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Why northern youths abuse drugs

AYUBA AHMAD, KADUNA
There is the need to escape from reality into the life of illusion and security.

Human beings have been using drugs to achieve these escapist tendency from harsh realities of being for long.

In some cultures opium, hashish, marijuana, cocaine, etc are being abused in different societies. But alcohol of different breweries would appear to be universal in terms of space and time.

In Nigeria for example, for a long time, even before colonialism various communities had been identified with one locally made alcohol or the other.

These include burukutu or pito made from grains like guinea corn, millet, etc, as well as the strong spirit known

for their different names as ogogoro, or kaikai.

With the coming of colonialism and modernity, Nigeria society was exposed to equivalent of assorted lager beer, whisky and brandy.

Why drugs?

Why the change from alcohol to drugs?

Increasing poverty of the majority of those who might have been consumers of alcohol are transiting to use of different forms of drugs.

Apart from such exotic drugs like cocaine or heroine, most of the drugs or substances are cheap affordable and asceible to a large number of people.

In other words, economic factor can be attributed to be increasing widespread drugs especially among the youths.

Relatively, frustration, eschewing from mass unemployment, poverty and social dislocation are forcing a sizable proportion of the country's youth population into seeking escape from the harsh realities of existence through the use of drugs.

Also, these related incidence of rising crime waves have pushed many into the use of drugs to bolster their tendencies or instincts to engage in heinous crimes.

Investigations have revealed that the availability of cheap narcotics coming from particularly Asian countries have made access to drugs easiest and affordable.

Measures to combat the menace

Many measures have been adopted by the governments

at various stages. However some of these measures have not been yielding the desired results. Basically due to ineffectiveness of caused by corruption in the implementation of policies or in regulatory agencies.

Therefore, institutions and agencies were needed to be fortified and sanitized to enhance their performance of these statutory obligations if they are established.

Community leaders such as religious and traditional authorities will have to be much more concerned and vigilant in monitoring especially the sales of these dangerous substances in use.

Many a times the dealers engaged in the dangerous trade of drug peddling are known to live in the communities. Which means the complacency

of the members of the community spur and aid the prevalence of these drugs.

Concretely however, the most effective panacea to the menace of drug abuse in the society particularly among the youths will be a massive programme of creating job opportunities for the teeming population of young men and women.

Global concern

Drug addiction among youths is a growing concern worldwide. The alarming rate at which young people are getting hooked on substances is not only detrimental to their health but also has severe consequences on

CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

I AVOID RICE TO PERFORM MY NIGHT DUTY, SAYS ISOKO MUSICIAN WHO MARRIED 3 WIVES SAME DAY

BY UJI A. ILIYASU, ABUJA

Popular Isoko highlife musician, Dr Arube Otor stunned the world on 19 January with a lavish party in Uzere community, Isoko, Delta State, to complete the traditional marriage rites of his three of his wives, all of us Isoko origin.

Otor, also referred to as "Isoko Fela", in Isoko nation because of his genre of Isoko high life music, said he chose to organise the marriage reception for his three wives the same day to save cost, emphasizing also that he desired to use the event to shoot himself to limelight in the country.

He said he has two concubines and would commence their marriage rites after this, making them a total of six wives God would have blessed him with.

The father of nine children said his target is to have 32 children, vowing to give all of them university education.

"I am Dr Arube Otor, aka Isoko Fela. I am a very popular Isoko musician. I play Isoko highlife. I got to primary six. And was born into a polygamous home; my father had four wives.

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HERITAGE >>13

HAUSA CULTURE, ONE OF THE RICHEST AND MOST VIBRANT IN WEST AFRICA



OLDIES >>10

TEACHING IS A NOBLE CALLING THAT SHOULD BE RESPECTED - RETIRED PRINCIPAL



Neptune World

The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing

Socrates

The man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny

Wole Soyinka

PICTURE OF THE DAY

Zainab Alkali is the first female novelist from Northern Nigeria. Born in Tura-Wazila in Borno State in 1950, she graduated from Bayero University Kano with a BA in 1973. She has prominent publications like *The Stillborn*, *The Virtuous Woman*, *Cobwebs & Other Stories*.

PHOTO CREDIT: Google



UP & DOWN



Nigerian pastor arrested for multimillion-dollar internet fraud in U.S

Nigerian Pastor Edward Abiodun Oluwasanmi has been arrested by the FBI for allegedly conspiring with Osun monarch, Oba Joseph Oloyede, to defraud the U.S. government of \$4.2 million in COVID-19 relief funds.

Like the Apetu of Ipetumodu, Mr Oluwasanmi also submitted forged documents to apply for the COVID-19 loans meant to lessen the financial burden of struggling businesses during the pandemic.

Mr Oluwasanmi used his three companies: Dayspring Property Incorporated, Dayspring Holdings, and Dayspring Transportation to obtain millions of dollars, which he later diverted for his own personal expenses, in breach of U.S. federal laws.

The U.S.-based Nigerian pastor was indicted for fraud on a 13-count charge and arrested in Cleveland in April.



FAAN arrests passenger for stealing on Air Peace flight

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has arrested a passenger accused of stealing on an Air Peace flight from Lagos to Port Harcourt.

In a statement, on Thursday, the airline's Head of Corporate Communications, Ejike Ndiulo, confirmed that the suspect was found in possession of the missing items after a thorough search upon arrival at Port Harcourt International Airport.

Ndiulo said the passenger was immediately handed over to airport police for further investigation and necessary action.

"We confirm an incident of in-flight theft onboard Flight P47190 on February 19, 2025. The airline reiterates its unwavering commitment to passenger safety and security and has taken decisive action in response to the situation," the statement read.

The airline expressed concerns over the increasing cases of in-flight theft in recent weeks and announced measures to curb the trend.

RANDOMFACTS

The origin of the human species

As far as science can tell, the evolutionary chain leading to human beings evolved from primates between roughly ten and two million years ago in what is now Africa. Modern human remains that are around 300,000 years old have been found in Africa, as have tools that were used by human ancestors even before that.

Early humans in Africa are thought to have descended from treetops due to climactic changes that led to diminishing forest cover in favour of grasslands across the continent. It's believed that early humans in Africa lived in small groups, moving nomadically across the landscape and hunting for sustenance. Not much else is known about their lifestyle, as their technologies—except those using stone and bone—were biodegradable.

It's estimated that humans began expanding out of Africa around 200,000 years ago, spreading into the Middle East, Europe, Southeast Asia, and around the world. The science behind these migrations isn't set in stone, but we do know it happened over the course of thousands of years. Studies of mitochondrial DNA have led to some understanding of the paths of these migrations.

Not much is firmly known about paleolithic life, especially as no communities of this time are known to have used writing (although wall art was commonplace). However, it's believed that humans lived in small, mostly nomadic bands that led simple, egalitarian lives of hunting and gathering.

The Paleolithic period (roughly 2.6 million years ago to 12,000 years ago) makes up more than 90% of our existence as a species; what is known is a fascinating glimpse into "human nature" and the changes wrought by the advent of civilization. Burials with household goods have been discovered, suggesting that Paleolithic peoples may have believed in the afterlife.

Most history education puts a big emphasis on the technological developments of later ages, but it can be equally interesting to study stone-age technologies, such as methods of making friction fire, stone blades, clothing, etc. While these methods are often characterised as primitive, a more keen eye sees these technologies as what they are: exquisitely adapted survival techniques that fit into a given landscape. Arguably the most important development was humankind's mastery of fire, which dates back to some 100,000 to 400,000 years ago.



FUN PUZZLE

Find The Hidden Words

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
H	E	L	O	K	T	R	Q	N	
S	T	A	Y	M	Q	O	U	N	S
S	T	R	O	N	G	S	V	H	P
S	T	A	Y	P	W	F	L	X	U
P	O	S	I	T	I	V	E	B	C
A	N	D	R	X	C	V	Y	G	D
N	E	V	E	R	B	W	Z	E	T
G	I	V	E	U	P	D	I	G	E
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J

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NEWS

Why northern youths abuse drugs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

their future.

Drug addiction affects brain development, leading to impaired cognitive function, memory loss, and decreased concentration.

Youths struggling with addiction are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies.

Addiction can lead to social withdrawal, strained relationships, and loss of friendships.

A c a d e m i c

underachievement

Drug addiction negatively impacts academic performance, leading to poor grades, absenteeism, and dropout.

Increased risk of infections

Sharing needles or engaging in unprotected sex while under the influence increases the risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases.

Consequences on youths' future

A history of addiction can hinder employment prospects and limit career advancement.

Addiction can damage relationships with family and friends, leading to long-term emotional scars.

Financial Instability

The financial burden of addiction can lead to debt, bankruptcy, and financial insecurity.

Untreated addiction can result in overdose, coma, or even death.

Measures to curb abuse

Implement comprehensive drug education programmes in schools, highlighting the risks and consequences of addiction.

Early Intervention

Identify and address early warning signs of addiction, such as changes in behavior or mood swings.

Family Support

Encourage open communication and involvement of family members in the recovery process.

Counseling and therapy

Provide access to professional counseling, therapy, and support groups to help youths overcome

addiction.

Alternative activities

Engage youths in extracurricular activities, sports, or hobbies to distract them from substance use.

Community-based initiatives

Develop community-based programmes, such as peer support groups and mentorship initiatives, to support youths in recovery.

Access to treatment

Ensure access to evidence-

based treatment, including medication-assisted treatment and behavioral therapy.

In conclusion, drug addiction among youths is a pressing concern that requires immediate attention. By understanding the effects and consequences of addiction, we can work towards preventing and addressing this issue.

Implementing measures such as education, early intervention, family support, counseling, and community-based initiatives can help curb drug addiction among youths and ensure a brighter future for them.

I avoid rice to perform my night duty, says Isoko musician who married 3 wives same day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Growing up, the children from the house related very well. And we also related with the various mothers. So polygamy was never a problem in our home. And we all still maintain the healthy bond among ourselves.

"All my children are going to school, none in my band yet. I want all of them to be university graduates. I want my first boy to join the military from the Nigeria Defence Academy, NDA. Though the boy is not the first child, my first child is a girl but in Isoko we don't count a girl as first child

when you have a male child.

In Isoko, my parlour, my room and also my car belong to my first son as inheritance while the girls get their share of my property from their mother's apartment from the way I built my house. Each of my wives has her apartment. Your apartment is for you and your children. I'm from Uzere in Isoko.

"I had two wives before, one left. I had only one until I later added this three I will be doing the marriage reception for, making them four wives. Mind you, I still have two other women pending that will join my list of wives to make six," he added.

Speaking on the strength

to go round them without anyone feeling neglected, he said, "I am equal to the task, I don't eat rice and I also don't use aphrodisiac, sex enhancement drugs, etc. I depend on our natural food to keep me fit and ever ready for my conjugal duty as a husband to my wives. My wives will tell you that I visit them every week.

"I avoid rice because it weakens a man. I'm sure you understand me. I want to have 32 children and until I have them I won't leave this earth. God will bless me with them. I make sure my wives don't fight among themselves. If they have any problem among themselves



they report to me and I settle them. If it's an issue between two of them, I call the others to be there to witness how I settle the dispute so they will also learn.

"My wives are doing their businesses. I don't allow them play music with me. The eldest one is a hair dresser, the second is a caterer; the third one is a trader at the market.

The junior one now is also a hairdresser. The other two pending (concubines), one is a nurse in Warri and the other is the chairlady of Oleh butchers association.

Stakeholders suggest a single-day general election, say it's cost effective

BY UJI ALIYASU

Ahead of the 2027 general elections, some stakeholders in the election process and civil society organisations (CSOs) have advocated a single-day election for the country.

They said such an innovation, as being practised in other developed democracies, "will save Nigeria unnecessary losses, is cost-effective and will curb waste, among others".

Speaking in Abuja on Friday, at a Policy Dialogue on Single Day Elections in Nigeria organised by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development, a political scientist and lecturer at Nile University, Abuja, Dr. Iro S. Izu, said countries like the United States of America, Brazil and India, among others, had long embraced

such a practice of conducting their elections.

He said, "Taking into account how much INEC spends to conduct one general election, plus what Nigerians lose economically, it is safe to say that it becomes a fool's paradise to continue in this charade. This is not to add the non-material, socio-psychological trauma faced by Nigerians as a result of sustained heated political environment.

"This initiative will save the government's funds, save the economy from unnecessary losses, stop subtle disenfranchisement via the bandwagon effect. It'll also show national seriousness, curb waste of time, energy, and manpower, arrest electoral fraud and prevent undue heating up of the polity.

"The Nigerian Government must be bold to take the

bull by the horn and think more efficiently, effectively and optimally, cost-effectively and patriotically."

In his remarks, the pioneer Executive Director of Centre LSD, Dr. Otive Igbuzor, said the majority of speakers at the Dialogue agreed that elections should be held in Nigeria on a single day.

Igbuzor said, "So, for us, this is a start of a process; we will appeal to the resource person to convert the presentation into a policy brief which we will use to engage INEC, political parties, politicians and stakeholders to further explore the possibility of a single-day election in Nigeria.

"Nigeria has been lucky to have 25 years of uninterrupted democracy, and we must all protect it and the way to protect it is to strengthen democracy by ensuring that there is a credible electoral

process. We are committed to contributing to that process."

Also speaking, the Executive Director of Partners for Electoral Reforms, Chief Ezenwa Nwagwu, expressed concerns about the level of literacy in the country, adding that topographies of countries like the USA, Brazil and India were not as that of Nigeria.

He said in a place like Taraba state, from Jalingo, there were places you would go that would take you almost seven hours.

"In Kebbi state, there are places you will go to by the time your vehicle stops, you use a camel and after that you use a motorcycle to get to those places. So, we're not the same as the USA; in dealing with those challenges we need to contextualise the environment we are living in.

"What I'm saying is that there is a need for deeper

reflection so that we don't get excited without taking into cognisance the political environment, the culture of the politicians we are dealing with, how they react and our own people. This is because at the end of the day we see elections as a bazaar. For me it has to do with the nature and character of our politics," he said.

However, the representative of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) at the Dialogue and the Director of Operations, Adigun Hakeem, said the Commission's position on the issue remained the same "until the National Assembly gives consent."

He said, "INEC, as a governing body, cannot take a position on these issues for now. INEC's primary assignment is to conduct free, fair, and credible elections. All

activities and guidelines are being spelt out by the National Assembly. So, we don't take a position.

"At the end of today's meeting, the decision we arrive at will be submitted to the Commission. We are here to participate and to listen to your position. As we are here, we are listening to your advocacy. Our interest is to be fair and conduct free and credible elections.

At INEC, after every general election we go back to the drawing board, to review the election. Like the last 2023 elections, the review report just came. For all the elections, like the National Assembly and presidency and followed by the state assembly and governorship, all the issues that came out during the last elections are being reviewed so that we improve on future elections.

NEWS

1966 Coup not ethnic cleansing – IBB

Former Military Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) has dismissed claims that the 1966 military takeover was an “Igbo coup”.

Babangida said the leader of the 1966 coup, Kaduna Nzeogwu, spoke Hausa fluently.

In his just launched book, ‘A Journey in Service’, the former military Head of State said Nzeogwu was only Igbo by name but was more of Hausa.

The former military ruler said it was heinously callous for Nzeogwu to have murdered Sir Ahmadu Bello and his wife, Hafsatu, because they were adored by many.

“For instance, the head of the plotters, Major Kaduna Nzeogwu, was only Igbo in name. Born and raised in Kaduna, his immigrant parents were from Okpanam in today’s Delta State, which, in 1966, was in the old mid-western region.

