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Victims of trafficking

FG, NAPTIP Intensify Efforts to Combat Trafficking of Nigerian Girls Abroad

NAPTIP vows to arrest and prosecute human traffickers

Many Nigerian women live under lock and key in Kumasi brothels

BY SHALOM KASIM

Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Binta Adamu Bello, OON, has assured that the Federal Government of Nigeria through NAPTIP, shall continue to double its

efforts, strategies, and policy implementation in line with the priorities of the Renewed Hope Agenda of the present administration to tackle all forms of human trafficking. She said the agency shall employ the necessary strategies to arrest and prosecute members of the organised human trafficking syndicate

responsible for the recruitment and trafficking of Nigerian girls for sundry exploitation anywhere around the world. **Trafficking of girls**

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation. Some 37% of Nigerians subsist below the poverty line, and the national minimum wage is only N70,000

(about \$46) per month.

The country's educated youth face unemployment or underemployment at home, fuelling the so-called "japa" syndrome (Yoruba slang for "run away") to seek work abroad.

Traffickers exploit these conditions mercilessly.

Desperate individuals hear stories of lucrative jobs overseas and scrape together fees for travel, but the reality is often far darker. Human trafficking is not a new problem for Nigeria. The country remains one of the

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LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS - HAJIYA KINGI ISA, RETIRED CIVIL SERVANT MARKED BY
CULTURE, JUDGED
BY SOCIETY:
NIGERIANS WITH
TRIBAL MARKS
SPEAK OUT ON
STIGMA, PRIDE,
PAIN

BY SADIQ ABDULLATEEF

For generations, tribal marks have stood as a bold imprint of Nigerian identity, ancestry, and aesthetic ideals, carved into the skin and woven into the nation's cultural fabric, *News Point Nigeria* examines the complexities of this fading traditional practice.

traditional practice.

From the intricate "pele" and "abaja" of the Yoruba to the subtle cheek lines of the Hausa, tribal marks once served as a proud symbol of origin, status, and spirituality. Today, they often invite stares, shame, or stigma.

In 2025, as Nigeria continues to modernise socially and culturally, the conversation around tribal marks is growing louder and more complex.

Once widespread across ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Fulani, Kanuri, Nupe, Igala and Igbo, tribal marks were traditionally used to identify families, clans, and regions. In times of conflict or during slave raids, they served as crucial identifiers. They were also part of initiation rites and were seen as marks of strength, beauty, and spiritual connection

"In those days, tribal marks were like a passport," veteran journalist and publisher of *Neptune Prime*, Dr. Hassan Gimba, who grew up with the markings told *News Point Nigeria*. "After the civil war, around 1972/73, fear and the need for clear identification led many parents to mark their children, mine did the same. It wasn't considered a bad thing back then."

"I remember returning to school after the break with my new tribal marks. My classmates teased me, and I buried my head on the desk. But eventually, I lifted my head and just let everyone see it, without

Today, this centuries-old tradition is fading fast. Hudu Auta Sarkin Aska, a traditional tribal marker (Wanzam) from Zaria, confirmed the decline in practice to News

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The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once

Albert Einstein

It is not life that matters, but the courage you bring into it

Chief Obafemi Awolowo



RANDOM FACTS

"No tears. Just win. And don't wear black when I die" The story of Capt. Tamuno

(In Memory of Captain Tamuno Ebiye - From the Creeks to the Battlefield)

Captain Tamuno Ebiye was born in the mangrove-lined town of Okrika, Rivers State. A quiet river girl. The daughter of a fisherman and a local teacher. She had dreams — big ones—but war had bigger plans for her. She was supposed to be a marine biologist. She loved sea turtles and red oil crabs. But life doesn't always ask you what you want.

The Niger Delta crisis took her cousin in 2009. He wasn't a militant. He was walking home. Stray bullet. Wrong place, wrong skin. Tamuno was 13. That day, she saw her uncle cry like a child. That day, she stopped smiling.

At 24, she joined the Nigerian Army through the Short Service Combatant Commission (SSC).

Her mother nearly fainted. 'Tamuno, why? You want to die?"

But Tamuno replied,

"If we keep running, who will stand?" She Fought With Her Mind...

Tamuno was no ordinary officer.

She wasn't just brave — she was smart.

Her strategy saved over 80 soldiers during an ambush in Gwoza, Borno,

But nobody outside the army ever heard her name. Why? Because she was a woman. Because she was from the South. Because Nigeria forgets its quiet heroes.

The Last Operation, January 14, 2024. She led a joint operation in Shiroro, Niger State. The intel was wrong, they walked into a trap.

Bandits opened fire from the cliffs.

One bullet shattered her thigh. She fell, but refused evacuation. With blood dripping from her leg, she gave orders through the radio. Calm voice. No panic.

She saved the entire unit. But she didn't save herself.

A second bullet hit her chest.

As she was lifted into the helicopter, she whispered to her 2IC:

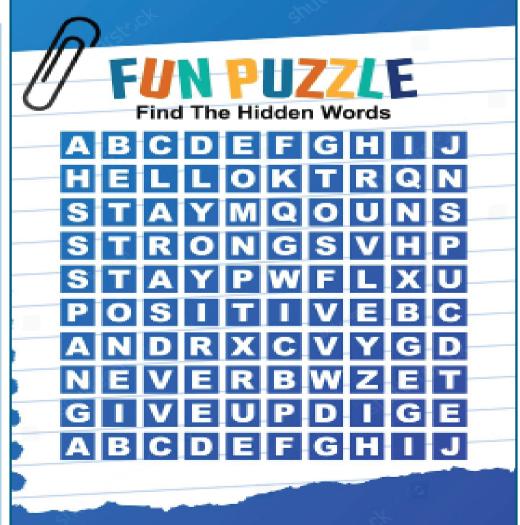
"No tears. Just win."

When her body returned to Port Harcourt, they brought her in a sealed

Her younger brother stood there with trembling hands, holding her old ID card.

Their mother collapsed beside the gate. On her bed was a small black notebook.

On the last page, she wrote: "I never joined the army to be remembered. I joined because silence is a betrayal. If I die, wear white for me. Not black. I died standing."



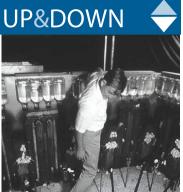
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Universe 25: The most disturbing experiment in history

The 'Universe 25' experiment is one of the most disturbing studies in the history of science, carried out by American scientist John Calhoun between 1958 & 1962.

Calhoun designed an ideal environment for rats, called "Mouse Paradise", with abundant food, water and space, to study the social dynamics of a growing population. Initially, the colony prospered, but after 317 days, population growth began to stagnate. Upon reaching 600 mice, serious social problems arose: hierarchies were established, the strongest individuals began to attack others, and aggressive and maladaptive behaviours emerged, such as violence between females and a lack of reproductive interest in males.

As passive, non-reproductive (beautiful mice) males dominated, the birth rate plummeted, juvenile mortality reached 100%, and the colony collapsed into cannibalism and homosexuality.



Shi Pei Pu: The 20-vearlong deception of Chinese opera singer

Shi Pei Pu was a Chinese opera singer turned spy who masqueraded as a woman and used a 20-year-long affair with French diplomat Bernard Boursicot to steal intelligence. Boursicot was thoroughly convinced that Shi was a woman. Born in 1938, Shi was a Peking opera performer and government translator. Posing as a woman, which Shi could do convincingly through his opera training where male actors traditionally played female roles, Shi began an affair with Boursicot, who genuinely believed Shi was a woman and later even claimed Shi had given birth to a child with him. The child was not biologically theirs but Shi presented the child as their own to keep up the deception. During this affair, Shi persuaded

Boursicot to pass classified French diplomatic documents to China. For years, the Frenchman smuggled documents under the belief that he was helping the mother of his child. When the deception was finally uncovered in the early 1980s, both were arrested in France and convicted of espionage in 1986. Shi received a sixyear prison sentence but was released early. Boursicot also served some time but did not stay imprisoned for the full term either.

After their release, Shi stayed in Paris and lived relatively quietly. He continued performing occasionally but mostly faded from the public eye.

NEWS

FG, NAPTIP Intensify Efforts to Combat Trafficking of Nigerian Girls Abroad

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largest sources of trafficked persons in Africa, but over the past decade, a significant shift has occurred: more victims are now trafficked within Africa, often unknowingly, and often through routes that exploit the porous borders of the ECOWAS free movement zone.

For decades, Europe, especially Italy, was the main magnet for traffickers moving Nigerian victims abroad. But tightened migration controls, disrupted Mediterranean routes, and heightened awareness have many trafficking forced networks to reorient their trade closer to home. As a result, West and North Africa have become the new endpoints for many vulnerable migrants.

Ghana

Kumasi has long been a gathering point for young job-seekers from Nigeria's south. Independent researcher Owusu describes Bright Kumasi's Dichemso district "where Kumasi's sex industry is flourishing, thanks to connection houses and brothels." There, scores of Nigerian women live under lock and key in cheap guesthouses. Most arrived willingly, duped by middlemen promising white-collar work. Instead they are introduced to madams and voodoo priests, told they owe thousands of dollars in transport fees.

Nigerian authorities estimate that thousands of women and girls end up in Ghana's sex trade each year. The Nigerians

Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) and anti-trafficking police have rescued cohorts of teenagers from Kumasi's streets, but many dozens more remain in captivity.

these women "Some of know they'll be coming for prostitution," explains Owusu, "but they don't know that once here, they'll lose control over their life"

Burkina Faso and Mali

Farther north, another sinister pattern has emerged: Nigerian migrants lured by the promise of gold. In Burkina Faso's remote mining camps, Nigerian women have begun to outnumber locals. Many were told they would work in beauty salons or markets; instead they wind up in encampments far from public

Associated Press reporters documented nearly 20 Nigerian women (all Edo-state natives) who had been trafficked into prostitution in Burkina's gold fields. One survivor, named Blessing, recalls being drugged and sold from one "ghetto" mining camp to another for months.

"Each night I was forced to sleep with dozens of men for less than \$2 a person." The madam who recruited her with tales of a hair salon job threatened to kill Blessing if she tried to escape. Her ordeal only ended when she seized a moment of opportunity by fleeing into the bush and ultimately reaching a UN transit centre in Ouagadougou.

Such stories are not isolated. AP's Africa team found trafficking rings operating across Burkina's gold belt, exploiting Nigeria's poverty and traditional beliefs. Most victims came from regions where cult-based juju rites and dreams of working abroad make the pipeline of captives easy to replenish. Local informants described dozens of hidden brothels with 100-150 women apiece scattered in jungle backroads.

One trafficker admitted to buying young women in Benin for only \$270 each, then selling them onward to brothel keepers in Mali and Burkina for double price. In fact, trafficking investigators estimate that at least 20,000 Nigerian women and girls are trapped in Mali and Burkina Faso's illicit sex trade. Many were told they would be transported to Malaysia or Europe, only to find themselves in a sand-sealed prison. "They were told they would be taken to Malaysia to work in hospitality but instead were forced into prostitution," reports Nigeria's anti-trafficking chief on the Mali

Victims are held in "horrible, slave-like conditions," kept in remote compounds far from any hope of rescue.

