officer at Manstructs Group Ltd.

Her banking career started in 2001 at First Interstate Bank (Nigeria) Plc., where she was recruited as Executive Assistant, Treasury Group, after which she proceeded to NAL Bank Plc as Head of Private Banking where she worked till 2005.

Later, she was Head of Retail Banking (Energy Group) and Group Head (Asset Management Business Development) at Zenith Bank Group. From 2009 until 2014, she served in various capacities at Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc including as Head, Private Clients/High Net Worth Individuals, before leaving for Diamond Bank to lead its retail business.

She retired as Executive Director of Retail Banking at Diamond Bank Plc following her appointment to the CBN. Other assignments in the past have included stints at the Bank of New York Mellon and at Synesix Financial Lim-

ited.

Ahmad served as Chairperson of the Board for SOS Children's Villages, an independent, non-governmental, nonprofit international development organisation she has volunteered for since 2017.

She also served as the chairperson of the executive council of Women in Management, Business and Public Service (WIM-BIZ), a Nigerian non-profit organisation where she was part of the establishment in 2001.

Ahmad was the Deputy Governor for Financial System Stability at the Central Bank of Nigeria. She was a member of the CBN Governing Board, Monetary Policy Committee, Financial System Stability Committee and the Committee of Governors. She also served as Chairperson of the boards of Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), the Nigeria Commodity Exchange (NCX) and the Financial Institutions Training Centre (FITC).

Paul Enenche, Medical Doctor, Pastor and Philanthropist

Paul Enenche is a Nigerian Christian pastor and the senior pastor at Dunamis International Gospel Centre in Abuja. Born in Orokam, Ogbadibo LGA of Benue State, his early life was marked by challenges and sickness, which ultimately prepared him for his future calling.

Dr Paul Enenche founded Dunamis International Gospel Centre on November 10, 1996. The inaugural Sunday service was held at the Abuja Centre for Arts and Culture (First Floor) Area 10. After two weeks, the church moved to Abuja Sheraton Hotel & Towers, where worship took place for another six months. What began humbly has grown into a worldwide ministry with numerous branches across Nigeria and beyond.

The church relocated to its present site in June 1997, less than a year after the ministry was born. Currently, with a sitting capacity of 30,000 members, the church holds five services every Sunday and two well-attended services every Wednesday evening. The ministry's continuous expansion across Nigeria reflects its profound impact.

Before establishing the ministry, Pastor Paul Enenche was a practising medical doctor. He is married to Dr Becky Enenche, also a medical doctor, and they are blessed with four children. Dr Becky Enenche is the proprietress of Dunamis International Schools.

As founder and senior pastor of Dunamis International Gospel Centre (DIGC) in Abuja, Nigeria, Pastor Paul Enenche shepherds over 20,000 congregants across five Sunday services. He is the publisher of the monthly daily devotional "Seeds of Destiny" and hosts the popular television and radio series "Destiny Encounter." He has authored numerous inspirational books.

Pastor Enenche is a prominent philanthropist focusing on humanitarian aid, education, and community development. He provides free medical care, relief materials to disaster victims, scholarships for the needy, and vocational training, exemplified by his recent aid in Maiduguri.

He organised a free medical outreach and empowerment programme for over 500 widows and underprivileged individuals in the Sabo Iddo community.

In June 2025, Pastor Enenche rejected a ₦30 million donation from the Kebbi State Governor, advising that the funds be directed toward orphanages or charitable institutions.



Enenche

ANIMAL WORLD

By Fatima Ma'aji Muhammad
(student at Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt)



The Octopus: A master of disguise and survival in the deep

Three hearts. Blue blood. Eight brains. Sounds impossible? It's real. It's the octopus. Two hearts pump blood to the gills. One pumps it into the body. The main heart even stops when it swims, forcing the octopus to creep along the ocean floor. Silent.

Calculating. Alive in the cold, deep waters where oxygen is scarce. Humans need constant oxygen to survive, but the octopus thrives in conditions that would exhaust most animals. Its copper-powered blue blood carries oxygen far more efficiently than ours, keeping it active and alert even in the harshest underwater environments.

