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NEPTUNE PRIME

12-13:09:2026 Vol. 1 No.90 WEEKEND®

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Dangote.

Dangote IPO, NNPC self-service stations headline new energy sector developments

- **NNPC to transform filling stations into energy and mobility hubs**
- **IPO to turn Nigerians from energy consumers into refinery owners**

By Abdullahi Haruna

With the planned Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Dangote Petroleum Refinery, Nigerians who have, for years, depended on refined petroleum products are set to get an opportunity to own a stake in one of the country's biggest industrial assets.

President of Dangote Industries Limited, Aliko Dangote, who spoke on the forthcoming offer, said the IPO would enable Nigerians to move from being mere consumers of energy products to becoming owners of the refinery.

The proposed offer comprises 4.1 billion ordinary shares at N525 each and is expected to raise about N2.15 trillion if fully subscribed, with retail investors forming a major target of the offer.

The offer price means that an investor can subscribe for a minimum of 10 shares for N5,250, opening the opportunity to Nigerians who may not have previously considered investing in a large industrial company.

Nigerians to become Owners of an Industrial System

Dangote described the proposed listing as more than a financial transaction, saying it would give Nigerians an opportunity to par-

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INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC PHYSICAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT FOR THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN NIGERIA (6)

NAFDAC under growing pressure as counterfeit products flood Nigerian markets

By Tawheed Yakub

The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) is coming under increasing pressure to curb the proliferation of counterfeit, substandard and falsified products in Nigeria, as the illegal trade continues to pose serious risks to public health.

NAFDAC Intensifies Fight against Falsified Products

The scale of the problem was highlighted in May when NAFDAC destroyed counterfeit, expired and unwholesome regulated products worth about N1.85 billion in Abuja. The items included fake medicines, antimalarials, antibiotics, counterfeit food products, cosmetics, insecticides and medical devices.

NAFDAC Director-General, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, described the proliferation of counterfeit products as a national security and public health concern, warning that criminals behind the trade were becoming increasingly sophisticated.

The agency has also reported attacks on its officers during enforcement operations. Adeyeye said such attacks would not deter NAFDAC from pursuing those involved in the production and distribution of fake products.

A Growing Challenge Nationwide

The growing challenge extends beyond medicines. In June, NAFDAC raised concerns about counterfeit cosmetics, food and beverages, which the agency said accounted for a significant

CONTINUES ON PAGE 3



NAFDAC DG Adeyeye.

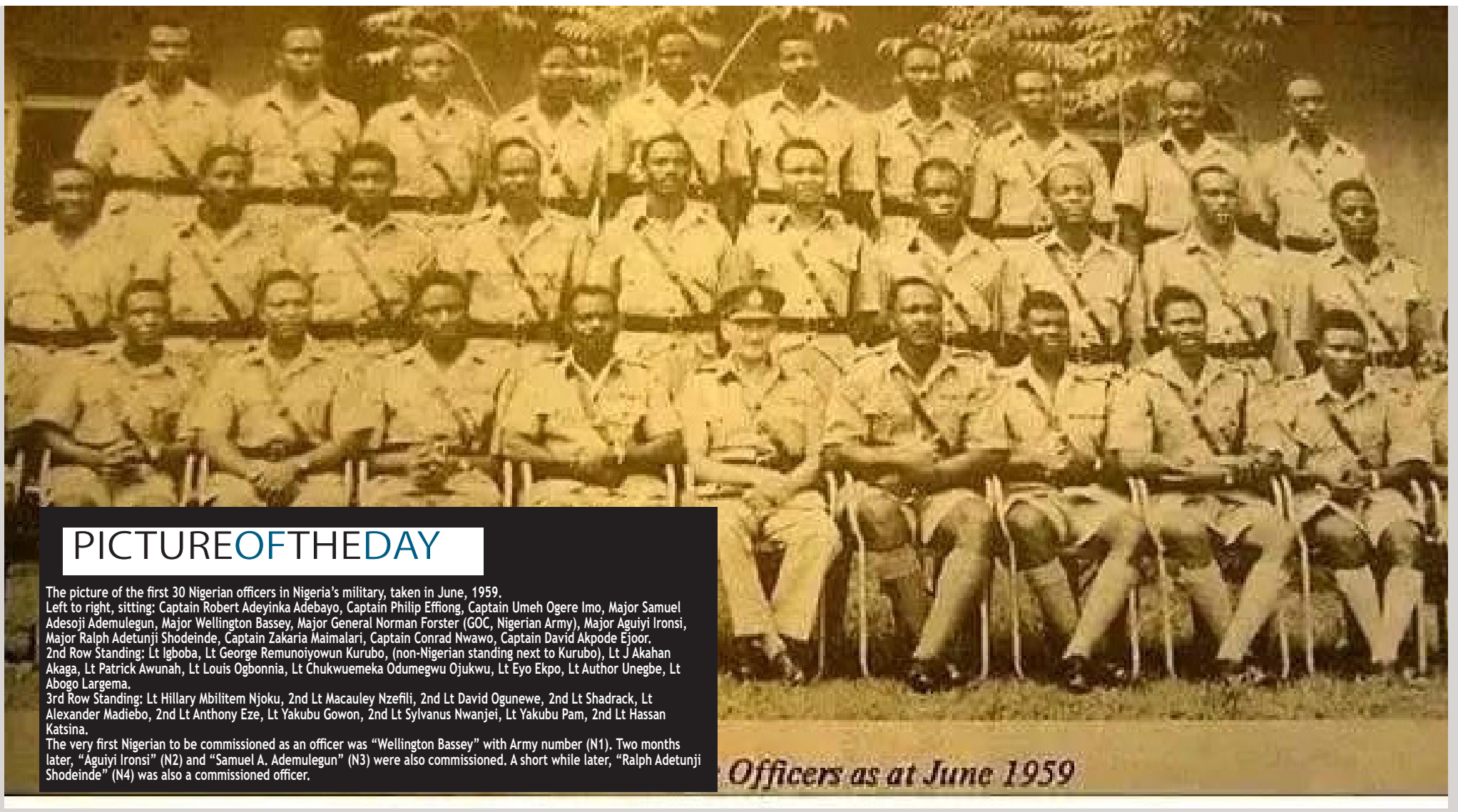
Neptune World

I dream of an Africa, which is in peace with itself

NELSON MANDELA

If you only visit two continents in your lifetime, visit Africa – twice!

R. ELLIOT



PICTUREOFTHEDAY

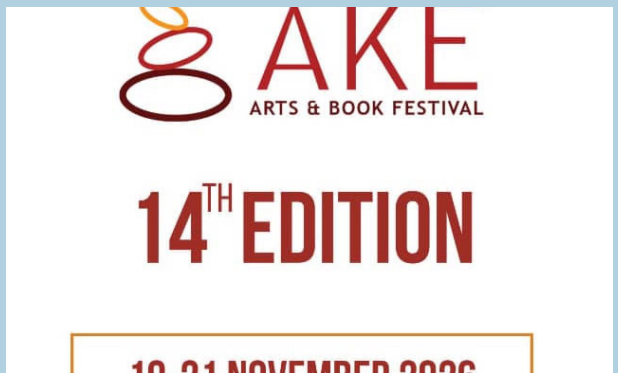
The picture of the first 30 Nigerian officers in Nigeria's military, taken in June, 1959.
Left to right, sitting: Captain Robert Adeyinka Adebayo, Captain Philip Effiong, Captain Umeh Ogere Imo, Major Samuel Adesoji Ademulegun, Major Wellington Bassey, Major General Norman Forster (GOC, Nigerian Army), Major Aguiyi Ironsi, Major Ralph Adetunji Shodeinde, Captain Zakaria Maimalari, Captain Conrad Nwawo, Captain David Akpode Ejoor.
2nd Row Standing: Lt Igboba, Lt George Remunoiyowun Kurubo, (non-Nigerian standing next to Kurubo), Lt J Akahan Akaga, Lt Patrick Awunah, Lt Louis Ogbonnia, Lt Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Lt Eyo Ekpo, Lt Author Unegbe, Lt Abogo Largema.
3rd Row Standing: Lt Hillary Mbilitem Njoku, 2nd Lt Macauley Nzefili, 2nd Lt David Ogunewe, 2nd Lt Shadrack, Lt Alexander Madiebo, 2nd Lt Anthony Eze, Lt Yakubu Gowon, 2nd Lt Sylvanus Nwanjei, Lt Yakubu Pam, 2nd Lt Hassan Katsina.
The very first Nigerian to be commissioned as an officer was "Wellington Bassey" with Army number (N1). Two months later, "Aguiyi Ironsi" (N2) and "Samuel A. Ademulegun" (N3) were also commissioned. A short while later, "Ralph Adetunji Shodeinde" (N4) was also a commissioned officer.

RANDOM FACTS

Aké Arts & Book Festival announces 14th edition in Lagos

By Asma'u Yahaya Mustapha

The Aké Arts & Book Festival is set to return to Lagos for its 14th edition from November 19 to 21, 2026, with this year's festival themed "Native Intelligence."
Founded in 2013 by Nigerian writer and poet Lola Shoneyin through the Book Buzz Foundation, the festival has grown into a major literary and cultural gathering, bringing together writers, poets, musicians, actors, filmmakers, artists and thinkers.
The 2026 edition will explore human knowledge systems and their relationship with artificial intelligence, continuing the festival's tradition of examining contemporary social, cultural and intellectual questions through literature and the arts.
The festival's programme typically features panel discussions, book conversations, poetry, music, film screenings, theatre and other cultural performances. Its well-known Palmwine & Poetry Night also forms part of its cultural programming.
The festival was initially held annually in Abeokuta, Ogun State, from 2013 to 2017 before moving its physical operations to Lagos in 2018. It also held virtual editions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
The festival takes its name from Aké, the historic Abeokuta neighbourhood where Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka was born.
The 2025 edition, themed "Reclaiming Truth," was held from November 20 to 22 in Ikeja, Lagos, with British-Nigerian writer Bernardine Evaristo among the featured guests.
The Aké Arts & Book Festival is organised by the Book Buzz Foundation, whose broader work focuses on promoting literacy, particularly among school-age children, developing reading resources and supporting the creation of reading spaces in schools.
The 2026 edition is expected to bring together literary and cultural practitioners for three days of conversations, performances and creative exchange in Lagos.



The suffering of the Palestinian people is a scar on the conscience of the world - UK PM Burnham

Burnham.

UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham has reaffirmed Britain's commitment to a two-state solution, saying expanding Israeli settlements in the West Bank threaten prospects for peace.
The UK, France and Canada have announced measures targeting settlement goods and activities.
He said: In a difficult and dangerous world, a decade on from Brexit, there is a risk that Britain loses the confidence to lead and stand up for its values.
I'm not prepared to let that happen. It is more important than ever that Britain stands for something.
We have called for years for a two-state solution in the Middle East, but we must recognise that those words are meaningless unless we back them up with action.
For too long, we have been hesitant to act, fearful of being accused of being anti-Israel.
Today we are announcing carefully judged, targeted steps that are not aimed at the Israeli people, but at the unacceptable policies of the current Israeli government.
The suffering of the Palestinian people is a scar on the conscience of the world. Innocent Palestinians, including children, continue to be killed in Gaza. And there is still a humanitarian crisis, with far too little aid getting in.
The scale of destruction is hard to comprehend. More than 70,000 people lie dead - at least 20,000 of them children. Families and communities have been torn apart. Millions displaced. And the population of Gaza is now penned into just one third of the territory.
I know that people across the UK feel very deeply about this issue - and so do I.
Before I became Prime Minister, I said our country's response had been too slow and simply not good enough. That's why I committed to changing the government's approach.
I will not stand by as the horrific suffering continues to grow and the prospect of a two-state solution - the best hope for peace and stability in the region - comes under attack.
More settlements have been approved under the four years of this Israeli government than in the previous 20 years. The UN has reported more than 1,500 incidents of settler violence so far this year, aimed at driving out Palestinians. And the situation is growing worse, fast.



How a church & mosque shared fence for over 100 years in Jos.

In the centre of Jos, the Tin City, a Church and a Mosque have stood side by side for over 100 years. The location is Adebayo Street, right next to the city centre popularly called Terminus, where Christians and Muslims worship on the same plot of land.
As a sign of the unity both faiths should embody, the two places of worship even share a common fence. For more than a century they have coexisted, which is a clear example of interfaith resilience.
One of the strongest symbols of this unity is the church and mosque on Adebayo Street in Jos. Despite years of violent conflict in the city, both buildings have survived. They are more than just buildings — they represent hope, peace, and unity for Plateau State and for Nigeria at large.
The First Baptist Church Jos and the Nurudeen Society of Nigeria have lived side by side since 1911 without any conflict. For decades, they have drawn attention and sparked conversations as a model of peaceful coexistence.
People who don't know the history often wonder how two different religious communities have managed to live in peace, especially given the recurring crises in Jos over the years.
History tells us the two worship centres were founded by two brothers who moved from Ogbomosho to Jos in 1911. Even though they practiced different religions, they ran business together, lived in the same house, ate together, and respected each other's faith without friction.

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NEWS

Dangote IPO, NNPC self-service stations headline new energy sector developments

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ticipate in the value being created by the refinery and strengthen their connection with the country's industrial development.

"Every day, Nigerians use products that depend on refined petroleum. What makes this IPO unique is that it gives people the opportunity not only to consume but also to participate as owners in the industrial system that powers economic life," he said.

The offer comes as the refinery, which began operations in 2024, has grown into a major supplier of refined petroleum products in Nigeria while expanding its reach into other African markets. The company is also planning to increase its processing capacity to 1.4 million barrels per day by 2029.

For prospective investors, however, the attraction of owning part of the refinery goes beyond its size and strategic importance, as questions around valuation, profitability, crude supply, refining margins and expansion costs are likely to determine the long-term value of the investment.

NNPC Introduces Smart Stations

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited has begun introducing self-service fuel pumps at selected NNPC Retail stations, allowing motorists to dispense petrol themselves using a mobile application.

The development is part of NNPC's plan to deploy between 50 and 70 smart, self-service stations across the country within the next six months.

No More Fuel Attendants

Unlike the conventional system where an attendant dispenses fuel, the self-service model allows customers to select the amount of fuel they want, make payment through an app and use a code to activate the pump.

NNPC Retail shared a guide on its X handle on Friday showing motorists how to use the system. Here is a step-by-step guide on how to buy and dispense fuel yourself at participating NNPC stations:

Step 1: Motorists who want to use the self-service facility should first download the NRL Fuel App. Get the download link from the NNPC X handle.

Step 2: Open the app, tap Fuel Purchase, and select your fuel type.

Step 3: Browse the station list and choose an NNPC Retail station offering the self-service option.

The facility is currently available only at selected stations as NNPC rolls out the new system. Look for the green Self-Serve badge next to the station name. Tap it to select.



NNPC unveils smart stations.

Step 3: After selecting the station, enter the amount you wish to spend on fuel. Review the quantity and price, then tap Pay from Wallet. The system will process the transaction based on the amount entered.

Step 4: Once the payment is successful, the app will generate a digital receipt. It contains your Order ID, your Self-Service Code, and a QR Code.

Step 5: At the pump, enter your 8-digit self-service code on the terminal and press the hash key. Once validated, pick up the nozzle and fuel up—exactly the amount you paid for.

Transformation of Conventional Filling Stations

NNPC Executive Vice President, Downstream, Mumuni Dagazau, said the new model was part of the company's plan to transform conventional filling stations into broader energy and mobility hubs.

At the newly commissioned smart station on Bill Clinton Drive, Airport Road, Abuja, NNPC Retail Executive Director, Retail Operations and Mobility, Shettima Baba-Kukawa, customers could complete transactions on their phones and dispense the exact amount of fuel purchased.

NNPC said the smart stations would combine conventional petrol sales with services such as electric vehicle charging, liquefied petroleum gas, compressed natural gas and other mobility services.

NAFDAC under growing pressure as counterfeit products flood Nigerian markets

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

share of counterfeit products. It also warned that online procurement platforms were making it easier for counterfeiters to source fake products directly from foreign manufacturers.

The agency has continued issuing public alerts over specific counterfeit products. In January 2026, for instance, NAFDAC warned Nigerians about falsified Tavanic 500mg tablets traced to purchases from Lagos' open drug market.

Severe Consequences

Health experts have warned that the consequences can be severe. Counterfeit medicines may contain incorrect or harmful ingredients, fail to treat illnesses effectively and contribute to drug resistance and other serious health complications.

NAFDAC has responded with raids, seizures, prosecutions, product destruction and public alerts, while calling for stronger collaboration among security agencies, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and consumers.

The agency continues to urge Nigerians to purchase medicines and other regulated products only from approved outlets, check product details carefully and report suspicious products to NAFDAC.

NAFDAC DG Condemns Calls for Resignation

NAFDAC DG Adeyeye has criticised what she described as an aversion to public service among some Nigerians. She spoke on Monday at a press conference in Lagos while responding to a question on whether she would bow to pressure and resign following calls for her removal over the circulation of counterfeit products in Nigeria.

The NAFDAC DG said she retired after a 30-year teaching career in the United States and returned to Nigeria because she wanted to serve the country.

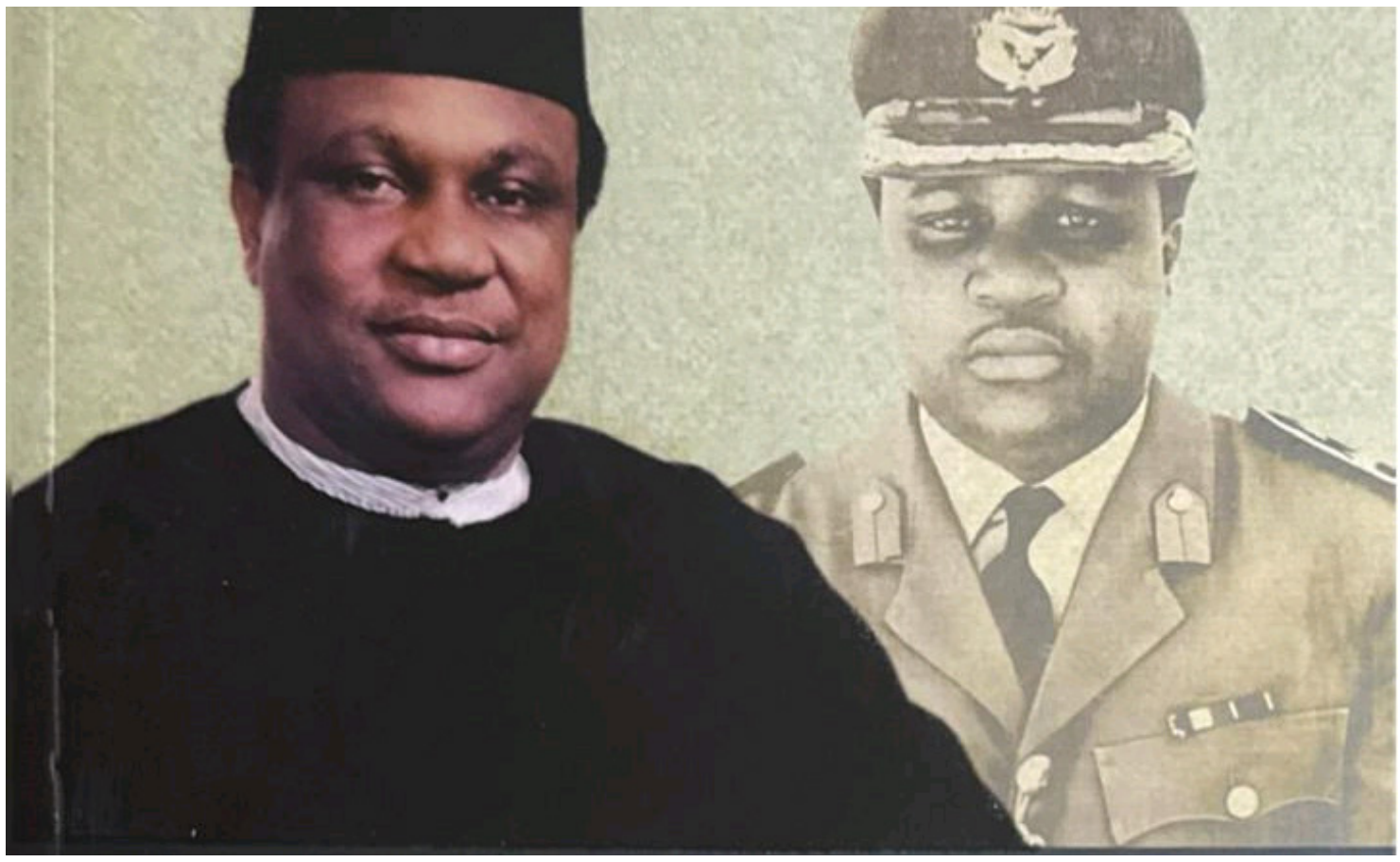
Adeyeye said that 2022, the final year of her first term, was particularly difficult, alleging that some staff members were instigated to embark on a strike to undermine the agency. She also alleged that some individuals seeking to become NAFDAC's next DG were working behind the scenes to instigate the unrest.



Fake products.

NEWS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA



Brigadier Usman.