The catalysts for this westward trafficking wave are manifold. Burkina Faso's recent gold boom has made its mines attractive to illicit profits. Poverty and insurgency across the Sahel mean security forces are stretched thin, allowing criminal networks to flourish. Investigators note that Burkina and its neighbours remain "transfer points" where victims are moved through Burkina en route to Mali, and beyond. Across the Sahara

Many Nigerian migrants don't stop in West Africa but press on across the Sahara toward the Mediterranean. The Italian NGO ASGI has chronicled the fate of women like "Princess" and "Doris", two Nigerian survivors who were ensnared en route to Europe. Both crossed the Niger border hoping for a future in Italy; instead they were "repeatedly sold and bought by different actors" as they were shuffled through detention camps in Libya.

In those camps, the women were tortured for ransom. When their families could not pay, Princess and Doris were handed over to new captors who enslaved them, forcing them into prostitution to "pay for the cost of their 'release'". Unlike the forest camps of Mali, Libya's cruelty has an international dimension. ASGI points out that Italy (with EU backing) invested millions to arm Libyan militias and coast guards to intercept migrants, money that effectively fuels the very trafficking many try to escape. In Princess's case, even her attempted rescue was perverted: after breaking free and boarding a boat for Europe, Libyan coast guards seized her and dumped her back in another detention centre.

Finally both women were flown home via an IOM "voluntary" repatriation flight. But human rights lawyers note that the returns were anything but voluntary: since Princess and Doris were never formally identified as trafficking victims, they were given no assistance or asylum. Upon landing in Lagos, they simply re-entered the cycle of abuse they had fled.

As one ASGI lawyer laments, international conventions required Italy and Libya to detect and protect victims of trafficking. By failing to do so, "they were not identified as victims and were put at risk of re-trafficking when they were returned to Nigeria". In practical terms, this means the policies of "detain and deport" in Europe have, paradoxically, helped perpetuate transnational slavery.

The Traffickers' Playbook

Trafficking syndicates are alarmingly sophisticated. They cast a wide net via social media and word-of-mouth. Facebook posts and WhatsApp messages promise "dollar jobs"(N1,000,000 monthly salaries that dwarf local pay), or advertise bogus NGO internships. Young men and women in rural Nigeria, earning only a few dollars a week at home, are susceptible.

Traffickers' tactics include: Fake job offers and social media lures: Many victims are drawn in by online ads or "agents" who promise highpaying work abroad. For example, one woman in case sold all her belongings after a friend sent her a photo of a \Box 1,000,000-naira salary in Egypt, nearly 7 times her Lagos income, and paid fees to fly out only to be enslaved in Cairo. Complex overland routes: Traffickers operate networks with contacts across Nigeria,

Benin, Togo, Burkina and Libya. Victims may be moved village to village by bus or boat: for instance, investigative journalist 'Fisayo Soyombo, in a 2024 investigative report described being shuttled through Benin and Togo, bribing immigration posts at each step, then riding a dusty bus up to Burkina Faso. These corridors serve both local exploitation and further smuggling north.

Debt bondage and rituals: Victims are forced to pay back travel expenses (often thousands of dollars). To enforce these debts, traffickers use intimidation rituals. In Ghana and beyond, juju (voodoo) priests are enlisted to swear victims into silence. Young women are made to sign oaths on shrines promising to obey their madam and never report them to police, all under threat of curses.

"They make us swear in voodoo that we will not escape or say anything," explains one survivor. "We live in fear our families will die if we fail". These spiritual threats prove as binding as chains: they terrify victims into compliance and even keep them hidden once they escape.

Passport confiscation and threats: From the moment victims arrive, recruiters often seize travel documents. Without papers, escape is virtually impossible. Bosses also threaten victims' families back home. Such tactics ensure that even those who slip away often suffer

From Help to Harm: Loan Apps Exploit Economic Crisis to Defraud, Harass Nigerians

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Point Nigeria, saying, "The last time I gave a tribal mark to a newborn was in 2019, in a village called Gangarida in Kaduna State. I've been doing this for over 42 years, working across all the northern states.'

"Only one child in over six years and before that, it was back in 2014 at Auyo village in Jigawa State," he emphasised.

"Between 1985 and 2005, we (my team and I) used to mark over 3,000 newborns each year," Sarkin Aska added, reflecting on how drastically things have changed.

Modernisation and decline

Government discouragement, the rise of modern identification methods, and changing social norms have led to a steep decline in the practice. Even in rural areas, parents have largely stopped giving their children tribal marks.

Yet, those who already bear the marks are now caught in a

complicated cultural crossfire. Sameer Ahmad, a Kaduna-based politician, sees his tribal marks as a source of pride. "They give me confidence," he told News Point Nigeria. "They remind me of where I come from. I am not one bit ashamed."

Gloria Noah, a Delta-born forex trader, feels the same way about her husband. "His tribal marks are part of what makes him attractive to me," she said. "I even wanted our kids to have them, but he refused."

But not all share that sentiment. Fareeda Yahaya, a fashion designer from Borno, described the discomfort that comes with being stared at. "When men look at me, I know they're not looking at my eyes. They stare at my face and the next question is always: 'Are you from Borno?' It feels reducing."

In Oyo State, Banke Ibrahim, a lawyer, had to end an engagement after overhearing her fiancé's sisters mocking her tribal marks on a WhatsApp voice note. "That was it for me," she said.

"It was painful to hear." For Zainab Aminu, a caterer from Kebbi, her aversion is personal even though her mother has tribal marks from the Zuru ethnic group. "I can never marry someone with tribal marks, she said. "In fact, when I have money, I want to sponsor surgery to remove my mother's own. She just laughs when I say that."

According to Professor Kemi Alabi, a behavioural psychologist at the University of Lagos, youth



Tribal marks

perception is largely responsible for the decline in acceptance.

"In the past, tribal marks were symbols of honour," she explained. "Today's youth see them as disfigurement. It's more than cultural change, it's an identity crisis."

In some regions, tribal marks still trigger teasing, bullying, and social exclusion especially in urban areas. Dr. Mahdi Sani, a Kano-based doctor, described his experience as a double-edged sword.

"I've had strangers give me



discounts at their shops because they recognised my mark," he said. "But I've also faced jokes and negative assumptions.'

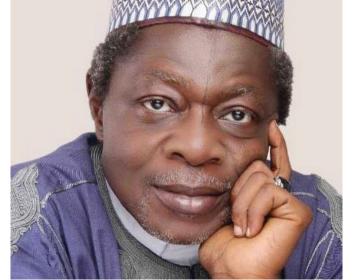
Across Nigeria from Ogun to Borno, Akwa Ibom to Sokoto, the intensity and style of tribal marks vary widely.

The Yoruba, Gobirawa, Kanuri, and northeastern Fulani traditionally have some of the most pronounced scarifications. What was once a symbol of origin has, in some cases, become a reason for judgment.

As societal views shift, human rights activists have begun to question the ethics of performing such irreversible procedures on infants and children without their

consent. Several NGOs have campaigned for laws banning tribal scarification, framing it as a form of bodily harm. In some states, tribal marking of children is already considered a criminal offence under child rights legislation.

Still, a legal ban alone cannot



Dr Gimba

NEWS

BY SALIM SANI



Police rescue 6 law students abducted in Benue

The Benue State Police Command has confirmed the release of six law students who were kidnapped along the boundary between Benue and Taraba states on July 28, 2025. The students were travelling to the Nigerian Law School in Adamawa State before they were abducted.

In a statement issued by the Command's Police Public Relations Officer, Udeme Edet, on Friday, the police said the six law

students were travelling from Anambra State to resume at the Yola Campus of the Nigerian Law School when they ran into the kidnappers along the Benue-Taraba boundary.

"Please be informed that the police have successfully rescued six law students of the Yola campus, who were abducted on July 26, 2025, while travelling from Anambra State to Adamawa State.

"They have been safely released and united with their families this morning, August 1, 2025," the statement read.

The Nigerian Bar Association's President, Afam Osigwe, had broken the news of the kidnapping of the six law students at the NBA's North-Central regional security summit held in Makurdi on July 28, lamenting the escalating security threats in the region.

Dismembered bodies of 2 teenage girls found in Kogi village

Ogbogbo, in Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Area of Kogi State.

The girls, identified as Ajuma Simon, 17, and Omojo Shuaibu, 18, were returning from a local market at about 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 30, when they were ambushed just two kilometres from Okekwu and killed by suspected armed bandits.

Residents who spoke with journalists said the girls were trekking along a bush path leading to their village. Their assailants allegedly ran after them in a bid to rape them.

The girls were said to have run for about 300 metres before they became tired, and their killers pounced on them before dismembering them.

The assailants macheted and butchered the girls beyond recognition.

Sources recounted hearing

Two teenage girls have been the victims screaming for help reportedly killed and mutilated in Okekwu Village, near during the attack, but by the time the villagers arrived at the scene, the victims had already been aismemberea.

> One of the community sources said that when people arrived at the scene, one of the victims was still alive and revealed that the armed men came intending to either rape or kidnap them.

The source also said local security personnel and youths mobilised to the scene Thursday morning and evacuated the bodies, which were subsequently deposited at a morgue in Idah, Idah Local Government Area. The girls' killing adds to the growing homicide rate in the state.

Recently, a photojournalist, Ayo Aiyepekun, was murdered in Lokoja, the state capital.

Aiyepekun, who until his death worked with Inside Story, a platform based in Lokoja, was allegedly killed on Tuesday, July 22, by his neighbour, Adebayo



Victims

Online voter pre-registration begins August 18 - INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has announced that the nationwide Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise will commence with online pre-registration on August 18, 2025.

INEC Chairman, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, disclosed this during a courtesy visit by the National Orientation Agency's management team to the INEC headquarters in Abuja.

"The nationwide continuous voter registration is scheduled to commence in about three weeks, with the online preregistration of voters scheduled for the 18th of August," Yakubu said.

He disclosed that the physical (in-person) registration exercise will begin a week later.

Yakubu said the CVR exercise is part of INEC's broader preparations ahead of the Anambra State governorship election slated for November 8, 2025, and the 2027 general elections.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the National Orientation Agency (NOA), during the visit, renewed their commitment to deepening collaboration on voter education, public enlightenment, and the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) tools ahead of the 2027 general elections. The INEC Chairman described the meeting as a continuation of the commission's stakeholder engagement strategy, stressing the critical role NOA plays in grassroots voter sensitisation.

"I am particularly glad that this meeting is at the instance of the DG in furtherance of the longstanding partnership between INEC and the National Orientation Agency," Prof. Yakubu said. Earlier, NOA Director-General, Malam

Lanre Issa-Onilu, said the agency was undergoing a major transformation aimed at repositioning it to better serve democratic objectives.

He said the agency had revamped its outreach strategy using both traditional and digital tools, including weekly newsletters, AI-driven feedback mechanisms, and a network of over 818 local offices nationwide.