“Nzeogwu spoke fluent Hausa and was as ‘Hausa’ as any! He and his original team probably thought, even if naively, that they could turn things around for the better in the country.

“That said, it was heinously callous for Nzeogwu to have murdered Sir Ahmadu Bello and his wife, Hafsatu, because not only were they eminently adored by many but also because they were said not to have put up a fight.

“From that moment, the putsch was infiltrated by ‘outsiders’ to its supposed original intention, and it took on an unmistakably ethnic colouration, compounded by the fact that there were no related coup activities in the Eastern region.

“It should, however, be borne in mind that some senior officers of Igbo extraction were also victims

of the January coup. For instance, my erstwhile Commander at the Reconnaissance Squadron in Kaduna, Lt-Col. Arthur Chinyelu Unegbe, was brutally gunned down by his own ‘brother’, Major Chris Anuforo, in the presence of his pregnant wife, at his 7 Point Road residence in Apapa, for merely being a threat to the revolution.

As a disciplined and strict officer who, as the Quartermaster-General of the Army, was also in charge of ammunition, weapons, equipment, vehicles, and other vital items for the Army, the coup plotters feared that he might not cooperate with them.

“It should also be remembered that some non-Igbo officers, like Major Adewale Ademoyega, Captain Ganiyu Adeleke, Lts Pola Oyewole and Olafimihan, took part in the failed coup. Another officer of Igbo extraction, Major John Obienu, crushed the coup.

“Those who argue that the original intention of the coup plotters was anything but ethnic refer to the fact that the initial purpose of the plotters was to release Chief Obafemi Awolowo from prison immediately after the coup and make him the executive provisional president of Nigeria.

“The fact that these Igbo officers



Babangida

would do this to a man not known to be a great ‘lover’ of the Igbos may have given the coup a different ethnic colouration. But, again, I may be wrong here since this view is speculative. I

admit that my position here may be the naive insights of an unsuspecting young officer who viewed events from a distance,” Babangida said.

Chief of Army Staff Oluyede storms Gusau, Zamfara State capital

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Olufemi Oluyede, has stormed Gusau, the state capital of Zamfara state, for one day official visit.

During the visit, the COAS will meet the Theatre Command of Operation Fansan Yamma under the leadership of Commander, Major Gen

Oluyinka Soyele.

The COAS will visit 1 brigade headquarters Gusau and Garrison Cantonment during which he will address the troops.

Zamfara state is one of the state in Northwest plagued by insecurity due to activities of armed terrorists for over a decade.



Lt. General Oluyede



TCN announces 7-hour power outage in parts of FCT

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has announced a planned seven-hour power outage in parts of Abuja due to scheduled annual preventive maintenance on two transformers at the Apo 132/33kV Transmission Substation.

A statement from the General Manager of Public Affairs, Ndidi Mbah, on Friday, confirmed that the maintenance will take place on Saturday, February 22, and Sunday, February 23, 2025, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm each day.

As a result, power will be interrupted in several areas during the scheduled maintenance.

The statement read, “The Transmission Company of Nigeria informs the public that its

maintenance crew will conduct annual preventive maintenance on the 2x100MVA, TR3 & TR4 transformers at the Apo 132/33kV Transmission Substation in Abuja.

“The planned power interruptions are unavoidable, as Abuja DisCo will be unable to receive bulk power supply from the transformers during the maintenance period. Power supply will be restored to the affected areas upon completion of the maintenance exercise.”

The TCN official said that on Saturday, February 22, power disruptions will affect the National Hospital, G2 Injection Station, Garki, Area 1, and Asokoro for seven hours.

OUR HEART

On the death of Chief Edwin Clark

The death occurred last Monday, 17th February, of Chief Edwin Kiogbodo Clark at the age of 97 years.

In his tribute, former President Muhammadu Buhari described him as, "An iconic statesman, who dedicated his life to the development of his community and the nation. His commitment to the unity of the country would be respected by generations to come."

To Kayode Fayemi, former governor of Ekiti state, "Pa Clark's passing marks the end of an era, but his legacy of service, courage, and commitment to the unity and progress of Nigeria will endure for ever."

Chief Edwin Clark, who was popularly identified as the leader of the Pan Niger Delta Forum, PANDEF, in the later days of his life, can surely be described as among the fortunate few among the men and women of his time.

For one, not many of his peers lived to the ripe age of beyond ninety years. Fewer yet, had the opportunities to acquire his level and quality of education. During the colonial era, it was a rarity for Africans to go beyond rudimentary education, just needed to qualify them as clerical officers and for other menial positions in the colonial bureaucracy. Edwin Clark, was however, in spite of the odds, sufficiently schooled to have enabled him embark on a degree course in law at the Holborn college, a British university, between 1961 to 1964.

As a student in Britain, the zestful and politically conscious young Edwin Clark, plunged into the West African Students Union, which was then, a political and nationalist movement of students from the British colonies of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

In 1953, even before traveling abroad for a degree education, he got elected as a Councillor to the Bomadi council. Walking further on the political terrain, he was later to have remarkable experiences at various times, as a Commissioner first, in charge of Education and later, that of Finance, in the old Midwest region later known as Bendel state.

Edwin Clark's other stations in the public space include, his appointment in 1975 by the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon as a Federal Commissioner (the nomenclature today is, Minister) of Information. Also he was elected to the Senate in 1983 for three months before the military scuttled the 2nd Republic on eve of the 1984 new year.

With an apparent innate public spiritedness, after exiting active public service, Edwin Clark engaged himself in the vocation of struggles notably, those related to his native Niger Delta region. These include advocacy for democracy, resource control, issues of oil pollution and environment, security, fairness, equity and justice in government's policies and distribution of resources among the components of the federation. His activities in these direction culminated in his establishment of the, Pan Niger Delta Forum, PANDEF in 1996.

As a result of his zest and single-minded commitment in advancing matters of exclusive relevance to the people and region of the Niger Delta, Edwin Clark was perceived and profiled in many quarters of the country, as a, clannish and jingoistic irredentist. Such a perception will however, appear as inappropriate, if, his life is wholistically examined through untainted prisms of objectivity.

Yes, Edwin Clark heroically and effusively stood up for his people and region of birth. But, pertinently, was he right or wrong? Should there have been no voices and actions decrying, even agitating, against the decades of criminal silence and negligence by successive governments, relevant authorities and stakeholders to the decades of environmental degradation arising from oil exploration and exploitation in the region?

Candidly, could the level of lack of fairness, empathy and justice to the people and environment of the Niger Delta have lingered for as long, if, the horrendous havoc was occurring in the regions of any of the major ethnicities of the country? With many other half truths and outright falsehoods bandied about it, the quest for controlling the country's oil wealth, was a critical causative factor that triggered the nation's civil war, 1967 to 1970.

To that extent, Chief Edwin Kiogbodo Clark was simply and essentially, the product of the circumstances of his time and environment. In other words, he did not create his struggles

out of a vacuum but, only responded to the historical exigencies and dictates of his time. That is to say that, Edwin Clark could not have conjured the PANDEF as a vanguard for his struggles, if the situation and exigencies on the ground, did not warrant his going so.

Contrary to the perception and classification of him as an agent of violence, Edwin Clark was, on the contrary, a temperate voice that greatly catalysed the process of attainment of peace and stability in the region.

Besides the civil war, which was triggered by external forces that aimed at controlling the oil in the region, there were also the internal dynamics that gave rise to incidents of violence such as the insurrection of Major Isaac Adaka Boro of 1966. The action of Isaac Boro was to inspire in later years, the sprouting of the mushrooms of armed militia groups mainly of Ijaw ethnic background, with devastating effects on the nation's economy.

The tragic deaths in 1995, of fourteen eminent leaders of the Ogoni ethnic group, the "Ogoni Five and the Ogoni Nine" in circumstances of agitating for environmental justice were other instances of violence in the Niger Delta.

In the milieu, Edwin Clark strictly adhered to the philosophy of non violence in his campaign. He was known to have wielded his towering clout in the region to make for stability while though, yet unrelenting in their demands. He was also acknowledged to be instrumental to the successful implementation of the Amnesty program that has since been the bedrock of the tranquility that has been prevailing in the region from 2008 to date.

The Pan Nigerian credentials of Edwin Clark can be traced way back to the position he took as a Midwest delegate to the 1966 adhoc Constitutional conference in the wake of the nation's civil strife. At the conference, he teamed up with other compatriots from other regions who patriotically stood for Nigeria's unity in a federation, against the advocates for a confederation.

In all his campaigns, Edwin Clark consistently opposed the irredentist tendencies towards the balkanisation of the country. From his earliest days and all through to his end, he was persistent in his conviction, that the people and region of the Niger Delta were safer and better off in a corporate Nigeria as presently constituted.

At the end of his sojourn on earth, Chief Edwin Kiogbodo Clark, by and large, lived a fulfilled life. The milestones he erected during his relatively long and eventful life, will certainly endure through the ages long after his passage.

Like with great people who lived phenomenal lives with indelible footprints on the sands of time, Nigeria in general and, Niger Delta in particular, will never be the same again, because Edwin Clark lived here. Certainly, Nigeria would have been a much better place, if, so many of the country's privileged citizens would put as much, back to the society as did Edwin Clark.

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Student killed, others injured as school building collapses in Yobe

A student lost his life, and several others were injured when a classroom block collapsed at Government Girls Science and Technical College, Potiskum.

Emergency responders and school officials worked together to rescue trapped students, who were rushed to a specialist hospital for treatment.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the collapse, with calls for improved safety standards in school infrastructure.

A tragic incident unfolded on Thursday at the Government Girls Science and Technical College in Potiskum Local Government Area, where a section of a classroom block collapsed, resulting in the death of a student. Several others sustained injuries and were promptly rushed to a nearby medical facility for treatment. Many students have been hospitalised after a school structure came crashing down.

Reports indicate that the affected students were in the corridor of the classroom when the structure gave way, causing the roof to crash down on them. Rescue efforts commenced swiftly as emergency response teams arrived at the scene, working alongside school staff to extricate those trapped beneath the debris.

Eyewitnesses recounted the chaos that ensued following the collapse, with distressed students and teachers scrambling for safety. Medical personnel at the specialist hospital where the injured were taken are currently providing necessary care, while authorities continue to assess the situation. Officials from the Yobe State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, including Commissioner Prof. Abba Adam and the Executive Secretary of the State Science and Technical Education Board, Dauda Atiyaye, visited the site to evaluate the extent of the damage.

They also met with hospitalized students to ascertain their conditions and offer support. The exact cause of the structural failure remains undetermined, pending an official investigation. However, concerns over the integrity of school buildings in the region have been raised, prompting calls for urgent safety assessments and renovations to prevent future occurrences. Established in 1979, the Government Girls' Science and Technical College Potiskum is a prominent boarding institution dedicated to providing quality education for girls in Yobe State.

Gov Buni signs N22.3bn Damaturu flyover bridge contract

Yobe state governor, Mai Mala Buni has signed N22.3billion contract for the construction of a state-of-the-art flyover bridge and underpass in Damaturu Main roundabout.

Commissioner for Works, Engr Umar Duddaye signed the contract on behalf of the state government, while Engr Habib Geojea signed

on behalf of Meress Triacta Nigeria Limited, the contracting firm.

According to him, "It is pertinent for me to mention that the governor has put much emphasis and priority to major infrastructural development which entails the construction of roads, bridges, drainages and other civil engineering

works".

He added that "the flyover bridge and underpass at Damaturu main roundabout will cost N22.3 billion with a completion period of 12 months.

He said a contract for the construction of Damaturu-Gambir road has been signed between the Yobe state government

and Meress Elegance Construction Nigeria Limited with a completion period of 9 dry months" he said.

According to him, also Damaturu metropolis will undergo a huge transformation through the construction of 23.5 kilometer roads and 27kilometer of concrete line drain and resurfacing

on all major roads in the state capital and the project will kick start in the 2nd quarter of the year 2025 accordingly.

In his response, the area manager of Triacta Nigeria Limited, who spoke on behalf of the contractors, pledged to deliver quality work base on the contractual agreement.

Federal University, Kashere signs strategic partnership with Beaconhouse University, Pakistan

Federal University, Kashere signs strategic partnership agreement with Beaconhouse University, Pakistan

In a landmark move to enhance academic collaboration and global engagement, the Federal University, Kashere (FUK), Gombe State, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Beaconhouse University, Lahore, Pakistan.

It was reported that the agreement was formalized on Tuesday in Lahore, with the Vice-Chancellor of FUK, Professor Umaru Pate, and his counterpart at Beaconhouse University, Professor Mojeed Hossin, signing the MoU in the latter's office.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Professor Pate described the partnership as a significant step toward fostering international academic cooperation. "This agreement will open doors for faculty and student exchanges, joint research projects, and shared academic resources between our institutions,"

he said.

On his part, Professor Hossin emphasized the potential impact of the collaboration on knowledge exchange and capacity building. "Beaconhouse University is committed to creating a global academic network, and this partnership with Federal University, Kashere, aligns perfectly with our mission of innovation and internationalization," he stated.

The MoU covers a range of academic initiatives, including exchange programmes for students and faculty, Collaborative research in diverse fields, Capacity-building initiatives for staff development and Joint conferences, seminars, and publications

Both institutions expressed optimism that the collaboration would strengthen their global reach and enhance academic excellence. The partnership marks a major milestone for FUK as it expands its international ties, particularly with higher institutions in Asia.



NORTH-EASTBY DAJEN COMFORT YAKUBU
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Former Speaker, Dogara hints Tinubu on Bauchi votes in 2027

A former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara has enumerated a list of things President Bola Tinubu has to achieve to be able to get the votes of the people on Bauchi State come 2027 elections.

Among others, he told Tinubu to revisit the issue of oil exploration as discovered in Bauchi State in order to gain the attention of the people and win their votes in 2027 general elections.

Dogara spoke while speaking at the commissioning

of a road project in Toro LGA of Bauchi State as undertaken by the Senator representing Bauchi South Senatorial District, Shehu Buba Umar at the weekend.

The former Speaker also called for the construction of the much sort after Bagel dam in Dass LGA of the state which he believes would open up the area, create sources of employment for the population and increase revenue generation opportunities.

Dogara stated that, "Your

know we Legislators have a way of doing our jobs, I will put two questions to you, all those in support should say Ye and those against say Nay."

He asked, "Do you support that if President Bola Ahmed Tinubu awards and commences the Bagel Dam and revisit the oil exploration in Bauchi State, he does not need to come for campaigns in Bauchi State for the 2027 presidential campaign as we will all vote for him?"

The crowd answered Ye and he hit the gavel signifying acceptance of the people explaining that those two projects are very vital to the growth and development of the state and must be done.

According to him, "If done, the Bagel

multipurpose Dam will generate electricity power for all the LGAs in Bauchi South Senatorial District" a development he said will lead to economic activities in the area and the State by extension.

On the oil exploration, Yakubu Dogara believes that if the state joins the oil producing states of the country, there will be more revenue allocation through derivation while more revenue generation sources will be opened.

He then stressed that the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), though in opposition in the state is not dead stressing that those having such notion are only deceiving themselves.