Vice President Shettima, other dignitaries to unveil posthumous biography of Brigadier Musa Usman

Vice-President Kashim Shettima will on Monday unveil a posthumous biography of the late Brigadier Musa Usman, the pioneer Military Governor of the former North-Eastern State.

The 363-page book, titled Brigadier Musa Usman (1940–1991): Service and Impact, will be presented at the NAF Conference Centre, Kado, Abuja, by 10:00am.

According to a press statement signed by Hassan Tanimu Musa Usman, FCA, on behalf of the family, the biography chronicles the late military officer's life, career and contributions to the development and administration of the former North-Eastern State.

The book was authored by two Nigerian journalists and intellectuals, Malam Mahmud Jega and Dr Theophilus Abbah.

Brigadier Musa Usman, who served in the Nigerian Air Force, governed the former North-Eastern State between 1967 and 1975.

The vast territory administered by the late military governor has since been divided into six states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe.

The statement said Shettima would serve as the Special Guest of Honour and formally unveil the biography at the ceremony. Major General IBM Haruna, a former Federal Commissioner for Information, will chair the event, while Major General (Senator) Ike Omar Sanda Nwachukwu is expected to deliver the keynote address.

The Governor of Borno State, Prof Babagana Umara Zulum, will serve as the Chief Host.

Governors of Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe will serve as co-hosts, representing the six states that emerged from the former North-Eastern State administered by Brigadier Usman.

Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, will serve as the Book Presenter.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, is also expected to attend the event as a special guest, alongside other prominent Nigerians.

The biography, according to the statement, examines Brigadier Usman's contribution to the development of the region, particularly in infrastructure, education, healthcare and socio-economic development.

It said his administration laid foundations for systems and infrastructure that continued to influence the development of the region long after his tenure.

The book also traces his early life, military career and rise through the ranks of both the Nigerian Army and the Air Force before his historic appointment as governor. Former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, wrote the foreword to the biography and described the late governor as a man of integrity and honesty.

FG pays N18bn to former employees of defunct Nigeria Airways

The Federal Government has paid the sum of N18 billion to former staff of the defunct Nigeria Airways.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Taiwo Oyedele, disclosed this at a press briefing in Abuja on Friday.

He disclosed that more former staff claims were being verified and that the government would ensure that the entitlements of the former staff were fully paid.

Mr Oyedele said the payments were made possible by President Bola Tinubu, who gave the approval to settle the entitlements after more than twenty years.

Oyedele's said, "Today, I'm pleased to inform you that following the directive of Mr President, President Bola Tinubu, has now paid 2,100 former Nigeria Airways workers in batches one to seven, while another 600 beneficiaries in batches eight and nine are being finalised for payment within the next few days.

"Altogether, this represents 18 billion naira in benefits for 2,700 former workers.

"Recognise that no payment today can fully compensate for more than two decades of waiting, but it is important that government confronts these long-standing obligations rather than allowing them to remain unresolved for another generation."

The minister described the intervention as part of a broader effort by the current administration to address legitimate inherited obligations and put people at the centre of public finance.

He said, "Our message to Nigerians is simple: government must be trusted not only for the promises it makes, but also for the obligations it honours.

"As we strengthen Nigeria's public finances, improve revenues, and create greater fiscal space, we will continue to prioritise legitimate obligations that directly affect the welfare of Nigerians while maintaining transparency and fiscal discipline.

"For the former workers of Nigeria Airways to have waited so long, this is ultimately not favour from government.

"For more than two decades, following the liquidation of Nigeria Airways, many former employees have waited for the outstanding severance benefits.

"It's about people, dignity, trust, and the responsibility of government to honour legitimate obligations to its citizens.

"The minister apologised on behalf of the federal government for the delay in the payment of the entitlements, saying, "It is your entitlement. We apologise for the long delay and thank you for your patience."

He also disclosed that 12, 000 local contractors have been paid in a move to give greater credibility to the government's contractual agreements by meeting its obligations.

Speaking further on government efforts to settle contractors' debts, the minister said: "I don't think there's any country where they have enough resources. So, when we say we don't have enough, it's a normal thing. You go to America, they are borrowing. You go to Japan, it's more than 200% of their GDP. You go to the UK. So, I think it's the reality of life that our needs are limited, but our resources are limited.

"So, Mr President has directed that we change our priorities. And so, we decided that, you know, we are owing contractors a lot of money. Instead of paying the big contractors billions of Naira, why don't we prioritise the small contractors? So, we started by paying contractors that we owe 50 million Naira or less.

Woman arrested for sexual exploitation of minors

Operatives of the Anambra State Police Command have arrested a 36-year-old woman in Onitsha following open-source intelligence regarding a trending video depicting the alleged sexual abuse of a minor.

The operation, which took place on the evening of September 10, 2026, resulted in the rescue of four children—aged two, three, six, and nine years—alongside the recovery of sex toys and other incriminating items related to the case.

According to the Command, preliminary investigations are underway, and the spouse of the suspect is also being questioned.

"The suspect is currently in police custody as the Command intensifies its investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged offence and the possible involvement of other persons," the Command stated.

"The husband of the suspect is also undergoing interrogation to determine whether he has any connection with the alleged offence."

Reacting to the development, the Commissioner of Police, Anambra State Command, CP Nnanna Ama, psc, expressed deep concern, describing the act as unacceptable due to the vulnerability and exploitation of the children involved.

He directed a thorough investigation and ordered that the rescued minors be given immediate protection and welfare support.

"To this end, the Command notes that beyond the investigation and prosecution, its priority is the safety, dignity and wellbeing of the rescued children."

The Command will work with the appropriate child-protection and relevant support agencies to ensure that the victims receive the necessary care, protection, counselling and other support required for their recovery.

"Their identities and privacy will be protected throughout the process, and they will be treated with compassion and sensitivity," it added.

It also commended the vigilante operatives in the area, as well as bloggers and residents who provided information that assisted the investigation and led to the arrest of the suspect.



Police.

OUR HEART

Appointment of General Christopher Musa as Defence Minister: Issues beyond the euphoria

While many would have been taken aback by the news of the sudden resignation of the erstwhile Minister of Defence, Muhammed Badaru Abubakar on the 1st of December, 2025, not as many discerning minds would have been convinced by the reason of health given by the former minister for his dramatic exit from office.

Similar to the resignation of Abdullahi Umar Ganduje as the national chairman of the APC, Badaru had not been known to have any debilitating ailments that would have led to the decision to abruptly and voluntarily relinquish the strategic portfolio of Defence Minister.

As it soon became clear that Ganduje was eased out of office, it did not take long before it became obvious to the public that the immediate past Minister of Defence was sacked by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. In other words, he was one of the latest and, so far, biggest casualties of the state of emergency recently declared by the President on security. Several such should be expected in the days ahead.

Perhaps, what turned out to be a surprise was the announcement of General Christopher Gwabin Musa as the replacement for Muhammed Badaru. Why General Musa, who was relieved of his position of Chief of Defence Staff barely one month earlier? Was he sacked for incompetence, or found wanting in certain other areas of his responsibilities?

Coming in the wake of a widespread rumour of an attempted military coup, speculations were rife that the President's decision to sack General Musa, along with the heads of the Navy and the Air Force, might have been the outcome of their action or inaction regarding the alleged coup plot. If he had been shown the door based on the foiled putsch, what then, is the rationale for asking him to take charge of the entire national security architecture as Defence Minister?

Or, as it is being said in many informed circles, President Bola Tinubu had tactically dropped General Musa as the CDS, with a view to elevating him to the position of Defence Minister in compliance with the constitutional requirements that an occupant of that office must be a civilian.

Whatever the reasons that informed the choice of General Christopher Musa, the thunderous ovation and show of support the appointment has received from a broad spectrum of Nigerians is, for once, a glowing testament of popular approval for the President's decision.

We at Neptune Prime are on the same page with the opinion held by many that the appointment of General Christopher Musa ranks as one of the most appropriate in the entire gamut of political appointments made in the last two years of Tinubu's presidency. It is as fitting as putting "a round peg in a round hole."

From his commissioning as a 2nd Lieutenant at the end, his sojourn at the Nigerian Defence Academy in 1991, his trajectory in the Infantry Corps of the Army has been a phenomenal journey of challenges and landmark achievements. He rose from being a platoon commander to higher command positions such as General Staff Officer 1, Training and Operations, 81 Division of the Army.

From 2019 to 2025, he was in the northeast of the country, engaged in the campaign against insurgency. He began his six-year tour of duty as Commander Sector 3, Operation Lafiya Dole; Sector Commander, Multi-National Joint Task Force and finally Theatre Commander, Operation Hadin Kai. In 2025, he was posted to head the entire Army Infantry Corps from where he was appointed as the Chief of Defence Staff on the 19th of June, 2025.

Based on his rich track record, Nigerians are optimistic that with General Christopher Musa on the saddle, the nation will experience a paradigm shift from the lingering, unbridled reign of insecurity in all its ramifications.



Musa.

It is a positive note that General Christopher Musa appears to be conscious of the high expectations of the public. That much he indicated during his screening by the Senate through the many inspiring vibes and responses to questions.

General Musa declared before the Senate:

"I want to assure Nigerians that I understand the situation and what is required.

"I will ensure that we monitor all activities of the Armed Forces and other security agencies to guarantee their professionalism.

"We can win this war but we must work together. We need support as gaps within the Armed Forces currently hinder complete operational success.

"From day one, we will monitor and review all activities and operations, taking necessary measures to address any shortcomings, and also recognise that addressing funding gaps will be challenging."

Without wasting time on frivolous celebrations, pomp and pageantry, the new Defence Minister went straight to work soon after he was sworn in by the President. During his inaugural address to the military and civilian staff of the ministry, Musa reiterated the primary and strategic vision and mission goals during his tenure:

"We cannot operate in silos. We cannot allow gaps between policy and execution.

"The shedding of innocent blood must end. Our children deserve to return to school. Farmers must return to their farms.

"Many of these issues require both kinetic and non-kinetic solutions---justice, equity, fairness and good governance.

"I expect the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and urgency. There will be zero tolerance for corruption, indiscipline and indolence."

General Christopher Gwabin Musa has, so soon in the day, reinforced the general perception of him as a clear-sighted and thoroughbred professional soldier. With characteristic few but pungent words that hit at the heart of the matter, he has shown, between his Senate appearance and his inaugural address to the staff of the ministry, that there is a new dawn in the nation's beleaguered security sector. As the Christian saying goes: "A Daniel has come to judgment."

Nigeria at this point in its experience as a nation, could not have hoped for a better Minister of Defence. So much different from the groping, drab and lacklustre performance of the preceding era.

We can only echo the words of advice given by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, urging the new Defence Minister to be firm, resolute, committed, and to prioritise the nation's interests above others. In his words:

"Advising the Commander-in-Chief inquires firmness and commitment…Your role is critical and we pray for your success."

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NEPTUNE PRIME WEEKEND

NORTH-EAST

BY GIFT LUCKSON
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Adamawa government to equip 10,000 young people with practical technology skills

The Adamawa State Government is set to launch a major digital skills initiative aimed at equipping more than 10,000 young people with practical technology skills and preparing them for opportunities in the modern workforce.

Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri reaffirmed his administration's commitment to digital education during an inspection visit to the Adamawa State Digital Academy.

Speaking to journalists after inspecting the facility, Governor Fintiri pledged to provide the necessary equipment, funding and other support required to ensure that the academy delivers high-quality and globally relevant training.

"The world is now in a digital age, and Adamawa cannot afford to be left behind—especially with so many smart and resilient young people in our state," Fintiri said.

The Governor stressed that equipping young people with practical digital skills has become increasingly important in preparing them for emerging employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and participation in the global digital economy.



Fintiri.

He said the initiative forms part of his administration's broader efforts to invest in human capital development and create new opportunities for young people across the state.

The Coordinator of the Adamawa State Digital Academy, Sumayya Banbangida, disclosed that more than 10,000 prospective students had already registered online ahead of the academy's official commencement of training.

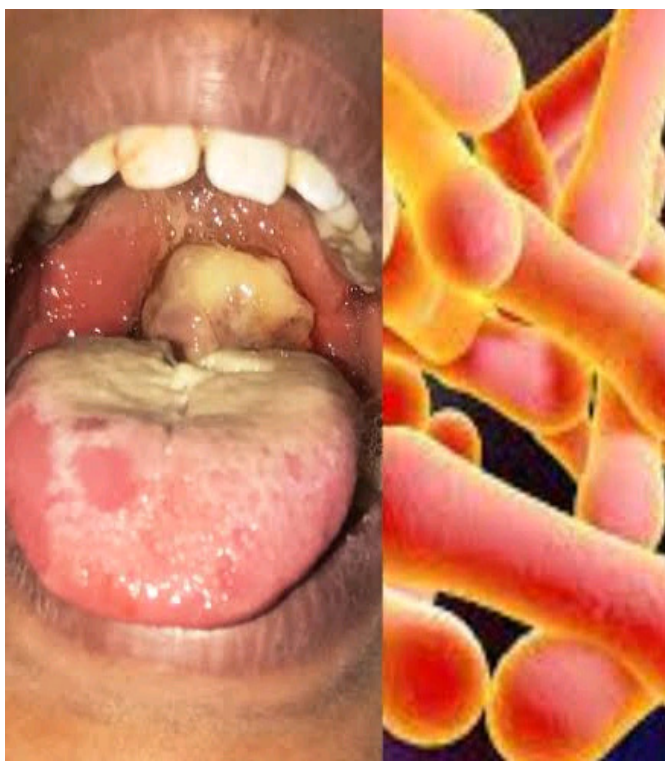
She said the academy is designed to address unemployment and bridge the digital skills gap by providing young people with practical and in-demand technological skills that can enhance their employability and entrepreneurial prospects.

According to her, the academy will commence with 11 accredited courses available through its portal, covering key areas of the digital economy, including Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Software Development and Digital Marketing, among others.

The initiative is expected to provide participants with skills relevant to emerging industries while opening opportunities for remote employment, innovation and technology-driven entrepreneurship.

Governor Fintiri was accompanied on the inspection by senior government officials, including the Secretary to the State Government, the Chief of Staff and the Special Adviser on ICT and E-Governance.

Yobe confirms 511 diphtheria cases, commences vaccination



Diphtheria outbreak.

Yobe State has documented 511 cases of diphtheria and 13 deaths from January to 8 September, according to health authorities.

The Commissioner for Health and Human Services, Muhammad Gana, revealed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Damaturu on Thursday.

Mr Gana explained that the 13 deaths corresponded to a case fatality rate of 2.5 per cent, which is lower than in most other affected states across the country.

He affirmed that the outbreak impacted 12 local government areas in the state, and that vaccination plans in these areas were well underway.

Mr Gana further stated that the current total of 511 diphtheria cases was significantly lower than the 1,100 cases reported in September 2025 and previous years.

He attributed the decline since 2023, when the state recorded its highest burden of 3,080 cases, to sustained outbreak response activities.

The activities listed by the Commissioner included providing free medication to victims, training health workers on response strategies, conducting intensive vaccinations in hard-to-reach areas, community engagement, and sensitisation campaigns against the disease.

Additional efforts involved aggressive contact tracing by health personnel, sharing updates with relevant stakeholders, holding regular coordination meetings, and mobilising resources for outbreak response.

Mr Gana praised the support from WHO, UNICEF, and the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET) for assisting the state's vaccination campaign against diphtheria, especially in nomadic settlements.

Diphtheria is a bacterial infection that primarily affects the throat and upper respiratory tract. It mainly spreads through respiratory droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing, and occasionally through direct contact with infected skin lesions or contaminated secretions.

Military airstrikes neutralise 18 terrorists in Borno

Air strikes by troops of Operation Hadin Kai have killed about 18 terrorists at Tumbunma Baba in the Tumbuns general area of Borno State.

Zagazola Makama, a counter-insurgency publication, said the air strikes also destroyed several terrorist structures and logistics hubs. Makama said the operation was conducted at about 6:05pm on Friday and followed intelligence reports of a high-profile terrorist meeting taking place on the islands.

"According to military sources, the formation conducted the air interdiction after confirmatory intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions on Sept. 9 identified several terrorist structures and logistics hubs in the area," Makama said.

"The aircraft reportedly acquired and engaged the identified targets with onboard munitions, resulting in the destruction of several structures and logistics facilities.

"The strikes also neutralised approximately 18 terrorists believed to be operating from the enclave."

"Military sources assessed the operation as having achieved an estimated 85 per cent success rate, with further air interdiction recommended to consolidate the gains and disrupt surviving elements in the area."

The publication reported that the operation is part of sustained efforts by the military to degrade terrorist networks, destroy their logistics infrastructure and deny them freedom of movement and coordination within the Tumbuns.



Airstrikes.

NORTH-EAST

Gombe government pays over N33 billion to clear gratuity backlog



Yahaya.

Gombe State Governor, Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya, has disclosed that his administration has paid more than N33 billion in gratuities over the past seven years, with about 70 per cent of the liabilities inherited from the previous administration.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of 19 newly permanent secretaries on Thursday in Gombe, the governor announced that another tranche of gratuity payments would be made before the end of September 2026.

He pledged that his administration would clear the outstanding gratuity backlog by the first quarter of 2027, adding that he is determined to leave behind a civil service that is more professional, digitally accountable, adequately staffed and capable of responding effectively to the needs of citizens.

He also disclosed that his administration is preparing for a massive recruitment exercise into the state civil service, following the establishment of an accurate manpower database through the biometric verification system.

Governor Yahaya said he had directed the Head of Civil Service to work with the State Civil Service Commission to conduct a comprehensive manpower needs assessment across ministries, departments and agencies to determine existing gaps and the number of personnel required.

He said the exercise would pave the way for fresh recruitment before the expiration of his tenure on May 29, 2027.

According to him, the biometric attendance and verification system, which attracted criticism when introduced, has since demonstrated its value by providing the government with reliable data on the actual workforce, while helping to tackle ghost workers and absenteeism and saving the state billions of naira.

Governor Yahaya said the latest appointments brought to 55 the number of permanent secretaries appointed by his administration over the past seven years, "with more than 100 directors elevated into the senior administrative cadre of the state civil service."

He said the appointments were part of a broader effort to strengthen the institutional capacity of government, address manpower gaps and build a professional civil service capable of sustaining development beyond his tenure.

He, therefore, urged the new permanent secretaries to see their appointments as a solemn responsibility rather than a personal achievement.

"You are the ambassadors of the civil service and of your respective communities. Your appointment is not a personal achievement alone; it is a trust reposed in you by the people of Gombe State.

"You should discharge your duties and responsibilities with integrity, accountability, discipline and diligence, as this administration would not tolerate corruption, indiscipline, dishonesty or abuse of office," Yahaya warned.

The governor added that with his administration entering its final phase, the focus would be on consolidating ongoing reforms, strengthening institutions and ensuring that the gains recorded over the years endure beyond the life of the present administration.

Troops arrest two suspected terrorist logistics suppliers in Yobe

Troops of the Joint Task Force (North East), Operation HADIN KAI (OPHK), have arrested two suspected terrorist logistics suppliers and recovered a large quantity of motorcycle spare parts and other items allegedly intended for Boko Haram/ISWAP terrorists operating within the Yunusari-Mobbar general area.

A statement by the Acting Military Information Officer, Headquarters Joint Task Force (North East) Operation HADIN KAI, Mohammed Goni, in Maiduguri, noted that the operation was conducted on Tuesday, following credible human intelligence on the movement of logistics supplies suspected to be destined for terrorist elements.

Acting swiftly on the intelligence, the troops of 159 Battalion under Sector 2 OPHK, in conjunction with other security elements, said they mobilised a fighting patrol and intercepted the suspected logistics consignment at Gumsa Bridge in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State.

Items recovered during the operation include large quantities of motorcycle tyres, crankshafts, oil seals, traffic indicators, acceleration and clutch cables, bearings, brake components, gaskets, piston kits, chains and sprockets, speedometers, clutch plates, rocker arms, CDI units, coils, rectifiers, fuel-related components and other motorcycle spare parts.

Also recovered were 145 pairs of footwear, 2 Tecno Android phones, amongst others

The suspects and recovered items have been handed over to the 27 Military Intelligence Regiment for further investigation and necessary action, according to the statement.

"The successful interception represents another effort by troops to disrupt terrorist logistics networks and deny them critical supplies required to sustain their activities", the statement added.

The Joint Task Force said it remains committed to dismantling terrorist support networks across the North East Theatre. Members of the public are therefore encouraged to continue providing credible and timely information to security agencies to support ongoing counter-terrorism operations.

Troops

Taraba government explores partnerships to attract investment, create jobs



Kefas.

Delegations from Taraba State government on Friday engaged European business executives and prospective investors in Istanbul, Türkiye, to boost development and create jobs for people in the state.

The engagement, according to the delegation, aligned with Governor Agbu Kefas' administration's Moving Forward Agenda and the recently launched Taraba Regional Development Plan.

In a statement, Hon. Justin Aondoaseer Tyopuusu, Special Adviser to the Governor on Digital Economy, said the delegation showcased the State's investment opportunities in agriculture, agro-processing, value-chain development, natural resources and other emerging sectors, while exploring partnerships to attract private investment, create jobs and strengthen local production.

The statement expressed that Taraba is open for business, partnerships and sustainable investment; just as the delegation is expected to proceed to Spain for further discussions with prospective investors before returning to Nigeria.