Prof. Yakubu

OUR HEART

Enforcing the law on employment for people with disabilities

After decades of sustained struggles and advocacy by several groups and individuals to pressure successive governments on the imperative of a law that prohibits discrimination against People Living with Disabilities, a breakthrough came in the passage of a Bill by the National Assembly in 2018 and the presidential accent to the Bill in January, 2019, that birthed the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act.

The law seeks to align Nigeria with many countries in the world where all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities are outlawed. In this context, the Act explicitly forbids discrimination based on disability in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, healthcare and public services, among other social and economic opportunities.

The very ambitious Act spells out different forms of penalties for individuals or corporate bodies that breach its provisions. Further, a National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) was established to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society.

To enhance the acceleration of the process of inclusion, the Act addresses accessibility in public spaces, transportation and other facilities requiring special accommodation for persons with disabilities. It stipulates a five-year period to allow for the modification of public structures to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Fines and various terms of imprisonment are provided by the Act for breaches.

Six years down the road, how much has the Act impacted people with disabilities, especially in terms of employment opportunities? What is the evaluation of the level of compliance achieved since the coming into effect of the Act?

Apart from the initial fervour that greeted the emergence of the Act which saw a maze of activities and attempts at implementation, nothing concretely can be identified as landmarks so far. Available reports indicate abysmal records of enforcement of the provisions, especially regarding employment for persons with disabilities. This, unfortunately, is the picture that is obtained in the public and private sectors.

The poor performance of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, NCPWD, is rooted in the endemic challenges that persons with disabilities have had to contend with through the ages.

These include negative traditions of stigmatisation, prejudice and discrimination that exclude persons with disabilities from society's social and economic opportunities. This has lingered for so long, essentially because of inadequate enlightenment programmes aimed at effecting attitudinal change.

Inadequate funding for the NCPWD has inevitably handicapped the performance of its statutory responsibility of driving the implementation of the Act. The situation has been further aggravated by the weak participation of non-governmental organisations, NGOs, and the private sector in supporting the agency towards attaining the goals of the Act.

Another significant impediment to employment opportunities for persons with disabilities is the lack of needed infrastructure as envisaged by the Act. Without easy access to education, transportation and public buildings for instance, people with disabilities are bound to encounter difficulties in gaining employment and inclusion in general terms,

Many state governments have not domesticated the Act into their statutes. This implied that a large population of persons with disabilities are excluded from enjoying the protection and provisions of the Act.

We at Neptune Prime believe that "There are abilities in disabilities", and therefore, no efforts should be spared

in harnessing the abundant, latent natural abilities and capabilities inherent in the vast population of persons with disabilities in our midst.

We believe that the lack of enforcement of penalties for discrimination against persons with disabilities and the contravention of its other provisions is a major reason for the nonchalance of both the private and public institutions and agencies towards more spirited implementation of the Act.

While recommending increased funding and engagement in more rigorous enlightenment programmes to effect positive attitudinal change in the way society relates to persons with disabilities, we are also stressing the significant roles the private sector and the nongovernmental organisations, NGOs, can play as catalysts for the advancement of inclusion of persons with disabilities in the social and economic activities of the society.

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Can Nentawe Save the APC From Itself?

to impress those who saw to his emergence to the leadership of the ruling party, the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Nentawe Yilwatda, struck an upbeat note moments after he assumed office by declaring that the party has no opposition to contend with.

Pointing to the stream of defections from PDP, LP, NNPP and others as well as listing the Renewed Hope Student Loan, youth start-up grants, and the presidential subsidies on food security, the new helmsman in charge of the APC reasoned that the Tinubu administration, is politically, unassailable and by extension, the APC, is alive and well.

However, behind the Yelwata's veil of APC's invincibility, the truth is that the party is far from being settled and immune to all forms of threats. In fact and as it is, the biggest threat to the APC is neither the PDP, the ADC, nor the Labour Party. APC constitutes the greatest threat to itself.

The grounds for this view include the existence of the ghosts of imposition from the past. The point here is that Yilwatda's own gubernatorial primary election in Plateau State in 2023, was a masterclass in how not to build party consensus. Allegations of imposition and scripted results triggered walkouts by other aspirants, fracturing the state chapter and delivering straight to the opposition in the general election.

So, in 2025, when the same man emerged as national chairman, tongues were naturally bound to be wagging even if in whispers, about the enactment of another top-down coronation. To

To calm this storm, Yilwatda must prove that he is not a placeholder for vested interests. He must show that under his watch, consensus will not mean compulsion. If he fails, the APC risks fresh cracks just when it needs to look unbreakable Also, there is the awkward legacy of his past job. Not so long ago, Yilwatda was the Benue State INEC Resident Electoral Commissioner, the same electoral body whose credibility is constantly on trial. Critics are already sniffing for conflict of interest: Can the former referee now be a player without raising eyebrows? The stakes are huge. In a country where losing parties rarely accept defeat graciously, the APC must look squeaky clean

Any hint that the national chairman might tilt the table behind the scenes will hand the opposition a perfect line of attack.

Yilwatda will be wise to lean into this. He should champion electoral reforms within the party to ensure the conduct of credible primaries. He should show that fair play starts at home. The APC has been tagged a party that eats its own. This uncomplimentary is derived from the fact that crises and the existence of factions are old sports in the party. The ghosts of past chairmen still haunt the corridors: Ganduje's sudden exit, Mai Mala Buni's caretaker saga, Oshiomhole's messy ouster. Each chapter proves that in the APC, power is never given for free. Old lions like Tinubu, regional warlords, state governors, and even youth blocs all want a seat at the table, preferably the head.

Yilwatda must hold this turbulent house together without losing

his own head in the process

His promise of "gentility with firmness" sounds nice in a press statement, but politics is not as polite. He will need to decide when to slap the table. On the other hand, too much rigidity will mean that he risks another round of rebellions.

Selling Hope in Hard Times. Even if he keeps the family together, he must still sell the APC brand to Nigerians who are growing more restless by the day. Yes, the party has won some off-cycle elections, but ask the average market woman or a bus driver, and they will tell you life is biting. The 'Renewed Hope' mantra only works if people see hope not just on campaign

Yilwatda will have to push the Tinubu administration to deliver results that are not just PowerPoint slides but tangible wins: affordable food, jobs for restless youths, real social safety nets. If the economy does not calm down, even 10 million door-todoor youth canvassers will not be able to save the party from voter anger in 2027.

When Yilwatda says there is no opposition, it sounds defiant, but it also amounts to a dangerous complacency. The Labour Party may be in disarray, PDP may still be licking its wounds, the ADC may still be trying to put itself together, but the Nigerian voter has a short fuse and a long memory. If hardship persists, fresh coalitions will spring up like mushrooms. Dismissing them as irrelevant is exactly how incumbents get blindsided.

So, can he do it? Professor Nentawe Yilwatda is no stranger to complex systems, but the APC is not a lecture hall. The good news is that he is young, he has technocratic chops, and he has the President's backing. The bad news is that none of that will protect him when the knives come out. If he wants to be remembered as the chairman who steadied the APC when it mattered most, he must make sure that Tinubu's promises actually touch real lives.

He says there is no opposition. Maybe he's right, but if he can't fix the cracks within, he won't need an opposition. The APC will do the job all by itself.

Tinubu commends Buni's massive investment in agriculture

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, has applauded Yobe State Government for massively investing in agriculture to guarantee food sufficiency and security in the state.

This was disclosed in a statement signed by Mamman Mohammed, DG Press and Media Affairs to Governor Mai Mala Buni.

The president made the commendation at the launch of the state's Agricultural Empowerment Programme in Damaturu.

Tinubu, represented by the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Political and Other Matters, Alhaji Ibrahim Kabiru Masari, said the Yobe state agricultural empowerment programme was in tune with the renewed Hope Agenda of the Federal government.

He assured the federal government's partnership to improve agricultural productivity in the state.



Tinubu, Buni

Governor Buni revealed that the state government procured 40 Massey Ferguson tractors, 1,961 Power Tillers, 1,250 4,500 bags of NPK 20:10:10 Hand Push Planters, 553 Fertiliser and 195 Crop

Multi-Purpose Threshers, 3,410 Solar water pumps, Residue crushers.

Similarly, 495 Crop Residue choppers, 20,000 Assorted improved seeds, Assorted Agro Chemicals, 4,000 Bunches of Cassava Stems, Assorted Certified Seeds, 50 Tricycles and 30 Motorcycles were procured for the programme.

"In line with our policy to promote agricultural development in the state, I hereby direct that the machines, equipment and other farm implements should be distributed free to deserving farmers.

"Additionally, I hereby direct a 50% subsidy on the sale of fertiliser to farmers," Buni announced.

It would be recalled that the Yobe State Government last year procured and distributed 100 tractors, hand tilling machines, solarpowered irrigation machines, harvesters, threshers, assorted improved seedlings, fertiliser, among others.

Troops intercept terrorists planting IEDs on Borno bridge





Recovered IEDs

Military troops have intercepted Boko Haram terrorists attempting to plant Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) on a bridge along the Dikwa-Marte road in Borno State.

The operation led to the recovery of two heavy IEDs after a prolonged gun battle. This development is part of

ongoing counteroffensive operations by the troops of the Northeast Joint Task Force, Operation Hadin Kai, aimed at clearing the region of terrorist elements.

Speaking with newsmen, the Theatre Commander of Operation Hadin Kai, Major General Abdulsallam Abubakar, revealed that

within the past week, troops conducted clearance operations deep into the Lake Chad region, Sambisa Forest, and the Mandara Mountains. "My men have been on the offensive for weeks now, and there have been operations into the Sambisa Forest and the Mandara mountains.

"While on a clearance

along Dikwa-Marte, our troops clashed with Boko Haram trying to lay mines on a bridge, the troops immediately engaged them in a firefight forcing them to abandon the IEDs and flee.

"There has been some stability along the fringes of Lake Chad, the terrorists are on the run and we are chasing after them.

"We will not allow them to attack our troops again, all liberated communities will not fall into the control of the terrorists, our troops are motivated and in high spirits,' Maj. Gen. Abubakar stated.

These operations resulted in the killing of nine terrorists in Bama, Gwoza, and Konduga Local Government Areas of Borno State.

According to General Abubakar, the joint operations are being carried out simultaneously by troops of the Nigerian Navy along the shores of Lake Chad, the Nigerian Army on the ground, and the Nigerian Air Force providing precision air support.

In addition to the recovered IEDs, troops also seized AK-47 rifles and PKT machine guns from the terrorists.

The Theatre Commander noted that the sustained offensives have significantly enhanced and security in border communities around the Lake Chad fringes.

Gov. Fintiri increases corps members' allowance to N30,000

allowance paid to National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving in the state from N20,000 to N30,000. The announcement was made on Friday during the swearing-in ceremony of the 2025 Batch B Stream I Orientation Course held at the NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp in Damare, Girei local government area. Clad in full NYSC regalia,

Governor Fintiri reaffirmed administration's commitment to youth development and the welfare of corps members posted to the state.

He noted that the increment reflects the state government's ongoing efforts to provide a conducive environment for serving corpers, including regular support with food items and other welfare interventions.