According to him, "APC is still alive in

How police in Yobe arrested 2 men for raping a minor

Yobe State Police Command has arrested two suspected rapists, Bawa Sa'idu and Weti Saleh both from Jalingo village of Tarmuwa local government area for allegedly raping a 12-year-old girl and inflicting injuries on her. A statement by the Command Police Public Relation Officer, SP Dungus Abdulkarim, made available to journalists in Damaturu on Monday, explained that "On February 15, 2025, at about 15:30hrs, Tarmuwa Divisional Police Headquarters apprehended Bawa Saidu (22) and Weti Saleh (25) of Jalingo Village, Tarmuwa LGA." The PPRO added that the suspects conspired and gang-raped a 12-year-old girl, inflicting serious injuries on her. READ ALSO: HIV carrier arrested for raping 17-year-old girl with sickle cell disease He said the victim received immediate medical attention, while the suspects were transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) in Damaturu for further investigation. According to the statement, "In a separate incident, Gujba Divisional Police Headquarters collaborated with vigilantes to rescue Hassan Alh Yau, 15, of Kojolo Hamlet, Dadawel Village. "The victim was kidnapped on February 12, 2025, by criminal elements demanding a ransom. "The successful rescue operation resulted in the recovery of dangerous weapons, including a single-barrel gun. "As security strengthens in Damaturu, the state capital, some miscreants were apprehended using an uncompleted building to conceal stolen properties". He noted that the Commissioner of Police, CP Garba Ahmed, commended the efforts of the Command, reiterating its sustained commitment to fighting criminal elements in the state.

Why Borno elders ask USAID to suspend aid

Borno elders are calling for the suspension of USAID due to allegations of misuse of foreign aid and potential support of terrorist groups, including Boko Haram. Specifically, they're concerned that USAID funds may have been used to support these groups, which is a serious accusation.

The Borno Elders Forum has been vocal about their suspicions, with the forum's Secretary, Dr. Bulama Male Gubio, stating that he raised concerns about NGOs' activities in Borno State as far back as 2014. He even claimed to have been detained for questioning his concerns.

The Nigerian Senate has also taken notice of these allegations and has launched an investigation into USAID's activities. The Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, stated that if the allegations are true, Nigeria will ban USAID from operating in the country.

It's worth noting that USAID has denied these allegations, with the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Richard M. Mills Jr., stating that the U.S. government categorically rejects any claims that it funds Boko Haram or any terrorist organization in Nigeria.

The U.S. government has since announced a 90-day suspension of all foreign aid as part of a review of assistance programmes worldwide.

The call by the Borno Elders Forum adds to growing scepticism in Nigeria over the role of international aid agencies in the region.

While NGOs have played a crucial role in humanitarian relief efforts for communities affected by insurgency, some local leaders have accused them of operating with hidden agenda.

The Nigerian government has yet to respond to the forum's demand officially.



CUSTOMS & NEMA

BY MARYAM SULAIMAN
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NCS hands over seized arms to NCCSALW

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) has handed over 1,599 assorted arms and 2,298 live cartridges to the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW).

The arms, seized in 2018 in three containers at the Tin Can Island Port, were formally handed over to the NCCSALW on Thursday, 13 February 2025, at the headquarters of the Federal Operations Unit, Zone 'A', Ikeja, Lagos.

The Comptroller-General of Customs (CGC), Adewale Adeniyi, stated that the handover ceremony demonstrates the NCS's commitment to protecting national borders and maintaining public safety.

"We will spare no resource in hunting down, exposing, and prosecuting anyone who attempts to compromise our national security through arms trafficking," he said.

The CGC also commended the professionalism and courage of officers involved in the seizures and the Forensics Unit for their role in securing convictions.

He assured the public of the Service's commitment to protecting legitimate trade while ensuring national security.

"We stand ready to deploy our full arsenal of intelligence and enforcement capabilities to protect legitimate trade as we ensure Nigeria's security interests remain paramount," he added.

The Director-General of NCCSALW, DIG Johnson Babatunde (Rtd), received the items on behalf of the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu. He assured that the weapons would be handled in accordance with international conventions.

"Nigeria is a signatory to the ECOWAS Convention, and we will not do anything short of international best practice," he said.

He urged all stakeholders to remain vigilant and to continue collaborating to ensure the country remains resilient against the scourge of illicit weaponry.



Customs officials inspecting the seized weapons

NEMA warns Abia, Imo residents to guard against fire, floods

The National Emergency Management Agency has urged residents of Imo and Abia states to take proactive measures to prevent fire outbreaks and floods, which can threaten lives and properties.

NEMA Head of Operation for Imo and Abia states, Nnamdi Igwe made the call while speaking to South-South PUNCH on measures to create awareness of fire outbreaks and flooding in the two states.

Igwe said it was in anticipation of potential flooding in 2025, as projected by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency in the 2025 Seasonal Climate Prediction, which forecasts an early onset of rainfall across the country.

He appealed to people to discourage bush burning, adding that if they must burn bush, it must be controlled to ensure that it doesn't spread and cause damage.

Igwe reiterated the need for organizations whether government or private to acquire fire extinguishers to help stop the spread of fire, especially during the dry seasons where it can easily spread.

He added that other measures to minimize the adverse effects of flooding include constructing and maintaining effective drainage systems to prevent water accumulation and the need for communities prone to flooding to move to safer areas, and heed early warning systems to provide timely alerts about impending floods.

He said "As we await the commencement of the rains, it's important that our people are safety conscious. They must avoid bush



DG NEMA, Zubaida Umar

burning and if they must, then make sure it's controlled. Don't light it and go away. Please stay back and watch the spread and have water and other measures to control it. Let us help to safeguard against fire incidents.

"Further, we appeal to people living in flood-prone areas to be on guard and get

ready to move upland immediately there is threat of flood this year. Our people especially government and community leaders must ensure everyone is safe."

Igwe appealed for collaborations with other organisations to engage in coordinated efforts among federal, state, and local

governments, as well as international bodies, to ensure a unified and effective response.

He enthused that by adopting these proactive strategies, Nigeria aimed to reduce the impact of annual flood disasters, protect vulnerable communities, and build resilience against future flood events.

PRIME PHOTOS

BY MARYA MUMAR
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Graduating Veterinary Medicine students from the University of Maiduguri, Borno State



Governor Fintiri receives traditional title as he presents staff of office to first Tol Hoba



The Dagona Waterfowls Sanctuary Park in Yobe State.



Maimalari village in Yobe State is the hometown of Nigeria's first regular combatant military officer, Brig Zakariya Mailamari.

PRIME10MENT

From Dajen Comfort Yakubu
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Nollywood crime thriller 'Red Circle' set for global release in June

The highly anticipated Nollywood crime thriller, Red Circle, is set for a global theatrical release, beginning with cinemas nationwide

Produced by Nora Awolowo and Abdul Tijani-Ahmed under Rixel Studios, the film brings together some of Nollywood's finest talents, delivering a compelling blend of suspense, action, and an unfiltered look

at power and corruption in modern-day Lagos.

Speaking on the film's journey, producer Nora Awolowo said.

"This film is a labour of love. We have poured everything into creating a cinematic experience that is both thrilling and socially relevant. We can't wait for audiences to experience Red Circle on the big screen."



2Baba Idibia spotted shopping with Edo lawmaker Natasha

2Baba spotted shopping with Natasha fueling speculation about their rumoured romantic relationship.

The sighting comes amid concerns from 2Baba's family about his wellbeing and recent absence as he navigates ongoing divorce proceedings with his

extranged wife, Annie.

In a recent plea, 2Baba's mother, Rose Idibia, begged Natasha to stay away from her son, citing his vulnerable mental

state.

However, a viral video showing 2Baba proposing to Natasha has raised questions about their relationship.

Tems becomes first African female artists to reach Spotify milestone

Tems becomes the first African female artist to feature on a song with a billion Spotify streams.

This feat comes after Future's 2022 hit single 'Wait For U' reached 1 billion Spotify streams thus making Tems the first African female artist to reach this milestone.

The record which features Canadian megastar Drake and vocals from the Nigerian award-winning star has enjoyed enduring commercial success since its release as part of Future 2022 album 'I Never Liked You'.

The single has marked several high points for Tems including making her the first Nigerian artist to debut at the summit of the Billboard Hot 100. It also earned her her first Grammy award for Best Melodic Rap Performance at the 2023 Grammys.

Since breaking into the international stardom in 2020 after her decisive contribution to Wizkid's hit single 'Essence', Tems has risen to superstardom with collaboration with Beyonce and Drake.

She also became the first



Nigerian to earn an Oscar nomination after she was shortlisted for Best Original Score for writing 'Lift Me Up' the lead soundtrack for 'Black Panther: Wakanda Forever' which was performed by Rihanna.

Sabinus: Another celebrity's marriage heading for the rocks

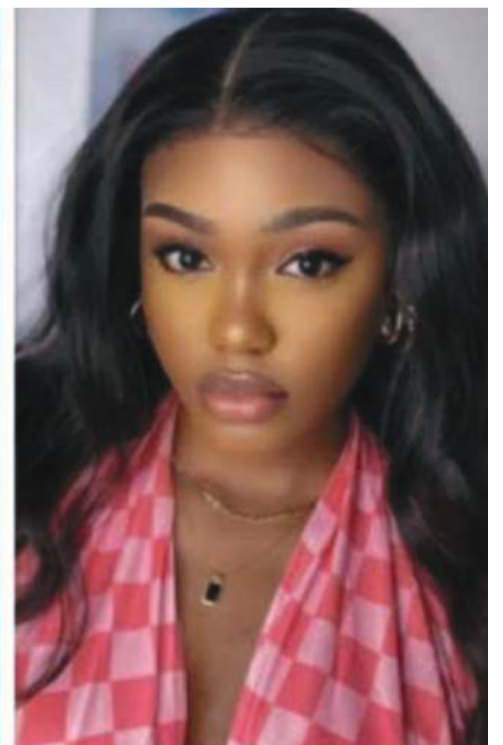
The marriage of a popular comedian and skitmaker, Sabinus is set to collapse over infidelity.

According to online gossip blog, Gistlover, Sabinus' wife has allegedly approached the court seeking divorce on the ground that her husband, Sabinus sleeps around with different women and doesn't take responsibility of their child.

The blog alleged that Sabinus' wife claimed that trouble started after their private wedding, which they relocated to the UK after the wedding and had a child.

According to the blog, the wife accused Sabinus of lodging them in a hotel and does not send money for the upkeep of their child.

Sabinus or the wife is yet to confirm their split, but unfollowing each other on social media intensifies the gossip.



NEPTUNE PRIME BUSINESS

MARKET SURVEY

Foodstuffs Price in Potiskum Cereal Market Yobe State

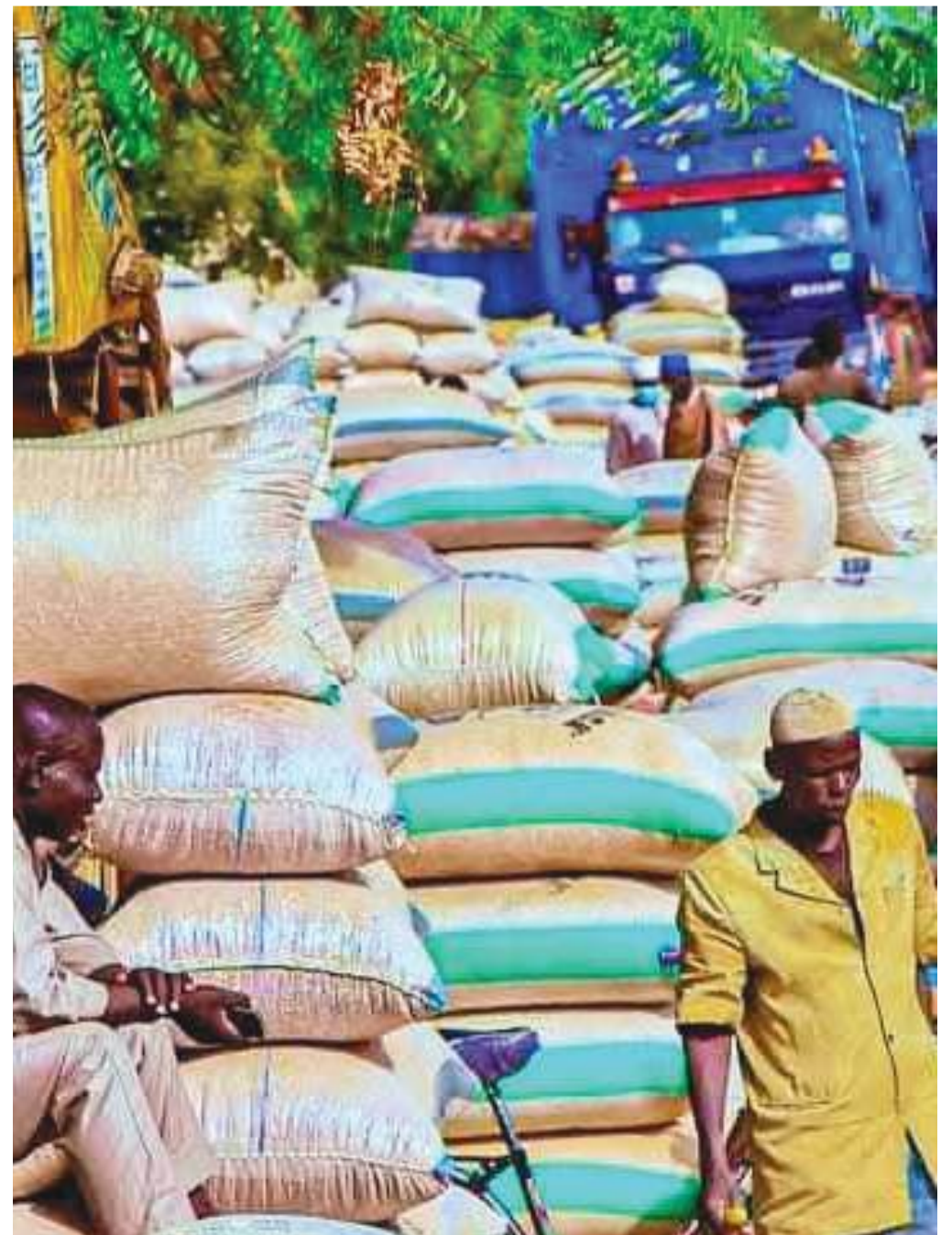
By Ibraheem El-Tafseer

(Sunday 16/02/2025)

- 1. Millet - 50,000
- 2. Dawa Wala Wuyo - 43,000
- 3. Gero Maiwa - 47,000
- 4. Dawa Fara 45,000
- 5. Normal Beans - 90k 000
- 6. White Beans - 83k 000

- 7. White Beans (small) - 87,000
 - 8. Red Beans - 90,000
 - 9. Peanuts - 130,000
 - 10. Gurguzu - 25,000
 - 11. Dawa Kwakwai - 47,000
 - 13. Gangala - 160,000
 - 14. Ridi Kilo - 1800
 - 15. Maize - 55,000
- Today Sunday 16/ 02/ 2025.

BUSY WUSE MARKET, ABUJA



MILESTONE

BY AYANDA NGWANE,
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Olufemi Adeagbo's captivating works depict African beauty and splendour

Olufemi Adeagbo is a Law graduate, technology adviser and creative economy participant.

His paintings usually leverage oil on canvas and speak to multiple dimensions of the human experience, contemporary issues, and depictions of African cultural splendour and beauty.

Olufemi Adeagbo's captivating artwork masterfully blends vibrant colours, poignant themes, and skillful technique. His paintings, predominantly oil on canvas, offer profound explorations of the human experience, tackling contemporary issues with sensitivity and nuance.

Adeagbo's dedication to celebrating African cultural splendour and beauty shines through in every piece, imbuing his work with a sense of pride, heritage, and authenticity.