The delegation comprises the immediate past Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Hon. Peter George, and the Special Adviser to the Governor on Digital Economy, Hon. Justin Aondoaseer Tyopuusu.

CUSTOMS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

Nigeria, Cameroon Customs partner to strengthen cross-border trade

Nigeria and Cameroon are moving to cut the cost and time of cross-border trade as the two nations' customs administrations begin a joint assessment of the Mfum-Ekok One-Stop Border Post (OSBP), a move expected to improve cargo clearance and strengthen the flow of goods along the two countries' trade corridor.

The initiative, being driven by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Cameroon Customs Administration, seeks to replace duplicated border procedures with coordinated processing, digital customs workflows and joint risk-management systems.

The development comes as businesses across Africa continue to grapple with high logistics costs, border delays and multiple regulatory checks that raise the final cost of traded goods and undermine the competitiveness of regional supply chains.

The joint assessment, held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, was themed "Leveraging the Nigeria Customs Service Trade Modernisation Project to Advance Seamless Cross-Border Trade and Shared Prosperity."

It brought together customs officials, technical experts, security agencies, development partners and representatives of communities around the border.



Customs recruitment.

Adewale Adeniyi, Comptroller-General of Customs, said the objective was to build on the existing relationship between the two customs administrations and develop a model that could be replicated across the region.

"We are not building from nothing. We are taking something that works between the two of us and asking whether it can be made to work for the region and hopefully for our continent," Adeniyi said.

He said the geographical proximity of Nigeria and Cameroon had not translated into seamless movement of goods and people, stressing the need to remove unnecessary barriers that constrain legitimate trade.

For businesses, the proposed one-stop arrangement could reduce the time trucks spend at the border, minimise repeated inspections and lower the administrative costs associated with moving cargo between the two countries.

The two customs administrations have also begun work on a joint operational agreement, following a study tour of the Beitbridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe to examine practices that could be adapted to the Nigeria-Cameroon corridor.

The agreement is expected to be signed at the forthcoming C-PACT conference.

Fongod Nuvaga, director-general of Cameroon Customs, said the assessment represented the first concrete step towards establishing unified border operations. He identified real-time data sharing and joint risk-management systems as critical to the success of the initiative, arguing that cargo and travellers should be processed once rather than subjected to multiple checks by agencies on either side of the border.

The initiative is also expected to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which seeks to increase intra-African commerce by reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers and improving the movement of goods across the continent.

The Mfum-Ekok Border Modernisation Initiative, launched at the end of the assessment, will combine customs technology with improvements to physical border infrastructure.

The project will digitise customs processes, optimise border facilities and create opportunities for businesses operating along the Nigeria-Cameroon corridor.

Development institutions, including the African Development Bank, ECOWAS, ECCAS, Afreximbank and the AfCFTA Secretariat, are supporting efforts to improve cross-border trade facilitation.

Customs intercept smuggled goods worth N604.33 million

The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Kwara Area Command, has intercepted smuggled goods with a combined Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N604.33 million across various locations in the state.

The seizures, which included 3,396 packets of Tramadol, 270 bags of foreign parboiled rice, 6,705 cartons of foreign spaghetti, 6,875 litres of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), used clothing and two high-value vehicles, were recorded along different operational corridors of the command.

The Acting Area Controller of the Kwara Area Command, Deputy Comptroller Najeem Akanmu Ogundeyi, disclosed this at a press briefing, stressing that the command would not allow the state to become a haven or transit route for smuggling activities.

Ogundeyi said the command's operations were driven by actionable intelligence, sustained patrols and collaboration with other security agencies.

He said, "The Kwara Command would never become a haven or transit corridor for illicit cross-border trade. That stance remains uncompromising."

The Acting Controller, who assumed duty on December 17, 2025, explained that the interception of food products should not be construed as opposition by Customs to food availability in the country.

According to him, the Service's responsibility is to ensure compliance with laws regulating cross-border trade, particularly where goods are moved through unapproved routes, evade regulatory checks or lack the required documentation.

He said the illegal influx of foreign food products through porous borders could undermine government efforts to promote local agricultural production, protect domestic investments and strengthen the country's value chain.

"Illegal influx of foreign food products through porous borders undermines Federal Government policies aimed at boosting local agricultural production, protecting domestic investments and safeguarding our local value chain," he said.

Among the seizures were 80 bales and six sacks of used clothing intercepted along the Ogbomoso-Jebba axis, with a DPV of N32.3 million; 6,875 litres of PMS intercepted along the Bukuro-Okuta-Chikanda axis, valued at N2.75 million; and 3,396 packets of 100mg Tramadol intercepted along the Okuta axis, with a DPV of N50.946 million.

Customs also intercepted 14 bags of Basmati rice along the Bode-Saadu Expressway, valued at N350,000; 6,705 cartons of foreign spaghetti along the Bode-Saadu axis, with a DPV of N201.15 million; and 270 bags of foreign parboiled rice, valued at N25.245 million.

The command further seized a 2025 Toyota Highlander intercepted along the Bode-Saadu Expressway, with a DPV of N214 million, and a 2018 Dodge Charger SXT intercepted on the Lagos-Kwara highway at Eyenkorin, valued at N77.59 million.

Ogundeyi said the combined DPV of the eight seizures stood at N604,333,592.

He described the seizures as evidence of the changing tactics employed by smugglers, noting that criminal elements were increasingly diversifying their activities to include the movement of petroleum products, controlled pharmaceuticals, foreign food items and uncustomed vehicles.

On the Tramadol seizure, he said the interception underscored the importance of border enforcement in protecting public health, warning that the uncontrolled entry of regulated substances posed serious risks to public safety and national security.

He also explained that the seizure of 6,875 litres of PMS was aimed at preventing the diversion of petroleum products meant for domestic consumption into illicit border markets.

Beyond seizures, the command generated N7,978,338,031.21 in revenue during the period under review.

Ogundeyi said the revenue figure reflected the command's commitment to maximising government revenue while balancing enforcement with legitimate trade facilitation.

He attributed the command's operational successes to intelligence-led enforcement, commending personnel of the Intelligence Unit and Customs Police Unit, as well as other officers operating across the command's challenging terrain.

He also acknowledged the support of sister security agencies, stressing that effective collaboration was essential to combating trans-border crimes.

"Trans-border crime cannot be fought in isolation; inter-agency cooperation remains central to our tactical execution," he said.

The Acting Controller commended the Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, for his strategic direction and support to the command.

He appealed to border communities, traditional rulers, transporters and other stakeholders to regard border security as a collective responsibility by providing credible and timely information on suspicious activities.

"Legitimate trade will receive our maximum support, but smuggling will encounter uncompromising enforcement," Ogundeyi said.



Smuggled goods.

PRIME PHOTOS

BY MERCY ADAJE
MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng



A glimpse into history: this archival photograph captures the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero, during a visit to a chocolate factory in 1950. The image offers a rare look at the Emir's engagements beyond the traditional and royal spheres, while reflecting the industrial and commercial activities of the period.



Adamawa's Ultra-Modern Shopping Complex is progressing under Governor Ahmadu Fintiri's administration, with the project expected to boost commercial activities, create jobs, support businesses and attract private investment.



A photograph of Sir Ahmadu Bello with his luxury car, the 1961 Old car Super 88. This vehicle, bearing the plate number S 888, is one of the important symbols of the history of the former Northern Region during the early period of



Yobe SSG, Dr Mohammed Goje, has commended young female artists Ummu Kulsum Umar, Zulaihat Hussaini Amshi and Hafsat Abdullahi Usman, who decorated the Damaturu underpass, assuring them of government support for creativity and vocational skills development.

PRIME1OMENT

BY MERCY ADAJE
MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng

AY shares 2019 request for help from Asake, urges people not to look down on others

Nigerian comedian and actor Ayodeji Makun, popularly known as AY, has recalled a 2019 message from Afrobeats star Asake, in which the singer sought his support for his music, years before achieving global success.

AY shared the revelation in a video on his Instagram on Monday after attending Asake's sold-out concert at the Toyota Centre in Houston, Texas, as part of the singer's "In God We Trust" tour.

Reflecting on Asake's journey, AY said he remembered receiving a direct message from the singer in 2019, although he did not see it at the time.

"I remember when this boy sent me a message in my DM on Instagram. I didn't even get to see this message on time. This was years ago, sometime during 2019," he said.

The message, which AY displayed in the video, was from Asake, who introduced himself as "Ololade" and appealed to the comedian to support his music.

"Good evening, sir. I'm OLOLADE. How are you doing sir? I'm here for help, KING AY. I just drop a record titled – African Something. You vibing to the song is a lot to my career," the message read.

Asake further appealed to AY to support him, writing, "KING AY, Help a son sir. May God bless you and your family. I love you KING AY."

AY said he was not recounting the message to take credit for Asake's subsequent success, attributing the singer's rise to his talent, hard work and God.

"I'm not saying all of this to take any credit. That glory belongs to God and his talent and of course the hard work that is put into all of this," he said.

The comedian said seeing Asake command the stage before thousands of people at the Houston concert reminded him of how far the singer had come.

He said the experience carried a lesson for everyone, particularly about how they treat people who approach them for opportunities.

"The truth is that the person asking to be seen today may become the person the whole world will celebrate tomorrow. So be good to people, respect their dreams, never look down on anyone because you simply cannot tell what tomorrow brings," AY said.

AY also disclosed that Asake's management took him backstage after the concert, where the singer came over to greet him.

He said Asake's humility remained evident despite his success, adding, "Ah Asake, you were simply phenomenal."

The comedian congratulated the singer, saying, "Nigeria celebrates you, Africa celebrates you, and the world is seeing all your doings and workings right now."



AY and Asake.

Afolayan: I've invested over N8bn in my film village, need government support

Nigerian filmmaker and entrepreneur, Kunle Afolayan, has appealed to the government for support after investing over N8bn of his personal funds in his resort, saying the lack of electricity has made operations increasingly difficult.

Afolayan disclosed this during an interview with the former Minister of Finance, Kemi Adeosun, on the Nidacity podcast, released on YouTube on Tuesday.

He said the resort had been without electricity since its establishment, forcing him to rely on diesel to power its operations.

According to the filmmaker, the rising cost of diesel had become unsustainable, prompting him to consider closing the resort.

"I believe so much in this country. We haven't had electricity in KAP Village since the beginning. So we've been running on diesel. I did a post a few months ago that I cannot be like, we can't sustain this diesel thing. We're going to close the resort, but then there is another friend who said I will sell diesel to you on credit and I'm like It's still not sustainable," Afolayan said.

He said he was now exploring alternative energy sources, adding that an investment of about N200m had already been made in green energy, although it was insufficient to power the entire resort.

"So right now we're talking to a lot of people to try and see how to do green energy. We did one last year, which cost about N200m, but it's not enough to power the entire resort, he said.

Afolayan said he had invested more than N8bn in developing the resort from his personal funds and believed the government should provide some form of support.

"And if we've managed to do that, I think there should be some sort of support, like from government agencies," he said.

He added that some businesses receiving government grants had invested significantly less than his establishment.

"I know people are not even doing one quarter of what we're doing, and they get a lot of grants from government," he said.

Afolayan also revealed that he built 100 rooms at his film village after the cast and crew of his movie, Anikulapo, struggled with accommodation during production.

He said actors, including Sola Sobowale and Bimbo Ademoye, had to bring personal belongings from their homes because there was no adequate accommodation for the production team.

"When we shot Anikulapo, we didn't have accommodation. We were squatting in people's houses. Sola Sobowale and Bimbo Ademoye even brought their mattresses and freezers from home. So I had to build 100 rooms in the film village to make everyone comfortable," he said.



Afolayan.

Nashville Airport to be named after country music legend Dolly Parton

The main airport in Nashville, Tennessee, the home of country music, is to be renamed after one of its brightest stars, the late Dolly Parton, who died last month.

The Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority (MNAA) voted 6-0 on Friday to honour the country music legend by changing the name of Nashville International Airport.

"While a final name has not yet been determined, we are working closely with the appropriate parties to thoughtfully determine how Dolly Parton's name and legacy will be incorporated," the MNAA said in a statement.

Parton died at the age of 80 on August 25 after a brief battle with cancer.

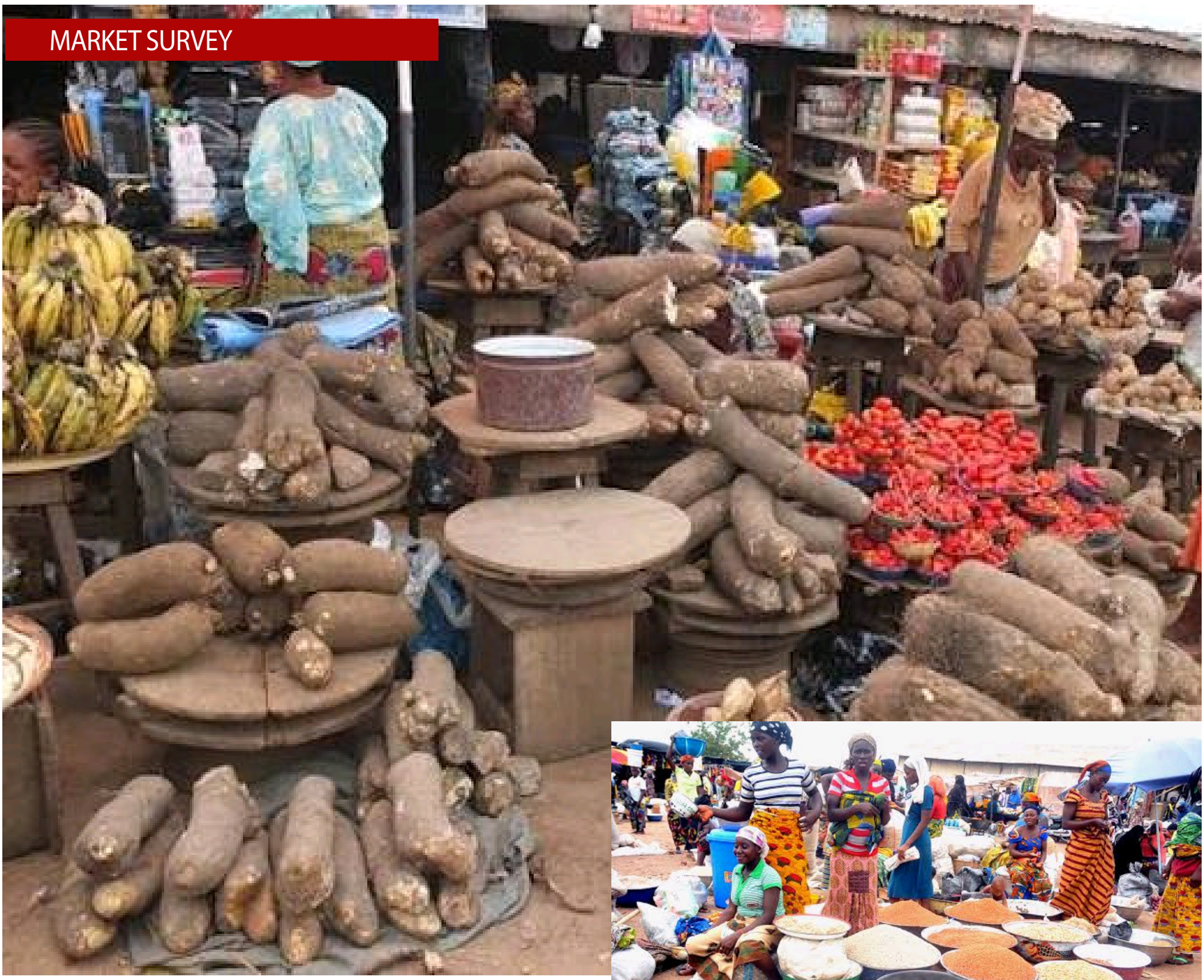


Parton.

NEPTUNE PRIME BUSINESS

BY AISHA WAZIRI KIDAJI, ASMA'U YAHAYA MUSTAPHA, TAWHEED YAKUB

MARKET SURVEY





Rising inflation pushes millions of Nigerians deeper into poverty

Resilient high inflation, a weakened naira, low-paying jobs, widespread underemployment and declining access to basic essential services are reinventing the cycle of deprivation that is fast reproducing itself across different spheres of Nigeria.

The entrenched survivalist behaviour may be expanding the number of millions of households currently dissaving, liquidating productive assets, rationalising children's education and reducing emergency buffers to fund immediate sustenance, leaving millions of citizens increasingly vulnerable to future shocks.

Even among several professional workers, who are traditionally classified as middle class, poverty is no longer a temporary consequence of economic shocks but an entrenched condition defined by prolonged deprivation, with dire consequences for sustained balanced diets, quality education, decent savings and investment.

The situation, Prof. Adeola Adenikinju, an economist at the University of Ibadan, said, has left most of the middle class only "one shock away" from falling into poverty.

Rising deprivation has grown from a personal vice to a social burden, undermining the country's industrial drive. For instance, many multinationals have closed operations in the country in recent years following their inability to match huge investment requirements with commensurate supportive domestic consumption. Last week, Uber was the latest global brand to quit the country. Although the company did not disclose why it included Nigeria, supposedly the gateway to the African market, among the markets affected by its restructuring, the numbers tell a sad story.

In South Africa, unconfirmed independent data put Uber's active riders at about 1.4 million. Ghana, Nigeria's neighbour, delivered about 180,000 as of 2018, two years into the company's operations in the West African country, according to research on e-hailing in Ghana.

MILESTONE

BY DR SULEIMAN DAUDA

Nine Lessons from Japan, Lesson Nine: Nigeria in Japan — Lessons Beyond Diplomacy

After days of travelling across Japan through classrooms, communities, reconstruction sites, farms and cities, our journey brought us somewhere different: the Embassy of Nigeria in Tokyo.

For the first time in several weeks, we were not simply Nigerians studying Japan. We were Nigerians walking into a little piece of our country thousands of kilometres away from home.

We were warmly received by the Senior Counsellor and Acting Ambassador, Ambassador Sherifat, alongside members of the Embassy team. What began as a courtesy visit quickly became one of the most reflective engagements of our programme.

The discussion reminded the team that an embassy is far more than a building where passports and visas are processed. It is the country's frontline institution abroad, representing national interests, protecting citizens, facilitating government-to-government relations, and increasingly serving as a bridge for trade, investment, technology, education and development cooperation.

That economic dimension is particularly important for Nigeria and Japan. In 2024, Japan imported about ¥121.8 billion worth of goods from Nigeria, while exporting approximately ¥49 billion to Nigeria. Nigeria's exports included liquefied natural gas, aluminium alloy and sesame seeds—the same crop whose value-chain potential Yobe State is actively pursuing through the four (4) sesame seed processing, cleaning and packaging factories established by the Governor Mai Mala Buni administration. Japanese exports to Nigeria, meanwhile, included vehicles, synthetic fibres and industrial equipment. This trade relationship illustrates not only what already connects the two economies, but also the considerable opportunity to deepen cooperation through agro-processing, technology transfer, industrial investment and value-added production.

But the opportunity is much bigger than trade figures. Japan possesses technology, manufacturing capacity, capital and decades of development experience. Nigeria offers a huge market, natural resources, entrepreneurship and one of the world's largest youthful populations. The task of modern diplomacy should therefore be to connect these comparative strengths, bringing Japanese investors and technologies into productive Nigerian sectors while creating stronger opportunities for Nigerian businesses to enter Japanese markets.

This is where institutions such as embassies, JICA, JETRO and platforms such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development become important. TICAD, which Japan has led since 1993, has increasingly emphasised African ownership, partnership and private-sector participation. More recently, both governments have expressed interest in deepening cooperation in areas including business, startups, climate change, global health, minerals and artificial intelligence.

From Learning to Exchange

Ambassador Sherifat thanked JICA for providing the opportunity for Nigerian professionals to experience Japan directly and encouraged more exchanges of this nature. Her message resonated with me. International cooperation becomes more meaningful when it moves beyond official agreements and allows people to understand one another's institutions, cultures and ways of solving problems. Our programme had allowed us to observe Japanese approaches to disaster recovery, community resilience, waste management, agriculture, technology and civic responsibility. But the real value would depend on what happened after we returned home.

The interactive session therefore became an opportunity for participants to share what Japan had taught us. We reflected on the lessons we had encountered across the country and discussed how some could be adapted, not simply copied, to Nigeria's own realities.

That distinction is important. The purpose of international learning is not imitation. It is adaptation. Japan's systems grew from its history, institutions and culture. Nigeria must develop solutions suited to its own communities and circumstances. But exposure allows us to see what is possible and sometimes to question practices at home that we have accepted as inevitable.

Then Came the Jollof Rice

Diplomacy, however, is not always conducted across conference tables. Sometimes it arrives on a plate. After weeks of Japanese meals, our hosts had prepared something very familiar: Nigerian jollof rice.





It may appear like a small detail in a programme filled with technical lectures and institutional visits, but that meal carried an unexpected emotional significance. Thousands of kilometres from home, surrounded by Japanese signs, streets and customs, the aroma and taste of Nigerian food instantly changed the atmosphere. There was laughter, familiarity and that unmistakable feeling of home.