"As a government, we are committed to improving the welfare of corps members. This increment aligns with our promise to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere for you," the Governor said.

Fintiri also revealed that preparations have reached an advanced stage for the construction of a new NYSC camp in the state.

He directed the State NYSC Coordinator to engage corps members with relevant professional backgrounds architecture, engineering, and quantity surveying to participate in the supervision of the project. Congratulating the newly sworn-in corps members on the successful completion of their academic journeys, the Governor welcomed them to Adamawa State and assured them of the government's hospitality and support. He described them as

Adamawa State governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, has implementation of key increased the monthly government policies, government policies, especially in the education

> "As bona fide citizens of Adamawa during your service year, you are expected to uphold discipline, engage in community development, and cultivate healthy interactions," Fintiri stated. emphasised importance orientation course, noting that it prepares corps members physically and mentally for national service. In his remarks, the Commissioner for Youths and Chairman of the NYSC Governing Board in the state, Barrister Wali Yakubu, urged corps members to take the orientation course seriously, obey camp rules, and embrace skill acquisition opportunities that would promote self-reliance beyond their service year.

> State Coordinator, Mrs. Osoro Caroline, acknowledged the positive response and discipline shown by the new corps members since their arrival at the camp.
>
> She noted that the

orientation course was designed to equip them with the tools needed to make meaningful contributions to national development. commended Osoro

Governor Fintiri for the stipend increase, his plans for a befitting camp, and other welfare packages for corps members, describing him as a visionary leader and a beacon of youth empowerment in Nigeria. Highlights of the event included the administration of the oath of allegiance by the Chief Judge of Adamawa State, Justice Hapsat Abdurrahman, and a presentation of the NYSC journal to the Governor.



Fintiri

NORTH-EAST

BY GIFT LUCKSON GIFTLUCKSON@NEPTUNEPRIME.COM.NG

Gov. Buni flags off 2025 agric empowerment programme for farmers

Governor Mai Mala Buni of Yobe State has launched the distribution of the 2025 Agricultural E m p o w e r m e n t Programme for Yobe farmers.

Represented during the launching ceremony by the Senior Special Assistant to President Ahmed Bola Tinubu on political matters, Alhaji Ibrahim Masari, Governor Buni said the initiative aimed to support farmers across all the 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

empowerment The underscored the state government's commitment to transforming agriculture from subsistence farming to mechanised production. Buni emphasised that the programme aligns with his administration's broader agenda to improve productivity, ensure food sufficiency, and strengthen the local economy.

"To empower farmers, we have procured and will distribute 40 heavyduty tractors, 1,961 power tillers, 1,250 hand-pushed planters, 553 multipurpose processing stations, 3,410 solar-powered irrigation pumps and 4,000 trucks of NPK 20:10 fertilisers.

Others are 4,500 biogas plants, 20,000 assorted improved seeds, 4,000 bunches cassava



Agricultural equipment

stems, 50 tricycles and 30 motorcycles for mobility logistics,"

He announced that all farm machinery and equipment will be given to farmers free of charge, while fertilisers will be sold at a 50%

subsidy.

"This intervention will reduce production costs, increase yields, and ultimately improve livelihoods," he said.

He commended President Tinubu for his leadership, noting that improved security has enabled farmers to access their farmlands

boosting safely, agricultural output.

The event, which took place at the 27th August stadium in Damaturu, brought together stakeholders, critical nongovernmental organisations, Emirs, Mais and farmers who are the key beneficiaries.

Flood destroys houses, submerges graveyard in Borno

No fewer than eight buildings have collapsed, a graveyard has been submerged, and residents were displaced after three hours of heavy downpour on Wednesday, in Maiduguri and other parts of Borno State. Many areas like Bulumkutu,

Damboa, Moduganari in Maiduguri, the state capital were heavily flooded after the downpour, while a graveyard in Jajeri in Jere local government area of the state was submerged, causing apprehension among the people.

A resident of Jajeri who did not mention his name in a video circulating online, appealed to the Borno State government to come to their aid to address the flood and the damage to the graveyard.

"We are calling on the state government to come to our aid and act fast as many of the graves in the graveyard are collapsing after the rainfall. This is beyond our control," the resident pleaded.

Meanwhile, the Borno State Police Command has swiftly carried out on-the-scene assessments and deployed patrol teams across the affected areas. A statement issued to newsmen in Maiduguri by the State's Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), ASP Nahum Kenneth Daso, said the Command has



swiftly carried out on-the-scene assessments and deployed patrol teams across the impacted areas. He also confirmed that, 'Unfortunately, eight buildings collapsed but no casualties were recorded."

Daso said to forestall any breakdown of law and order, the Command has stationed officers at strategic locations to protect evacuated homes and properties from potential looting or criminal activities.

He said the operations were

coordinated by the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of Operations, DC Garba Audu Bosso, alongside ACP Jawi Muhammed and several Divisional Police Officers within Maiduguri Metropolis.

The PPRO added that the Commissioner of Police, Abdulmajid, Naziru commended the swift response of the officers involved and called on residents to remain calm and law-abiding.

He also urged parents and guardians to monitor their children closely and prevent them from playing in floodwaters, as such behaviour poses serious risks to their safety.

Daso further assured the general public that the Command remains committed to the safety and security of all residents and will continue to respond promptly to any emergencies as they arise.

The devastating flood is occurring 10 months after the September 10, 2024 flood disaster that destroyed homes, public infrastructure and killed many in Maiduguri and environs, with over a million residents displaced.

16-year-old boy kills stepmother during domestic quarrel

The Adamawa State Police Command is currently investigating two separate incidents of culpable homicide arising from domestic violence in Madagali and

Gombi local government areas. A statement issued by the spokesman for the command, SP Suleiman Nguroje, on Wednesday, stated that the first incident occurred in Pallam District, Madagali.

According to the statement, a preliminary investigation reveals that a physical confrontation erupted between two cowives, Rhoda Anthony, aged 55, and Victoria Anthony, aged 36, both married to one Anthony Pallam.

"During the altercation, Victoria's son, Ijai Anthony, aged 16, reportedly struck his stepmother, Rhoda Anthony, on the head with a piece of wood, causing her

"Upon receiving the report, the Divisional Police officer in Madagali promptly mobilised to the scene and rushed the victim to Cottage Hospital Madagali, who was later confirmed dead while receiving treatment," the statement read. He said that the suspect and his mother have been taken into protective custody

as the investigation progresses. The statement added, "In another similar tragic incident occurred in Fotta District, Gombi Local Government Area.

The Command received a distress report that Idi Buba had attacked his biological father, Buba Jelli, by stabbing him on the neck and back with a knife, following a domestic altercation.

The victim was immediately rushed to the Primary Health Care Centre in Fotta, where he sadly died while receiving

Nguroje confirmed that the suspect was arrested at the scene, and the knife used in the attack has also been recovered and will be treated as an exhibit against the

The Commissioner of Police, Adamawa State Command, CP Dankombo Morris, has strongly condemned these acts of violence, especially those involving family members.

He calls on all residents to always exercise restraint, avoid taking the law into their own hands, and seek peaceful means in resolving conflicts.

He said that investigations are ongoing and that the suspects will be charged in court upon completion of investigations.



Suspect

CUSTOMS & NEMA BY MARYAM SULAIMAN Maryam Sulaiman@neptuneprime.com.ng

NCS deepens strategic engagement with China's GACC on customs knowledge exchange

Nigeria Customs (NCS) has Service further strengthened its international cooperation efforts through a highlevel engagement with the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). The meeting, held in Beijing on July 25, 2025, brought together senior officers of the Service and top officials from the GACC to explore bilateral knowledge exchange and capacity development in customs administration.

The 21-member Nigerian delegation was led by Comptroller-Assistant of Customs General Oluyomi Adebakin, Commandant of the Nigeria Customs Command and Staff College (NCCSC), Gwagwalada. Discussions were held with officials from the GACC International Cooperation Division, the Training and Education Centre, and representatives of the Shanghai Customs College. The engagement focused on deepening cooperation in customs training methodologies, modernisation models, and technology-driven solutions, especially as China plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's international trade network.

During the meeting, the Chinese Customs authorities shared their incorporating virtual reality (VR), 5G-enabled systems, and blended e-learning approaches. In 2024 alone, GACC conducted over 8,000 physical training sessions and developed 360 online courses.

Discussions highlighted Nigeria's active participation in Chinaled customs development initiatives, with over 200 African customs officers, including 89 from Nigeria, having received training since 2023 across various areas such as trade facilitation, anti-smuggling enforcement, food safety supervision, and digital port operations.

Chinese Customs The acknowledged officials recent reforms within the Nigeria Customs Service and commended the country's growing leadership in international customs platforms. They appreciated the election of the Comptroller-General Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR, as Chairperson of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Council, describing it as a significant milestone in Nigeria's customs diplomacy. Both parties expressed mutual interest in exploring technical exchange programmes, joint research initiatives, and officer exchange schemes structured training system focused on regional port



Nigeria Customs officials with Chinese Customs officials

systems and cross-border intelligence cooperation. The bilateral dialogue also signalled new areas of collaboration, including participation Nigeria's in upcoming Customs Modernisation Courses

and officer development training at the Shanghai Customs College.

The Platform Business Development Agency facilitated the meeting, and its founder coordinated the engagement as part of a broader agenda to drive customs sector reform, ease of doing business, and institutional capacity building. This aligns with the broader objectives of promoting knowledge

customs procedures, and building an integrated trade infrastructure for sustainable development as a cornerstone for the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Adamawa Flood: 5 dead, 55 injured - NEMA

injured from flooding in parts of Yola, Adamawa

The NEMA's Head of Operations in Yola, Ladan Ayuba, confirmed the number of victims and stated that the injured were receiving treatment at the Modibbo Adama Teaching Hospital.

Speaking with The ICIR on Monday, July 28, NEMA's national spokesperson, Ezekiel, corroborated the fatalities figure. He added that a team from the organisation was on the ground in the town. He promised to give a further update before the end of today (Monday). Meanwhile, residents in

The National Emergency the state capital gave higher Many residents have since among residents about the persons dead and 55 others claiming as many as 40 schools. people died.

The Adamawa flooding occurred on Sunday, July 27, following a heavy downpour in Yola and its environs. The flood submerged houses in some of the affected places. Media reports indicate that boats have been used to rescue people in areas such as Sabon Pegi, Shagari Phase II, Anguwan Tabo, Tashan Sani, Modire, Ummare, Ibnu Abbas, and Yolde-Pate. Officials of the Red Cross, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence (NSCDC) are among those working together with NEMA to support and

rescue the victims.

The state Deputy Governor, Kaletapwa Farauta, a professor, visited affected areas on Sunday. Farauta also visited the injured at Modibbo Adama University Teaching Hospital, expressing concern over the level of destruction and directing that temporary shelters and essential relief materials be provided to the victims immediately.

'The government will ensure the victims receive food, clothing, and medical care without delay," he promised. The ICIR reported in June 2025 that NEMA announced the deployment of its personnel to 15 highrisk states to raise awareness

Management Agency numbers of casualties from been seeking shelter in looming threat of floods and (NEMA) has confirmed five the flooding, with some emergency camps and the urgent need to relocate from vulnerable areas.