Eight arms. Eight minds. Each arm can touch, taste, and explore independently. They solve puzzles, open jars, manipulate objects, and find tiny cracks to escape enclosures. Each arm acts as both limb and brain, giving the octopus a level of



intelligence few animals possess. Watching one move is like seeing eight clever hands thinking simultaneously, plotting,

and adapting. Soft, boneless, flexible, and endlessly inventive, the octopus is a master of disguise and survival.

It changes colour and texture to vanish into rocks and coral. It slips through holes smaller than its body. It outsmarts

predators and humans alike. The octopus is one astonishing creature, it is not just an animal

it is a magician of the deep, a living reminder that nature's genius can take forms we are only beginning to understand.

JOKES AND PUZZLES

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

JOKES

1. Why did the computer go to therapy?
It had too many bytes of emotional baggage.
2. Why don't skeletons fight each other?
They don't have the guts.
3. Why did the math book look worried?
It had too many problems.
4. Why did the tomato blush?
Because it saw the salad dressing.
5. Why don't scientists trust stairs?
They're always up to something.
6. Why did the scarecrow get promoted?
He was outstanding in his field.
7. What do you call fake spaghetti?
An impasta.
8. Why did the student eat his homework?
Because the teacher said it was a piece of cake.
9. Why are graveyards so noisy?
Because of all the coffin.
10. Why did the bicycle fall over?
It was two-tired.



RIDDLES

1. I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. What am I?
Answer: An echo.
2. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What am I?
Answer: Footsteps.
3. I have keys but no locks, space but no room. What am I?
Answer: A keyboard.
4. What has a heart that doesn't beat?
Answer: An artichoke.
5. I shave every day, but my beard stays the same. Who am I?
Answer: A barber.
6. What can travel around the world while staying in one corner?
Answer: A stamp.
7. I have hands but cannot clap. What am I?
Answer: A clock.
8. What gets wetter the more it dries?
Answer: A towel.
9. I'm tall when I'm young and short when I'm old. What am I?
Answer: A candle.
10. What has one eye but cannot see?
Answer: A needle.



SPORTS: BEHIND THE SCENES

By Muhammad Kukuri
MuhammadKukuri@neptuneprime.com.ng

Tyson, Mayweather decide date, location for high-profile exhibition bout



Tyson and Mayweather.

Boxing legends Mike Tyson and Floyd Mayweather Jr. have reportedly agreed a provisional date and location for a high-profile exhibition bout,

with Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo earmarked to host the event on 25 April 2026. Reports suggest the proposed venue carries

deep historical significance. Kinshasa — formerly part of Zaire — staged the iconic 'Rumble in the Jungle' in 1974, where Muhammad Ali famously defeated George Foreman

to reclaim the heavyweight championship in one of boxing's most celebrated contests. Tyson, 59, last competed in November 2024 in a widely publicised bout

against Jake Paul, an eight-round contest that ended in a unanimous decision defeat. The former undisputed heavyweight champion holds a professional record

of 50 wins, seven losses and two no contests, but has not secured a victory since his 2003 win over Clifford Etienne.

Mayweather, 48, retired from professional boxing with a perfect 50-0 record following his 2017 victory over former UFC champion Conor McGregor. Since then, he has remained active in exhibition bouts, most recently facing John Gotti III in August 2024 — his eighth exhibition appearance since retirement.

Initial discussions surrounding a Tyson-Mayweather exhibition surfaced in September 2025, though concrete details were scarce. Speculation over the bout's viability intensified when Mayweather was linked to a separate exhibition against Mike Zambidis scheduled for 27 June in Athens, Greece.

However, Tyson appeared to confirm his willingness to proceed. "Yeah, that's happening. You think I'd give that up? I was minding my business, he challenged me!" Tyson said in an interview with TMZ.

How Anthony Joshua's tragedy inspired my boxing comeback - Fury

Tyson Fury said the deaths of two friends of his long-time rival Anthony Joshua in a car crash in December prompted his return to boxing.

Fury will step back into the ring on April 11 after a 15-month absence to face Russian-born heavyweight Arslanbek Makhmudov in a bout at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

The 37-year-old retired after his second successive loss to Oleksandr Usyk at the end of 2024 and went a calendar year without a fight before revealing his latest comeback on January 4.