It reminded me that embassies represent more than governments. They also represent people, identity and belonging. Their responsibility is diplomatic, economic and consular, but there is also something profoundly human about maintaining a country's presence and identity abroad.

Beyond Diplomacy

As we left the Embassy, I reflected on the larger relationship between Nigeria and Japan. Formal diplomatic relations date back to Nigeria's independence in 1960, while decades of Japanese development cooperation have supported Nigeria in areas ranging from economic development and health to peace and stability in the North-East.

But the next chapter should go further. Nigeria-Japan relations should increasingly move from aid to investment, from training to institutional partnerships, from importing technology to transferring knowledge, and from occasional official engagements to sustained connections between businesses, universities, professionals and communities.

Nigeria has much to learn from Japan, but partnership must ultimately be mutually beneficial. Japan's ageing population and labour constraints exist alongside Nigeria's enormous youthful human capital. Japan's technological and industrial strengths complement Nigeria's market, resources and entrepreneurial energy. Properly connected, these differences can become opportunities for both countries. And perhaps that was the fitting lesson with which to conclude my journey. Over the previous eight lessons, Japan had taught me about waste becoming resources, technology serving society, humility, civic responsibility, climate-smart agriculture, disaster resilience and the difficult realities of an ageing population. But our visit to the Nigerian Embassy reminded us that international learning achieves its greatest value only when knowledge travels home, and relationships endure after the journey ends.

Diplomacy is therefore not merely about representing a country abroad. At its best, diplomacy connects opportunities, builds trust, transfers knowledge and turns relationships between nations into tangible benefits for their people.

And somewhere in Tokyo, over a plate of Nigerian jollof rice after weeks away from home, that lesson became wonderfully simple: No matter how far we travel to learn from the world, the ultimate purpose of the journey is to bring something valuable back home.

Arigatō gozaimasu, Japan. Thank you.

Dr Suleiman Dauda writes from Damaturu, Yobe State.

HERITAGE

BY TAWHEED YAKUB

Attakar: Advancing cultural resilience and heritage through archaeological evidence





Across the rugged hills and valleys of Southern Kaduna lies a people whose history has been shaped by migration, settlement, agriculture, traditional institutions and an enduring determination to preserve their identity.

They are the Attakar, also known in different historical and linguistic references as Atakad, Atakat, Attaka, Ataka, Takad or Takat, an indigenous people whose principal homeland is associated with Kaura Local Government Area of Kaduna State, with Attakar communities also extending into parts of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State.

The Attakar occupy an important place within the diverse ethnolinguistic landscape of central Nigeria. Their identity is expressed through their language, ancestral settlements, family structures, traditional authority, economic life, oral traditions and cultural practices.

Their history, however, cannot be understood merely by looking at modern political boundaries.

Long before the emergence of Nigeria's present-day states and local government areas, communities had already established relationships with particular landscapes, cultivated their lands, developed systems of governance and transmitted their histories from one generation to another.

For the Attakar, this heritage remains a living inheritance. It is found in the hills where their ancestors established settlements, in the language spoken within families, in the traditions preserved by elders and in the stories that continue to connect the present generation with those who came before them.

The Attakar story is therefore not simply a story of the past. It is a story of identity, resilience, adaptation and continuity.

A Homeland Shaped by Hills and Valleys

The geography of Attakar country has played an important role in shaping the history of its people.

The traditional homeland is closely associated with the hilly terrain of Southern Kaduna, particularly the communities around Kaura. The landscape consists of rocky elevations, valleys, cultivated areas and natural formations that have influenced settlement patterns and economic activities over generations.

For the Attakar, the land represents much more than physical territory. It is connected to ancestry and memory.

It is connected to family histories and the places where earlier generations lived, farmed, worshipped and sought protection. Archaeological investigations around Zangang have provided important evidence of earlier Attakar settlement. Researchers have documented features including house foundations, granary remains, grinding stones, stone tools, pottery fragments, caves and rock shelters.

These remains offer a physical record of communities that existed long before the modern era. The hills were also significant from a security perspective. Elevated settlements could provide strategic advantages during periods of conflict and insecurity, allowing inhabitants to observe the surrounding terrain and defend their communities.

Consequently, the Attakar landscape can be regarded as a historical archive. Its hills and valleys preserve traces of generations whose lives might otherwise be known only through oral accounts.

Traditional Leadership and the Attakar Institution

Traditional authority remains an important expression of Attakar identity. The traditional institution of the people is represented by the Agwam Afan Takad, with Fadan Attakar serving as an important centre of traditional authority.

The institution represents continuity between the contemporary Attakar community and generations that preceded it. Traditionally, elders and community leaders played important roles in maintaining social order, resolving disputes, guiding families and preserving communal values. Leadership was therefore not simply a matter of authority; it was also a responsibility.

The traditional institution provided a framework through which customs and collective memory could be preserved.

In contemporary society, the role of traditional institutions has evolved. Modern government structures, formal courts, education and other institutions now perform many responsibilities once handled primarily within traditional systems.

Nevertheless, traditional leadership continues to provide an important symbol of unity and cultural continuity. For many Attakar communities, it remains a visible connection to their ancestral past.

Takad: The Language of Identity

Perhaps one of the clearest expressions of Attakar identity is their indigenous language, commonly referred to as Takad, with related forms and spellings appearing in historical and linguistic literature.

Takad belongs to the broader linguistic environment of the Central Plateau languages and exists within the complex network of related languages spoken across Southern Kaduna and neighbouring parts of Plateau State.

This language is much more than a means of communication. It is a repository of memory.

Through language, a people preserve names, greetings, proverbs, expressions, songs, stories and traditional knowledge. A language can contain ideas and cultural meanings that are difficult to reproduce fully in another language.

For this reason, the continued use of Takad is closely connected to the preservation of Attakar identity. The modern world, however, presents challenges.



English dominates formal education and official communication, while Hausa is widely used as a regional lingua franca. As migration and urbanisation increase, younger members of indigenous communities may increasingly communicate in languages other than their ancestral tongue.

The challenge is therefore not merely linguistic. When an indigenous language declines, the community risks losing part of the cultural knowledge embedded within it.

Preserving Takad consequently means preserving a significant part of the Attakar historical consciousness.

Family, Kinship and Communal Responsibility

Family has traditionally occupied a central position in Attakar social organisation. The extended family provides a structure through which children learn about their ancestry, responsibilities and place within the community.

Elders have historically been important custodians of family history. They tell younger generations about ancestors. They explain relationships between families and teach traditional values.

They also preserve knowledge about important events and places. Communal responsibility has also been reflected in agricultural activities, ceremonies, marriages, funerals and other major events. Such practices reinforce the understanding that individual wellbeing is connected to the wellbeing of the wider community.

Modern education, migration, Christianity, Islam, formal employment and urbanisation have transformed many aspects of social life. Nevertheless, family remains one of the strongest channels through which Attakar identity can be transmitted.

Agriculture and Traditional Economic Life

Agriculture has historically played an important role in the economic life of Attakar communities.

The fertile valleys and surrounding lands provided opportunities for cultivation, while knowledge of the local environment enabled generations to develop agricultural practices suited to their surroundings.

Archaeological evidence from earlier Attakar settlements, including grinding stones and granary foundations, points to the importance of food production and storage in earlier community life. Farming was consequently more than an economic activity; it was a source of knowledge.

Children could learn from their parents how to recognise suitable land, cultivate crops, store harvests and work according to seasonal patterns.

HISTORICITI

BY ASMA'U YAHAYA MUSTAPHA



Cholula, Mexico: Exploring the enduring legacy and rich history of one of the Americas' oldest cities

Cholula is a city and district located in the metropolitan area of Puebla, Mexico. Cholula is best known for its Great Pyramid, with the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios sanctuary on top, as well as its numerous churches.

Districts

The city and district of Cholula are divided into two: San Pedro Cholula and San Andrés Cholula. Surrounding the city proper are a number of more rural communities which belong to the municipalities of San Andrés and San Pedro. The city itself is divided into eighteen neighborhoods or barrios, each with a patron saint.

This division has pre-Hispanic origins as does the division into two municipalities. The city is unified by a complicated system of shared religious responsibilities, called cargas, which function mostly to support a very busy calendar of saints' days and other festivals which occur in one part or another almost all year round.

The most important of these festivals is that dedicated to the Virgin of the Remedies, the patron of the city in its entirety, which occurs at the beginning of September. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities on Earth. Pre-Columbian Cholula grew from a small village to a regional centre during the 7th century. It is the oldest still-inhabited city in the Americas.

Location

The city of Cholula is located just west of the state capital of Puebla and is part of its metropolitan area. The city is divided into two municipalities, called San Pedro Cholula and San Andrés Cholula, which also include a number of smaller communities that surround the city proper.

The main plaza of the city is located in the municipality of San Pedro Cholula, but the Great Pyramid, located only a few blocks away, is located in San Andrés Cholula. Of the two subdivisions, San Andrés is more residential and has the higher indigenous population.

The city as a whole is officially called the Distrito Cholula de Rivadavia. It was created in 1895 and named in honour of Bernardino de Rivadavia.

La Quinta Luna is a 17th-century house located in the Santa María Xixitla neighborhood, cataloged by INAH as a historic monument. It was converted into a boutique hotel, affiliated with the Hoteles Boutique de México. It was the home of an indigenous noble by the name of Juan de León y Mendoza, built with adobe walls and very high ceilings.

The hotel contains seven luxury rooms, a meeting room, a library, a lobby and a restaurant, surrounding a central courtyard which has a garden. The lobby and restaurant are located in what was the chapel. The library area contains about 3,000 books and its roof is crossed by beams which were rescued during renovations to the building. The decoration is based on paintings by Federico Silva and Gerardo Gomez Brito, various pieces done in local onyx and a number of antiques from various places in the world. The lobby occasionally hosts small concerts.

Origin of Name

The name of Cholula comes from the Nahuatl word (Nahuatl languages: Cholōllān). Its etymology has been explained either as "where water falls," or "place of those who fled" or a combination of the two.

"Place of those who fled" is a reference to a myth that describes the arrival of Toltec refugees to this area because of the fall of Tula in 1000 CE. One Mexica myth states that the people of Cholula, called Chololtecs, were descended from one of the seven Aztec tribes that migrated to central Mexico from their mythical homeland Aztlan.

Settlement

Settlement of Cholula began between 500 and 200 BCE (middle Pre Classic period), with two small villages established near water sources in what is now the eastern side of the city. They were two of a number of agricultural villages with ceremonial centres in the area, with evidence of emerging social stratification. Its earliest settlers were probably speakers of Oto-Manguean languages, linguist Terrence Kaufman has proposed that they were speakers of the Chorotega language of the Mangue branch of the oto-mangue family.

Economic Activities

The main economic activities of the city are commerce and agriculture, although the economy is shifting away from agriculture. Commerce, including tourism, is mostly concentrated in the city proper, while agriculture and certain industries such as brick making, are mostly found in the edge of the city and in the rural areas of the municipalities of San Pedro Cholula and San Andrés Cholula.

Despite being a city in its own right, Cholula is part of the Puebla metropolitan area, with residential areas encroaching onto former farmland. Most of the San Pedro municipality is dedicated to agriculture, much of which is irrigated and represents most of the irrigated farmland in the Cholula area. Agriculture employs about 30% of the population of San Andrés, while it employs 17.4% of the population of San Pedro. Principal crops include corn, beans, alfalfa, animal feed, nopal cactus, onions, cilantro, radishes, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce and cucumbers. There are also various fruits such as pears, plums, apricots, peaches, apples and capulins. There is also extensive floriculture. Livestock includes cattle, goats, pigs, and domestic fowl.

In the San Andrés area, much of the livestock is produced for autoconsumption. There are small areas of pasture and some forest on the Tecajetes Mountain, with pine, oyamel and white cedar. Its production is second in important in the Valley of Puebla. Fishing is limited to a small pond called Zerezotla, which is stocked with carp and catfish.



ROOTS

BY ASMA'U YAHAYA MUSTAPHA (Student at Al-Qalam University, Katsina)

Blanche Kelso Bruce: The legacy of the first African American senator to serve a full term





Blanche Kelso Bruce (March 1, 1841 – March 17, 1898) was an American politician who represented Mississippi as a Republican in the United States Senate from 1875 to 1881.

Born into Slavery

Born into slavery in Prince Edward County, Virginia, he went on to become the first elected African American senator to serve a full term (Hiram R. Revels, also of Mississippi, was the first African American to serve in the U.S. Senate but did not complete a full term).

He was appointed as Recorder of Deeds in Washington D.C. during Benjamin Harrison's presidency. His home, the Blanche K. Bruce House, is a National Historic Landmark.

Bruce was born into slavery in 1841 in Prince Edward County, Virginia, near Farmville to Polly Bruce, an African American woman who served as a domestic slave. His father was his master, Pettis Perkinson, a white Virginia planter. Bruce was treated comparatively well by his father, who educated him together with a legitimate half-brother.

When Bruce was young, he played with his half-brother. One source claims that his father legally freed Blanche and arranged for an apprenticeship so he could learn a trade. In an 1886 newspaper interview, however, Bruce says that he gained his freedom by moving to Kansas as soon as hostilities broke out in the Civil War.

Marriage

On June 24, 1878, Bruce married Josephine Beall Willson (1853–1923), a fair-skinned socialite of Cleveland, Ohio, amid great publicity; the couple travelled to Europe for a four-month honeymoon. Their only child, Roscoe Conkling Bruce, was born in 1879. He was named for U.S. Senator Roscoe Conkling of New York, Bruce's mentor in the Senate.

One newspaper wrote that Bruce did not approve of the designation "coloured men." He often said, "I am a Negro and proud of it."

Honours

In July 1898, the District of Columbia public school trustees ordered that a then-new public school building on Marshall Street in Park View be named the Bruce School in his honour.

In 1975, the Washington, D.C. residence of Bruce, was declared a National Historic Landmark and formally named The Blanche K. Bruce House.

In October 1999, the U.S. Senate commissioned a portrait of Bruce. African-American Washington D.C. artist Simmie Knox was selected in 2000 to paint the portrait, based on a photograph by Mathew Brady; it was unveiled in the Capitol in 2001.

Blanche Bruce is listed in Molefi Kete Asante's book 100 Greatest African Americans (2002).

On March 1, 2006, the African American Heritage Preservation Foundation unveiled a historical highway marker noting Bruce's birthplace at the intersection of highway 360 and 623 near Green Bay, Prince Edward County, Virginia.

Lawrence Otis Graham authored a historical book about Bruce titled The True Story of America's First Black Dynasty: The Senator and the Socialite in June 2006.



THIS LIFE

BY PROFESSOR ISA H. MSHELGARU

Introduction to Islamic physical security management for the resistance movement in Nigeria (16)

Continued from last week.

(iii) Initial Implementation (the 'action' phase)
Implement Fundamental Administrative Controls:
Visitor management: establish a simple check-in/check-out process at a designated reception point. Use paper logbooks if necessary to start; key management: create a formal system for issuing and tracking keys. Collect keys from terminated person immediately.
Basic awareness: communicate new security policy and basic "see something, say something" principles to all participants via assorted means.
Address the "Easy Wins" (Low-Cost/High-Impact):
Good housekeeping: ensure areas are tidy; equipment and assets are put away, reducing temptation and opportunity for theft;
Lighting: improve external and internal lighting, especially in alleys, parking lots, and near entry points.
Landscaping: trim bushes and trees near windows and entrances to eliminate hiding spots
Signage: post "no Trespassing" and "video surveillance in use" signs as a psychological deterrent.
Harden the Physical Structure: assess and upgrade doors, ensure exterior doors are solid core and that frames are robust, assess and upgrade locks and replace low-quality locks with commercial-grade deadbolts and door hardware. Begin planning for an electronic access control system for high-security areas.
Establish a Relationship with Local First Responders:
Activity: invite local fire and road safety etc departments and introduce them to your site. This is invaluable for emergency response.
(iv) Initial Operations and Review
Document Everything:
Activity: from day one, start a security log; record all incidents, requests, maintenance issues, and actions taken. This crucial for tracking trends and proving due diligence.
Schedule Your First Review:
Activity: set a date to formally review the initial measures.
Ask: are the policies being followed? Have there been any incidents? What's working? What isn't? Use this to plan the next phase (e.g., CCTV, alarm systems, or dedicated security personnel).
Following this structured approach is alike moving from ad-hoc security to a managed security program. The foundation makes future resources and implementation of more advanced technology much easier.
(v) Managing PS of the 'Organizing and preparing' stage of Arbaeen symbolic treks:
(i) The Arbaeen activities at this stage requiring PS cover include:
Ziyarah cycles, transportation and logistics, arrangement for supply of necessities, welcoming and settlement of millions of participants, secure accommodation, installation of temporary structures and facilities in different locations like toilets and kitchens, erect route side service stations (maukibs), stock food, water and gas, connect electricity and source of power, formation of makeshift health centers, sanitation and medications, design effective media and missionary procedures, assigning duties and rehearse procedures, assessing and testing
(ii) The PS activities required to be management at the 'Organizing and preparing' stage of the occasion are:
Vital security measures that are structured, proactive, and ready for implementation 'before threats arise, they contain;
Risk Assessment and Threat Analysis: identify potential threats (theft, vandalism, terrorism, natural disasters), assess vulnerabilities (weak entry points, poor lighting, lack of alarms) and determine critical assets needing protection.
Security Policy and Procedure Development: define access control policies (who can enter restricted areas), establish emergency response protocols (fire, intrusion, evacuation) and create incident reporting and escalation procedures.
Physical Security Measures Implementation: perimeter security: fences, gates, bollards, barriers. Access control systems: keycards, biometric scanners, turnstiles. Surveillance systems: CCTV cameras, motion sensors, alarm systems. Lighting: ensure adequate illumination (especially in vulnerable areas). Locks and safes: high-security locks for doors, safes for valuables.
Security Personnel Planning: assign roles (guards, patrol officers, control room operators), schedule shifts for 24/7 coverage if needed and Train Harris on protocols and emergency response.
Emergency Preparedness: install fire suppression systems (sprinklers, extinguishers), designate evacuation routes and assembly points and conduct drills (fire, active shooter, bomb threat).
Coordination with External Agencies: liaise with emergency departments for rapid response. Partner with cybersecurity teams (if PS integrates IT systems).
Documentation and Compliance: maintain records of security policies, incident logs, and audits and ensure compliance with regulations.

(iii) Focus of the PSM at this stage of commemoration: establishing framework and resources necessary for a successful security task.
(iv) The key management actions and activities to be engaged with in managing the PS at this point involve:
Define Scope and Objectives: clearly outline the boundaries of the PS operation and establish specific goals to be achieved
Conduct Risk Assessments: identify potential threats and vulnerabilities to assets and operations. This involves analyzing internal and external factors, including potential insider threats
Develop Security Policies and Procedures: create documented guidelines for all aspects of PS, including access control, visitor management, and emergency response
Implement Access Control Systems: establish systems for controlling entry to facilities and sensitive areas, using technologies like keycards, biometrics, or combination locks
Train Staff: ensure all Harris understand their roles in maintaining PS, including reporting suspicious activity and responding to emergencies
Secure the Perimeter: implement physical barriers such as fences, gates, and surveillance systems to deter unauthorized access
Plan for Emergencies: develop and document procedures for handling various emergencies, including fires, natural disasters, and security breaches
Establish Communication Protocols: ensure clear communication channels for security personnel and other staff during normal operations and emergencies
Maintain Security Equipment: ensure all security equipment, such as cameras, alarms, and access control systems are regularly maintained and tested
Regularly Review and Update: conduct regular reviews of the PS program to identify areas of improvement and adapt to changing threats
Document and Report: maintain detailed records of security assessments, incidents, and training activities
Consider Environmental Factors: implement measures to mitigate damage from natural disasters or unforeseen events
Leverage Technology: utilize technologies like AI, CCTV, intrusion detection systems, and visitor management systems to enhance security
Tie Access Control to Individuals: use systems that track access based on individual credentials for better accountability
Maintain Updated Plans: ensure the PS plan reflects the current state of the assets, facilities and operations
(v) Necessary Management approach required: 'Ease my task for me' (Wa Yassirli Amri); by helping me get experts people (or technology) that will be in charge of fairs to perform each task as if they are Harun (as) in prophetic mission; and the systems of moral, social and managerial wisdom of Imam Ali (as)
(vi) Prerequisites requirement to the management approach: 'Ease my task for me' management component:
A. Divine knowledge and capabilities: spiritual knowledge, skill and capabilities: what spiritual characteristics do you need to possess to earn you divine guidance that will ease providing PSM for the Arbaeen commemoration for you? That is, making the task certain and uncomplex.
However, complexity and difficulty in managing a task may be due to intricated complexity and complication as a result of either system behavior, having interdependencies of components and systems; or human behavior, having interplay between diverse individuals and groups; or ambiguities related to uncertainty of emerging issues, lack of understanding or confusion of work which can easily be resolved if handled by a qualified manager.
To remove complexity from tasks, Moses (as) got prophet Harun (as), a person with similar divine capacity and capability to work with him. In our case, Wa Yassirli Amri will necessitate us getting perfect expert PS managers comparable to Harun (as) who will man different parts of the security management in similar manner that will make every part of the task easy for us. With sincerity of intent, you can acquire the necessary knowledge, get the right persons and gargets, not only based on talent, for the right jobs and positions who will perform with dedication as if on prophetic mission by seeking Allah's guidance.
In addition to other qualities, you will require a high degree of jurisprudence, leadership and fellowship, strong faith, loyalty to wilayat, and morality. 'Ease my task for me' encompasses anything, not only human factor but including necessary modern technologies available. Some aspects of the security for Arbaeen commemoration may contain elements of complexity that may not demand use of high tech to ease, mere individual's management experience, observation and skill suffice.
B. Acquired knowledge and capabilities: Acquiring capable hands and minds, with innovative management tools, technologies and techniques, comprise;
(i) Recruiting people similar to Harun (as) with all characteristics: expertise, strength, wisdom, courage, sacrifice, and dedication to carry out task
(ii) Training and developing of the recruited people to meet characteristics of Harun (as).
(iii) Creating conducive work environment
(iv) Employing techniques and procedures
(v) Using equipment and Technologies: ICT, AI
(vi) Removing bureaucratic bottle necks and ensure smooth workflow
The highest goal is to recruit or get people and technology reminiscent of Harun (as) as tools and employee to man various positions of the PS.
Human resources can be acquired through the following processes published by the Project Management Institute in its Project Management Body of Knowledge;
Plan Resource Management—by defining how to estimate, acquire, manage, and utilize physical and team resources.
Estimate Activity Resources—estimating team resources and the type and quantities of material, equipment, and supplies necessary to perform PS work.
Acquire Resources—Through obtaining team members, facilities, equipment, materials, supplies, and other resources necessary to complete PS work.
Develop Team—by improving competencies, team member interaction, and the overall team environment to enhance security performance.
Manage Team—by way of tracking team member performance, providing feedback, resolving issues, and managing team changes to optimize project performance.
Control Resources—via ensuring that the human resources assigned and allocated to the project are available as planned, as well as monitoring the planned versus actual use of resources, and performing corrective action as necessary.
Similarly, efforts can be made to acquire emerging technologies that will help achieve perfect security management jobs as required.