> The NEMA spokesperson said the affected states include Kogi, Imo, Enugu, Adamawa, Taraba, Borno, Zamfara, Katsina, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

> HE said the May 23 flooding in Mokwa Local Government Area, Niger State, took many residents by surprise, especially those living in gully-prone areas. Despite earlier warnings issued by authorities, many victims of the flooding built their residences in the gully

> The ICIR reported that the Niger State Government said the flooding killed over 200 residents, with more than 1,000 residents missing.



Adamawa flood

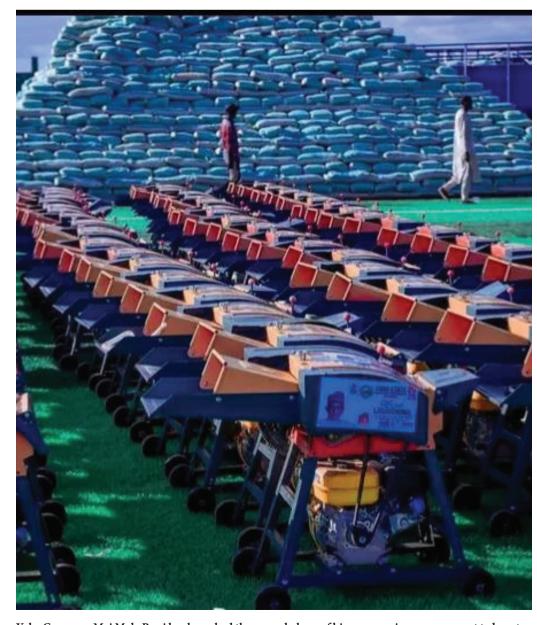
PRIME PHOTOS By Maryam Umar Maryam Umar@neptuneprime.com.ng



Friends posed for a photo on vacation in 1972 and recreated it 50 years later



This is Kaduna in the year 1964. Today, this building is the Secretariat of Kaduna North Local Government and the road is a double lane — Ahmadu Bello Way. Back then, it was called the **Administrator's Office**



Yobe Governor Mai Mala Buni has launched the second phase of his mega agric empowerment to boost agricultural productivity and food security



Minister of Health, Professor Mohammed Ali Pate, was in Maiduguri, the Borno State Capital, to commission the Bolori II General Hospital delivered by the administration of Governor Babagana **Umara Zulum**

PRIME1OMENT

BY ALIYU ASKIRA

I was denied movie roles because I refused to kiss women - Actor McDonough

Veteran Hollywood actor Neal McDonough has revealed that he was blacklisted in Hollywood for refusing to kiss anyone other than his wife, Ruvé McDonough, in film and television roles.

Speaking on the Nothing Left Unsaid podcast on Wednesday, the Band of Brothers and Yellowstone star said he had always made it clear in his contracts that he wouldn't engage in romantic or intimate scenes that involved kissing other women.

McDonough has said in the past that his decision is rooted in

personal values and commitment to his marriage.

He stated, "I always had in my contracts that I wouldn't kiss another woman on screen. My wife didn't have any problem with it. It was I, really, who had a problem. I was like, 'Yeah, I don't want to put you through it. I know we're going to start having kids, and I don't want to put my kids through it.'"

But that stance quickly came at a cost.

When I wouldn't do it, and they couldn't understand it, Hollywood just completely turned on me.

"They wouldn't let me be part of the show anymore. And for two years, I couldn't get a job, and I lost everything you could possibly imagine. Not just houses and material things, but your swagger,

your cool, who you are, your identity, everything," he said. The 58-year-old actor recalled one particular moment when he was fired from a television show for refusing to wear a "modesty

sock" during a simulated sex scene.
"They said, 'Well, unless you do it, we're gonna have to replace

"I'm like, 'Well, then replace me because I'm not gonna do it.' And they fired me," he stated.

He said that decision triggered a lawsuit.

McDonough said he feared his Hollywood career was over.

"I remember flying home from Albuquerque and flying over the desert in New Mexico and realising, 'Okay, I just got fired from a TV show. I'd have a better chance of surviving in that desert than surviving when I land in Hollywood.' And I was right," he added. Still, the actor said he has no regrets.

McDonough said, "I knew I did the right thing for my marriage. I knew I did the right thing for God. And I knew I did the right

In 2019, McDonough told Closer Weekly he was fired from the short-lived ABC series Scoundrels in 2010 for refusing to perform intimate scenes, claiming "everybody thought I was this religious

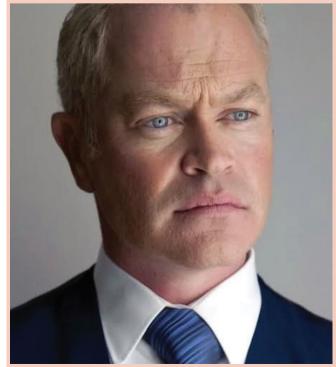
His career got a second wind when Band of Brothers producer Graham Yost called him about a role in Justified, marking what McDonough called a comeback

Now, he's taken full control of his narrative with The Last Rodeo, a film he wrote, directed and stars in.

When the role called for onscreen kisses, McDonough cast his

real-life wife as his character's partner. He said, "Well, my wife is really hot. She is a good-looking woman,

and everything else can pale in comparison to my wife, Ruvé. It was financed. It was ready to go and I said, 'I am not doing the movie unless you play my wife. Because I am not going to kiss some other woman on screen.' And she's like, 'Well, I am not an actor.' I'm like, 'Well, you are now. So let's go."



McDonough

"I did not give Ummi Nuhu N5 million," reveals Hadiza Gabon



Ummi Nuhu

Hadiza Aliyu Gabon, CEO of Gabon Talk Television, Show denied rumours that she recently gave the sum of 5 million Naira to embattled Kannywood actress Ummi Nuhu.

Ummi Nuhu used to be among Kannywood's most popular actresses 10 years

However, she suddenly disappeared from show business after allegedly having serious quarrels with some of her fellow actresses.

Two weeks ago, she surfaced on the popular Gabon Talk Show and answered a series of questions from Hadiza Gabon.

During the interview, she discussed her life, times and circumstances that led to her disappearance.

After interview, the rumours surfaced within that Fati Kinal, a beauty

the Kannywood circle that Hadiza Gabon gave her clothes, 5 million Naira and a

house to stay in Kano. Similarly, it was reported on social media that Bashir Maishadda, a popular producer in Kannywood, gave her money, car, clothes and also linked her up with a foreign NGO that gave her millions of Naira,

The reports further alleged

queen in Kannywood, also gave her 1 million Naira. Some old actresses in Kannywood, like Ruqayya Dawayya, took to social media to advise that Ummi Nuhu should not be sympathised with because when they were reigning, they never showed respect to their parents or senior colleagues, while some of them took to drugs and prostitution after making some money.

In a swift response, other Kannywood members described Dawayya's outburst as unfortunate, claiming that Dawayya also had a dirty past, noting that her first marriage ended in a serious scandal.

According to them, Dawayya's first husband, Adamu Teku, a real estate developer in Abuja, had married 20 wives before Dawayya, and when he wanted to divorce her, he only sent her a text message while she was in Kano to see her mother who came into the country from Saudi Arabia. Hadiza Gabon, who felt embarrassed that her gift to Ummi was leaked, said she invited the actress to her studio to deny receiving 5 million from Gabon and also

denied the other gifts she was

2Baba marries Edo lawmaker, Natasha, in private ceremony

Legendary Nigerian singer, 2Baba, has tied the knot with his partner, Natasha Osawaru, in a traditional wedding ceremony.

The private ceremony was held in Abuja on July 25 and attended by close family members. While details of the ceremony

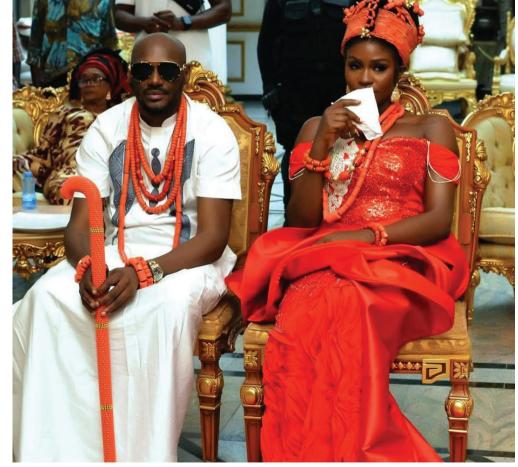
remain scarce, glimpses from the occasion show the newlyweds dressed in elegant traditional attire. The music legend, in his usual dashing figure, appeared in an immaculate white short-sleeved traditional shirt featuring intricate grey embroidery.

He paired this with a crisp white wrapper elegantly tied at his waist. His royal accessories included multiple strands of gleaming coral beads around his neck and wrists, while a coral-beaded staff added regal flair. The ensemble was perfectly completed with sleek sunglasses and pristine white shoes, blending traditional and contemporary style.

On her part, the bride, Honourable Natasha wore a red off-shoulder gown. Her crowning glory was the magnificent native coral bead okuku headpiece, a symbol of Edo royalty, meticulously arranged atop her head.

Layers upon layers of lustrous coral beads cascaded from her neck to her shoulders, arms, and wrists, creating a mesmerising display of cultural opulence.

Fans have since flooded social media with congratulatory messages, celebrating the artist's latest milestone in his personal



2Baba, Natasha

life.

The lovebirds' relationship became public shortly after 2Baba announced his split from his estranged wife Annie Macaulay in January.

At the time, he clarified that his romance with the Edo lawmaker was unrelated to the breakup. The 'African Queen' hitmaker proposed to Osawaru in February.

The relationship gained family

approval in April when Natasha visited Rose, 2Baba's mother, who had previously pleaded with her to "remove the beads" from the singer in February, claiming he wasn't in his "right senses".

NEPTUNE PRIME BUSINESS

MARKET SURVEY

Grain prices drop at Potiskum, Ngelzarma Markets in Yobe, residents, traders welcome relief

BY KASIM ISA MUHAMMAD, KasimIsa@neptuneprime.com.ng

In what many are describing as a breath of fresh air amid rising living costs, grain prices have dropped significantly this week in the Potiskum Local Government Area of Yobe State, offering a rare moment of relief for both traders and residents.

Potiskum Grain Market, one of the busiest agricultural produce hubs in the state, recorded noticeable declines in the cost of staple food items such as maize, millet, sorghum, and beans.

This development comes as a welcome change for families who have been struggling to afford the basics of daily nutrition.

According to a recent market survey, maize is now selling between N37,000 and N40,000 per 100kg bag. The price of millet has also dropped, ranging from N37,000 to N38,000.