His unique perspective, coupled with his technical prowess, results in artwork that resonates deeply with viewers.

Whether you're an art aficionado, a collector, or simply someone who appreciates beauty and creativity, Olufemi Adeagbo's artwork is sure to inspire, educate, and delight.

Explore his portfolio and experience the magic of his creations for yourself.



Dotun Poppola, talented artist and creative writer

Nigerian artist, Dotun Popoola is a talented artist and creative individual. Here are some short notes on his arts and creative talents:

Visual Arts

Skilled painter and illustrator with expertise in various mediums.

Vibrant color palette and unique compositions characterize his work.

Music

Multi-instrumentalist with proficiency in guitar, piano, and percussion.

Genre-bending style
Blends elements of jazz,



rock, and Afrobeat.

Writing

Published author of poetry, short stories, and essays. Lyrics and spoken word performances

showcase his storytelling ability.

Performance Art

Dynamic stage presence and captivating live performances.



Dotun Popoola

HERITAGE

BY UCHECHI DANIEL
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Hausa culture, one of the richest and most vibrant in West Africa

Hausa culture, one of the richest and most vibrant in West Africa, famous for its unique traditions, customs, and celebrations.

Two of the most significant events in Hausa culture are weddings and Sallah durbar.

Weddings

In Hausa culture, weddings are grand affairs that bring together families, friends, and the community. The ceremony is a beautiful blend of tradition, music, and feasting.

Bride and Groom

The bride, adorned in intricate henna decorations and colorful clothing, is the centre of attention. The groom, dressed in elegant traditional attire, is equally celebrated.

Henna Decoration (Lalle)

Henna is an essential part of Hausa wedding traditions. The bride's hands and feet are decorated with intricate henna designs, believed to bring good luck and happiness.

Cloth Dyeing (Kwando)

Cloth dyeing is another significant aspect of Hausa weddings. The bride's family presents her with beautifully dyed clothes, which she wears during the ceremony.

Sallah Durbar

Sallah durbar is a colourful and iconic celebration in Hausa culture, marking the end of Ramadan (the Islamic holy month of fasting) and the Eid al-Fitr celebrations.

Procession

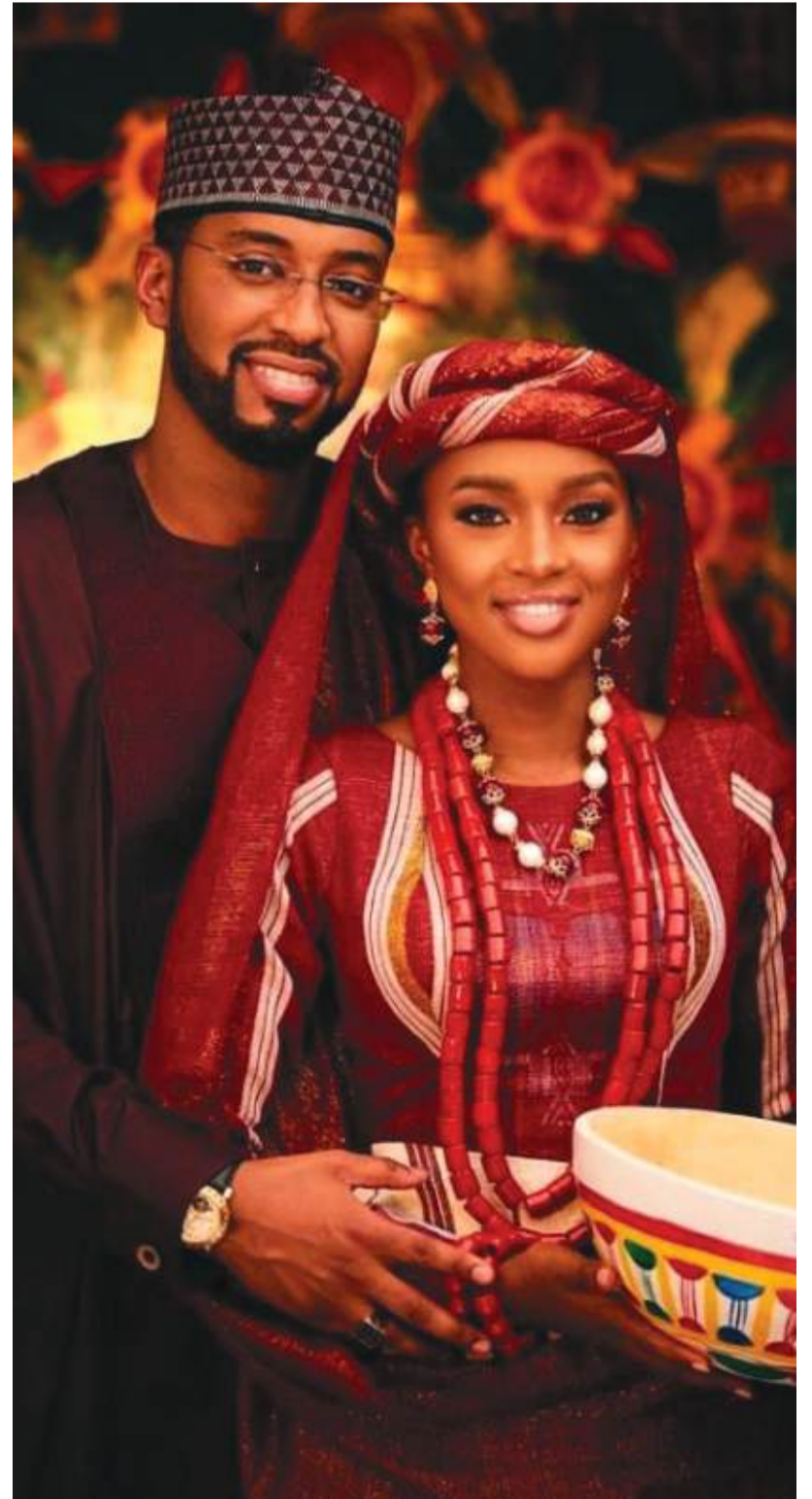
The durbar features a grand procession of the Emir (the traditional ruler) and his entourage, adorned in elaborate traditional regalia.

Horse Riding

The Emir and his men showcase their equestrian skills, riding beautifully decorated horses through the streets.

Music and Dance

The durbar is accompanied by lively music and dance, adding to the festive atmosphere.



From Nok to Ife: A journey through Nigeria's ancient artefacts

Nigeria, a country renowned for its rich cultural heritage, is home to some of the most fascinating ancient civilizations. Among these, the Nok and Ife cultures stand out for their incredible contributions to art and history. The journey through Nigeria's ancient artifacts, from the Nok to Ife, is a deep dive into the past, offering a glimpse into the creativity, sophistication, and belief systems of these early African societies.

The Nok Civilization: An Ancient Legacy

The Nok culture, which flourished between 1000 BCE and 300 CE, is one of Africa's oldest known civilizations. Situated in the central region of Nigeria, the Nok people are renowned for their advanced iron-smelting technology, which predates similar advancements in other parts of the world. However, it is their extraordinary terracotta sculptures that have captured the world's attention.

Nok sculptures are among the earliest known African art forms, often depicting human figures with elaborate facial features, such as large eyes, intricate hairstyles, and detailed clothing. These sculptures are not only artistic masterpieces but also offer insight into the spiritual and social life of the Nok people. The terracotta figurines are believed to have had religious or ceremonial significance, possibly representing ancestors or deities. The fact that these figures were crafted thousands of years ago underscores the highly developed cultural and artistic traditions of the Nok civilization.

In addition to their sculpture work, the Nok people were pioneers in ironworking. Archaeological evidence suggests that they were among the first people in sub-Saharan Africa to smelt iron, a skill that greatly impacted trade and technology in the region. The Nok civilization may have played a pivotal role in the development of other cultures in West Africa, influencing the subsequent rise of powerful kingdoms and empires.

The Rise of Ife: A Center of Art and Spirituality

While the Nok civilization represents the earliest known Nigerian culture, the ancient city of Ife, located in present-day Osun State, rose to prominence between the 12th and 15th centuries. Ife holds a central place in the history of African art and culture, often regarded as a spiritual and artistic capital in West Africa. The Ife people are best known for their exceptional bronze and terracotta sculptures, which are revered for their lifelike representation and technical mastery.

The most famous of these artifacts are the Ife bronze heads, which are widely regarded as some of the finest sculptures in African history. These sculptures, which depict royal

figures, are characterized by their realistic facial expressions, detailed hairstyles, and intricate jewelry. The level of detail in these works suggests a highly sophisticated society, with advanced artistic techniques and a deep understanding of human anatomy.

The Ife bronzes have long been associated with the city's rulers, or "Ooni," and are thought to symbolize the divine connection between the royal family and the gods. According to oral traditions, the city of Ife is considered the birthplace of humanity in Yoruba cosmology, and the Ooni is believed to be a direct descendant of the gods. This spiritual significance imbues the art of Ife with a deeper meaning, as the sculptures are not only representations of rulers but also of the divine power they held.

Much like the Nok people, the Ife civilization demonstrated remarkable technological achievements. The Ife people mastered the art of lost-wax casting, a process that allowed them to create intricate metal sculptures. These works are notable for their lifelike realism, especially in the portrayal of



facial features, which suggests that the artists had an acute understanding of human anatomy and artistic proportion.

Connections and Continuities

The connection between the Nok and Ife civilizations is both temporal and cultural. Although the Nok culture predates Ife by many centuries, both civilizations share a deep connection to spirituality, symbolism, and artistic expression. The artistic traditions of the Nok, with their emphasis on human figures, seem to find a continuation in the Ife sculptures. The detailed, lifelike portraits of rulers in Ife echo the earlier terracotta figures of the Nok, suggesting a continuity of artistic traditions and cultural values.

In addition, both the Nok and Ife cultures were highly advanced in their technological and artistic endeavors. While the Nok excelled in ironworking, the Ife people refined the lost-wax casting technique to create some of the finest metal sculptures in the world. These advances in craftsmanship were not isolated but may have influenced other cultures and societies throughout West Africa, contributing to the broader development of African art and technology.

Legacy and Significance

Today, the Nok and Ife artifacts are not only valuable for their historical and cultural significance but also for their role in shaping African identity. These ancient works of art are a testament to the creativity, ingenuity, and spiritual depth of early African civilizations. They

offer a powerful reminder of Africa's contributions to global cultural heritage, challenging misconceptions about the continent's historical narrative.

The artifacts from Nok and Ife also continue to inspire contemporary African artists, who draw on these ancient traditions to create new forms of expression. In museums and galleries around the world, Nok and Ife sculptures are displayed as symbols of Africa's rich artistic legacy, sparking conversations about the importance of preserving and celebrating these ancient cultures.

As Nigeria continues to grow as a cultural and economic powerhouse, the legacy of the Nok and Ife civilizations remains an integral part of the country's identity. The journey through their artifacts not only illuminates the past but also underscores the ongoing importance of art and culture in shaping the future.

Conclusion

From the terracotta masterpieces of Nok to the bronze heads of Ife, Nigeria's ancient artifacts provide a window into the creative, technological, and spiritual life of two of Africa's most influential civilizations. These works of art stand as a testament to the skill, vision, and legacy of the Nok and Ife peoples, offering a glimpse into the depths of Nigeria's cultural history. The journey through these ancient artifacts is a journey through time, one that reveals the profound contributions of these early African societies to the world's artistic heritage.

ROOTS

BY GIFT LUCKSON
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Legendary Yarrow Mamout: From slave boy to American property owner

Yarrow Mamout (1736 – January 19, 1823) was an enslaved African who became an entrepreneur and property owner in Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

In 1752, Mamout was taken from his home in Guinea, West Africa, to Maryland. He was 16, a well-educated Fulani Muslim, who could read and write Arabic. He gained his freedom in 1796 after 44 years of slavery.

He became a free man at the age of 60.

Hard work and determination in the years of his enslavement, he worked odd jobs to establish himself and save money, yet fell prey to several near-crushing swindles. Finally, in 1800, Mamout earned enough, not only to purchase a property on Dent Place, but also to begin lending to others. He became a financier for Georgetown's black and white merchants and eventually came to own stock in the Columbia Bank of Georgetown.

Slavery

Upon his arrival in Maryland, Yarrow was sold to Samuel Beall, who owned a plantation in Takoma Park. He became Beall's manservant and later served his son, Brooke. By 1790, Yarrow had moved with Beall to Georgetown and begun hiring himself out for wages. According to contemporary sources, Beall required him to turn over wages he earned during the day but allowed him to keep wages he received for nocturnal work. He became a jack of all trades, working as a brickmaker, charcoal burner, basket weaver, cart driver, and stevedore, working long hours to earn enough money to buy his freedom.

Freedom

After 44 years in slavery, Yarrow was freed at the age of 60 when Brooke Beall died in 1796, manumitted by his enslavers who believed he was too old to work anymore. He immediately spent £20 to buy and free his seven-year-old son, Aquilla, who had been born into slavery on a neighbouring farm. Little is known of the boy's mother.

Property owner and entrepreneur

Yarrow amassed savings of \$200 and became one of the first investors in the successful Columbia Bank of Georgetown. In 1800, he purchased a lot located at 3324 Dent Place NW in Georgetown, valued in a tax assessment at \$30.

He constructed a log house on the land. By 1816, the property had an assessed value of \$500 (~\$11,579 in 2023). Yarrow lived quietly on the dividends of his bank stock. He remained a devout, lifelong Muslim, praying regularly and avoiding the consumption of pork and liquor.

On March 23, 1821, Yarrow loaned \$170.85 (~\$3,911 in 2023) to a white merchant named William Hayman to help purchase a warehouse. Hayman defaulted on the loan after Yarrow's death, but Nancy Hillman, the daughter of Yarrow's sister, sued to recoup the loss in 1843. She received \$300 from the foreclosure and sale of the warehouse in 1850.

Death

Yarrow died on January 19, 1823, at the approximate age of 86. According to his obituary, penned by Charles Willson Peale, he was buried in the corner of his yard where he was accustomed to pray; however, a 2015 archaeological dig failed to unearth any remains. Peale's



obituary was published in the Gettysburg Compiler and was reproduced in 38 newspapers across the United States, testifying to the unique life story of the enslaved African Muslim turned entrepreneur and property owner.