TO BE CONTINUED.



Prof. Mshelgaru.

The Islamic Resistance Movement as the most ideal society for the Islamic PS Management

HUMANIST

BY JAMEEL LAWAN YAKASAI



Over 5,000 Nigerians benefit from free surgeries, medications and operative care

Over 5,000 residents of Isuikwuato/ Umunneochi Federal Constituency have been targeted for the 2026 annual free medical outreach of former Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, as she sustains the humanitarian initiative for the 19th consecutive year.

The eight-day medical programme, which was held at Isuikwuato General Hospital, moved to Madam Susan Mba Memorial Health Centre, Ugwuodo Umuaku Isuochi, Umunneochi Local Government Area.

A statement issued by Onyejeocha's media office in Abuja described the outreach as 19 years of uninterrupted commitment to providing quality healthcare to the people, noting that beneficiaries received comprehensive secondary and tertiary medical services at no cost.

The services include free medical consultations, cataract and other eye surgeries, hernia and hydrocele operations, fibroid and pile surgeries, appendicitis procedures, caesarean sections, cervical cancer screening, laboratory and optical services, free medications, and food support for patients undergoing surgery.

According to the statement, although Nigeria has made significant progress in primary healthcare, many life-saving specialised treatments remain beyond the reach of ordinary citizens because of their high cost and limited availability of specialists and medical facilities.

It noted that the annual outreach has, over the years, bridged that gap by providing free surgery, medications and post-operative care for thousands of indigent residents. "The sustenance of this laudable programme for this length of time can only be described as 'a covenant being kept'," the statement stressed, adding that the initiative has restored health, renewed hope and transformed countless lives across the constituency.

It reaffirmed Onyejeocha's commitment to improving access to healthcare, stressing that "a healthy constituency is a wealthy constituency," and describing the minister as "an intentional leader."

FEATURES

Nigeria's National Drug Policy: From policy ambition to medicines security



Pharmacy.

By Dr Sabiu Adamu, FPCPharm

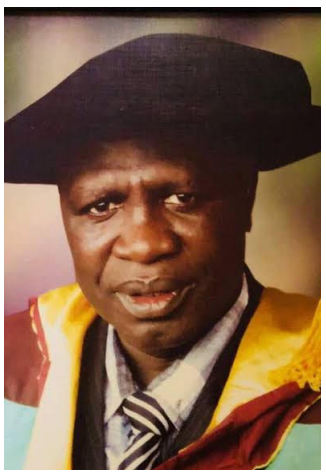
An appraisal of Nigeria's efforts to ensure that safe, effective, affordable and quality-assured medicines reach every Nigerian who needs them. When a Nigerian falls ill, one of the most important questions is often not whether there is a hospital nearby, but whether the medicine prescribed by the healthcare professional will be available and affordable. For some families, obtaining medicines has become a difficult struggle, particularly when treatment is required for a chronic illness that demands continuous medication. A prescription may be carefully written, a diagnosis properly established and professional advice appropriately given, yet the entire process can be undermined if the patient cannot find the medicine or cannot afford it. This simple reality reminds us that medicines are not merely commodities sold in pharmacies; they are an essential part of healthcare and, in many circumstances, a matter of life and death. It is against this background that Nigeria's National Drug Policy deserves serious attention. The Third Edition of the National Drug Policy, introduced in 2021, provides a framework for ensuring that Nigerians have access to medicines that are safe, effective, affordable and of acceptable quality. The policy covers a broad range of issues, including medicine regulation, procurement, distribution, local manufacturing, rational use, quality assurance, pharmacovigilance, research and human-resource development. Its vision is therefore much broader than simply ensuring that drugs are available in hospitals and pharmacies. It seeks to establish a medicines system capable of responding to the health needs of the Nigerian population. The challenge, as with many Nigerian policies, lies not necessarily in the quality of the intentions but in translating those intentions consistently into reality. Nigeria has made notable progress in the regulation and quality assurance of medicines. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has over the years strengthened its regulatory activities, including product registration, inspection, surveillance and enforcement. These efforts have contributed significantly to protecting Nigerians from substandard and falsified medicines. The country's pharmacovigilance system has also continued to develop, providing mechanisms through which suspected adverse reactions to medicines can be reported and investigated. These achievements should be recognised because ensuring that a medicine is genuine and of acceptable quality is just as important as ensuring its availability. However, the availability of medicines remains a major concern. A medicine may be registered and approved by the regulator, yet remain beyond the reach of the patient who needs it. The rising cost of medicines has become particularly troubling in an economy where many families already struggle to meet basic needs. Inflation, exchange-rate fluctuations, transportation costs, energy costs and dependence on imported pharmaceutical raw materials all contribute to the increasing cost of medicines. When medicines become unaffordable, patients may reduce their doses, skip treatment days, purchase only part of a prescribed course or abandon treatment altogether. What may appear to be a simple economic decision can eventually result in treatment failure, complications, hospitalisation and unnecessary deaths. This makes local pharmaceutical manufacturing one of the most important pillars of Nigeria's medicines security. A country of Nigeria's population and economic potential should not remain excessively dependent on other countries for essential medicines. Recent global health emergencies have demonstrated how quickly international supply chains can become disrupted, leaving countries that depend heavily on imports vulnerable. Strengthening domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing would therefore not only create employment and stimulate industrial development; it would also protect national health security. The government's current efforts to encourage local production, including fiscal and regulatory incentives, are steps in the right direction, but these initiatives must be sustained and supported by reliable infrastructure, access to finance, research capacity, technology and a stable business environment. There is, however, an important caution. The goal should not simply be to manufacture more medicines in Nigeria; the medicines must also be of consistently high quality. Nigerian pharmaceutical manufacturers should be encouraged to meet internationally recognised standards of good manufacturing practice, quality control and bioequivalence. Patients should be able to use locally manufactured medicines with confidence, knowing that they are safe, effective and therapeutically reliable. If properly implemented, the ambition to substantially increase local production could transform Nigeria from a predominantly import-dependent medicines market into a stronger pharmaceutical manufacturing hub in Africa. Another area that requires renewed attention is the rational use of medicines. The right medicine can save a life, but the wrong medicine, used in the wrong way, can cause serious harm. Irrational prescribing, unnecessary polypharmacy, inappropriate antibiotic use, self-medication and poor adherence to treatment remain challenges within the Nigerian health system. Antimicrobial resistance is particularly worrying because the effectiveness of medicines that have saved millions of lives is gradually being threatened by inappropriate use. Healthcare professionals therefore have a major responsibility to ensure that medicines are prescribed and dispensed appropriately, while patients must also be educated about the dangers of using medicines without proper professional guidance. The distribution of medicines presents another challenge. It is not enough for medicines to exist somewhere in the country; they must reach the health facility, pharmacy or community where the patient needs them. Weak forecasting, procurement delays, inadequate storage, poor transportation and inefficient distribution can create shortages even when medicines are available elsewhere. Strengthening the pharmaceutical supply chain should therefore remain a priority. Better information systems, transparent procurement processes, effective inventory management and stronger coordination between government agencies and other stakeholders can help reduce wastage and improve availability. The problem of informal medicine distribution also deserves sustained attention. Open drug markets have provided access to medicines for many Nigerians, particularly where formal healthcare services are inadequate or distant. However, the risks associated with uncontrolled storage, inappropriate dispensing, self-medication and the circulation of poor-quality medicines cannot be ignored. The solution should not be limited to closing such markets; it should also involve strengthening legitimate pharmaceutical distribution networks and ensuring that affordable medicines are readily available through properly regulated channels. People will continue to patronise informal sources when the formal system fails to meet their needs. Ultimately, the success of Nigeria's National Drug Policy should be judged not by the number of policy documents produced, meetings held or targets announced, but by the experience of the ordinary Nigerian who walks into a health facility with a prescription. Can the patient obtain the medicine? Is it genuine? Is it affordable? Has it been properly stored? Is there a qualified professional available to provide appropriate advice? These are the questions that give meaning to medicines policy. Nigeria already possesses considerable professional expertise, regulatory institutions and a policy framework capable of supporting a strong medicines system. What is required now is sustained political commitment, adequate investment, effective coordination and, most importantly, consistent implementation. The journey from policy ambition to medicines security may be challenging, but it is a journey Nigeria must undertake if the promise of healthcare for all is to become a reality.

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Nigerian Road Accidents: "New norms" adoption and docility of FRSC officers

By Prof MK Othman

A few years ago, on my way to Sokoto, I met a stern-looking Road Safety Officer at the rail crossing of Tsafe town, Zamfara State, who demanded my vehicle's particulars, which I delivered promptly. After examining the particulars, he demanded a triangle and a fire extinguisher, which I provided. When he found nothing amiss, he tried to operate the Extinguisher and, in the process, broke the pressure head. We looked at each other, and he profusely apologised. While the scene was being played, an overloaded commercial car passed by, its passengers and goods crammed in at three times the vehicle's capacity. The Road Safety officer pretended not to see the vehicle by looking the other way. I collected my particulars and drove away without uttering a word. Another time, a Road Safety officer stopped me in Funtua, Katsina State, and demanded to see my driving license, which I handed over pronto. The tendency of road traffic officers to harass law-abiding motorists is common on almost every road across the country, especially for those of us driving private vehicles with required particulars and functional equipment. At one time, on my way to Kano from Zaria, a road safety officer, after checking my particulars and finding nothing missing, bent down to examine the manufacturing and expiration dates on my tyres, all in an effort to assign fault and extort me. I cannot afford to travel without fire extinguishers, spare, unexpired tyres, and wearing seat belts, as I have witnessed how these common tools have saved lives and prevented injuries. He was certainly disappointed. However, most commercial vehicle drivers, tricycle drivers, and motorcycle riders commit all kinds of traffic offences and get away with it, while innocent, humble-looking private vehicle drivers like me and others are harassed without committing any offence. Well, as Dan Bello would say, "This is Nigeria." The most disturbing thing is the adoption of the "new norms" in road transportation by commercial vehicle drivers and motorcyclists, who are mostly responsible for massive road accidents with dire consequences. What are the "new norms"? Before answering the question, what is the level of road accidents in Nigeria? Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest rate of road accidents in the world. In 2025, the Nigerian Red Cross Society on March 11 and the World Health Organisation on September 23 reported an estimated 21.4 road traffic deaths per 100,000 population in Nigeria, placing the country significantly higher than in developed regions but near the African regional average of 19.5 and the global average of 17.5. However, the FRSC reported 10,446 crashes and 5,289 deaths nationwide for January–December 2025, meaning that, on average, Nigeria recorded approximately 29 road crashes and 14.5 deaths every day in 2025. Compared with 2024, the FRSC recorded 9,570 crashes and 5,421 deaths, indicating that the number of crashes increased, even though recorded fatalities fell slightly from the 2024 level. According to a study conducted by Wasiu et al., there was an average of 1042 deaths per 100,000 vehicles and a loss of ₦80 billion in goods annually due to road accidents in Nigeria (www.researchgate.net/publication/324088254_ROAD). For a long time, Road traffic accidents have been very devastating, with a high fatality rate. For instance, in 1984, Nigeria was reported to have the highest rate of road traffic deaths in Africa, with the chances of a vehicle killing someone in Nigeria being 47 times higher than in Britain (Bolade and Ogunsanya, 1990). Data on the recent fatality rate in Nigeria due to road traffic accidents are mostly underreported or difficult to access. Still, the accident rate is likely to increase due to growth in the vehicle population, the number of road users, overloading, dilapidated roads, and the adoption of the so-called "new norms". One of the "new norms" includes placing passengers in the vehicle booths meant for loading goods. It is common to see one to three people crammed into a booth in a commercial vehicle, along with goods. I have observed several times on many roads commercial cars with a maximum capacity of four passengers and a driver, carrying three in the front, four in the back seat, and four passengers in the booth, called the "big parlour".



Prof. Othman.

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SPORTS

BY TAWHEED YAKUB



D'Tigress.

FG completes presidential reward package for D'Tigress

The Federal Government has paid the naira equivalent of $100,000 to each D'Tigress player, completing President Bola Tinubu's promised presidential rewards for the team's historic 2025 FIBA Women's AfroBasket triumph.

The National Sports Commission (NSC) confirmed that the accounts of the players and officials were credited on September 9, 2026, with each team official receiving the naira equivalent of $50,000. All recipients have confirmed receipt of the payments.

The payment represents the final component of the presidential reward package promised to D'Tigress after they won a record fifth consecutive FIBA Women's AfroBasket title and seventh overall.

According to the NSC, the full reward package comprised a three-bedroom flat in Abuja, national honours of the Order of the Niger (OON), and cash payments of $100,000 for each player and $50,000 for each official.

The commission said the players and officials had earlier received the title documents, including Certificates of Occupancy, for their three-bedroom apartments in Abuja and certificates of national honours in February 2026.

The documents were duly signed by President Tinubu, the NSC said.

In a statement signed by its Director of Information and Public Relations, Kehinde Ajayi, the commission said the completion of the payment meant that all components of the presidential rewards had now been fully redeemed.

D'Tigress acknowledged the reward on Thursday with a post on its official X handle, with a caption: "Presidential reward acknowledged."

The NSC said the presidential rewards were part of the Federal Government's efforts to prioritise the welfare of Nigerian athletes and appropriately recognise outstanding sporting performances.

The commission also disclosed that the Super Falcons, who were promised similar rewards after their 2025 Women's Africa Cup of Nations triumph, had received their apartment title documents and national honours.

It said the Falcons' cash component — the naira equivalent of $100,000 per player and $50,000 per official — is expected to be paid before their next official engagements.

D'Tigress made history at the 2025 FIBA Women's AfroBasket by winning their fifth consecutive continental title, extending their dominance of African women's basketball.

France withdraws support for Infantino ahead of FIFA presidential election

France has withdrawn its support for Gianni Infantino's presidency of FIFA, becoming the latest major European football nation to distance itself from the world governing body's leader.

The French Football Federation announced the decision on Thursday, following similar moves by England, Italy, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland.

The decision follows Infantino's controversial proposal to sell stakes in FIFA competitions, including the World Cup, to private investors.

The plan triggered widespread criticism and led UEFA to threaten a boycott of FIFA competitions.

UEFA, the Asian Football Confederation and Concacaf have also called for Infantino to step down, although he continues to receive backing from South America's Conmebol and Africa's CAF.

FIFA has confirmed that Infantino will seek a fourth term in office at the presidential election in March.

FFF president Philippe Diallo said the federation could not support the way the proposal was handled.

"A project with such a significant impact on the future of football could not be envisaged without comprehensive information, in-depth consultation and a fully transparent decision-making process.

"FIFA's governance does not live up to the standards that football represents," Diallo said.

Although Infantino abandoned the investment proposal, the FFF said concerns over FIFA's governance remained unresolved.

"FIFA's governance cannot be considered resolved," the federation said.

The FFF plans to consult confederations, national associations, players, supporters and governance experts as it seeks proposals for wide-ranging reforms.

"The aim of these consultations will be to foster collective reflection and to draw up proposals for a far-reaching transformation of FIFA's governance, with a view to restoring confidence, enhancing transparency and ensuring the independence and exemplary conduct of world football's governing body," the federation said.

The FFF, a founding member of FIFA, said it intends to contribute to what it considers an important debate over the future direction and regulation of world football.



Infantino.

Messi to become majority shareholder in Spanish second-tier club

Lionel Messi has reached a preliminary agreement to become majority shareholder of Spanish second-tier club Eldense, days after ending his Argentina international career.

According to the BBC, Eldense confirmed the agreement with Messi for the acquisition of shares currently owned by Grupo TH Soluciones, which would make the 39-year-old majority shareholder.

The transaction remains subject to legal and contractual procedures, including due diligence and approval from Spain's National Sports Council (CSD).

The proposed takeover would make Eldense the second Spanish club Messi has invested in after he acquired fifth-tier Catalan side Cornella in April.

Messi recently retired from international football after Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain in the 2026 World Cup final, bringing his illustrious career with the national team to an end.

Eldense are currently 20th in La Liga 2 with two points from four matches and parted ways with coach Claudio Barragan earlier this week.

The club, based in Alicante, have risen through Spain's lower divisions and have competed in the second tier in three of the past four seasons.

Messi left Argentina for Spain at 13 and made his Barcelona first-team debut at 17 in 2004. He went on to score a club-record 672 goals in 778 appearances for the Catalan giants before moving to Paris Saint-Germain in 2021 and Inter Miami in 2023.

His move into Spanish club ownership follows a growing trend among high-profile football figures. Former Barcelona defender Gerard Pique's Kosmos group owns second-tier Andorra, while Real Madrid forwards Vinicius Junior and Kylian Mbappe are part of investment groups holding majority stakes in clubs in Portugal and France.

Messi's former Real Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo also owns a 25% stake in Spanish side Almeria.



Messi.

SALUTE TO SERVICE

How discipline, hard work and faith drive success — Business titan shares insights at ABU's 'Lunch with the Vice-Chancellor'

A renowned business executive and entrepreneur, Lawal Garba, shared his career life with students at the second edition of the 'Lunch with the Vice-Chancellor' programme, introduced by Ahmadu Bello University, which took place at the weekend.

The programme was introduced last year by the university to create a relaxed and direct platform where the Vice-Chancellor could interact with the students.

In the course of interaction with students, the Vice-Chancellor would listen to their experiences and aspirations, and share with them some of the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities that come with being a student of the university.

Lawal Garba, FNIQS, MFR, a distinguished alumnus of Ahmadu Bello University, having been its graduate after studying Quantity Surveying, is the Chairman/CEO of Trobell International Nigeria Ltd.

Garba was the keynote speaker at this year's ABU 'Lunch with the Vice-Chancellor' programme, which was held at Yusufu Bala Usman Hall, ABU Main Campus, Samaru, Zaria.

According to the Public Affairs Directorate, Office of the Vice-Chancellor,

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (NEWS/NAM/AHW&PIC/YOU/DAH), the lecture, 'The Lawal Garba Way: Building Enterprises, Creating Opportunities, Transforming Lives', offered students of the university valuable lessons in professional excellence, entrepreneurship and service to society.

Garba, who distinguished himself as a Quantity Surveyor, became the first graduate of Quantity Surveying to establish a property cost-control function in the banking sector.

Speaking at the occasion, the guest lecturer explained that his journey as a business executive and entrepreneur was not defined by privilege but by persistence, discipline, hard work and faith.

According to him, success did not come overnight; it came through sacrifice and setbacks like losing opportunities which he thought were certain.

Garba also said success came through difficult decisions, including walking away from short-term gains that did not align with long-term integrity.

The business executive stated that, most importantly, it came through consistency - showing up every day when results were not immediate.

He told the story of his company, Trobell Nigeria Ltd, which he said was established on a vision of excellence, integrity and long-term value creation.

Garba also said they started modestly, taking on projects that required not just technical competence but also trust.

"In one early project, we were selected not because we were the biggest firm, but the client believed in our commitment to deliver - this reinforced a lifelong lesson that credibility often matters more than size," he said.

He stressed that business is not simply about making money, but it is about creating solutions and that the greatest asset any entrepreneur possesses is not capital but reputation.

The keynote speaker further told students of the university five lessons for success, saying "integrity is everything"

He said he had seen situations where contracts worth millions were awarded based solely on trust built over the years - not aggressive marketing.

The business entrepreneur stressed the need for guarding one's name jealously by never compromising integrity, even when no one is watching.