The announcement came a week after compatriot Joshua was involved in a car crash in Nigeria which killed his close friends Sina Ghami and Latif



Fury

Ayodele. "Tomorrow might not ever come and I suppose the biggest turning point in this comeback for me was the tragedy that happened with

Anthony Joshua. "You should never put things off until tomorrow, or next year, or next week because tomorrow is not promised to anybody," Fury said at

the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on Monday. Any plans for Fury and Joshua to finally fight in 2026 have been put on the back burner. Fury, a former two-time world heavyweight

champion, claimed he has also returned to the ring to bring back some glamour to the sport. "The truth of the matter is I came back for one reason only and that's to make

boxing great again," added Fury. "Since I've retired for the fifth time over a year ago, boxing for me has gone on a downward slope and it's become quite boring."

BOOKS

BY MUHAMMAD AL-TJANI

Then I Was Guided (15)

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "You are commanded to do good deeds and to prevent any objectionable act; otherwise Allah will put your wicked ones in charge of you, then your good people would call, but no one will listen to them."

O God, we believe in what you have sent us and we follow the Messenger, so will you consider us with the believers? O God, please do not change our hearts after you have enlightened us. Please God, have mercy on us, for you are the Giver. O God, we have unjustly treated ourselves, and if you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, then we will certainly be among the losers.

I left for al-Medinah al-Munawwarah with a letter from my friend al-Basheer for one of his relatives there, so that I could reside with him during my stay in al-Medinah. He had already spoken to him on the phone, and when I arrived he received me warmly and put me up in his house. As soon as I arrived, I went to visit the grave of the Messenger of Allah (saw), so I cleaned myself and put on my best clothes.

There were only a few visitors in comparison to those who come during the season of Pilgrimage, therefore I managed to stand before the graves of the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abu Bakr and Umar, something which I could not do during the Pilgrimage because of the crowds. As I tried to touch the doors for blessing, one of the guards rebuked me, and when I stayed for a long time to do my supplication and salutation, the guards ordered me to leave. I tried to speak to one of the guards, but it was in vain.

I went back to the blessed court and sat down to read the Qur'an and to improve my recitation of it. I repeated the recitation several times because I felt as if the

Messenger of Allah (saw) was listening to me. I said to myself: Is it conceivable that the Messenger (saw) is dead like any other dead person? If so, why do we say in our prayers "May peace be with you O great prophet, and may Allah's mercy and blessings be upon you" in a form which sounds as if we were addressing him. The Muslims believe that our master al-Khidr (sa) is not dead, and that he would return the greetings of anybody who greets him.

Also, the followers of the Sufi orders believe that their Shaykhs, Ahmed al-Tijani or Abdul Qadir al-Jilani come to see them openly and not in their sleep, so why are we reluctant to grant this noble deed to the Messenger of Allah, and he is the best of all mankind? But the reassuring thing is that the Muslims are

not reluctant towards the Messenger of Allah except the Wahabis, from whom, for this and various other reasons, I started to feel estranged. I found their manners very coarse, because they treat other Muslims who disagree with their beliefs very harshly. I visited al-Baqee Cemetery once, and while I was calling for mercy upon the souls of Ahl al-Bayt, I noticed an old man standing near me crying, and because of that I realized he was a Shi'i.

He positioned himself towards the Kaba and started to pray, and suddenly a soldier rushed towards him, as if he had been monitoring his moves, and kicked him while he was in a position of prostration. The

man fell on his back unconscious, and then the soldier started beating him and cursing him. I felt so sorry for the old man and thought he might have been killed and so I shouted at the soldier, "You must not do that! Why did you beat him while he was praying?" He rebuked me and said, "You be quiet and do not interfere, or else I will do to you what I have just done to him!"