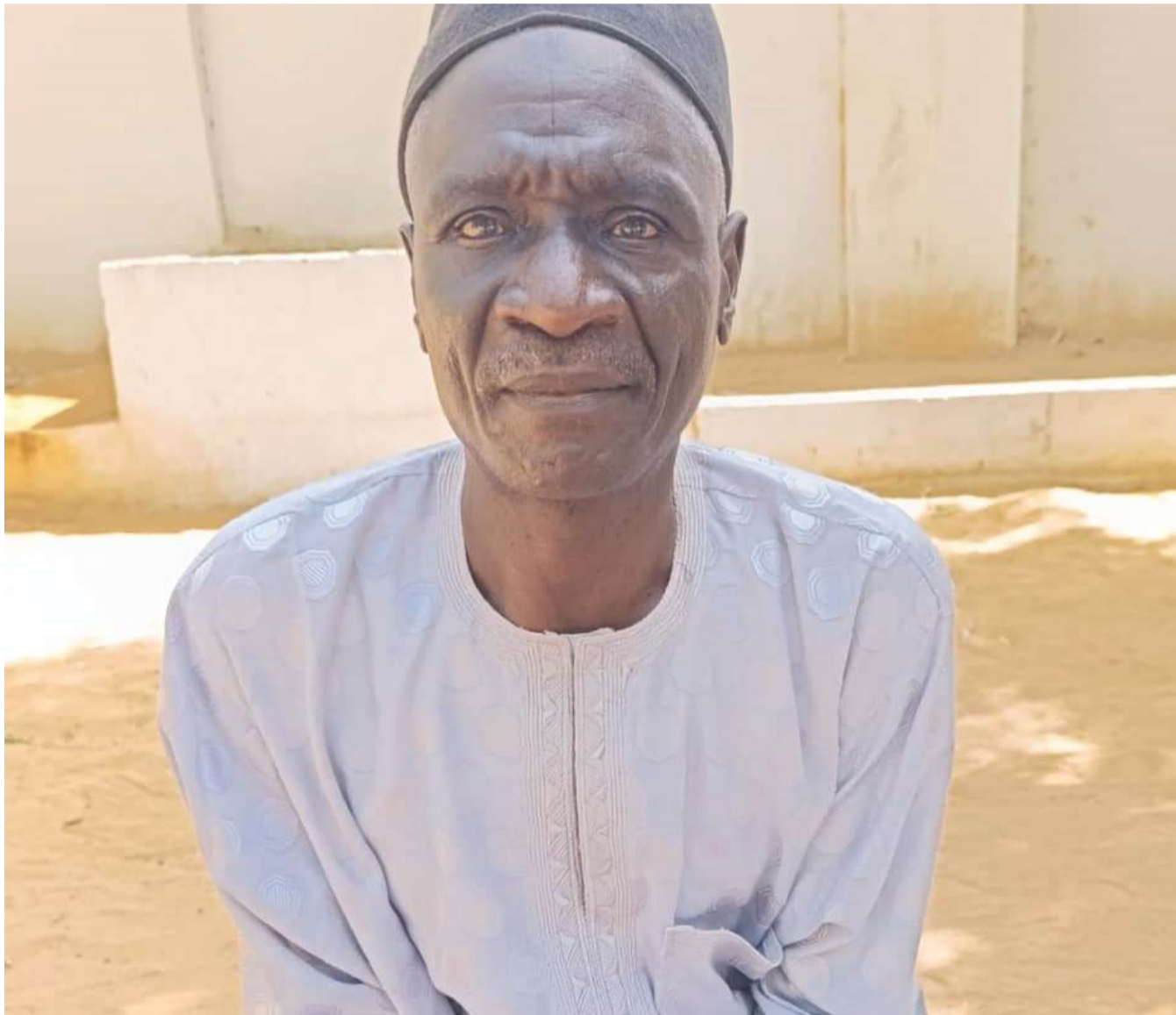


OLDIES

BY KASIM ISA MUHAMMAD

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Teaching is a noble calling that should be respected - retired principal



Abbas

Muhammad Abbas (M.A), is a retired educationist who once served as the Principal of Fika Government Secondary School in the Potiskum Local Government Area of Yobe State. With decades of experience in the field of education, Abbas has dedicated his life to shaping the younger generation. He shares his journey, the challenges he encountered, and the wisdom he has gained over the years.

NP: Tell us about your background.

M.A: My name is Muhammad Abbas. I was born in 1956, and my journey in education began in Plateau State, where I attended my primary school. It was during these formative years that I developed a deep appreciation for learning and discipline. After completing my primary education, I proceeded to Government College Birnin Gwari in Kaduna State for my secondary education. I was not just an ordinary student; I was the Head Boy of my set, a role that instilled in me a sense of responsibility and leadership from a young age.

M.A: After graduating from secondary school, I took a rather unexpected path—I learned tailoring. At the time, acquiring a skill was seen as an essential part of personal development, and I wanted to ensure I had something to fall back on. However, my passion for education never waned. In 1987, I secured admission to study Education at the University of Maiduguri. It was a defining moment in my life because, despite my desire to further my education, the road was not smooth. I finally graduated in 1992, an achievement that marked the beginning of my lifelong journey as an educator.

NP: What challenges did you face during your education?

M.A: One of the greatest challenges I faced was the lack of financial support. I did not have any scholarship to fund my university education. Unlike some of my peers who had financial backing from the government or other organisations, I had to navigate my way through university with little to no assistance. It was not easy. There were times when I had to make tough choices—whether to buy books, eat, or save for future expenses.

M.A: Despite these hardships, I remained focused on my goal. I worked tirelessly, studied diligently, and ensured that nothing deterred me from completing my education. The experience taught me resilience and determination. It also made me appreciate the value of hard work. After graduating, I was posted to Kwara State for my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). That was yet another phase

of my life where I had to adapt to new environments and face new challenges, but it was a valuable experience that helped shape me into the person I am today.

NP: Tell us about your career.

M.A: My career was deeply rooted in education. Right from my university days, I knew I was meant to be a teacher. The passion I had for imparting knowledge and moulding young minds kept me motivated throughout my years of service. My first appointment was at Fika Government Secondary School, where I began as a teacher. I was eager to make an impact, and I committed myself to my work with diligence and sincerity.

M.A: Over the years, I progressed in my career, taking on more responsibilities and earning promotions along the way. Eventually, I became the Principal of Fika Government Secondary School. As a Principal, my role expanded beyond just teaching. I had to manage students, teachers, and the school administration. It was a demanding position, but I embraced it wholeheartedly because I believed in the importance of education and the role teachers play in shaping society.

M.A: Looking back, I take great pride in knowing that I contributed to the education of many young individuals, some of whom have gone on to become successful professionals in various fields. Teaching is not just a job—it is a calling. And I am grateful for the years I spent serving as an educator.

NP: What were the biggest challenges you faced as a teacher?

M.A: Teaching is one of the most challenging professions, second only to hospital work, in my opinion. The reason is simple—teachers deal with human beings at their most critical and impressionable stages of life. Students come from different backgrounds, each with unique personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. It takes patience, wisdom, and understanding to manage them effectively.

M.A: One major challenge is discipline. As a teacher, you are responsible for not just educating students but also guiding their moral and social development. Some students are naturally obedient, while others require constant monitoring and discipline. It is a delicate balance—being strict enough to maintain order while being approachable enough to earn the respect and trust of the students.

M.A: Another challenge is working with colleagues. The teaching profession requires teamwork, and sometimes, differences in opinion or teaching styles can lead to conflicts. However, I always ensured

that I maintained professionalism and worked towards fostering a harmonious environment where both teachers and students could thrive.

M.A: There were also infrastructural challenges—schools lacking adequate teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and in some cases, a lack of motivation among teachers due to delayed salaries or inadequate remuneration. Despite all these obstacles, I remained steadfast in my mission to educate and inspire.

NP: What advice do you have for aspiring teachers?

M.A: To those who are considering a career in teaching, my advice is simple—be prepared for challenges, but do not be discouraged. Teaching is not an easy profession, and it requires dedication, patience, and a strong sense of purpose. However, the rewards are immense. There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing your students succeed and knowing that you played a role in shaping their future.

M.A: Teachers should be consistent and committed to their work. Many people underestimate the impact of a good teacher, but in reality, teachers shape societies. They instill knowledge, discipline, and values in students who will one day become leaders, doctors, engineers, and policymakers. That is why every teacher must take their responsibility seriously.

M.A: In addition, teachers should continue to learn and grow. Education is not static—it evolves with time. A good teacher must keep up with new teaching methods, technology, and global trends to remain effective in the classroom. Lastly, teachers should always remember that they are role models. Students look up to their teachers not just for academic guidance but also for moral and social direction.

NP: What is your hobby?

M.A: Now that I am retired, my greatest joy comes from spending time with my family. Throughout my career, I dedicated so much of my time to my work, ensuring that my students received the best education possible. Now, I prioritise my family and cherish every moment I have with them.

M.A: Family is the foundation of every society, and I believe in the importance of maintaining strong family bonds. I enjoy engaging in meaningful conversations with my children and grandchildren, sharing my experiences with them, and watching them grow. Retirement has given me the time to reflect, relax, and appreciate the simple joys of life.



Family is the foundation of every society, and I believe in the importance of maintaining strong family bonds

HUMANIST

Godwin Akor, veteran journalist, needs life saving help

BY KASIM ISA MUHAMMAD

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Yobe State correspondent for Daily Times, who served between 1996 and 1999, Mr Godwin Akor, aged 67 years, is a veteran journalist who has contributed his quota to the growth of Nigeria's media industry.

He is down with spinal spondylosis (Cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine degeneration), and prostate enlargement, a urinary disease that needs urgent operation.

At present he cannot walk; a catheter which is fixed through the bladder cannot go through his genital.

He urgently needs help to realise the amount needed for operation.

We are appealing to wealthy Nigerians and the general public to save his life by donation. Any amount is not too small.

Amount needed N10 million.

Account details:

Name: Godwin O. Akor

Acct.No. 1000369142

Bank: UBA

God bless you as you make your donation.



FEATURES

The vanishing friendship



BY OSMUND AGBO

In an age where information flows ceaselessly from every direction, we are often overwhelmed by the sheer volume, most of which is little more than noise, distracting us from what truly matters.

Unfortunately, those who profit from misinformation seem to be flourishing, capitalising on the confusion they sow. I've observed with growing concern how many of my compatriots continue to cheer for policies that are not only harmful but inhumane, particularly those driven by the current U.S. administration.

Our blind allegiance to these destructive forces often leaves me wondering if we have totally lost our way as a people. With that in mind, this year, I have made a conscious decision to retreat from the noise, to create space for my own peace of mind. But I digress.

Recently, a close friend of mine reached out, expressing his frustration over our mutual friend, who, for some time now, has ignored his calls and messages. We spoke at length, the conversation charged with emotion, and the underlying theme of our exchange led me to reflect deeply on the nature of friendships in adulthood. I have decided to share these reflections, which I've titled *The Vanishing Friendship*.

Nosa and Daniel (not their real names), were two best friends whose bond went way back. They grew up together in the Ikpoba Hill area of Benin City and attended Uniben. For most of their formative years, they were inseparable, celebrating small wins, picking each other up after setbacks, and navigating life side by side. Like many young Nigerians, they struggled to find jobs after youth service. Then life happened.

Daniel landed a dream job with an oil servicing company and relocated to Lagos. Over time, his life took a different trajectory, one of financial success and social elevation. Expensive suits, exclusive clubs, jet-setting for work, and frequent overseas trips—his world expanded beyond what he and Nosa had once known.

At first, Nosa was genuinely happy for his friend. Daniel remained supportive, sending money when necessary, helping with job applications, and even generously sponsoring Nosa's wedding. But slowly, things began to change. The weekly phone calls that once anchored their friendship stopped. Text messages went unanswered for days, then weeks.

The conversations they had shared in the past grew increasingly strained, punctuated by awkward silences. Nosa, whose life had not undergone the same transformation, could not ignore the widening gap between them. He began to feel abandoned.

We've all witnessed a version of this story before. A colleague lands a lucrative job and suddenly becomes too busy to engage. A friend secures a prestigious position in government, and your calls no longer get returned. You ask yourself, "What did I do wrong?"

The truth? Nothing went wrong. It's simply a reflection of life itself, of the evolving nature of friendships and relationships.

Adult friendships according to psychologists, are shaped by three key factors: proximity, energy, and timing.

Proximity effect refers to the way in which frequent, close interactions form the basis of strong relationships. People are more likely to form lasting friendships with those they encounter regularly, whether through work, shared living

spaces, or social circles. Even in the digital age, where we connect across vast distances, the frequency of communication—whether in person, over the phone, or online—plays a crucial role in maintaining bonds.

Psychologists like Leon Festinger have studied this phenomenon, concluding that physical and emotional proximity fosters stronger, more resilient relationships.

Energy is another significant force that determines the strength of a friendship. Friendships thrive when both parties invest in each other, when there is mutual enthusiasm, shared interests, and a willingness to engage. A person who enjoys lively socialising will find greater fulfillment in the company of someone with a similar zest for life, rather than a childhood friend who is a pastor and has chosen a more reserved, introspective path.

Timing is perhaps the most elusive factor. Life, in all its unpredictability, places us in different phases at various points in time. Sometimes, even the most promising connections are not meant to last simply because the timing is off. One person may be too focused on career ambitions to nurture the friendship, while the other may be navigating the complexities of a new relationship or undergoing a personal transformation.

The timing of our lives, and where we are in our journeys, often dictates the relationships we keep.

We like to believe that friendships are anchored in deep emotional bonds, but the reality is that most adult relationships are, to some extent, transactional. The moment a friendship no longer serves a person's needs or aligns with their current circumstances, it becomes difficult to maintain.

It might sound harsh, but if the roles were reversed, if Nosa had found himself in Daniel's position, he would likely have done the same. It's not out of malice or disregard; it's simply human nature.

At some point, we all wake up to the reality that some of our closest friends have drifted away, often without explanation, and without closure. As painful as it may be, we must come to terms with the fact that, over time, people grow, change, and sometimes outgrow each other. And inevitably, we too will distance ourselves from people who no longer align with our present or future. It is not done out of spite, but rather out of necessity—because life moves on, and so must we.

The only constant in life is change. People leave. Friends become strangers. Lovers transform into friends. Colleagues drift apart as they pursue different goals. Some leave in search of better opportunities, while others, perhaps, find new interests or simply grow tired of the same old routine. It's not personal; it's just life. Life moves in seasons, and seasons inevitably change.

The sooner we accept this reality, the easier it becomes to navigate life without bitterness. Instead of mourning the loss of friendships that fade, we should cherish those that endure, all the while embracing the inevitable transience of human connection. After all, in the grand scheme of things, nothing lasts forever, except change itself.

So let go of what no longer serves you. Accept the ebb and flow of life. And when a friendship vanishes, remember: it's not the end of the world, it's simply another season of life passing.

Osmund Agbo is a medical doctor and author.

Nigeria's escalating cost of living crisis

BY MOHAMMED KUKURI

The cost of living in Nigeria is skyrocketing, rendering basic necessities unaffordable for many. Food, fuel, and healthcare prices are surging, while the value of money plummets. This forces Nigerians to make agonising choices between essential expenses, pushing them deeper into poverty.

The plight of impoverished families is particularly distressing. Malnutrition stalks children, imperiling their health and development. The prohibitive cost of healthcare drives people to neglect medical care until emergencies arise, further entrenching the cycle of poverty. The mental toll of financial strain exacerbates the struggles of daily life.

The chasm between rich and poor widens as urban residents battle extortionate rent and transportation costs, while rural farmers and traders reel under rising prices. Small businesses teeter on the brink, unable to cope with the economic turbulence.

To arrest this downward spiral, the government must intervene decisively. Economic stabilisation, affordable food and healthcare, and targeted support for the most vulnerable are imperative.

Investing in agriculture, job creation, and social welfare can help mitigate the citizens' burden. Until concrete solutions emerge, Nigerians will continue to struggle for survival.

The living condition in Nigeria demands urgent attention. As the situation deteriorates, the government must act to alleviate its citizens' suffering. The future of Nigeria's most vulnerable – children, the elderly, and low-income families – hangs precariously in the balance. Policymakers must prioritize citizens' welfare and implement sustainable solutions to combat poverty and economic inequality. Time is running out, and the fate of Nigeria's future generations hangs in the balance.





SPORTS

BY MUHAMMAD KUKURI,
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History-maker: Nigerian midfielder becomes first footballer to kick a ball at Everton's new stadium

As reported by All Nigeria Soccer, Nigerian midfielder Ademide Akarakiri became the first footballer to kick a ball at Everton's new stadium, an event that would go down in football fan history books for years to come.