Sorghum, a staple in local diets, is being sold based on type and quality—some going for N26,000 to N28,000, others between N35,000 and N37,000. In a similar development, residents and traders in Ngelzarma town in Yobe State

have welcomed a significant drop in the prices of grains and other staple food items, bringing relief to many households in the

According to the latest market update as of July 27th, 2025, prices of essential grains such as maize, millet, sorghum, and beans have witnessed notable reductions at the Ngelzarma grain market in Fune Local Government Area of Yobe State. The survey revealed that maize (commonly known as masara) is now selling between N39,000 and N40,000 per 100kg bag. Millet (gero), another staple in the region, is now priced between N35,000 and N33,000 per bag.

Sorghum, which previously saw slight fluctuations, is currently being sold within the range of N26,000 to N31,000.

The price of large white beans has dropped slightly to between N63,000 and N65,000, while large red beans, previously more expensive, are now being sold between N75,000 and N80,000. Other market commodities have also seen price adjustments. Dried roselle flower, known locally as zobo, is now sold for N20,000 to N21,000.

Melon seeds are going for between N44,000 and N45,000,



although a particular variant is priced higher, ranging from N50,000 to N52,000.

The market report also indicates that polished rice is currently being sold at N125,000 per bag, while the price of broken or locally processed rice varies depending on quality and

source.

Groundnut prices remain relatively high, ranging from N120,000 to N150,000 per bag, possibly due to demand and limited availability.

This drop in prices is being attributed to increased market supply and improved

transportation logistics within the region.

Traders and consumers alike have expressed gratitude and relief, with many hoping that the trend will continue as the harvest season progresses.

harvest season progresses.
"Alhamdulillah," one trader remarked, "May Allah continue

to ease our affairs."

Residents are optimistic that the lower prices will provide temporary respite from the country's broader economic challenges, particularly for low-income households that are often hardest hit by food







BY MARYAM SULAIMAN Maryam Sulaiman@neptuneprime.com.ng

Eyiyemi Olivia Rogbinyin to host QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit

Actor and voice artiste, Eyiyemi Olivia Rogbinyin, has been announced as host of the inaugural QEDNG Creative Powerhouse Summit holding on August 12, 2025, at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

The announcement was made on Thursday by Mighty Media Plus Network Limited, publishers of the online newspaper QEDNG.

With a career spanning over three decades, Eyiyemi Olivia is celebrated for her dynamic presence across theatre, film, and radio. She is widely recognised for her captivating performances as Iya Onidiri in Itura (M-Net Africa Magic) and Hajia Malaika Doherty in Dust.

Beyond her acting talent, she has won the hearts of many for her strong advocacy for professionalism, humility, and courtesy on set, particularly in how cast and crew members are treated.

She has delivered stellar performances in theatre and film productions directed and produced by a long list of accomplished creatives, including Bunmi Davies, Mofe-Damijo, Richard Daniel Oriahi, Dipo Abdul, Ego Boyo, and James Omokwe.

Others are Biodun Stephen, Hadizat Ibrahim, Momo Spaine, Tosin Igho, Steve Gukas, Dotun Olakunrin, Wande Thomas, Rogba Arimoro, Wumi Fosudo, Mide Glover, Omoni Oboli, Chris Odeh, and many others. "Eyiyemi Olivia is more than a host. She is a storyteller who connects deeply with her audience," said Olumide Iyanda, publisher of QEDNG and convener of the summit. "Her presence brings warmth, elegance, and a unique energy that perfectly aligns with the spirit of this summit."

Known for her smooth voice

and engaging personality,

Eyiyemi Olivia has built a reputation as a charismatic compere and voice artiste. She co-anchored radio shows such as Weekend Nigeria on Spirit of Nigeria Radio and The Praise O'Clock Show on Praiseworld Radio. Her ability to host with wit, grace, and empathy makes her a natural fit for the Creative

Iyanda added: collaborative spirit and respect for behind-thescenes contributors make her compassionate and relatable to event attendees. From radio to stage to screen, Eyiyemi Olivia has left a lasting impression

Powerhouse Summit.

everywhere she performed."
The QEDNG Creative
Powerhouse Summit will bring together industry stakeholders, policymakers, and financiers to discuss how to strengthen Nigeria's creative economy.

Two panel discussions will take place, moderated by veteran journalist Steve Ayorinde and broadcast professional Anike-ade Funke Treasure.

Earlier announcements confirmed Udeme Ufot, group managing director of SO&U, as chairman, and Dr. Nkiru Balonwu, founder of The Africa Soft Power Group, as keynote speaker.



23-year-old Nigerian lady unveils AI platform to preserve local language

A 23-year-old Nigerian engineer, Ikeoluwa Abioye, has developed an artificial intelligence-powered platform aimed at preserving and promoting the Yoruba language.

Abioye, who graduated from Dartmouth College in the United States, unveiled the innovation, named Alarino.

The platform, designed as a digital resource, focuses on providing accurate Yoruba translations complete with tone marks (diacritics), a key linguistic feature often missing from existing translation

"Yoruba is considered a low-resource language in natural language processing, which means reliable tools and data are scarce," Abioye explained.

She said her personal struggle with accessing correctly spelt Yoruba words while living abroad inspired her to create the tool. According to her, existing online translators routinely fail to provide tone marks, leading to confusion and incorrect meanings. "What started as a personal frustration soon became a wider mission to create a resource for millions of Yoruba speakers, learners, and developers.

"Alarino, which is open-source, aims to support educators, students, native speakers, and AI developers by offering a rich, curated dataset of properly accented Yoruba words.

"I want Alarino to become the most trusted resource for Yoruba learning and translation. More importantly, I want it to remind us that our languages deserve a place in the digital future," Abioye said.



HERITAGE BY SALIM SANI

Exploring the Resilient Traditions and Rich Heritage of the Bade People

The Bade tribe is an indigenous ethnic group predominantly found in Nigeria's Yobe and Jigawa States. The Bade people are known for their resilient heritage, colourful traditions, and a language that is still a cornerstone of their identity. Their community's journey is a testament to adaptability and deep-rooted cultural pride. **History and Origin**

The origin of the Bade people can be traced through both oral traditions and historical research. According to these sources, the Bade migrated from the East, specifically from an area near modern-day Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Over centuries, their journey took them across the Lake Chad region before finally settling in what is now Yobe State by around 1300 AD.

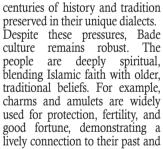
Upon settling, the Bade tribe split into several clans, each led by descendants of the original patriarch.

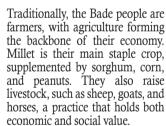
External pressures, such as conflicts with neighbouring groups, forced the unification of their clans. This led to the creation of a confederation which fostered mutual defence and political cohesion. Today, their leadership is embodied by the Bade Emirate, headquartered in the town of Gashua, with the Emir serving as both a cultural and religious figure.

Language and Cultural Identity The Bade language is classified as West Chadic and remains a key aspect of their cultural identity. The language is divided into several dialects, most notably Western Bade, Gashua Bade, and Southern Bade. Over recent decades, however, the number of Bade speakers has decreased as many people adopt Hausa, reflecting broader social and economic changes. Scholars and local leaders frequently raise concerns that Bade is now considered a "vulnerable" language at risk of disappearing, which would mean the loss of

centuries of history and tradition preserved in their unique dialects. Despite these pressures, Bade culture remains robust. The people are deeply spiritual, blending Islamic faith with older, traditional beliefs. For example, charms and amulets are widely used for protection, fertility, and

the natural world. **Economy and Livelihood**





During the rainy season, the majority of the community is engaged in farming, while the dry season sees a shift towards fishing and other activities made possible by the fertile river environments.

The integration of farming, livestock breeding, and fishing helps ensure food security and a stable local economy. Éminent towns like Gashua act as important centres for trade, education, and administration, where people from different backgrounds come together to exchange goods and ideas.

Bade Fishing Festival

The Mauyi-Ğanga Fishing Festival is a hallmark of Bade cultural life. Held each year in Gogaram, a town along the Mauyi-Gaga river, this festival began as a local fishing event and has grown into a significant cultural and tourism attraction, drawing participants and spectators from all over Nigeria. The festival is steeped in ritual. It opens with special ceremonies led

river") and his aides, who perform traditional rites to honour the river's spirits and ensure a bountiful catch. In the past, the festival involved dramatic displays of hunting skills, including attempts to hunt hippopotamus; a testament to the community's intimate relationship with their environment.

Modernisation

Today, while some of those older practices have faded, the festival remains a powerful source of unity and communal pride. It offers entertainment, promotes cultural heritage, provides economic opportunities, and strengthens social bonds within the diverse Bade community.

Nevertheless, the Bade people exemplify the ability to honour ancient traditions while adapting to changing times. Their story, from ancient eastward migrations and clan alliances to ongoing language preservation efforts and vibrant festivals, demonstrates a rich heritage that continues to evolve without losing its core essence.

Despite external pressures and modernisation, the Bade people's spirit, culture, and connection to their land thrive, showing how a community can survive and succeed at the intersection of history and culture.







HISTORICITI BY MERCY ADAJE MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng

Lamu, Kenya: An ancient, well-preserved city of heritage and culture

Lamu is one of the oldest Donkevs & Dhows: and best-preserved Swahili settlements in East Africa, with a history that dates back to the 14th century, believed to have been established around

Located on Lamu Island off the northern coast of Kenya, it was a vital part of the Swahili Coast, a network of city-states that thrived through Indian Ocean trade.

Lamu Island is situated 341 kilometres (212 mi) by road northeast of Mombasa, where the road ends at Mokowe Jetty, from where the sea channel has to be crossed to reach Lamu Island. It is the headquarters of Lamu County.

Historical Significance

It was founded around the 14th century, though evidence suggests settlements may have existed earlier.

UNESCO World Heritage

Lau was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001 for its unique blend of African, Arab, Persian, and Indian cultures. Trade Hub: Lamu flourished as a centre of trade in slaves, ivory, spices, and textiles, connecting inland Africa with Arabia, India, and Persia.

Cultural & Architectural Features

Lamu Old Town: The town is famous for its narrow alleyways, coral buildings, and intricate wooden doors with Arabic inscriptions.

Islamic Influence: The town is predominantly Muslim and known for its mosques, religious schools (madrassas), and rich Islamic traditions. Lamu is also home to 23 mosques, including the Riyadha Mosque, built in 1900, and a donkey sanctuary.

widely used, no cars in Lamu Old Town! The streets are too narrow.

Economy

Lamu's economy was based on the slave trade until its abolition in the year 1907. Other traditional exports included ivory, mangrove, turtle shells and rhinoceros horn, which were shipped via the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and India.

In addition to the abolition of slavery, the construction of the Uganda Railroad in 1901 (which started from the competing port of Mombasa) significantly hampered Lamu's economy.

Tourism has gradually benefited the local economy since the early 2000s. Lamu is a popular destination for backpackers. Many of the locals are involved in providing trips on dhows to

Harambee Avenue is noted for its cuisine, and has a range of stores, Coconut, mango and grapefruit and seafood such as crab and lobster are common ingredients.