Then I was Guided



Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi

Al-Islam.org

I realized that the soldier was full of aggression, so I avoided him, but I felt angry at myself for not being able to help those who are unjustly treated, and felt angry at the Saudis who treat the people as they like without any check or accountability for their actions. There were some visitors who witnessed the attack, but all that they could do was to say, "There is no power or might but in Allah." Others said, "He deserves what he got because he was praying by the graves." I could not control myself, so I said to that particular person, "Who told you that we must not pray by the graves? He answered, 'The Messenger of Allah (saw) prevented us from doing so.'" I replied angrily. You are lying about the Messenger of Allah." I became aware of the dangerous situation and feared that some of the visitors might call the soldier to attack me, so I said gently, if the Messenger of Allah prevented us

from praying by the graves, why should millions of pilgrims and visitors disobey him and commit a sin by praying by the graves of the Prophet (saw), Abu Bakr and Umar in the Holy Mosque of the Prophet and in many other mosques around the Islamic world.

Even if praying by the graves is a sin, should it be prevented with such harshness? Or should we prevent it by gentle action. Allow me to tell you the story of the man who urinated in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah and in his presence, and some of his Companions drew their swords to kill him, but he stopped them and said: Let him go and do not harm him, and pour some water on the place where he urinated. We are sent to make things easy and not difficult. We are sent to spread the good words and not to make people keep away from us.

The Companions obeyed his orders, and the Messenger of Allah (saw) asked that man to

come and sit next to him and spoke to him nicely. He explained to him that the place was the House of Allah and should not be dirtied, and the man seemed to have understood the point, for he later was seen in the mosque wearing his best and cleanest clothes. Allah - the Great - was right when He said to His Messenger (saw): "If you had been rough and hard-hearted with them, they would certainly have dispersed from around you." (Holy Qur'an 3:159) Some of the visitors were moved when they heard the story, and one of them took me aside and asked me, "Where do you come from?" I said, "From Tunisia." He then greeted me and said, "O brother, by Allah, take care of yourself and do not say such things here at all, and this is my advice to you, for the sake of Allah."

I became so angry and bitter about those who claim that they are the guardians of al-Haramayn and treat the guests of the Merciful

with such harshness, so that no one is allowed to voice an opinion or to believe in a belief that does not suit their way of thinking, or indeed, to recite a saying (of the Prophet) that does not coincide with their own recitation of the sayings. I went back to the house of my new friend, whose name I did not then know, and he brought me some supper and sat in front of me and asked me where I had been. I told him my story from the beginning to the end and said, "My brother, I have started to be dissatisfied with the Wahabis and have begun to lean towards the Shi'a."

Suddenly the expression on his face changed and he said to me, "I warn you not to say anything like that again!" Then he left me without even finishing his supper, although I waited for him, until I went to sleep. I woke up next morning with the call for prayers from the Mosque of the Prophet (saw), and found the food was untouched, which meant that my host had never come back. I became suspicious and feared that the man might have been a member of the secret service, so I left the house quickly and went to the Prophet's Mosque praying and worshipping. After the afternoon prayers I noticed a speaker giving a lesson to some worshippers, so I went towards him, and later learnt from one of the listeners that he was the Qadi (magistrate) of al-Medinah. I listened to him as he was explaining some Qur'anic verses, and after he had finished his lesson and was about to leave, I stopped him and asked him, "Please Sir, could you give me some indications as regard the interpretation of the following Qur'anic verse: 'And Allah only desires to keep away the un-cleanness from you, O people of the House, and to purify you a (thorough) purifying.'" (Holy Qur'an 33:33).

TO BE CONTINUED

SPACE AVAILABLE

The Arbiter

BY HASSAN GIMBA



Your terrorist is better treated than mine

Last week, a Federal High Court judge, James Omotosho, sentenced separatist leader Nnamdi Kanu to life in prison after convicting him on seven terrorism-related charges. This came after a decade-long trial in which prosecutors proved that his broadcasts and orders to his banned Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group incited deadly attacks on security forces and citizens. Prosecutors had sought the death penalty, but the judge noted that “it is now being frowned upon by the international community. Consequently, in the interests of justice, and to temper justice with mercy, despite Kanu’s arrogance and lack of remorse, I hereby sentence the convict to life imprisonment ... instead of the death sentence.”