He mentioned excellence as another lesson for success, stressing that success is the result of consistent excellence.

"In one instance, a small detail in the documentation or execution made the difference between approval and rejection of a major project," he stated.

Garba said continuous learning is another lesson for success.

He recalled a time when traditional methods dominated the business sector, but those who refused to learn digital tools and modern project systems gradually became irrelevant.

"The day you stop learning", according to him, "is the day you start becoming irrelevant".

Garba further stressed the need for building relationships, as no successful person succeeds alone. "Your network matters", he said.

He explained that some of the most important opportunities in his journey came not from formal applications, but from relationships built over time.

"Treat everyone with dignity. Maintain relationships. One conversation can change your life forever," he said.



Lawal Garba also spoke on the need to be resilient. He stressed that failure is not the opposite of success, but part of success.

He said there were moments when bids were unsuccessful, or projects faced unexpected challenges, saying that instead of giving up, they reviewed, learned, improved and returned stronger.

"Every setback carries a lesson; every challenge creates strength. Never allow temporary difficulties to destroy permanent opportunities," he counselled.

He said Nigeria remained one of the most promising countries in the world and that the opportunities before the students were enormous.

Garba told students of the university that opportunities exist in the following, but are not limited to: agriculture, technology, mining, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, digital economy, creative industries.

He said what they must do is, among many others, develop valuable skills such as data analysis, engineering competence, or digital literacy that make them relevant in the job market.

He also advised them to read beyond their academic disciplines, just as he had to learn business and management, which is beyond Quantity Surveying, which is what he studied at ABU, Zaria.

The business executive also spoke on leadership and service, saying true leadership is not about position, but about responsibility and service.

The greatest leaders are those who create opportunities for others, stressing that the most fulfilling part of success is not personal achievement, but seeing young professionals grow, families supported, and communities improved through their work.

Lawal Garba expressed gratitude to Ahmadu Bello University for allowing him to share his professional experience with students.

He urged his alma mater to continue to produce leaders, innovators and nation builders who will transform Nigeria and Africa.







SOCIALS/FASHION

BY AYANDA NGWANE

The evolution of Nigerian lace production as an alternative to costly Western imports

Lace materials made in Nigeria represent a vibrant sector of local industrial manufacturing, challenging the long-standing reliance on imports from Austria and the Netherlands.

While Nigeria historically imported billionsdollars'lars worth of ceremonial textiles annually, local factories and cottage industries have stepped up to produce premium, highly sought-after lace variants designed specifically for West African fashion and Owambe culture.

Local production covers several iconic lace types adapted for Nigerian weather and stylistic demands.

Dry Lace / Swiss Voile Lace: Made predominantly from 100% pure cotton. It is heavily embroidered but breathable, making it highly preferred for both men's sets and women's kaftans or boubous.

Cord Lace / Guipure Lace: Characterised by its heavy, raised, open-pattern embroidery where the motifs are connected by plaits or "cords".

Beaded and Sequined Net Lace: Often locally finished, these feature delicate nylon or polyester mesh backing embellished with intricate stonework, manual beading, and metallic sequins.

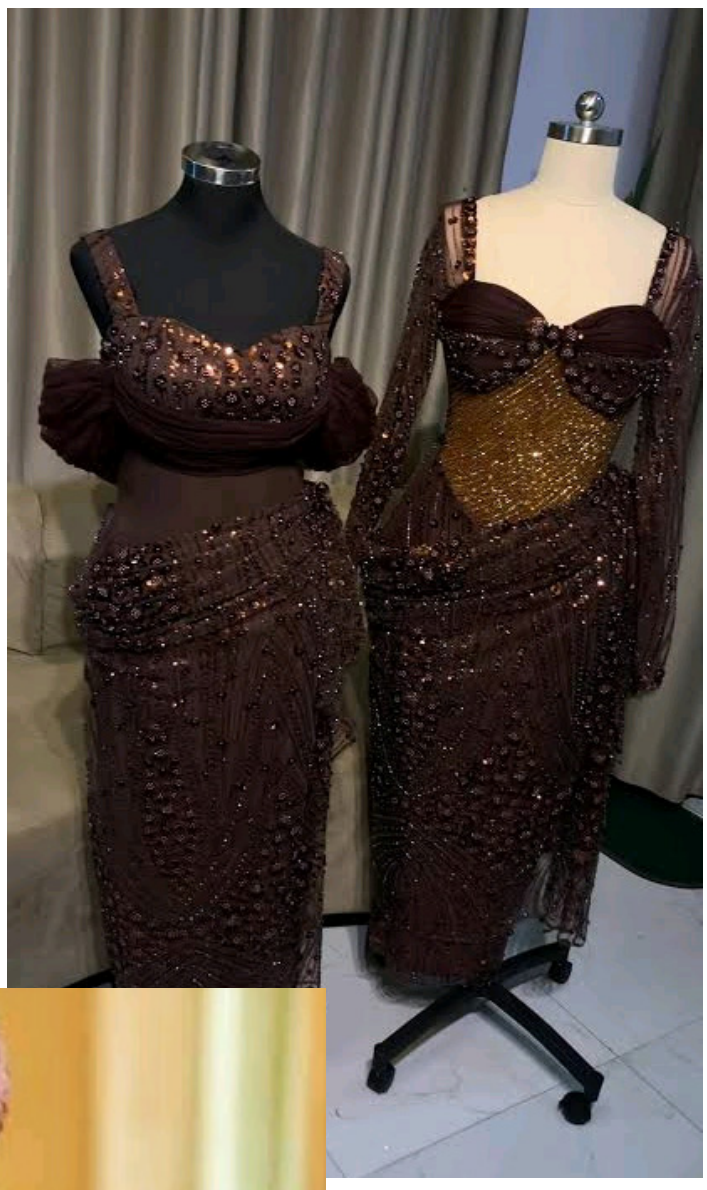
Tissue and Organza Lace: Lightweight, semi-transparent alternatives featuring soft, clean finishes.

Local production is spearheaded by established textile mills and newer industrial plants that manage the intricate workmanship needed for dense African embroidery patterns.

Win-Win Textile (Ondo State): A major industrial milestone launched to mass-produce high-quality lace materials specifically engineered to substitute expensive imports from Western Europe.

The Austrian Lace Textile Factory (Agege, Lagos): An indigenous, historic production facility situated along the Old Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway in Oko-Oba, specialising in localised Swiss- and Austrian-style lace.

Cottage and Small-Scale Plants (Lagos & Onitsha): A dense network of local industrial hubs (some running for up to 50 years) where fabric retailers collaborate with manufacturers to create custom-embroidered, sample-less designs tailored directly to the domestic market.









TECH WORLD

ABDULLAHI HARUNA

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.

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.

Apple launches its first foldable iPhone

Apple has unveiled its first foldable iPhone, the iPhone Duo, in what the company described as a major redesign of its flagship smartphone.

Apple unveiled the device on Wednesday at its product event, which also featured the iPhone 18 Pro and iPhone 18 Pro Max, updated AirPods, and new Apple Watch models.

According to CNN and The Independent, the iPhone Duo has a foldable design and a 7.6-inch continuous display when unfolded.

It is also described as Apple's thinnest iPhone ever. When folded, the device has a screen roughly the size of a passport, while its controls, including the home-screen dock and status indicators, have been moved to the right side of the display to make them easier to reach.

Introducing the device, Apple's new Chief Executive Officer, John Ternus, criticised existing foldable phones, saying they felt like "two phones awkwardly stuck together."

The launch marks Ternus' first Apple product event as CEO after taking over from Tim Cook earlier this month. The iPhone Duo is expected to cost more than $2,000, according to The Independent, which described the device as a complete redesign of Apple's most iconic product.



IPhone 18.

Apple also unveiled the iPhone 18 Pro and iPhone 18 Pro Max, with the Pro model starting at $1,199 and the Pro Max at $1,299.

The prices are higher than those of last year's iPhone 17 Pro and Pro Max, which started at $1,099 and $1,199, respectively.

The iPhone 18 Pro features a variable-aperture camera that allows users to adjust how much light enters the lens, while Apple said its new thermal management system would help control the devices' temperature.

Apple also introduced the Apple Upgrade programme, allowing customers to make monthly payments over 12 or 24 months and upgrade to a new iPhone at the end of the lease.

The company unveiled the AirPods 5, which feature improved sound quality and noise cancellation, as well as Siri AI tools, including live translation.

The new Apple Watch Series 12 and Apple Watch Ultra 4 also received health and artificial intelligence upgrades. The watches will feature a new "Readiness" score combining users' recent activity, vital signs and sleep, while a new Audio Intelligence feature will allow them to identify sounds such as sirens and alarms.

Apple said the audio features would not store recordings and that the audio would be end-to-end encrypted.

OpenAI reveals AI solved decades-old maths problems within hours

OpenAI says it has found a solution to a decades-old advanced maths problem in a matter of hours using a new artificial intelligence (AI) model and thousands of AI bots. The ChatGPT-maker said on Tuesday that by focusing a group of roughly 10,000 AI agents, or AI bots that undertake tasks somewhat autonomously, it solved a notoriously difficult maths problem in just 88 hours.

The problem was part of the Navier-Stokes equations, which concern how fluids move. For 90 years, important aspects of the problem have lacked a proof, the argument underlying a correct mathematical equation.

OpenAI called the solution it found a "milestone" and evidence that AI tools are improving quickly.

OpenAI's solution has yet to be verified independently or publicly accepted by The Clay Mathematics Institute, a maths organisation based in the US which runs the Millennium Prize that offers big money to the first to solve certain mathematical conundrums. But the company's claim has already sparked a backlash.

Tristan Buckmaster, a mathematics professor at New York University, said on Tuesday that he and Levent Alpöge, a mathematician working for OpenAI rival Anthropic, had also been working on solving the problem.

The duo had been using OpenAI's tool Codex in their work. But Buckmaster said that on 3 September, he found out that "information about our progress had been passed to OpenAI".

Buckmaster's statement came the same day, but hours before, OpenAI published its Navier–Stokes work. He claimed that OpenAI did not begin working on the Navier–Stokes equations until "after information about our work had reached OpenAI".

He included text from emails exchanged with OpenAI over the work and his questions about the company's timing and methods. Buckmaster added that he had not yet read OpenAI's full proof, but felt compelled to go public with "what I was told, when, and what was proposed to me...because the alternative is to let a sequence of announcements say something I know to be false".

OpenAI on Tuesday congratulated the "concurrent work" of Buckmaster and Alpöge, calling it "remarkable".



OpenAI.

The company said it had not seen "any of their work through any means until they released it publicly" and that no user data was accessed in its work on the Navier–Stokes problem.

"While unlikely, we cannot rule out that de-identified data derived from their usage of our products helped improve our models□ ", the company added. "However, our proofs differ significantly, and even the precise results proved are different," OpenAI said.

web update

AI must assist, not replace human effort, experts caution

Nigeria must urgently embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) while establishing strong guardrails against its irresponsible use or risk falling behind in global development.

This was the central position of prominent academics on Tuesday at the opening ceremony of the 8th Lagos State University (LASU) Research and Innovation Fair, themed "Accelerating National Development Through Artificial Intelligence-Driven Research and Innovation."

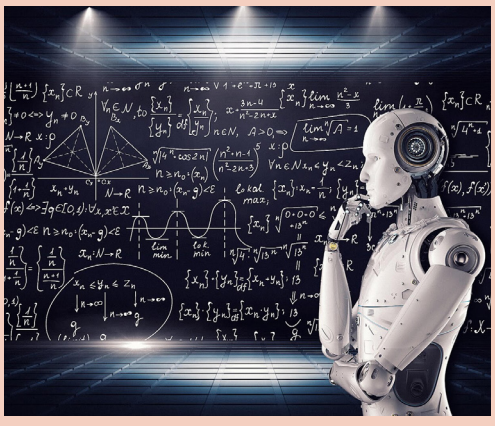
Speaking at the two-day event, the immediate past Vice-Chancellor of Covenant University, Ota, Prof. Abiodun Adebayo, described AI as a transformative technology capable of driving productivity and solving critical challenges in agriculture, healthcare, education, and energy.

"If you have not subscribed to AI, you are still in the dark age," Adebayo declared.

He shared how AI assists his daily professional tasks, turning hours of manual transcription into minutes for meeting records and action timelines.

However, Adebayo warned that inadequate digital infrastructure, poor connectivity, skill shortages, high costs, and ethical concerns remain major barriers to wider adoption in Nigeria.

He advocated for targeted AI deployment in precision farming, medical imaging, and telemedicine for underserved communities, stressing that AI must assist rather than replace human effort.



OpenAI.

WORLD NEWS

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

British MPs reject bill to legalise assisted dying

British MPs on Friday rejected a bill to legalise assisted dying in a knife-edge vote, a blow to campaigners in favour of the controversial procedure that is legal in a host of countries including Canada and Switzerland.

Plans to legalise assisted dying have had a long and emotional passage through parliament, with protesters on both sides of the debate regularly demonstrating in Westminster.

Lawmakers in the House of Commons had taken the historic step to back a separate but identical bill legalising the practice for some terminally ill adults last year, before that was scuppered in the unelected upper house.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill was reintroduced this parliamentary session, but MPs struck it down after hours of impassioned debate Friday, with 286 voting against and 270 in favour.

The bill would have allowed adults in England and Wales who have been given less than six months to live and can clearly express a wish to die the option to opt to end their own lives. They would need the approval of two doctors and an expert panel to make the decision.

Campaigners against assisted dying celebrated the result, with Gordon Macdonald from the Care Not Killing group calling it a "decisive vote".

He said MPs had "over the last 24 months seen through the pernicious pretence that this draft legislation was safe and wouldn't put pressure on vulnerable people to end their lives prematurely".

Outside parliament, campaigners hoping for the change in law wiped away tears and comforted each other.

"This is a devastating setback for dying people," said charity Dignity in Dying, adding that "this issue is not going away".

New Prime Minister Andy Burnham had said he would sit out the vote so as not to "unduly influence the debate".

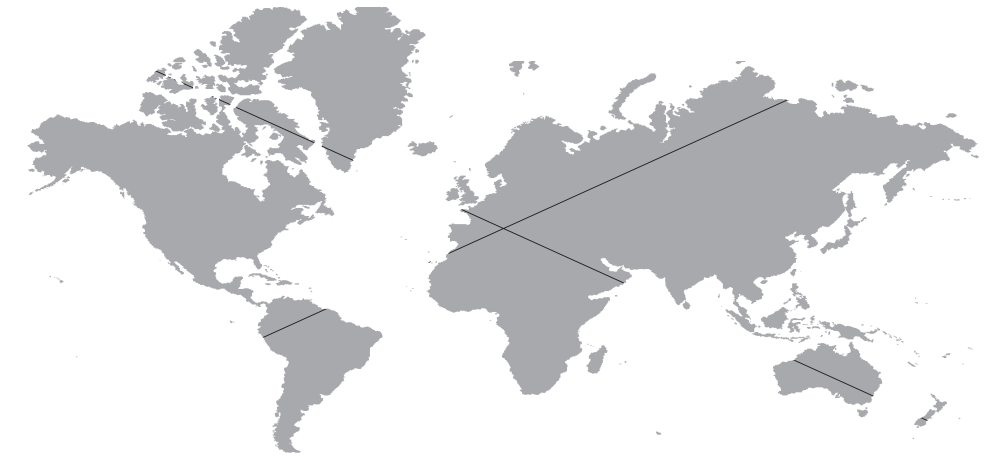
Since becoming the country's leader in July, Burnham has relaunched his years-long push to improve social care for the elderly and vulnerable, and has supported prioritising palliative care.

The controversial draft assisted dying legislation passed in a landmark vote in the House of Commons last June.

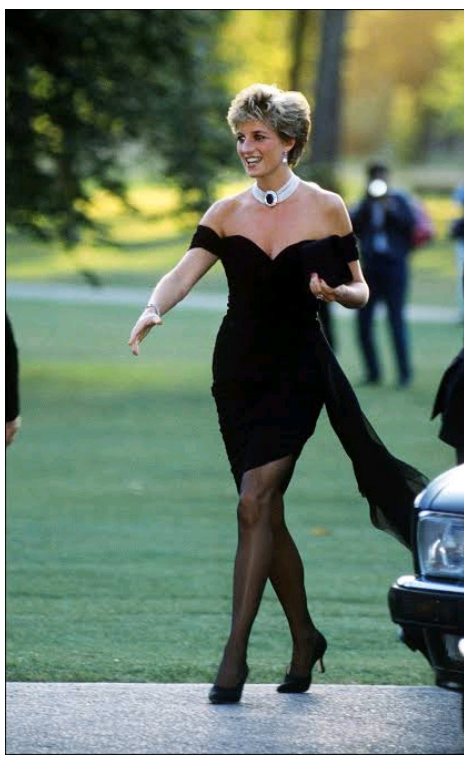
But it was torpedoed by more than 1,200 amendments in the unelected upper House of Lords, which was accused of obstructing and delaying the bill. Earlier this year, lawmakers in Scotland, where health is a devolved issue, rejected a bill to legalise assisted dying. Lawmakers in the self-governing British dependencies of Jersey and the Isle of Man have already approved assisted dying legislation, but the moves are awaiting royal assent.



Campaigners.



Princess Diana's iconic 'revenge dress' goes up for auction 30 years later



Princess Diana.

Princess Diana's head-turning "revenge dress," which broke royal protocol and created a sensational pop culture moment, is going on sale for the first time in nearly 30 years.

The showstopping evening gown by Greek designer Christina Stambolian will be exhibited in London this month, before heading to Hong Kong, Geneva, and finally New York, where it is expected to sell for up to $300,000 when it goes under the hammer on December 9.

The late Princess of Wales wore the black, figure-hugging dress on June 29, 1994 — the same day that her then-husband, now King Charles III, admitted in an ITN documentary that he'd been unfaithful. The revelation had been leaked days prior by the British press and the documentary aired to 13 million viewers nationwide.

Yet Diana chose to arrive for a party at the Serpentine Gallery in London in a gown so captivating it received its own moniker, becoming known as "the revenge dress."

Pairing the shoulder-baring silk design with black heels, a black clutch, bold red nails and a jewelled choker – created from an antique diamond and sapphire brooch that Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, gifted her for her wedding, according to Sotheby's – Diana reclaimed her image in the public's imagination.

"Fashion can be a language when words fail or are simply not enough. Princess Diana understood that instinctively," said Morgane Halimi, head of handbags and fashion at Sotheby's, in a statement Thursday.

"On her own terms, Princess Diana turned the dress into one of the most powerful messages she ever made, during one of the most scrutinised and emotionally charged episodes of her life," Halimi added.

At the time, black was only considered appropriate for royals during funerals. Stambolian's design is a version of the little black dress, a fashion statement first conceived in 1926 by Coco Chanel to reimagine black, from a colour of mourning to one of sophisticated chic, and free women from the fashion constraint of earlier times, according to Sotheby's. Diana made the impulsive decision to wear the black design, which had been sitting in her closet for three years out of fear it was "too daring," Stambolian said in the 2013 Channel 4 documentary "Princess Diana's Dresses: The Auction."

The dark outfit and its pop culture moment have since been memorialised in clothing lines, on social media and on TV programs such as Netflix's historical drama "The Crown."

"What became a global viral moment – long before social media made the term mundane – also gave license to anyone, but especially women, to use fashion beyond adornment and much more intentionally and meaningfully: as a shield, a weapon or both," Halimi said.

"What has endured across the decades is not the scandal surrounding that evening, but Princess Diana's show of confidence and self-possession," Halimi added.

Diana "wanted to look a million dollars" when she stepped out in the dress, according to the stylist who helped her get ready, Anna Harvey, Sotheby's said.

Considering one of Diana's less famous dresses far exceeded estimates in 2023, selling for $604,800, this dress could hold more value than estimated. After all, Diana's famous "black sheep" sweater broke records in 2023 when it sold for more than $1.1 million.

The "revenge dress" was last sold in June 1997, when Diana auctioned 79 of her dresses to raise funds for breast cancer and AIDS charities, Sotheby's said. It then appeared at charity fundraiser events in Scotland before it was last seen on display at the country's Paisley Museum nearly three decades ago.

A rare copy of the catalogue from the original sale – which credits Prince William with the sale's design and which was signed by the late princess and the dress designer – will be sold with the gown.

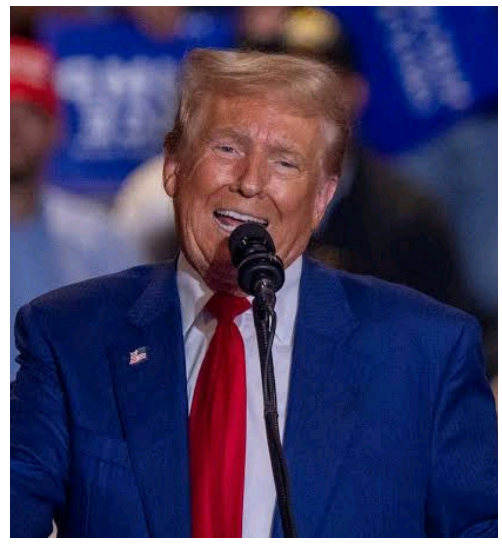
"My late husband and I knew that this dress was something special," said the anonymous consignor who bought the dress in 1997.