Key Landmarks

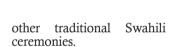
- Lamu Fort Built in the early 19th century by the Sultan of
- Riyadha Mosque A major religious centre and the base of the Maulidi Festival. • Lamu Museum – Showcases
- Swahili culture, traditional artefacts, and town history. • Shela Village – A peaceful
- and scenic part of the island with beautiful beaches and old

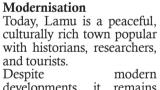
Maulidi Festival

- · A major religious and cultural event held to celebrate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Features Islamic poetry, dances, boat races, and

 Attracts visitors from all over the Islamic world.

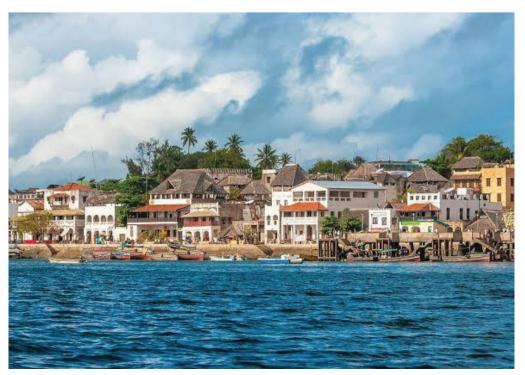
developments, it remains rooted in tradition, offering a rare glimpse into pre-colonial urban life in East Africa.













ROOTS

BY GIFT LUCKSON GiftLuckson@neptuneprime.com.ng

Sarah Forbes Bonetta: The African Slave Girl Who Became Queen Victoria's Protégé

from present-day Nigeria who became a ward of Queen Victoria of England in the 19th century.

Aina was born in 1843 (in what is now Southwest Nigeria). She was believed to have been a titled member of the Egbado clan of the Yoruba people in West Africa.

Enslavement

Aina was captured by King Ghezo of Dahomey during a slave raid and was given to British Captain Frederick Forbes, as a "gift" to Queen Victoria. After her capture, she was renamed Sarah Forbes Bonetta (after Captain Forbes and his ship, HMS Bonetta).

Life Story
As a child, Aina's village was attacked by the Dahomey army. Her parents were killed, and she was taken captive. In 1850, she was given to Captain Forbes, who saw her intelligence and potential. He took her to England, where she was presented to Queen

Sarah Forbes Bonetta (originally named Aina, 1843 – 15 August 1880) impressed by her intellect and took a special interest in her, from present day funding her education and treating her as a goddaughter.

Victoria Queen requested that Sarah have her photo taken, Sarah was taken to the English-based studio of American photographer John J. Mayall.

Sarah was afraid of the photographer because she had no idea what he intended. When she noticed a portrait of a man with a sword hanging on the wall, her fear turned into panic. She yelled, "Cut head off!" as she quickly ran her hand down her narrow throat. "Cut head off!" Sarah knew from her years in captivity that swords were meant for head cuts.

It was necessary to reassure the trembling girl that the man brandishing the sword was not real and would not hurt her.

Sarah lived between There England and Sierra Leone for her education and health.

In 1862, she married wealthy Yoruba businessman, Captain James Pinson Labulo Davies, in a lavish ceremony attended by British elites.

Legacy Sarah Forbes Bonetta died of tuberculosis on 15 August 1880 in the city of Funchal, the capital of Madeira Island, a Portuguese island in the Atlantic Ocean.

In her memory, her husband erected over-eight-foot granite obelisk-shaped monument at Ijon in Western Lagos, where he had started a cocoa

Aina is seen as a symbol of African royalty. Her story depicts the complex ties between colonialism imperialism

The experience of being caught between two worlds—African heritage and Victorian expectations. descendants continued to have ties to British

several are paintings and photos of Sarah Forbes Bonetta, rare for a Black woman in Victorian England, which add to her historical significance.







OLDIES

BY KASIM ISA MUHAMMAD

KasimIsa@neptuneprime.com.ng

Life has taught me that perseverance and patience are the keys to success - Hajiya Kingi Isa, retired civil servant

Hajiya Kingi Isa is a retired civil servant who dedicated her career to working in various government facilities, including Potiskum General Hospital, where she served as Secretary. She also held different positions in other institutions, such as the Psychiatric Hospital, before retiring in 2007. In this interview, she reflects on her *life experiences, the challenges* she faced as a woman in the workforce, and her advice to younger generations.

N.P (Neptune Prime): Can you tell us about your background?

I was born in the year 1954, in a time when education, especially for girls, was not as widely encouraged as it is today. Despite that, I was fortunate to have parents who, after some initial reluctance, eventually allowed me to go to school. I completed my primary education in 1964 and went on to acquire my secondary school leaving certificate at Government Secondary School, Potiskum, in the year 1971.

After completing my secondary education, I was lucky enough to secure a job in a hospital, which marked the beginning of my career in the civil service. However, my thirst for knowledge did not end there. After I got married, I pursued higher education and studied administration at the College of Administrative and Business Studies (CABS) in Potiskum. This helped me enhance my career prospects and broaden my knowledge.

N.P: This is quite interesting. How did you manage to attend school at a time when women were not encouraged to pursue education?

It was indeed a humbling experience, one that came with its own set of challenges. At that time, it was not common for girls to be sent to school, and we had to convince our parents to allow us to study. There was a lot of resistance at first, as many people believed that a woman's place was in the home, taking care of household responsibilities. However, I was among five girls from my area who were selected by the Education Secretary of Borno Province to attend secondary school in Potiskum. This was a rare opportunity, and we faced

many challenges along the way. The journey was tough, and it required a great deal of perseverance, but we were determined to make something of ourselves.

Looking back, I am grateful to my parents for eventually allowing me to pursue education. Without their support, I would not have been able to achieve all that I did in my career. It was a challenging path, but praise be to Allah, we managed to go through it.

N.P: You mentioned that you got married

immediately your secondary school education. How did you balance your work and family responsibilities?

When I got married, I did not go back to further my studies immediately. Instead, I chose to focus on my family first. I wanted to make sure that I took care of my children before thinking about advancing my education.

work and Balancing responsibilities family was not easy, especially in the early years. I had to carefully plan everything so that neither my work nor my home suffered. There were times when it felt overwhelming, but I remained determined to make it work.

My husband was very supportive throughout my career. His encouragement played a big role in ensuring that I was able to manage both my professional and personal life effectively. I strongly believe that women can excel in both areas if they are determined and if they have the necessary support from their spouses and families.

N.P: That is interesting. What do you believe is the secret to a long-lasting marriage?

The most important thing in marriage is patience. Couples must learn to be patient with each other, especially during difficult times. Marriage is not always smooth; there will be challenges along the way, but if both partners are willing to work through them with patience and understanding, they can build a strong and lasting relationship.

More importantly, young people today need to However, the main build their marriages on challenge I encountered genuine love and not on was balancing family



Hajiya Kingi Isa

got married, my husband was on grade level 4, while I was on grade level 3. At that time, there was not much difference between us in terms of financial status, but over time, he surpassed me.

This shows that marriage in the past was built on mutual understanding and love, not on financial expectations. Today, many young women are looking for ready-made nuspanas ınstead focusing on building a life together with their spouses. Marriage should be about companionship, love, and support, not just material wealth.

N.P: What were the challenges you faced in your career?

To be honest, I did not face many challenges in my career because my late husband was always there to support me. His encouragement allowed me to focus on my work without feeling overwhelmed.

material things. When I life with my job. It

required a lot of effort and time management, but with dedication and proper planning, I was able to pass through it successfully.

N.P: Looking back at your life, is there anything you wish you had done differently?

When I reflect on my life, I feel grateful for all the experiences, both good and challenging, that shaped me into the person I am today. Nonetheless, if I had the chance to change anything, I would have pursued higher education earlier.

Although I eventually went back to school after marriage, I sometimes wonder how much further I could have gone if I had continued immediately after secondary school. Education has always been my passion, and I strongly believe that learning never stops. I do not regret the choices I made because they allowed me to nurture my family while still building a career.

N.P: What is your perspective on the role of women in today's society?

Women play a vital role in shaping society, both within their families and in professional spaces. Today, we see more women excelling in different fields, which is a great development. However, I believe that there is still work to be done in ensuring that women are given equal opportunities, especially in education and leadership positions.

One of misconceptions is that a woman's success comes at the expense of her family. That is not true. Women can be both successful professionals and dedicated mothers or wives if given the right support. Society needs to change its mindset and encourage women to pursue their dreams without guilt or limitations. N.P: What is the most intriguing lesson life has taught you?

Life has taught me that perseverance and patience are the keys to success. Nothing comes easy, and every stage of life presents its own challenges. Nevertheless, patience, faith, and hard work, one can overcome any obstacle.

I have also learned self-contentment is fundamental. Many people spend their lives comparing themselves to others, which only leads to dissatisfaction. It is important to be grateful for what you have while striving for growth.

N.P: What are your hobbies?

Since I retired, my favourite hobby has been spending time with my family. I find great joy in being around my children and grandchildren, watching them grow, and sharing stories with them.

Family is very important to me, and I cherish every moment I get to spend with them. I also enjoy engaging in community activities and helping younger women understand the importance of education and self-reliance.

N.P: How many children do you have?

I have six children. I currently have five, as one of them has passed away. Losing a child is one of the most painful experiences a mother can go through, but I remain grateful for the ones I still have.

N.P: A word for our readers?

Perseverance is the key to success. Life is full of challenges, but with patience and the biggest determination, one can achieve a lot. No matter what obstacles you face, keep pushing forward and never lose hope.

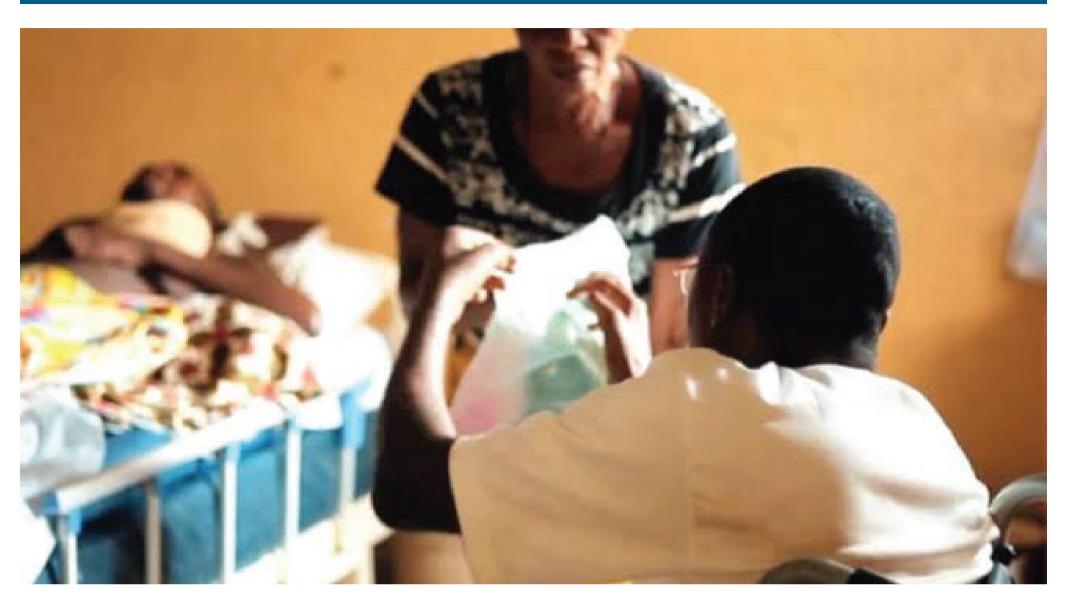
It is through patience and hard work that people can accomplish great things in life. Young people should learn to be patient with life and trust that with persistence, they eventually reach their goals.