The midfielder, who came to Everton from Arsenal in the summer of 2024, was sixteen years old when he featured in a friendly encounter between Wigan Athletic U18s and Everton U18s in the new stadium for the first test event.

Akarakiri had the privilege of being the match's official kicker as the teams stepped onto the field, making him the inaugural player to do so at the brand new stadium. As the youth teams took the field, the enthusiastic 10,000 spectators—representing one-fifth of the stadium's capacity—laughed their approval.

The success that Akarakiri has achieved in the sport is a result of his perseverance and commitment. Critics have praised the teenage midfielder's skill, saying that he can run with the ball and has a long passing range. He obviously loves football a lot; he has named Amadou Onana, Paul Pogba, and Andres Iniesta as some of his favorite players.

The game was a tight one, but Wigan Athletic U18s came out on top, 2-1. The young Everton players, especially Akarakiri, were greeted with an incredible reception by the crowd, and their future with the club is clearly bright, even though they lost. Everton have benefited greatly from Akarakiri's summer 2024 transfer from Arsenal, and the player has made a big impression since joining the club.

Tennis World Number One Sinner Accepts 3-Month Doping Ban

Jannik Sinner has accepted a three-month ban from tennis after the world number one admitted team mistakes led him twice testing positive for traces of banned substance clostebol in March last year.

The February 9 to May 4 suspension means Sinner will be free to play in the French Open, the second grand slam of the season, which begins on May 25 at Roland Garros.

In a statement, Sinner said that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) accepted that he "had no intent and did not derive any competitive advantage from the two positive tests".

Australian Open champion Sinner has always said that clostebol entered his system when his physiotherapist used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy.

"This case had been hanging over me now for nearly a year and the process still had a long time to run with a decision maybe only at the end of the year," Sinner said.

"I have always accepted that I am responsible for my team and realise WADA's strict rules are an important protection for the sport I love. On that basis I have accepted WADA's offer to resolve these proceedings on the basis of a 3-month sanction."

WADA said separately that "Sinner did not intend to cheat" but that he would serve his suspension as he is responsible for the actions of his entourage.

The agreement between Sinner and WADA means that Sinner will be able to play in front of his home fans at the Rome Open which kicks off just after the end of his suspension and is the last big clay court tournament before Roland Garros.



Anthony Joshua secures ringside ticket to discover next opponent but has exciting 'Plan B'

Eddie Hearn has laid out the two possible routes for Anthony Joshua's next fight.

AJ looked destined to finally land the long-awaited all-British showdown with Tyson Fury after 'The Gypsy King' lost to Oleksandr Usyk for a second time at the back end of last year.

Hearn wants Joshua to return to a world heavyweight title fight.

Saudi boxing chief Turki Alalshikh was said to be preparing a lucrative offer for

Joshua vs Fury. However, those plans were put on ice when Fury announced he was hanging up his gloves.

Hearn and Co are now looking at other avenues for the Watford powerhouse, with a world title shot at the top of their list.

Joshua was knocked out by IBF champion Daniel Dubois in September at Wembley Stadium.

Artur Beterbiev makes stunning U-turn on Canelo

Alvarez days before Dmitry Bivol fight.

There was a one-way rematch clause written into Joshua's contract but he chose not to have an immediate sequel due to lingering 'niggles'.

Providing Dubois can overcome Joseph Parker on Saturday, Joshua will be eyeing up the winner.

"I think without Tyson Fury, AJ's number one priority is to fight for the

world heavyweight title," Hearn told iFL TV.

"He's not going to fight Usyk, is it? So it is going to be the winner of Saturday night [between Parker vs Dubois]."

"I can't even tell you for sure because there hasn't been a conversation.

"I don't even know. The only thing I know granted fact is that AJ wanted to fight for Fury and AJ wanted to fight for the world title, fact.

Ruben Amorim to be sacked? 'Man Utd manager has lost dressing room'

Ruben Amorim's future on the Manchester United bench is coming under increased scrutiny and there are claims he may have already lost the team's dressing room.

Amorim was only appointed as Man Utd manager just over three months ago, on November 1, following the sacking of Erik ten Hag.

The 39-year-old arrived with high hopes after a brilliant spell at Sporting Lisbon, where he won two Primeira Liga titles and developed a host of talented players such as Viktor Gyokeres.

However, Amorim's first few months at Old Trafford have been a disaster.

Man Utd's three man shortlist to replace Ruben Amorim

He has a win rate of just 43 per cent - one of the worst in the club's history - and has overseen United dropping to 15th in the Premier League table.

Indeed, Amorim has a far inferior record to his much-maligned predecessor Ten Hag, who had a 54.7% win rate between

2022 and 2024.

As a result, there are increasing calls for Amorim to be sacked by Man Utd fans and his position will surely be under threat soon if the team don't improve fast.

Former Arsenal star Martin Keown believes there must be problems in the United dressing room.

What did Keown say?

"I don't think they are tuned in and believe everything. There must be an issue," Keown said on TalkSport about the dressing room.

"I looked at the game where he took [Joshua] Zirkzee off after 33 minutes and thought that it was the manager's fault.

"I don't think they needed two strikers (against Spurs); they needed an extra midfielder.

"This once-great club, look at Amorim's record since he's been there, which is 14 Premier League games, four wins, and eight losses.

"Whereas look at Everton, in the same amount of time for David Moyes, a former United



manager, are getting results. You could argue his players maybe aren't quite as good, but this once-great club is now falling from a great height.

"The panic button is close to being pressed. You can't keep performing as they did against

Spurs.

"The tactics are flawed; we've been saying it for weeks now. The midfield, Casemiro sitting on his own, Spurs exploiting that with two players in those pockets. James Maddison ran the show. Fernandes was a boy lost on the pitch.



FAMILY DYNAMICS & CUISINES

• WITH

• AISHA AUYO,
• AishaAuyo@Neptuneprime.com.ng

Vegetable White Rice by Auyo's Cuisines

This is our classic Nigerian white rice, elevated with vibrant vegetables for a healthier and more appealing dish.

Ingredients

- Rice
- Water
- Carrots
- Green peas
- Sweet corn
- Cucumber
- Green beans
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

Method

1. Parboil the Rice:

- Half-boil your desired amount of rice.
- Strain and rinse with room-temperature water.
- Allow it to cool and drain properly.

2. Prepare the Vegetables:

- Cut the carrots, peas, and green beans into small pieces.
- Add them to a pot with a teaspoon of baking powder.
- Boil until the peas are soft. The baking powder helps retain the veggies' fresh colours.
- Drain using a colander and rinse with water.

3. Combine the Ingredients:

- Drain the sweet corn and cut the cucumber into small pieces.
- Add both to the boiled vegetables.

4. Cook the Rice:

- Heat a small amount of water and cook the parboiled rice until soft.
- Once the water is fully absorbed, add the vegetable mix and gently stir to combine.
- Avoid overcooking to maintain the rice's texture and the veggies' crunch.

Serve with stew or sauce. I paired mine with potato goulash—stay tuned for the recipe next week!



WHAT TO KNOW:

- TRUE LOVE STILL EXISTS, WITH EESHER: THE STORY OF A TAILOR CUM CUSTOMS OFFICER



In this episode of NP'S Family Dynamics with Eesher, an officer shared with us his love story rooted in perseverance and loyalty.

"Dear Sis Eesher I started dating my wife (then girlfriend) in 2014. I was 19 years old and in my first year at Polytechnic, while she was 15 years old and in SS1.

After 9 wonderful years, we got married in January 2023. When she finished secondary school, she got admission into a university far from my state. Even though I didn't see her every day, I used to visit her house at least once a week and spend a few minutes in the place where we used to hang out.

That was the only thing that gave me relief. There was a time her friend called me from school on the first of April, telling me that my girlfriend had died. She was sick at the time, and I almost fainted. Her friend had to tell me the truth—that it was an April Fool's joke—before I came back to my senses. Sometimes, when the longing became too much, I would start having palpitations and chest pains, just like in the movies.

On her part, it took her almost one session to start concentrating in school because she missed me so much. After a full session, we were finally able to start coping well. She was in her final year at university when I formally asked for her hand in marriage, though everyone in her house already knew me.

I was a tailor, and she came from a well-to-do family, MashaAllah. Her family is polygamous, full of competition between wives and siblings. There were rich and classy suitors interested in her, but she always declined their requests because of me. I'm a hustler—I sponsored myself from my diploma to my first degree with money from my tailoring work. In her family, only her mum genuinely supported our relationship, but her stepmothers were happy that she was going to marry a tailor and "suffer in poverty." After our wedding was fixed, I got an offer from the Nigeria Customs Service, which led to postponing the date because I had to attend training. It was after I passed out from training that the wedding finally took place.

Many people were talking behind our backs, saying the classy and wealthy girl was going to end up with a tailor, not knowing I had become a commissioned officer.

We are now happily married. Not every man is this lucky, as my wife is extremely caring and respectful. She's religious, God-fearing, and an excellent cook. She prepares numerous dishes with passion, and if I ate ten times a day, she would willingly cook ten different delicacies. May Allah continue to bless my beautiful wife and our union in general."

Dear Anonymous

Thank you for sharing such a touching and inspiring story. It's rare to come across a love that endures trials, distance, and external pressures as beautifully as yours has.

Your journey from being a hardworking tailor to becoming a commissioned officer while holding on to the love of your life is truly remarkable.

SOCIALS/FASHION

BY JANE AISO
JanetAiso@neptuneprime.com.ng

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 power of jewelry that makes perfect statement for self-expression in fashion

Fashion trends constantly evolves, but jewelry steadfastly remains an accessory that women turn to. Nothing can make an ensemble shine quite like jewelry can.

It also makes the perfect statement for self-expression.

Why is jewelry important in fashion?
Jewelry changes the way your outfit 'works'. Whether you wear an extravagant ring, or a simple necklace, a statement bracelet or subtle stud earrings, your choice of jewelry has the power to elevate your look to a whole new concept.

In fact, fashion designers and jewellers have long since been working together to create various styles. Also, gemstones are no longer simply embellishments – they are pieces of art. Jewelry is definitely a big part of fashion. Here are some reasons why:

New look every day
Love your white shirt and end up wearing it too often? That's ok! Make it look different each time with different jewelry! For a formal look, pair it with gold studs or drop earrings; for a Boho look throw on some chunky

bangles and stack rings, or look casual and laid-back with tassel and pom pom earrings. You can also wear your pieces to match your mood.

Sparks conversations
Certain pieces are called conversation starters for a reason. Bold or quirky, intricate or chunky, such pieces of jewelry naturally draw attention and spark friendly discussions.

Accentuates your personality
Jewelry is a great way to express yourself, so select pieces that match your personal style and personality. It also allows your creativity and individualism to shine through and speak for themselves.

The biggest question probably is, how to choose jewelry that will complement your look, your mood and your personality. Also, how to style the pieces so they will enhance your wardrobe.

Elizabeth Taylor says,
"Jewelry has the power to be the one little thing that makes you feel unique."



TO FEATURE ON OUR FASHION/SOCIAL PAGE!
You can send your pictures to JanetAiso@neptuneprime.com.ng
Call: 0909966777

TECH WORLD

BY JANE AISO, JanetAiso@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

Google to invest \$75 bn in capital expenditures for 2025

Google parent company, Alphabet, has announced plans to invest approximately \$75 billion in capital expenditures for 2025 as part of its ongoing growth strategy.

The tech giant made this disclosure in its fourth-quarter earnings report for 2024.

Chief Executive Officer, Sundar Pichai, expressed confidence in the company's prospects, stating, "We are confident about the opportunities ahead, and to accelerate our progress, we expect to invest approximately \$75bn in capital expenditures in 2025."

As part of its strategic shift, Alphabet is speeding up the expansion of its data centres, focusing on next-generation AI infrastructure.

Microsoft, similarly, has allocated \$80bn for AI-related capital expenditures in its current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, Alphabet reported a 12 per cent increase in consolidated revenues for the fourth quarter, totalling \$96.5bn.

Google Services led the way with \$84.1bn in revenues, a 10 per cent year-over-year increase, driven by robust growth in Google Search and YouTube advertising.

Pichai commented on the company's momentum, saying, "Q4 was a strong quarter driven by our leadership in AI and overall business momentum. We are building, testing, and launching products and models faster than ever, making significant strides in computing and driving efficiencies."

He further noted, "In Search, innovations like AI Overviews and Circle to Search are boosting user engagement. Our AI-powered Google Cloud portfolio is seeing stronger customer demand, while YouTube remains a leader in streaming watch time and podcasts."

"Together, Cloud and YouTube closed 2024 with an annual revenue run rate of \$110 billion. Our results underscore the power of our full-stack approach to AI innovation and the continued strength of our core businesses," Pichai added.

Every version of iOS, from the oldest to the latest

The complete iOS version history including the latest version of iOS, which versions of iOS are still supported, and when each version launched.

iOS is at the heart of the iPhone experience. It's the operating system on which everything else sits, while also delivering plenty of features and dedicated apps built by Apple itself. Every year Apple adds new features to compatible iPhones, and through the months that follow more features arrive. If you want to know what the latest version of iOS is, or if you've ever wondered about when versions came out and what features they brought, we will answer your questions. We also show you how to check which iOS you're currently using and how to update to the latest iteration.

February 2025: iOS 18.3.1 arrived on February 10 2025 and provides important security fixes relating to an "extremely sophisticated" security flaw relating to "A physical attack [that] may disable USB Restricted Mode on a locked device". iPadOS 18.3.1 and iPadOS 17.7.5 were released at the same time addressing the same flaw.

iOS version history
iOS made its debut in 2007 alongside the first iPhone. However, when Steve Jobs held the little device aloft revealing it to the world for the first time, it wasn't running iOS 1. Instead, it was reported by Apple to be powered by OS X, the software for the Mac. Over time it was called iPhone OS, until finally gaining its now legendary name in the fourth generation of the software when it was shortened to iOS in 2010.

Significant milestones are scattered across the iOS timeline, with the first being the introduction of the App Store in iPhone OS 2 in 2008. iOS 4 saw the iPad joining the scene and using the operating system alongside the iPhone. iOS 5 was introduced along with the iPhone 4S in 2011, which saw the debut of Siri as a built-in part of the operating



system. Sadly, this was the last version of the software to be released when Apple CEO and Founder Steve Jobs was still alive.

Things changed significantly in iOS 11 in 2017 as it brought the first touch and gesture interface, allowing the first iPhone without a Home button—the iPhone X.

Another major shift was with iOS 13 in 2019, as it marked the bifurcation of Apple's mobile operating systems, with iPhones staying on iOS but the newly announced iPadOS powering the new iPads. This would continue through to the present day, although the version numbers have stayed in sync, with the latest ones being iOS 16 and iPadOS 16.