Omotosho also told the court that the “right to self-determination is a political right,” but added that “any self-determination not done according to the constitution of Nigeria is illegal.” However, the arrest, trial, and subsequent conviction of Kanu have revealed a nasty side of us as a people. Those sympathetic to him—mostly from his geopolitical zone—believe the government mistreated him, arguing that terrorists from other zones are negotiated with, granted amnesty, and rehabilitated. They accuse the government of double standards, especially when compared with its handling of notorious bandit leaders like Bello Turji, who operates in the North West. Even ace broadcaster Rufai Oseni confronted the government, questioning why terrorists who abducted schoolgirls in Kebbi were allowed to walk free while Nnamdi Kanu faces maximum punishment. On 11 July 2021, in a piece titled “Between Kanu, Igboho, Gumi and Southern Governors,” I wrote: “A Methodist Bishop ridiculously said he would stand by Kanu as long as ‘northerners stand by Pantami and Gumi.’ A well-

known southern columnist also questioned how Kanu and Igboho were arrested, while Gumi got a slap on the wrist.

“What they refuse to accept is the fact that Kanu is a terrorist in the class of Shekau. A fugitive from justice who jumped bail while standing trial in a court of competent jurisdiction. Whereas he picked up arms against his country, the others did not. He instigated people to kill through electronic messages; the others did not.

“He calls for the balkanisation of the country. Perhaps being a second-class British citizen, he sees Nigeria as a ‘zoo’ and Nigerians as animals. His gullible followers, Nigerians through and through, accept being animals in a country that is a zoo. Maybe because most of his followers are those frustrated with their lives, they find solace in living in utopia. They claim they are Jews.

“Laughable as it was, with no historical or biological evidence to support the phantasmagoric claim, they do not know, nor do they seek to understand, the history of the Ethiopian Jews. The Ethiopian Jews, immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Beta Israel, known as the Falashas (Falash Mura), trace their history back to 325 CE, when Ezana became emperor of Axum.

“And even with this rich and ancient history, the ‘real’ Jews did a DNA test to confirm their Jewishness. They studied samples from Falasha Jews and Ethiopians with the Y-chromosome-specific DNA probe to screen for TaqI restriction polymorphisms and haplotypes.

“Two haplotypes (V and XI) are the most widespread in Falashas and Ethiopians, representing about 70% of all haplotypes in Ethiopia. Because the Falasha



Dr Gimba

population lacks Jewish haplotypes VII and VIII, they concluded that the Falasha people descended from ancient inhabitants of

Ethiopia who converted to Judaism. Therefore, they do not have the same rights as the real Jews in Israel. “So, just because you

wake up in a state of hallucination, start wearing the Jewish kippah or yarmulke (also called kappel or skullcap), drape over your shoulders their tallit and hold their tzitzit (rosary), and call yourself a Jew does not make you one—just as speaking through the nose and decking yourself in a three-piece suit does not make you a white man.

“Claiming to be them and calling your country a zoo will not make Netanyahu come to your aid when caught by nemesis. He does not even know you exist. The world sees you for what you are: a madman. No wonder one of his incoherent phrases that his demented followers love parroting is ‘mad people everywhere,’ not knowing it is about them.”

Both Kanu and Turji have committed heinous crimes against the people. Both have killed or caused the killing of innocent civilians, military personnel, and other members of our security agencies. This is true of Shekau as well, long before Turji appeared on the scene. I recall the comparison I made between Imam Shekau and Mazi Kanu in my write-up of 24 July 2022, “Open Letter to Ndigbo,” where I wrote: “Perhaps the only difference between the leader of the terrorist organisation in your area and that of Boko Haram is that Boko Haram’s Imam is in the trenches with his troops while your Mazi is with his family, ensconced in the White man’s land, feeding fat at your expense. No wonder someone referred to him as a ‘made-in-China Shekau’.”

That notwithstanding, our penchant for rivalry and fighting one another like step-siblings has brought us to the sorry pass where we hate other terrorists but embrace those who share our language and ethnicity. So, for us to start “fighting” over how “our terrorist” is being “maltreated” and raising our blood pressure because “your terrorist” is being “pampered” is simply mind-boggling. Can people really go this low?

For too long, we have allowed sentiment to cloud our utterances and actions. It is high time we treated criminals without undue regard to their race or religion. Partial tolerance of terrorism will destroy us. *Hassan Gimba is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Neptune*

And even with this rich and ancient history, the ‘real’ Jews did a DNA test to confirm their Jewishness