"Princess Diana was walking into the worst night of her life, and you would never know it to look at her. It went from a cocktail dress to a statement in the time it took to photograph her. "Thirty years on, you can say the words anywhere in the world, and everyone knows exactly which dress you mean," they added.

"I hope it goes to someone who will enjoy owning it as much as we did."

Some of the proceeds from the sale will be donated to the health service charity NHS Lothian Charity, according to the auction house.

The dress will be unveiled at Sotheby's London on September 18 and displayed until September 24, before exhibiting in Hong Kong from October 1 to 15, in Geneva from November 6 to 11, and in New York from December 2.



Trump

Trump promises $5,000 to every U.S. adult if Republicans win

United States President Donald Trump says he will pay a $5,000 dividend to every adult citizen if Republicans win the upcoming congressional midterm elections.

Speaking on Wednesday at the Republican convention in Dallas, Texas, Trump said the payment would be funded by revenue generated from the country's economic growth and tariffs.

He described the offer as a cash distribution similar to what a successful company pays its shareholders.

"Because of our tremendous strength and success economically, I will issue a dividend to every adult citizen in the United States of America for $5,000," Trump said.

The president said the payment would be contingent on recipients spending the money in the US, adding that it would be known as the "Trump Dividend".

"We don't want you going to Canada to spend the money. We don't want you going to China, to Germany. You've got to spend the money in the United States of America," Trump said.

He attributed the planned payment to the economic gains his administration had achieved, noting that Democrats would not be able to implement a similar scheme because they do not support tariffs.

"If the Republicans win, you win with us, and you get $5,000," Trump said.

The president said his administration's Trump accounts programme, under which the government provides $1,000 to eligible children, has helped low-income families.

Trump also praised the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation for committing $6.25 billion to the programme, saying the contribution would benefit children across the US.

Republicans currently hold majorities in both chambers of Congress, while Democrats are in the minority, with Americans set to vote in November to elect members of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

DID YOU KNOW?

BY VIVIAN OKAFOR

Great Wall of China evolves from defence system into cherished historical landmark



The Great Wall of China was built primarily to protect China's northern borders from raids and invasions by nomadic tribes, such as the Xiongnu and later the Mongols.

Farming communities in ancient China faced constant attacks from northern nomadic groups who stole food, livestock, and goods.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang connected smaller, older border walls into one unified system in the 3rd century BCE to secure his newly unified empire and project central power.

The wall helped secure trade routes like the Silk Road, allowing safe passage for merchants and enabling the government to collect taxes on goods.

Watchtowers along the wall acted as an early-warning system, using smoke and fire signals to pass messages across vast distances quickly.

The barrier helped the government monitor and control the movement of people and supplies crossing the frontier.

The eastern end of the Great Wall of China looks like a massive stone structure plunging directly into the blue waters of the Bohai Sea. The Great Wall of China has two main ends, the eastern end meets the ocean at Laolongtou in Hebei Province, and the western end stops at the desert fortress of Jiayuguan in Gansu Province.

The Great Wall of China stopped functioning as an active military defense in 1644 when the Qing Dynasty rose to power and expanded China's borders beyond the northern fortifications. When the Manchu rulers of the Qing Dynasty took control of all China, the northern boundary shifted far past the wall, rendering the military barricade obsolete.

Active maintenance stopped completely. Local populations took bricks and stones from the structure to build houses, roads, and farm enclosures, causing large parts of the wall to crumble or vanish. In the 20th century, the neglected ruins found a new life as a cherished historical landmark and a proud national symbol of China.

Traditional maps place the eastern end at Shanhai Pass in Hebei province, where the structure meets the sea at a section called Old Dragon's Head (Laolongtou). The famous western terminus for the Ming Dynasty wall is located at the Jiayu Pass (Jiayuguan) in Gansu province, near the edge of the Gobi Desert.

Crooked House of Windsor is renowned as England's oldest teahouse



The Crooked House of Windsor is widely recognised as England's oldest teahouse.

Windsor, England (on the bustling High Street near Windsor Castle), Originally constructed around 1687 (and later reconstructed in 1718). It stands at a dramatic, noticeable slant, giving it a wonky appearance.

While historically famed as a teahouse, the building has also housed retail spaces like a Jersey Pearl jewelry shop in recent years.

The dramatic slant happened because builders used unseasoned green oak wood during a court-ordered reconstruction, causing the frame to buckle.

Rumours say a secret underground passage connects the basement to Windsor Castle, supposedly used by King Charles II to visit his mistress, Nell Gwyn.

While famous for operating as a teahouse and tearoom for many years, the building has also housed retail shops (such as a jeweler) in recent times.

LIVING LEGENDS

BY AISHA AUYO
AishaAuyo@neptuneprime.com.ng

Prof. Peter Akinsola Okebukola, Award-Winning Academic and Researcher

Peter Akinsola Okebukola, OFR (born 17 February 1948) is a Nigerian academic, researcher, and administrator.

He holds the position of distinguished professor of science and computer education at Lagos State University (LASU) and has been contributing to academia since 1984.

He serves as the chairman of council at Crawford University and is the president of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi-Africa).

Okebukola is a recipient of the UNESCO Kalinga Prize for the Communication of Science in 1992, being the first African to achieve such recognition for contributions to science popularisation.

Born on 17 February 1948 in Ilesa, Osun State, Nigeria, Okebukola embarked on his educational journey at St. Malachy's College, Sapele, Delta State, culminating in the acquisition of his GCE Advanced Level certificate at Remo Secondary School, Sagamu, Ogun State, in 1969.

He attended the University of Ibadan, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1973, master's degree in 1979, and doctoral degree in 1984—all in Science Education.

With a specialisation in biology education, curriculum development, and evaluation, Okebukola further honed his skills through specialised science and technology training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University in Cambridge, USA.

Okebukola's association with Lagos State University (LASU) began in 1984 when he assumed the role of the director of the science education department.

Progressing through the academic ranks, he became a professor of science and computer education in 1989. His range of courses includes science education, computer education, environmental education, e-learning, quality assurance in higher education, and educational evaluation.

He has supervised more than 100 doctoral students and over 200 master's students. He has been dean of the faculty of education, director of the centre for environmental sciences, director of the centre for general Nigerian studies, director of the centre for planning studies, and chairman of the committee of deans.

In 2017, he was appointed as a distinguished professor of science and computer education at LASU.

His awards include a 1989 Gold Medal from the International Council of Associations for Science Education, the 1991 Gold Medal from the International Society for Technology in Education, and the 1993 Gold Medal from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

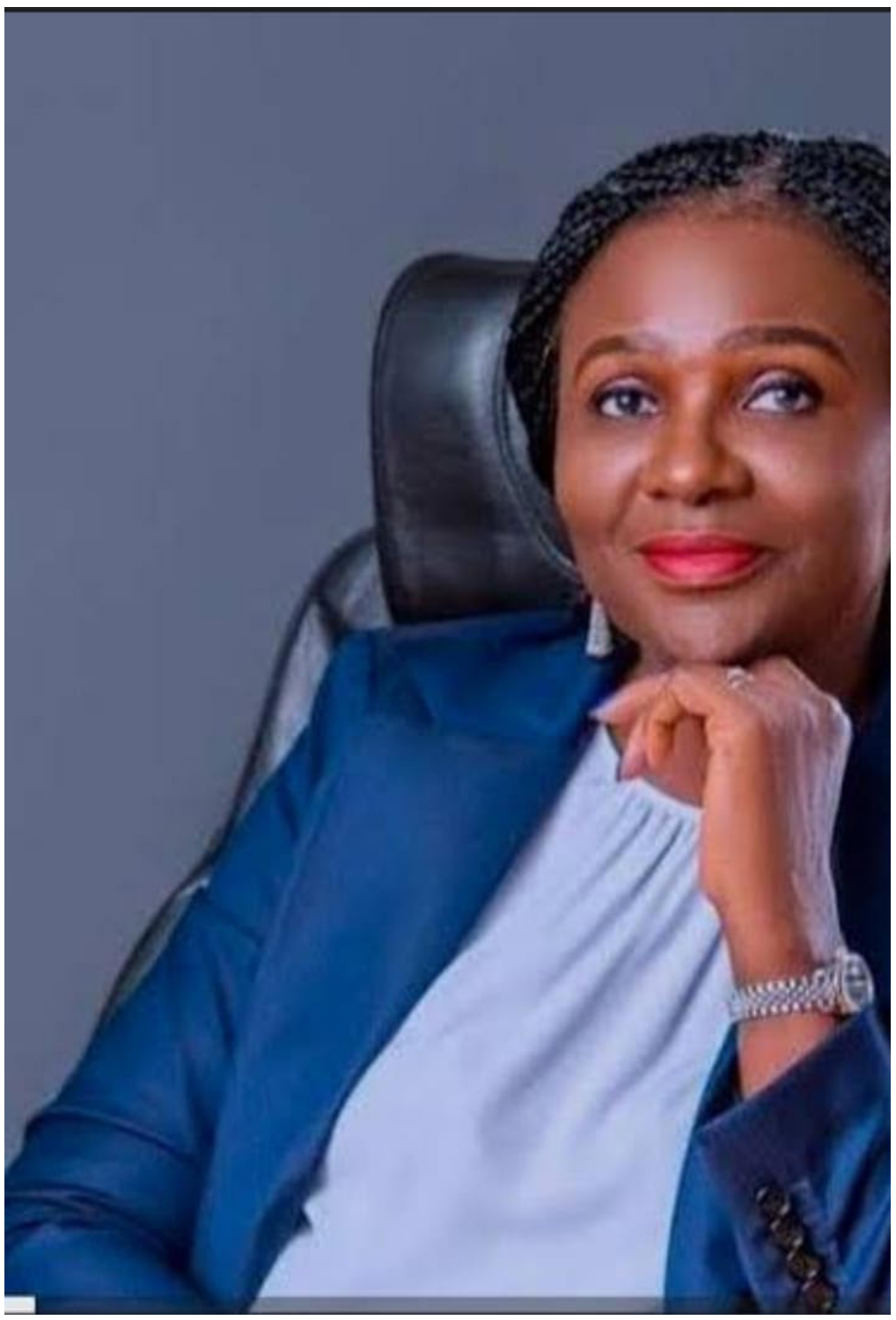
His Kalinga Prize for the Communication of Science was awarded by UNESCO in 1992, recognising outstanding contributions to the popularisation of science. Okebukola is the first African recipient of this award.

Honorary doctor-of-science degrees from the University of Jos, Nigeria (2000), University of Ilorin, Nigeria (2001), University of Uyo, Nigeria (2002), University of Abuja, Nigeria (2003), and the University of Benin, Nigeria (2004).

He was conferred the Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) in 2004.



Prof. Okebukola.



Eyesan.

Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan: Oil and Gas Executive and Administrator

Oritsemeyiwa Amanorisewo Eyesan (born 15 September) is a Nigerian oil and gas executive and administrator. She is the current Commission Chief Executive of the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Council (NUPRC).

In June 2024, she was appointed as the first female Executive Vice President of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) upstream division.

Eyesan was born in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. She studied at the University of Benin where she obtained her first degree in Economics Education in 1986. Eyesan is a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers. She is an Itsekiri woman from Delta State.

She began her career in the banking industry in 1989, serving as a branch manager at the defunct People's Bank of Nigeria until 1991. She later joined the defunct Gulf Bank of Nigeria in September 1991 as a treasury officer.

In 1993, she joined NNPC as a material traffic officer. Between July 2019 and November 2022, she worked as the Group General Manager, Corporate Planning & Strategy.

In November 2022, she was appointed Chief Strategy Officer following the transformation of NNPC from astate-owned oil and gas business to a commercialised limited liability company operating under Nigeria's Companies and Allied Matters Act.

In her role as Chief Strategy Officer, Eyesan created the company's sustainability framework, ensuring process and cost efficiency at a time the organisation was experiencing structural changes.

Eyesan was appointed executive vice president on 17 September 2023. She oversaw NNPC's oil and gas development, exploration and production activities. During her term, she reduced the contracting cycle from 300 days to 180 days, enabling an optimal operational environment for International Oil Companies (IOC) and joint venture partnerships, a move that contributed to the increase in oil production to 1.7 million barrels per day.

She held the role until November 2024 when she was replaced by Udobong Ntia, following her retirement from NNPC.

After Gbenga Komolafe stepped down as Commission Chief Executive of the NUPRC on 17 December 2025, Eyesan was nominated by Nigeria's president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to replace him. Her nomination received attention from professional and interest groups nationwide, including the Women in Energy Network (WIEN) and the Itsekiri Liberation Frontiers (ILF).

On 18 December 2025, Eyesan appeared before a Nigerian Senate committee led by Senator Kawu Sumaila for screening. Oritsemeyiwa Eyesan's appointment was confirmed by the senate on 19 December 2025.

ANIMAL WORLD

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



Walrus: The compassionate animal hunted for almost every part of its body

The walrus is a large pinniped marine mammal with a discontinuous distribution around the North Pole in the Arctic Ocean and subarctic seas of the Northern Hemisphere. It is the only extant species in the family Odobenidae and genus Odobenus.

This species is subdivided into two subspecies: the Atlantic walrus (O. r. rosmarus), which lives in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific walrus (O. r. divergens), which lives in the Pacific Ocean.

Adult walruses are characterised by prominent tusks and whiskers, and considerable bulk; adult males in the Pacific can weigh more than 2,000 kilograms (4,400 pounds) and, among pinnipeds, are exceeded in size only by the two species of elephant seals.

Walruses live mostly in shallow waters above the continental shelves, spending significant amounts of their lives on the sea ice looking for benthic bivalve molluscs. Walruses are relatively long-lived, social and intelligent animals, and are considered a keystone species of the Arctic marine region.

The walrus has played a prominent role in the cultures of many indigenous Arctic peoples, who have hunted it for meat, fat, skin, tusks, and bone. During the 19th century and the early 20th century, walruses were widely hunted for their blubber, walrus ivory, leather, and meat; in this period, the walrus population dropped rapidly all around the Arctic region.

It has rebounded somewhat since, though the populations of Atlantic and Laptev walruses remain fragmented and at low levels compared with the time before human interference.

Walruses live to about 20–30 years old in the wild. The oldest-living walrus on record was Slowpoke, a captive walrus at SeaWorld Orlando, who lived to be 49 years old when he died.

The males reach sexual maturity as early as 7 years, but do not typically mate until fully developed at around 15 years of age. They rut from January through April, decreasing their food intake dramatically. The females begin ovulating as soon as 4-6 years old. Females reach physical maturity at 10–12 years of age, and males at 15–16 years of age.

The females are diestrous, coming into heat in late summer and around February, yet the males are fertile only around February; the potential fertility of this second period is unknown. Breeding occurs from January to March, peaking in February.

Males aggregate in the water around ice-bound groups of oestrous females and engage in competitive vocal displays. The females join them and copulate in the water.

Gestation lasts 15 to 16 months. The first three to four months are spent with the blastula in suspended development before it implants itself in the uterus. This strategy of delayed implantation, common among pinnipeds, presumably evolved to optimise both the mating season and the birthing season, determined by ecological conditions that promote newborn survival.

Calves are born during the spring migration, from April to June. They weigh 45 to 75 kg (99 to 165 lb) at birth and are able to swim. The mothers nurse for over a year before weaning, but the young can spend up to five years with the mothers.

Walrus milk contains higher amounts of fats and protein compared to land animals but lower compared to phocid seals. This lower fat content in turn causes a slower growth rate among calves and a longer nursing investment for their mothers.

Young may be suckled at sea as well as during long haul-outs, making walrus the only pinnipeds that exhibit aquatic suckling. Because ovulation is suppressed until the calf is weaned, females give birth at most every two years, leaving the walrus with the lowest reproductive rate of any pinniped. Male walruses may help inexperienced young as they learn to swim, and have even been recorded caring for orphans. When a group is threatened, all the adults may protect the young.



The rest of the year (late summer and fall), walruses tend to form massive aggregations of tens of thousands of individuals on rocky beaches or outcrops. The migration between the ice and the beach can be long-distance and dramatic.

In late spring and summer, for example, several hundred thousand Pacific walruses migrate from the Bering Sea into the Chukchi Sea through the relatively narrow Bering Strait.

Traditional hunters used all parts of the walrus. The meat, often preserved, is an important winter nutrition source; the flippers are fermented and stored as a delicacy until spring; tusks and bone were historically used for tools, as well as material for handicrafts; the oil was rendered for warmth and light; the tough hide made rope and house and boat coverings; and the intestines and gut linings made waterproof parkas.

While some of these uses have faded with access to alternative technologies, walrus meat remains an important part of local diets, and tusk carving and engraving remain a vital art form.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the walrus was heavily exploited by American and European sealers and whalers, leading to the near-extinction of the Atlantic subspecies.

As early as 1871, traditional hunters were expressing concern about the numbers of walrus being hunted by whaling fleets. Commercial walrus harvesting is now outlawed throughout its range, although Chukchi, Yupik and Inuit peoples are permitted to kill small numbers towards the end of each summer.

According to Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld, European hunters and Arctic explorers found walrus meat not particularly tasty, and only ate it in case of necessity; however, walrus tongue was a delicacy.

Walrus hunts are regulated by resource managers in Russia, the United States, Canada, and Greenland, and by representatives of the respective hunting communities. An estimated 4000–7000 Pacific walruses are harvested in Alaska and in Russia, including a significant portion (about 42%) of struck and lost animals.

Several hundred are removed annually around Greenland. The sustainability of these levels of harvest is difficult to determine given uncertain population estimates and parameters such as fecundity and mortality. The Boone and Crockett Big Game Record book has entries for Atlantic and Pacific walrus.

The recorded largest tusks are just over 30 inches and 37 inches long respectively.

JOKES AND PUZZLES

BY ABDULLAHI HARUNA

JOKES

What's 90 degrees but covered with ice?
Answer: The North and South Poles.
What happened when the blue ship and the red ship collided at sea?
Answer: Their crews were marooned.
What's the difference between the bird flu and the swine flu?
Answer: One requires tweetment and the other an oinkment.
What do you call a line of men waiting to get haircuts?
Answer: A barberqueue.
Why do seagulls fly over the sea?
Answer: If they flew over the bay, they would be bagels.
I'm thinking I should do lunges to stay in shape.
Answer: That would be a big step forward.
What did the baby corn say to the mama corn?
Answer: Where's popcorn?
What vegetable is cool, but not that cool? Answer: Radish.
What do you call two monkeys who share an Amazon Prime account?
Answer: Prime mates.
You can't spell par entry without "try."
What do you call a beehive without an exit? Answer: Un-bee-lievable.
Why did the football coach go to the bank? Answer: To get his quarter back.
Why can't a leopard hide?
Answer: He's always spotted.
Air used to be free at the gas station; now it costs 2.50. You want to know why?
Answer: Inflation.
I tried to get a smart car the other day, but they sold out too fast. Why?
Answer: I guess I'm just a bit slow.
Did you hear about the claustrophobic astronaut?
Answer: He just wanted a bit more space.
Why did the orange lose the race?
Answer: It ran out of juice.
Why are fish so smart?
Answer: They live in schools!
What's the best thing about Switzerland?
Answer: I don't know, but the flag is a big plus.
Why did the man fall down the well?
Answer: Because he couldn't see that well!
Why do peppers make such good archers? Answer: Because they habanero.
What did the sink tell the toilet?
Answer: You look flushed.
What do you call a pencil with two erasers? Answer: Pointless.
Did you hear the one about the roof?
Answer: Never mind, it's over your head.



RIDDLES

What has four fingers and a thumb, but is not living?
A: A glove.
Q: What starts with T, ends with T, and has T in it?
A: A teapot.
Q: What kind of ship has two mates but no captain?
A: A relationship.
Ask this question all day long, but always get com**pletely different answers, and yet all the answers will be correct. What is the question?**
A: What time is it?
Q: What loses its head in the morning but gets it back at night?
A: A pillow.
Who makes it, has no need of it. Who buys it, has no use for it. Who uses it can neither see nor feel it. What is it?
A: A coffin.
Q: What has hands but cannot clap?
A: A clock.
Q: Paul's height is six feet, he's an assistant at a butcher's shop, and wears size 9 shoes. What does he weigh?
A: Meat.
Poor people have it. Rich people need it. If you eat it you die. What is it?
A: Nothing.
Q: What is the longest word in the dictionary?
A: Smiles, because there is a mile between each 's.'
Q: Throw away the outside and cook the inside, then eat the outside and throw away the inside. What is it?
A: Corn on the cob.



SPORTS: BEHIND THE SCENES

Tawheed Yakub



Bolt.

Usain Bolt: The undisputed benchmark of human speed and world-record excellence

"I think there are a lot more people showing real potential in the 200 meters. But my 100-meter record? I think that one is going to stand for a very long time. Once guys start consistently running 9.60s, then we can talk—but for now, we're good."
-Usain Bolt

Set at the 2009 World Athletics Championships in Berlin, Bolt's staggering 9.58-second world record remains the undisputed benchmark of human speed.

That landmark performance was forged through brutal training under head coach Glen Mills—pairing heavy compound lifts with high-velocity plyometrics to generate the explosive ground-force production required to propel his 6-foot-5 frame out of the blocks.