List of iOS versions and latest versions

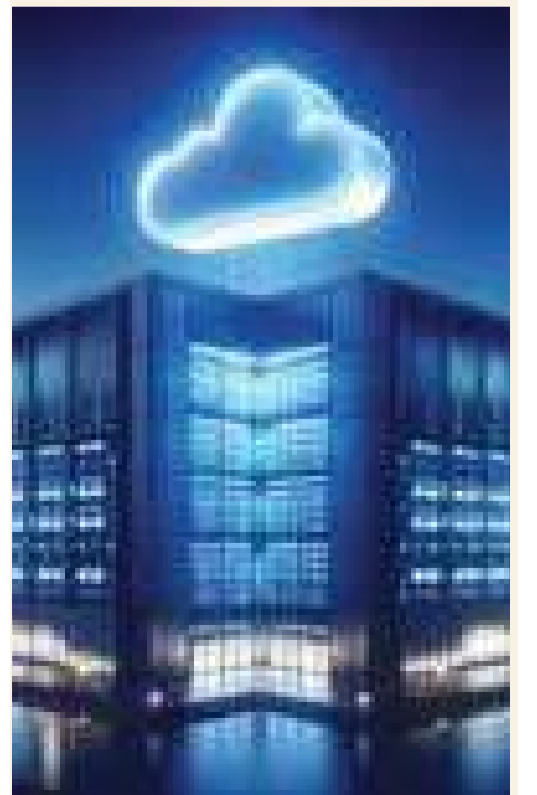
Here's a breakdown of all the versions of iOS that have been released, when they were released, when they were last updated, and the latest iOS version.

iPhone OS 1 – Released June 29, 2007 (Latest 1.1.5 July 15, 2008)
iPhone OS 2 – Released July 11, 2008 (Latest 2.2.1 January 27, 2009)
iPhone OS 3 – Released June 17, 2009 (Latest 3.2.2 August 11, 2010)
iOS 4 – Released June 22, 2010 (Latest 4.3.5 July 25, 2011)



iOS 5 – Released October 12, 2011 (Latest 5.1.1 May 7, 2012)
iOS 6 – Released September 19, 2012 (Latest 6.1.6 February 21, 2014)
iOS 7 – Released September 18, 2013 (Latest 7.1.2 June 30, 2014)
iOS 8 – Released September 17, 2014 (Latest 8.4.1 August 13, 2015)
iOS 9 – Released September 16, 2015 (Latest 9.3.6 July 22, 2019)

iOS 10 – Released September 13, 2016 (Latest 10.3.4 July 22, 2019)
iOS 11 – Released September 19, 2017 (Latest 11.4.1 July 9, 2018)
iOS 12 – Released September 17, 2018 (Latest 12.5.7 January 23, 2023)
iOS 13 – Released September 19, 2019 (Latest 13.7 September 1, 2020)
iOS 14 – Released September 17, 2020 (Latest 14.8.1 October 26, 2021)
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WORLD NEWS

BY GIFT LUCKSON
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BY SAMI SAEED

Sudan is of great importance to the surrounding regions, such as the Horn of Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Africa, the Nile Basin countries, North Africa and the Arab region. Sudan is a founding state of the Organization of African Unity (which later became the African Union), a founding member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and a founding state of the League of Arab States.

With these complex relationships, Sudan is of special importance to most other regions of the world, including the European Union (EU). Because Europe has a long history in Sudan, and EU members have a great interest in Sudan or should have.

War broke out in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, 2013. The war escalated very quickly, leaving behind unprecedented destruction, killing and brutality. Several regional and international initiatives were launched to stop the war and establish peace. Despite the multiplicity of these initiatives, they did not succeed in making peace in Sudan.

Are there other international priorities greater than peace and stability in the heart of the African continent? Is this war important and influential on international security and peace? If the answer is yes, why are international and regional peace efforts unsuccessful?

Why should the world be more concerned about the war in Sudan?

The Importance of the Red Sea to International Trade:

Based on a report issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The Red Sea is an essential maritime route for global commerce through Suez Canal, linking Europe, Asia, and Africa. It accounts for around 12-15% of annual world trade. This constricted channel is essential for oil transit, with almost 7 million barrels of oil traversing it daily.

The trade value transiting the Red Sea to Europe is substantial; nevertheless, ascertaining the precise figure proves challenging. It is estimated that around 40 percent of Asia-Europe trade and over 95 percent of vessels navigating between the two regions typically transit the Red Sea, the rest go through Strait of Gibraltar.

This encompasses a diverse array of commodities, including containerized products, petroleum, and liquefied natural gas.

The recent assaults on vessels in the Red Sea have resulted in considerable interruptions to commercial routes and have escalated shipping expenses. This has adversely impacted the global economy, resulting in elevated prices and possible declines in GDP growth in Europe.

The Red Sea is an essential conduit for global commerce, and any interruptions to its navigation might result in substantial economic repercussions.

War, Migration and Human Trafficking

The Khartoum Process, officially the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, is a regional migration dialogue platform initiated in November 2014 to enhance cooperation among countries involved in migration between the Horn of Africa and Europe. It focuses on combating human trafficking, promoting dialogue, managing irregular migration, and addressing broader migration issues while facing challenges related to effectiveness and human rights.

Terrorism and Extremism

The current war in Sudan is a war of extremists. The war is led by fanatical generals who have a clear alliance with extremist, tribal leaders, and exclusionary Islamic ideological groups. This applies to both parties SAF and RSF who mobilize militias and ethnic groups against each other.

The two warring parties have prepared a chaotic environment that has allowed various armed groups to flourish, including some with jihadist and terrorist ideologies, and have even encouraged and provided them with weapons.

Here are some of the most prominent

The Islamic State (ISIS): Reports suggest that ISIS has an established network in Sudan, primarily focused on financial and logistical support rather than direct attacks. Sudan appears to be used as a transit point for jihadists moving towards other regions in Africa, particularly Libya, Mali, and West Africa. While denying the existence of an official ISIS entity, the Sudanese government has acknowledged the presence of ISIS-linked extremists within the country, and there is an



Dr Sami Saeed

Why steps of peace lame towards Sudan?

allegation that Dr. Mohamed Ali Elgizoly, the president of the "State of Law and Development" is a leading figure in the ISIS in Sudan.

Al Qaeda: Al Qaeda has also been trying to incite violence in Sudan. Al Qaeda has a longer history in the country, having been based there in the 1990s. When the war broke out, there were a number of Al Qaeda prisoners who were sentenced under judicial rulings issued against them during the time of the ousted president Al-Bashir. Al Qaeda members were released from prisons along with leaders of Islamists accused of criminal and political crimes, and the rest of the criminals, under a decision issued by the prison administration.

Al Baraa bin Malik Battalion

This is a Sudanese armed group with a militant Islamist ideology, aligned with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). They have been involved in the fighting and have expressed extremist views.

The spread of terrorist groups, as much as it is a threat to Sudan, and a great threat to the strip of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to note that the spread of terrorism in this part of Africa is a great threat to the world, and especially Europe.

The war that erupted in Sudan on April 15, 2023, has triggered a complex web of international and regional peace initiatives. These efforts aim to mediate between the warring factions, SAF and RSF, and pave the way for a ceasefire and lasting peace.

Why are the steps of peace lame?

The United Nations:

The UN, through its Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), has been playing a central role in coordinating peace efforts. It has worked closely with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to form a "Trilateral Mechanism" for mediation.

The UN Security Council voted to terminate the mandate of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) on December 1, 2023, following a request from Sudanese authorities. The mission officially closed on February 29, 2024.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres had appointment Ramtane Lamamra from Algeria as his Personal Envoy for the Sudan to continue the UN efforts to restore peace and political stability in the country.

International Humanitarian Conference

International humanitarian conference for Sudan and neighbouring countries, held in Paris, on 15 April 2024. Ministers and representatives from 58 states, including donors and neighboring and regional nations, as well as representatives from regional organizations like the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development were present at this conference. The UN Secretary-General's personal envoy for Sudan

was also present.

The Geneva Meeting

International community organized a meeting in Switzerland on August 14, 2024. They established the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group. ALPS secured the reopening and expansion of critical humanitarian access routes, received commitments to improve the protection of civilians, particularly women and children, as well as developed a framework to ensure compliance with the Jeddah Declaration and any future agreements between the warring parties.

The African Union (AU):

The African Union Appointed on 17 January 2024, three eminent African personalities, as members of the AU High-Level Panel on Sudan. The AU High-Level Panel chaired by Dr. Mohamed Ibn CHAMBAS.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):

IGAD has been actively involved in mediation efforts, given Sudan's strategic importance in the region. It has hosted meetings with the warring parties and facilitated dialogue. The government of Sudan has accused in January 2024 the IGAD of being biased to RSF and suspended its membership in the IGAD, which has tried to broker talks between the country's warring parties (Al-Jazeera).

Jeddah Peace Talks:

Launched in May 2023 amid escalating tensions between SAF and RSF, the mediation sought to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access. Despite numerous negotiation rounds, the talks were frequently suspended due to persistent violations and disagreements over terms, ultimately failing to secure a lasting ceasefire or facilitate safe humanitarian aid corridors.

Neighbouring Countries

Countries bordering Sudan, such as Egypt, South Sudan, and Chad, have also been playing a role in the peace process, given the conflict's potential to destabilize the entire region.

Challenges and Prospects

Despite these numerous initiatives, achieving a sustainable peace in Sudan remains a daunting task. The conflict is deeply rooted in complex political, economic, and social factors. Both the SAF and the RSF have significant military capabilities, and neither side has shown a clear commitment to a peaceful resolution.

Entry Points

If we go along with the assumptions of this paper, then Europe has a strategic interest in stopping the war in Sudan and establishing peace and political stability there. To achieve this goal, European countries individually, and the European Union as a union, can adopt a number of approaches to implement this strategy and achieve their interests.

Nigeria, Caribbean nations to deepen trade ties at upcoming summit

As part of efforts to strengthen economic ties between Africa and the Caribbean, Aquarian Consult Limited (ACL), in partnership with the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, is set to host the Aquarian Consult Afri-Caribbean Investment Summit (AACIS '25) from March 25-28, 2025, at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja. Themed "Bridging Continents: Africa and the Caribbean—A Partnership for Prosperity," the summit aims to foster cross-regional investment, unlock new economic opportunities, and facilitate high-level discussions on trade and development.

In a statement made available to the media on Tuesday, the Summit Coordinator, Hyelsinta Linda Ojo, emphasized the significance of the event in promoting credible investment opportunities and fostering partnerships in key sectors such as technology, agriculture, manufacturing, and finance. She noted that the summit will bring together policymakers, investors, business leaders, and entrepreneurs to explore strategies for enhancing bilateral trade and economic collaboration.

Ojo highlighted Aquarian Consult's 16-year track record in business advisory, strategy development, and capacity building, stating that the company has played a key role in facilitating industry growth and supporting sustainable development in an evolving global economy. According to her, the summit will provide a platform for high-level dialogue, strategic networking, and impactful partnerships, further solidifying trade and investment relations between Africa and the Caribbean.

The event is expected to attract distinguished speakers and policymakers, including Dr. Terrance Drew, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, who will deliver the keynote address alongside an official delegation. Also scheduled to speak is Dr. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Former President of Mauritius, who will share insights on investment and economic development strategies.

Among the key highlights of the summit are keynote addresses, plenary sessions, and sector-focused discussions on trade policies and business growth. An exhibition showcase will feature innovations, startups, and investment-ready businesses, providing entrepreneurs and investors an opportunity to connect and explore potential collaborations.

A major aspect of the summit will be discussions on Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programs, a key revenue source for Caribbean nations. Ojo noted that the summit will help Nigerian businesses and investors explore opportunities in the Caribbean, while also allowing Caribbean investors to assess potential ventures in Africa. She emphasized that while Caribbean nations offer vast lands and investment-friendly policies, Nigeria has a wealth of innovative entrepreneurs and businesses in need of investment, making the summit a timely opportunity for economic collaboration.

Interim Chief Operating Officer of Aquarian Consult, Abisola Bamtefa, highlighted the summit's potential to create new opportunities for African entrepreneurs and small businesses, stating that the event could serve as a gateway for securing investment and expanding business operations.

AACIS '25 represents a significant step toward strengthening Africa-Caribbean economic relations, fostering long-term investment partnerships, and opening new trade frontiers. With growing interest in cross-border collaborations, the summit is expected to pave the way for deeper engagement between Africa and the Caribbean, reinforcing a shared vision for economic prosperity.

LIVING LEGENDS

BY SA'ADATU MAINA
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Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar Sadiq Malafa

Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar Sadiq Malafa was born in 1965 in Whona, a village in Gombi Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. She started her education at St. Theresa School in Luggere, Adamawa, before moving on to Government Secondary School in Hong for her secondary education.

After finishing secondary school, she pursued a certificate in nursing and midwifery at the School of Nursing in Yola. While she was waiting for admission into the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital to further her studies, a friend suggested she apply to the Nigerian Navy. She did, and in 1988, she was recruited—becoming the only female from Northern Nigeria in her batch.

Once in the Navy, Malafa didn't stop learning. She earned a law degree from the University of Lagos, followed by a master's degree in constitutional and criminal law from the same university in 2004. Later, she obtained a second master's degree in international maritime law from the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta in 2009. As of 2017, she was working toward a Ph.D.

Malafa's journey in the Nigerian Navy officially began when she was commissioned as a midshipman in 1990. Over the years, she steadily climbed the ranks, proving herself as a



Rear Admiral Jamila Abubakar Sadiq

capable officer. In December 2017, she was promoted to the rank of Commodore, which is equivalent to a Brigadier General in the Army. This was a historic moment, as she became the first woman from Northern Nigeria to achieve this rank.

Throughout her career, she has held important positions in the

Navy. One of her key roles was serving as the Deputy Director of Civil-Military Relations (Law Support) at the Nigerian Navy headquarters, where she was responsible for legal affairs.

Malafa is also passionate about mentoring young women, especially those from Northern Nigeria, encouraging them

to join the military and break barriers in male-dominated fields.

Rear Admiral Malafa's story is one of perseverance and breaking stereotypes. She has paved the way for more women to join the Nigerian Armed Forces and rise through the ranks. Her career shows the importance of

determination, continuous learning, and pushing beyond societal limitations.

Her journey remains an inspiration, proving that with hard work and commitment, anyone—regardless of background or gender—can achieve great things.

General Yakubu Gowon

General Yakubu Gowon (rtd.) was born on 19 October 1934, in Kanke, Plateau State, Nigeria. He is a Nigerian politician and former military Head of State.

Gowon was born into a Christian family and attended St. Bartholomew's Primary School in Wusasa, Zaria. He later attended the Government College in Zaria and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the United Kingdom.

General Gowon joined the Nigerian Army in 1954 and rose through the ranks. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1955 and served in various capacities, including as a platoon commander, company commander, and battalion commander.

In July 1966, Gowon became the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces after a military coup. He was just 31 years old at the time.

During his tenure, Gowon oversaw the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and implemented various policies aimed at promoting national unity and development.

General Gowon is married to Victoria Gowon, and they have three children together.

General Yakubu Gowon is indeed a living legend and a significant figure in Nigerian history. As the Head of State during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), he played a crucial role in keeping the country united. No wonder Nigerians, using his surname as an acronym G-O-W-O-N, called him Go On With One Nigeria.

Gowon's efforts to rebuild and reconcile the nation after the civil war are still remembered and appreciated today. He is indeed a national hero and a symbol of Nigerian resilience and determination.

General Yakubu Gowon created 12 states in Nigeria on May 27, 1967. Prior to this, Nigeria had only Four Regions: Northern Region, Western Region, Mid-Western Region, and Eastern Region.

Gowon's creation of 12 states was a significant step towards decentralising power and promoting regional development.

General Yakubu Gowon introduced the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme in 1973. The NYSC was established to promote national unity, encourage cultural exchange, and develop the skills of Nigerian youths. The scheme requires Nigerian graduates to participate in a one-year compulsory national service, during which they are deployed to different parts of the country to work in various sectors.

After the Biafran forces surrendered in January 1970, General Yakubu Gowon declared: "No victor, no vanquished".



Wole Soyinka: A literary icon and Nobel laureate

Born on July 13, 1934, in Abeokuta, Nigeria, Akinwande Oluwale "Wole" Soyinka is a renowned Nigerian playwright, poet, essayist, and social critic. He is one of Africa's most distinguished writers and the first African to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986.