Biomechanical analysis of that legendary sprint revealed astonishing metrics:

Hit a peak speed of 27.78 mph (44.72 km/h) between the 60m and 80m mark.

Covered the entire 100-meter distance in just 41 strides—averaging an extraordinary stride length of over 8 feet (2.44 meters).

Nearly two decades later, no sprinter has managed to come within a tenth of a second of his world record.

Sports scientists agree that breaking 9.58 seconds requires a near-impossible alignment of freak genetics, biomechanical efficiency, hyper-optimised physical conditioning, and perfect track conditions.

Usain Bolt's 100m world record isn't just a sports statistic—it stands as a monument to human potential, proving what happens when generational raw talent meets relentless physical engineering.

"He's still the greatest. I'm just the latest," Spinks says after legendary fight with Ali

Before Leon Spinks became the man who shocked the world, he was just another young boxer who admired Muhammad Ali.

Like millions of others, Spinks had watched Ali on television. He studied his fights, listened to his words, and dreamed of one day becoming a champion himself.

Then, in 1978, fate placed him in the opposite corner. The young challenger wasn't facing just a heavyweight champion. He was facing his hero.

For fifteen rounds, Leon Spinks fought the fight of his life and pulled off one of the greatest upsets in boxing history.

Yet when the decision was announced, he didn't celebrate by tearing Ali down.

Instead, he looked at the man he had just beaten and said:

"He's still The Greatest. I'm just the latest."

Because some victories are bigger than belts.



Spinks.

BOOKS | BY MUHAMMAD AL-TIJANI

Then I Was Guided (39)

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

The Messenger of Allah stood up and faced the Qiblah (the direction of al-Ka'ba) and raised his hands to the sky then said, "O Allah, I am innocent of Khalid's deed three times."10

May we ask where the alleged fairness of the Companions, which these people claim to have had, is? If Khalid ibn al-Walid, who is considered to be one of our greatest military leaders, was the sword of Allah, does that mean that Allah drew his sword to kill the innocent Muslims and to violate the integrity of people? There is a clear contradiction here, because Allah forbids the killing of human beings and prohibits the committing of vile deeds, but Khalid seems to have drawn the sword of injustice to kill innocent Muslims and to confiscate their wealth and to take their women.

There is a blatant lie and a clear deception. Praise and thanks he upon You our God, Blessed be You the Most High, Praise be upon You, You did not create the skies and the earth and what is in between them unjustly. These are the doubts of those who blaspheme. Woe to those who committed blasphemy, for Hell is awaiting them. How did Abu Bakr, who was the caliph of the Muslims, allow himself to listen to all these crimes and be silent about them?

Moreover he asked Umar to stop attacking Khalid and was very angry at Abu Qutadah because he protested strongly about Khalid's action. Was he convinced that Khalid had passed a judgment but got it wrong? What excuse could be given to those corrupt criminals who violated human integrity and claimed to have passed judgment? I do not think that Abu Bakr was trying to pass judgment on Khalid who Umar ibn al-Khattab called "The enemy of Allah".

Umar thought that Khalid should be killed because he had killed an innocent Muslim, or be subjected to a hell of stones because he had committed adultery with Leyla, the widow of Malik. But nothing like that happened to Khalid; rather he defeated Umar because he had the full support of Abu Bakr who knew the whole truth about Khalid more than anybody else.

Historians have recorded that after this terrible misdeed, Abu Bakr sent Khalid on a mission to al Yamamah, from which he came out victorious and subsequently married a girl from there in the same way as he had Leyla, before the blood of those innocent Muslims and the blood of the followers of Musaylama had dried. Later, Abu Bakr rebuked him about what he had done and used stronger words than those he used during the affair of Leyla.11

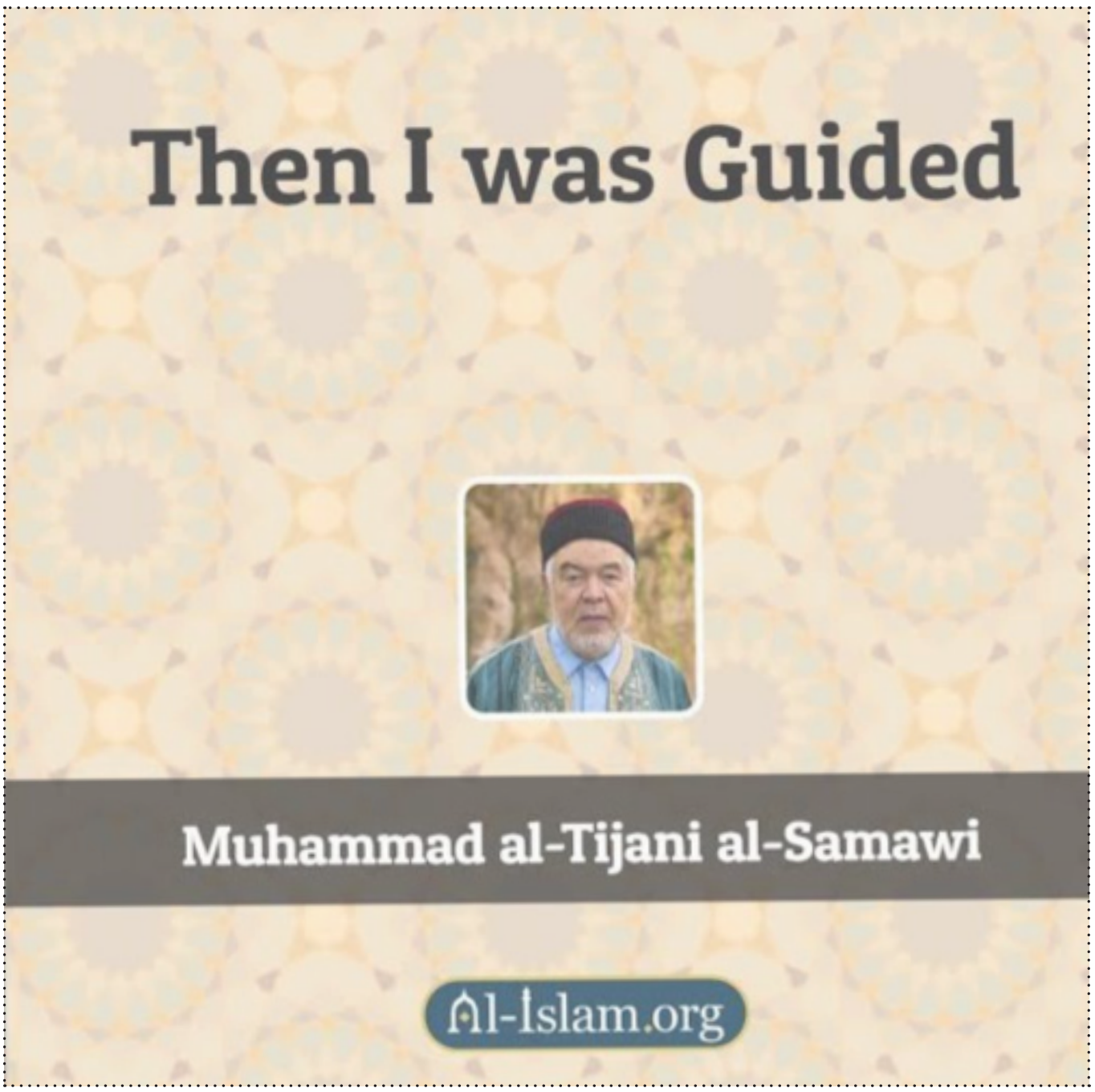
Undoubtedly, this girl's husband was killed by Khalid who took her for himself, in the same way as he had Leyla, the widow of Malik. It must have been so, otherwise Abu Bakr would not have rebuked him using stronger words than the previous event. The historians mention the text of the letter which Abu Bakr sent to Khalid ibn al-Walid in which he said: "O Ibn Umm Khalid. Upon my life you are doing nothing but marrying women, and in the yard of your house there is the blood of one thousand two hundred Muslims yet to dry!".12 When Khalid read the letter, he commented, "This must be the work of al-A'sar" meaning Umar ibn al-Khattab.

These are the strong facts that made me shun these types of Companions, and their followers who support them and defend them eagerly and invent various texts and stories to justify the deeds of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Khalid ibn al-Walid, Muawiyah, Amr ibn al-As and their brethren.

O Allah! I am innocent of the deeds and the sayings of those people who opposed Your rules, violated Your prohibitions and trespassed on Your territories. I am innocent of their followers and their supporters, despite their full knowledge of the latter's misdeeds, forgive me for my previous support for them because I was ignorant and Your Messenger said: "He who does not know (the ignorant) cannot be excused for his ignorance."

O Allah! Our leaders have led us astray and veiled the truth from us and presented us with distorted pictures of those renegade Companions and led us to believe that they were the best people after Your Messenger. There is no doubt that our forefathers were victims of the deception and the intrigues of the Umayyads and later the Abbasids.

O Allah! Forgive them and forgive us because You know what is in our inner souls. They loved and respected those Companions out of goodwill assuming that they were supporters of Your Messenger, may Your blessings and peace be upon him and upon those who love him. You know, my Lord their and our love for the purified family, the Imams whom You cleansed and purified and, at their head, the master of all Muslims, the Commander of the Believers, chief of the singularly radiant, Imam of all those who fear Allah our lord 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.



O Allah! Let me be one of their followers who have committed themselves to their cause and followed their path. Let me be on their ship and help me to hold on to their strong link. Let me enter their doors and assist me in dedication to their love, help me to follow their words and their deeds, and let me be grateful to their virtues. O Allah! Let me be with them, for Your Prophet (saw) said, "Man is assembled together (on the day of Judgment) with those whom he loves."

2. The Prophetic tradition of the Ship

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Behold! My Ahl al-Bayt are like the Ark of Noah, whoever embarked in it was saved, and whoever turned away from it was drowned."13

He also said: "My Ahl al-Bayt are like the Gate of Repentance of the children of Israel; whoever entered therein was forgiven."14

Ibn Hajjar cited the above tradition in his book "Al-Sawa'iq al-Mahriqa" and gave the following commentary: The idea behind comparing them with the Ark (ship) is to say that whoever loves them and reveres them as a sign of his gratitude for their graces, and whoever is guided by their learned people, will be saved from the darkness of contradictions. On the other hand whoever decides to stay behind, will sink in the sea of ingratitude and will be destroyed in the wilderness of tyranny. The reason for comparing Ahl al-Bayt with the Gate of Repentance is that Allah - the Most High - made the Gate of Repentance (the Gate of Jericho or Jerusalem) a sign of His forgiveness. Similarly, Ahl al-Bayt are the means of Repentance for this nation.

I wish I could ask Ibn Hajjar if he was one of those who went on board the ship and entered the door and was guided by the religious leaders (Ulama), or was he one of those who order what they do not do in practice and contradict their belief. There are many of those unfair people when I ask them or argue with them they say. "We are in a more favorable situation vies-a-vies Ahl al-Bayt and Imam 'Ali than others, we respect and appreciate Ahl al Bayt and nobody can deny their graces and their virtues."

Yes, they say with their tongues what is not in their hearts, or they respect them and appreciate them but follow and imitate their enemies who fought them and contradicted them, or even perhaps on many occasions do not know who Ahl al-Bayt are, and if you ask them who Ahl al-Bayt are, they answer you immediately, "they are the Prophet's wives from whom Allah kept the dirt away and purified them." When I addressed the question to one of those people, he solved the puzzle by giving me the following answer, "All the Sunni people and al-Jama'ah follow Ahl al-Bayt." I was surprised and said, "How could that be?" He answered, "The Messenger of Allah said that we should take half of our religion from this Humayra, meaning Aisha, therefore we took half of the religion from Ahl al-Bayt."

On this basis one could understand their respect and appreciation for Ahl al-Bayt, but when you ask them about the twelve Imams they would only know 'Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husayn from them, and they would not accept the Imamate of al-Hasan nor al-Husayn. Besides, they respect Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan who poisoned al-Hasan and killed him (they call Muawiyah "The writer of the Revelations"), and they also respect Amr ibn al-As in the same way as they respect Imam 'Ali.

This is nothing but contradictions and confusion and an attempt to cover the right with the wrong and the light with darkness. For how could the heart of the believer contain the love of Allah and the devil at the same time, and Allah said in His Glorious Book:

"You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the Latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons or their brothers or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow abiding therein; Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him; these are Allah's party: now surely the party of Allah are the successful ones." (Holy Qur'an 58:22).

TO BE CONTINUED

NEPTUNE 'RIME
12-13:09:2026 Vol. 1 No.90
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SPACE AVAILABLE

The Arbiter

BY HASSAN GIMBA



Of Caps, Marabouts and Politics of Envy

While being interviewed on the Mic On Podcast, hosted by Channel Television's Seun Okinbaloye on Friday, September 5, 2026, Senator Yusuf Datti Baba-Ahmed, erstwhile vice-presidential candidate of the Labour Party, openly alleged that Vice President Kashim Shettima does not wear President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's signature cap, bearing the infinity sign, because "maybe his marabout said he shouldn't wear it."

Datti Baba-Ahmed has gradually earned a reputation for making all manner of unfounded claims once he is before a mic and camera. And he's not your regular loudmouth, the sort that earns a living for badmouthing whoever is on the other side of their paymaster.

Datti founded Baze University in 2011 as an independent private institution and serves as its Chancellor and Chairman of its Board of Trustees. He has also established Baba-Ahmed University in Kano.

His political career began in 2003, when he represented the Zaria Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives from 2003 to 2007. He was elected to the Senate, representing Kaduna North Senatorial District, in April 2011 under the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). However, his time in the Senate was short-lived, as an electoral tribunal nullified his election in 2012.

Kashim Shettima, on the other hand, entered politics in 2007 after a banking career. He later served as a commissioner in Borno State, a two-term governor, a senator in the 9th National Assembly, and eventually Vice President in 2023.

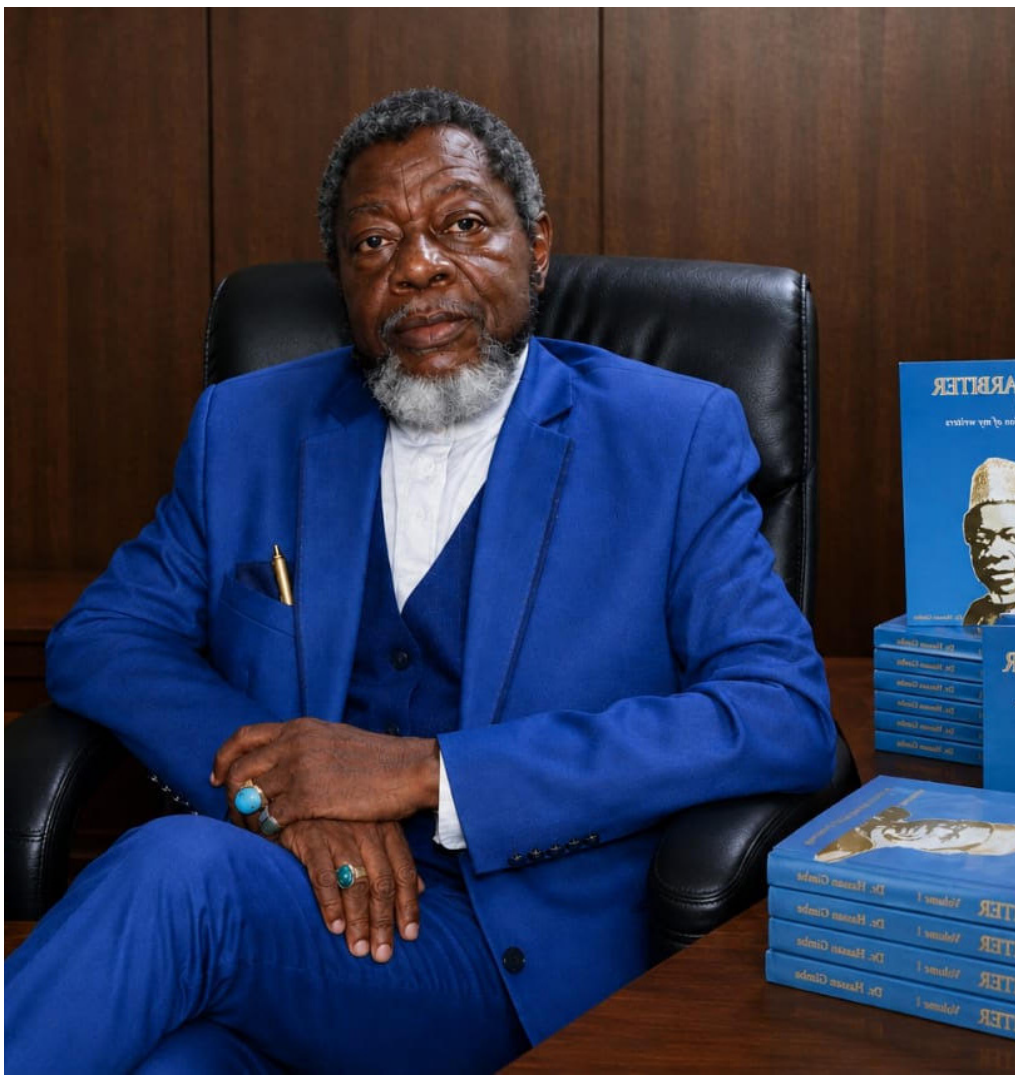
Shettima resigned as General Manager of Zenith Bank in 2007 to join public service. In mid-2007, then Governor Ali Modu Sheriff appointed him Commissioner for Finance and Economic Development in Borno State. He subsequently served as commissioner in five different ministries, including Finance and Economic Development, Local Governments and Chieftaincy Affairs, Education, Agriculture, and Health between 2007 and 2011, gaining substantial governance experience across several sectors.

He was elected governor of Borno State in 2011 and served two terms until 2019, when he contested and won the Senate seat for Borno Central Senatorial District. On July 10, 2022, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, then the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, nominated him as his running mate ahead of the 2023 general election, which they won.

Let us also consider their backgrounds.

Datti was born on July 7, 1969, to an elite family, and has four degrees in economics and business: a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Economics and a Master of Science (MSc) in Economics from the University of Maiduguri; a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Wales, Cardiff; and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Economics/Business from the University of Westminster, completed in 2006.

tima, whose father was a struggling primary school Arabic teacher, was born on September 2, 1966, and holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Agricultural Economics from the University of Maiduguri and a Master of Science (MSc) in Agricultural Economics from the University of Ibadan,



Dr Gimba

which he obtained in 1991.

This is not the first time Datti, the son of an influential Arab cattle trader and judge, has made uncomplimentary remarks about Shettima, the Kanuri Arabic teacher's son.

Speaking on Arise TV's Prime Time on Thursday, July 3, 2025, Datti claimed: "What I know about Shettima cannot be uttered on a National TV." He also remarked that President Bola Tinubu "has tried to keep Shettima this long," suggesting that whoever knew what Shettima "did and does" would not allow him to remain in office for long.

He provided no specific evidence for those claims then, just as he has provided none now for his allegation about the supposed "advice" from a marabout. Perhaps, in the first instance, he had "court-proof" evidence; and in the latest allegation, maybe he was present when the marabout gave the alleged instruction.

But dressing is a matter of choice, while loyalty is a matter of the mind and heart.

Consider Mahatma Gandhi. Some of his closest political associates never dressed like him. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) were among his closest and most trusted political associates. Yet, each dressed in his own way, showing that loyalty did not depend on copying Gandhi's dress.

Although they shared a commitment to wearing khadi—handspun and handwoven Indian cotton—as a symbol of the independence movement, none adopted Gandhi's extreme minimalist attire: the iconic loincloth or short dhoti and bare torso. Gandhi himself made it clear in his writings that he did not expect or want his co-workers to copy his minimalist dress code; he did not accept that associates must leave their traditions and lives and be sycophantic to prove their loyalty.

Coming back home, how many of Shehu Shagari's ministers wore their caps like his—long and uncontoured? Even Chief Alex Ekwueme, his vice president, did not adopt the President's style, which shows that political loyalty did not require matching dress.

Did Professor Yemi Osinbajo dress like Muhammadu Buhari, in an overflowing black jumper over a white shirt, with the bishop collar and sleeves showing? Seyi Tinubu, Nigeria's "first son," dresses in his own way.

So, this latest attack cannot really be about a mode of dressing or cap-wearing. It must be about something deeper—something the accuser either cannot or will not articulate.

Does Datti harbour some envy that his age-mate, from a less endowed background, who apparently entered politics after him and does not possess as many academic certificates, is now Vice President, while he has served only a short term in the Senate and was an unsuccessful vice-presidential candidate?

But even if that were the case, has he considered the immense executive and legislative experience Kashim Shettima has accumulated over the years?

I cannot fathom how a dress code translates into loyalty or competence. Politics, however, should not become an avenue for envy or for tarnishing the image of those we believe have zoomed ahead, leaving us chasing the wind.

It is also a sign of Shettima's maturity that he has hardly taken notice of Datti's broadsides, nor responded in kind, as some might have done.

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What I know about Shettima cannot be uttered on a National TV

NEPTUNE PRIME ONLINE AND MAGAZINE are publications of Neptune Network Nig. Ltd., Suite 602C, Third Floor, Yobe Investment House, Plot 1332, Ralph Shodeinde Street, Central Area, Abuja.
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