Soyinka was born into a Yoruba family and grew up in a culturally rich environment. His father, Samuel Ayodele Soyinka, was an Anglican minister and a headmaster, while his mother, Grace Eniola Soyinka, was a shopkeeper.

Soyinka's early life was marked by a strong Christian upbringing and an exposure to traditional Yoruba culture.

Soyinka attended St. Peter's Primary School in Abeokuta and later proceeded to Abeokuta Grammar School. In 1952, he enrolled at the University College Ibadan, where he studied English Literature, Greek, and History. Soyinka later moved to the University of Leeds in England, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in English Literature in 1957.

Literary Career

Soyinka's literary career spans over six decades and includes a wide range of genres, such as plays, poems, essays, and novels. His works often explore themes of identity, culture, politics, and social

justice, drawing heavily from his Nigerian heritage and experiences.

Some of Soyinka's notable works include:

"The Lion and the Jewel" (1963) - a play that explores the tension between traditional and modern values in Nigeria.

"Death and the King's Horseman" (1975) - a play that examines the complexities of cultural identity and the impact of colonialism on traditional societies.

"Aké: The Years of Childhood" (1981) - a memoir that recounts Soyinka's childhood experiences in Nigeria.

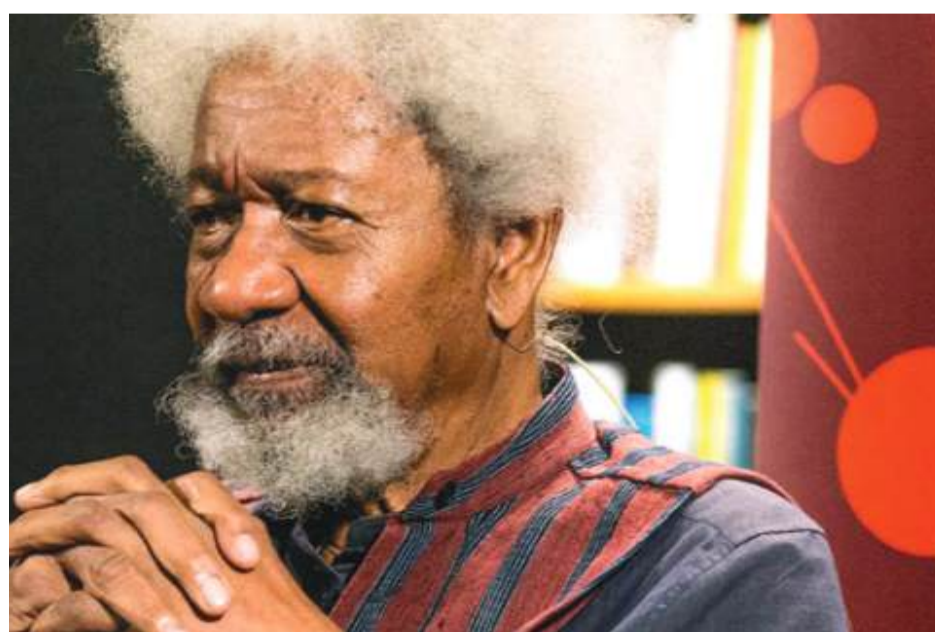
"The Open Sore of a Continent" (1996) - a collection of essays that critiques the Nigerian government and explores themes of democracy and human rights.

Awards and recognition

Soyinka's contributions to literature have been recognized globally. Some of his notable awards include:

- Nobel Prize in Literature (1986) - Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for his contributions to literature, which the Nobel Committee described as "a rich and varied output that has earned him a place among the greatest writers of our time."

- Agip Prize for Literature (1980) - Soyinka was awarded the Agip Prize for his play "Death and the King's Horseman."



Prof. Wole Soyinka

- Commonwealth Poetry Prize (1987) - Soyinka was awarded the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for his collection of poems "Mandela's Earth and Other Poems."

Activism and Politics

Soyinka has been an outspoken critic of social injustice and political oppression. He has been involved in various activism efforts, including:

Critique of Nigerian

Government

Soyinka has been a vocal critic of the Nigerian government, particularly during the military regimes of the 1980s and 1990s.

Anti-Apartheid Movement: Soyinka was an active supporter of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa during the 1980s.

Environmental Activism: Soyinka has been involved in environmental activism efforts, particularly in Nigeria, where he has spoken out against oil pollution

and environmental degradation.

Legacy

Wole Soyinka's legacy as a writer, activist, and intellectual is immense. He has inspired generations of writers, artists, and activists across Africa and beyond. His commitment to social justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability has made him a respected voice globally.

DID YOU KNOW?BY DAJEN COMFORT YAKUBU
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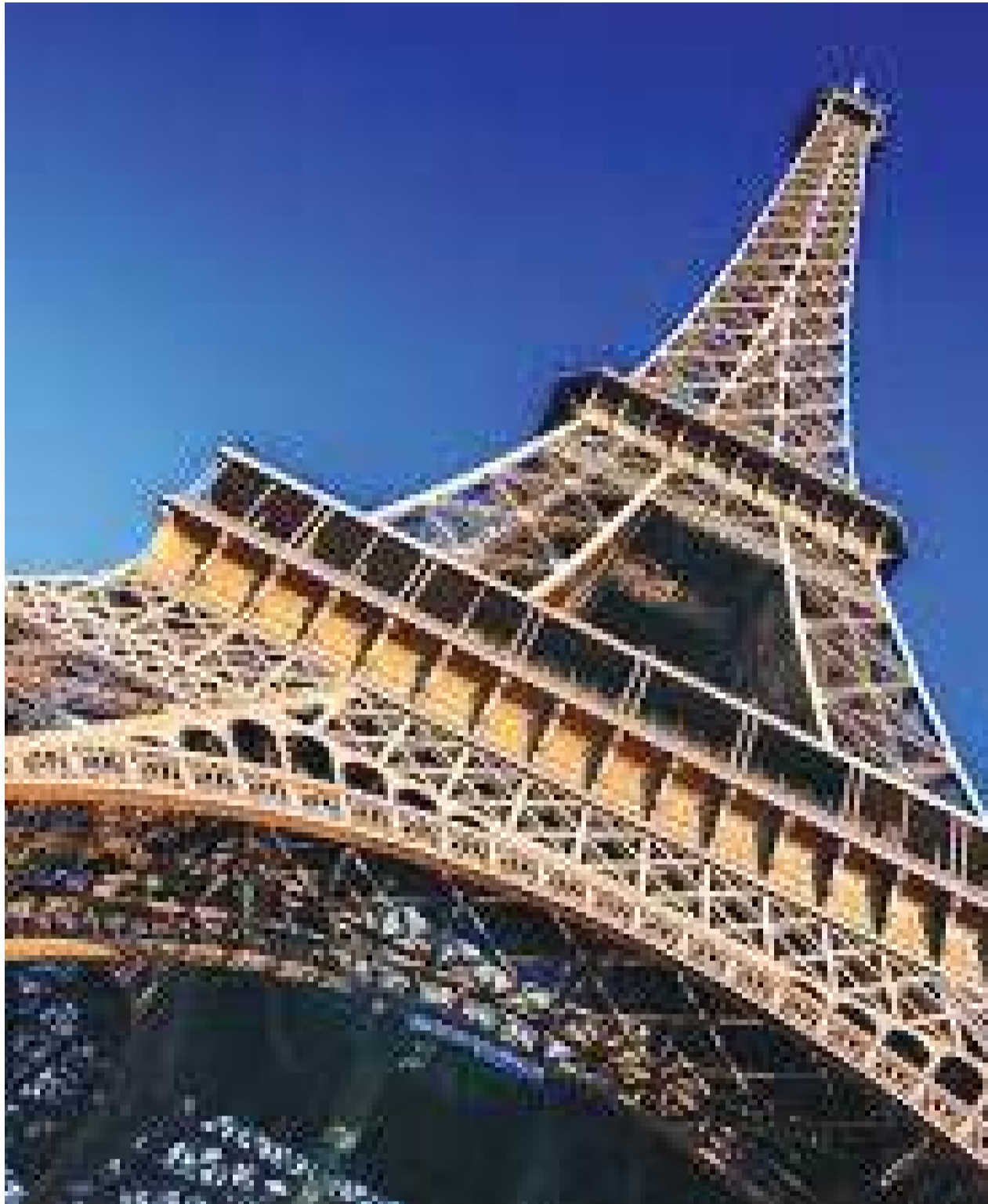
Eiffel Tower

Located on the Champ de Mars in Paris, France, this wrought-iron lattice tower is one of the most recognizable structures in the world. Built for the 1889 World's Fair, it was named after Gustave Eiffel, the engineer whose company designed and constructed it.

Standing at an impressive 330 metres (1,083 feet) tall, the Eiffel Tower was the tallest human-made structure in the world for 41 years until the Chrysler Building was completed in 1930.

Its base is square, measuring 125 metres (410 feet) on each side, and it has three levels for visitors, with restaurants on the first and second levels.

Interestingly, the Eiffel Tower was initially criticized by some of France's leading artists and intellectuals for its design, but it has since become a global cultural icon of France and one of the most-visited monuments in the world. In fact, it received over 5.8 million visitors in 2022 alone.



The Dome of the Rock

Located in Jerusalem, Israel, the Dome of the Rock is a magnificent Islamic shrine and one of the most iconic landmarks in the world. Built in 691 CE by the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik, it's considered one of the oldest and most important Islamic monuments.

The Dome of the Rock is situated on the Temple Mount (also known as the Haram al-Sharif), a site sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The shrine is built over a rocky outcrop, believed by Muslims to be the spot where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven during his Night Journey.

The Dome of the Rock's stunning architecture features an octagonal base, a cylindrical drum, and a golden dome that rises 65 feet (20 meters) above the base. The exterior is adorned with intricate tile work, calligraphy, and ornate geometric patterns.

This sacred site is not only a masterpiece of Islamic architecture but also a symbol of the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of Jerusalem.



London Bridge

London Bridge, one of the world's most iconic landmarks, has a rich history spanning over 2,000 years. The first bridge built on this site was a Roman bridge constructed around 43 AD, during the Roman occupation of Britain.

Over the centuries, several bridges were built and rebuilt on this site, each with its own unique character. The most famous of these was the medieval London Bridge, built by the Normans in 1176. This bridge was a bustling hub of activity, lined with shops, houses, and even a chapel.

In the 19th century, the medieval bridge was demolished and replaced with a new bridge designed by John Rennie. This bridge, known as Rennie's Bridge, was opened in 1831 and served the city for over 130 years.

The modern London Bridge, designed by architect Mott, Hay and Anderson, was opened in 1973. This bridge is a sleek, modern design made of concrete and steel, with three spans and a central pier.

Here are some interesting facts about London Bridge:
Location: London Bridge spans the River Thames, connecting the City of London to Southwark.

Cost: The modern London Bridge cost £4 million to build (approximately £60 million today).

Length: The bridge is 928 feet (283 metres) long.

Width: The bridge is 85 feet (26 metres) wide.

Materials: The bridge is made of concrete, steel, and granite.

Today, London Bridge is a popular tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors each year. Its rich history, stunning architecture, and picturesque location make it one of the world's most beloved landmarks.



SPACE AVAILABLE

The Arbiter

BY HASSAN GIMBA
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Between the Senator and the Soldier

As long as I remain the minister of defence, our soldiers will marry the prettiest women, live in the best houses, eat the best food, wear the best clothes and drive the best cars because when war comes, they will be the ones to die first. - Muhammadu Ribadu.

If I did not get the above quotation right, I would not be far off the correct one. I vividly recall reading the book *Power of Powers, A Biography of the Late Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu*, in which the above quotation was narrated the year it was published. The 100-page book, published by Gaskiya Corporation in Zaria in 1974, was written by Sidi H. Ali, a veteran journalist and politician who died in April last year. Our late father, a consummate historian who loved books and read a lot, bought it that year and brought it home.

That statement was singular, and I memorised it at that time. It was such a morale booster and enough marketing for the noble profession of soldiering to the impressionable young mind of a then ten-year-old that I yearned to be a soldier. I became active in physical activities and started leading the parade of my primary school, Shehu Garbai, at the Race Course ground during Children's and Independence Day parades. I also started going to the sports council for boxing lessons after the Borno State Sports Council sent a boxing coach to our school.

I joined the Boy Scouts movement from Class Seven. Encouraged by our father, Borno and later Yobe State assistant scout commissioner, I climbed from Cub Scout to Scout Master at Government College, Maiduguri. The school, with the blessings of the Borno State Ministry of Education, encouraged us to go on hikes and campings, the last of which was in the Gwoza Hills. That was in the

good old days when people could travel through the night and menaces like bandits and Boko Haram were not in the equation, not to talk of kidnappings for ransom or ritual killings.

At Government College Maiduguri, I also joined the Cadet, where retired Non-Commissioned Officers took us through the various marching and parade drills, as well as different tactics and strategies of warfare. I saw automatic guns like the MG1 at close quarters; we used them with dummy bullets.

However, in the trajectory of human development, many childhood dreams never materialise. If it were, many of those reading this peace would have been married to Indians. Another dream of youths growing up in the 1970s and 1980s was to marry Indian beauties, having been bewitched by Bollywood screen divas like Hema Malini, Rekha, Jayaprada, Tina Munim, Poonam Dhillon, et al.

As someone who admires a profession that breeds gentlemen whose creed is to protect the country and its citizens, even at the cost of their lives, my heart bleeds whenever a soldier finds himself in a quandary.

I was happy when I read about the perks President Bola Ahmed Tinubu recently approved for retired officers. The only misgiving I had was quantifying medical bills in dollars. While one may ask whether that means our hospitals are not going to be upgraded and world-class ones built, one must advise that we should respect our currency so that it attracts respect and dignity. After all, the military is trained to place the nation above every other country, the same for its currency.

Apart from that, all the things approved for them are well deserved, and one prays that the same is extended to the other ranks who bear the

brunt of any operation. It is unfair for soldiers to die in, or conclude, military service while their families have no house to go to after leaving the barracks.

I know of the 44 Hospital, an army hospital in Kaduna, and the Air Force hospital in Bauchi. However, with what is happening to our soldiers fighting insurgents and terrorists, the urgent need for a world-class hospital for the military in each of our geopolitical zones cannot be overstated. This should be treated with the utmost urgency and importance.

If the National Assembly, comprising fewer than 3,000 people - if you add all the legislators, staff and their families - would budget N15 billion for a hospital, despite their comfortable lives and huge allowances, why shouldn't our soldiers sleeping in the bushes under inclement weather and facing bullets and bombs to allow us to sleep at night?

When faced with choosing who the government should care for between a senator and a soldier, the answer is pretty apparent to many Nigerians. But to the generality of Nigerians, the country can do without senators who, in most cases, have no enduring legacies or altruistic records.

Unlike their Roman precursors, senators would never go out to fight for the country. Their Roman forerunners led and fought in wars to demonstrate their leadership and

commitment to the state. During crises, such as wars, insurgencies, or invasions, senators often took up arms.

Nigerian soldiers, on the other hand, have been laying down their lives for the country's unity since independence. They have given up their comforts so that you and I may sleep and the senator can get his humongous allowances for saying 'aye' and 'nay'. Their sacrifice is a testament to their unwavering commitment to our safety and unity, and their new package should be a sign of gratitude from all of us.

Hassan Gimba, anipr, is the CEO/Publisher of Neptune Prime.