This shows that marriage in the past was built on mutual understanding and love, not on financial expectations

HUMANIST

BY SHAFAATU DAUDA shafaatudauda@neptuneprime.com.ng



Spinal cord injury survivors seek help, awareness among Nigerians

The Kano State Chapter of the Spinal Cord Injury has Association a courtesy visit to the Ministry of Women Affairs, Children and Disabled, in preparation for the upcoming International Day of Spinal Cord Injury, scheduled for September 5. During the visit, the Chairman of the association, Abdulraman Uba Daushe, said the programme aims to raise awareness among spinal cord injury victims on proper self-care and longterm management.

He also stressed the importance of educating the public on how to handle accident victims to prevent secondary injuries during emergency response.

"The day provides an opportunity for victims to share their stories and challenges. Through this, we foster community support and offer critical items such as wheelchairs, diapers, and other essential medical supplies.

Responding on behalf of the Commissioner, Director of Special Duties, Mairo Halliru Haruna, appreciated and assured them of the Ministry's full support. She emphasised that the

the efforts of the association Ministry, under the leadership of the burden on spinal cord injury directors Commissioner, is committed to supporting persons with disabilities and would continue to provide the needed assistance to reduce



association's survivors. representatives on areas featured fruitful collaboration, support, and sustainable The discussions between the ministry's intervention for affected individuals.

FEATURES



Dr Duru

Use of gender-based laws for political persecution and social manipulation (2)

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

By Duru Sandra Chidinma, PhD

Weaponizing Policy: The deliberate misuse of laws or

frameworks to harm, silence, or discredit individuals, often for political or personal gain.

Gender-Based Laws: Legal instruments designed to address inequalities and violence based on gender identity or expression. • False Accusation: A claim or allegation that is intentionally untrue

and made to damage a person's reputation or freedom.

• Gender Equity: A state in which individuals of all genders

equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.

Federal Ministry of Men's Affairs: A proposed governmental

dedicated institution addressing issues affecting men, including

male victimization, fatherhood, mental health, and policy protection.

Historica1 Intent Contemporary Interpretation Gender-based laws were created to redress centuries of legal and social injustices, particularly those directed against women. In countries like Nigeria, laws such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) 2015 were enacted to protect vulnerable individuals, primarily women from domestic violence, sexual abuse, and

harmful traditional practices. However, over time, genderbased legal frameworks have evolved from instruments of protection to potentially biased instruments of persecution when wielded without balanced accountability. Feminist legal theorists argue that such laws are essential in patriarchal societies, yet critical legal scholars caution against the "unquestionable victimhood" status these laws sometimes confer upon women, to the exclusion of men who may also be victims (Smart, 1990; Naffine, 1990). The misapplication of these laws has led to situations where accusations against men are presumed to be truthful without rigorous investigation.

undermining principles of justice and due process. Gender Policy and Political

Policy weaponization occurs when legal and administrative tools designed for justice are manipulated for strategic, political, or personal advantage. This phenomenon is not unique to gender law but is increasingly visible in gender-based cases where political opponents, expartners, or aggrieved parties exploit policy frameworks to exact revenge or gain leverage. Studies from the United States, Canada, and India reveal a growing number of false accusations used in child custody battles, academic disputes, and political smear campaigns. While systems exist in some countries to penalize false accusers, many men remain stigmatized and professionally destroyed even after exoneration (Griffin, 2017; Bedi, 2020). In Nigeria and several African states, the lack of institutional response mechanisms for male victims only exacerbates the problem.

Gender Bias in Public Policy and Administration

Gender equity in public policy should mean the fair treatment of all genders. However, equity has often been mistaken for protectionism. In the absence of gender-neutral enforcement mechanisms, policies tilt toward presumed female victimhood. For example, administrative procedures in public service disciplinary panels or political ethics committees are frequently reactive, with male subjects facing suspension or dismissal based solely on accusations, regardless of legal outcomes.

This bias is often supported by societal and media narratives that reinforce stereotypes of women as perpetual victims and men as inherent aggressors (Flood, 2011). As public administration serves as the engine of policy implementation, its failure to uphold neutrality and justice becomes a critical concern for democratic governance and human rights.

The Silencing of Male Victims: Social and Institutional Consequences

Cultural expectations of masculinity often discourage men from speaking up about victimization, especially when the abuse is emotional, legal, or reputational. This silence is further enforced by institutional structures that lack support systems, legal aid, or even basic the context of false genderbased accusations. According to Galdas et al.

recognition of male trauma in

(2005), male mental health is often ignored in policy discussions, and men who seek help are viewed as weak. When such social stigma is combined with administrative negligence, men become invisible victims, unheard, unprotected, and often unjustly condemned. International Responses and

Comparative Policy Models Several countries have begun acknowledging the need for male-inclusive gender frameworks. For instance:

· Australia operates the Men's Referral Service, which offers support

to male victims of domestic abuse.

India has faced legal challenges against its misuse of Section 498A

(anti-dowry law), with courts recognizing a high number of

accusations.

• United Kingdom has seen advocacy for more gender-

domestic violence laws and support centers for male survivors.

These models show that policy abuse is not a localized problem and that administrative responses must evolve to reflect contemporary gender complexities.

Conceptual Gaps in Literature Despite increasing reports of false accusations and genderpolicy manipulation, academic literature in Nigeria and Africa remains largely silent on this issue. Most studies focus on the underrepresentation and victimization of women, which remains crucial, but there is an absence of scholarship addressing how men can also be unjustly harmed through the same policies.

significant document in Nigeria currently recommends the creation of a Ministry of Men's Affairs, nor does any national gender policy address the rights of men in legal disputes stemming from gender accusations. This gap signifies both a conceptual and structural imbalance in gender justice advocacy.

Theoretical Framework This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical lenses: 1. Critical Legal Theory

Inis theory challenges the objectivity and neutrality of the law, arguing that legal frameworks are often shaped by political, social, and cultural ideologies. It helps explain how gender laws can reflect power dynamics and how such laws, though noble in intent, can become tools of oppression when misused.

2. Masculinist Theory

This framework re-centers the male experience in gender studies, highlighting the emotional, psychological, and institutional neglect faced by men in discourses traditionally dominated by feminist theory. It does not negate women's issues but calls for balanced gender discourse.

3. Policy Weaponization Theory (Emerging)

This study proposes a developing conceptual model

that examines the intentional distortion of public policy for harm. It identifies four pillars: manipulation, amplification (via media/public opinion), institutional complicity, and lack of redress mechanisms.

This research adopts a qualitative case study design, appropriate for gaining deep insights into the complexities of policy misuse, social manipulation, and institutional responses. Through case studies, the researcher will explore real-life scenarios involving false accusations, administrative bias, and political persecution of men under gender-based policy frameworks. A qualitative approach is most suitable for this study because it allows for nuanced understanding of perceptions, power relations, and the socio-legal dynamics surrounding these issues.

Population of the Study The target population includes:
• Men who have been falsely accused or persecuted using gender-

based laws. Legal practitioners, public administrators, and policymakers involved in gender-related cases.

NGO staff and social workers involved in gender advocacy,

pro-women and pro-men. · Journalists, scholars, and

media analysts who have documented or analyzed such cases.

• Select members of the general public, to understand societal perceptions of gender equity and justice.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling technique will be used to sampling select participants who have either experienced or directly engaged with the weaponization of gender-based laws. Approximately 25-30 participants will be selected across five stakeholder categories:

1. 5–7 falsely accused men (documented or litigated cases). 2. 5 lawyers/legal experts in human rights, gender law, and crimina1 iustice.

3. 5 public administrators and policymakers in relevant ministries

(Women Affairs,

cases.

Justice, Human Rights). 4. 5–7 NGO professionals and

gender advocates.
5. 3–5 journalists/media analysts who have reported on relevant

Selection will be based on credibility, relevance to the research focus, and willingness

to participate. Sources and Methods of Data Collection

The study will draw data from three primary sources:

In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to allow participants to express their experiences, observations, and expert insights. Interview questions will be tailored for each stakeholder category, guided by the research questions. Dr DURU Sandra Chidinma, a Nigerian Scholar.

TO BE CONTINUED...



Super Falcons

Super Falcons lit Lagos streets with trophy parade following WAFCON win

The streets of Lagos Island came alive on Wednesday as the Super Falcons' trophy parade swept through the city, drawing cheers and applause from excited fans.

Nigeria's women's football team flaunted their WAFCON title, celebrating their stunning 3–2 comeback victory over hosts Morocco.

Just days before the Lagos

parade, the team had been hosted at a grand reception in Abuja by President Bola Tinubu.

In honour of their achievement, each player was awarded a generous \$100,000, while the 11-man technical crew received \$50,000 each, along with threebedroom apartments.

The President also bestowed on the entire squad the prestigious national title of Officer of the Order of the Niger.

The Super Falcons' latest victory marks a recordextending 10th continental title, cementing their dominance in

African women's football. The team showed incredible grit and character in the final, coming from two goals down to snatch the win through second-half strikes

Esther Okoronkwo, Folashade Ijamilusi, and Jennifer Echegini. Their individual brilliance didn't go unnoticed either.

Captain Rasheedat Ajibade was crowned Player of the Tournament, goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie earned the Best Goalkeeper award, and coach Justine Madugu was named Best Coach of the tournament.

Real Madrid to part ways with Vinicius over financial demands

Vinicius Junior's financial demands explain Real Madrid's potential willingness to sell him this

Real Madrid is reportedly considering selling Vinicius Junior during this transfer window if a tempting offer comes in for the Brazilian forward. They deem the activation of his €1 billion release clause highly improbable.

According to Sportal, the possibility of Los Blancos parting ways with the Brazilian international hinges on his financial demands.

His current contract, valid until June 30, 2027. stipulates a net salary of €15 million per season, but the player wants parity with Kylian Mbappé. Although Mbappé's contract is also for €15 million net, due to his arrival on a free transfer, an additional €40 million spread over five seasons was agreed upon.

This adds €8 million to his annual €15 million, totalling €23 million per season.

According to the report, Real Madrid is unwilling to meet Vinicius' demands, potentially paving the way for his departure. His future will become clearer in the coming weeks.



Vinicius Jnr



deal with Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr, where he will join Cristiano Ronaldo, the club announced Tuesday.

Atlético Madrid in 2019, but has since seen his fortunes

"I'm here to spread joy. Let's win together," said Félix in a video posted on the Riyadh club's X account. A separate post said he had signed until 2027.

Félix remains one of the most expensive transfers in history, following his move to Atletico for 127.7 million euros (\$147.3 million) six years ago.

He has since failed to score more than 10 goals a season, despite stints at Barcelona, AC Milan and Chelsea.

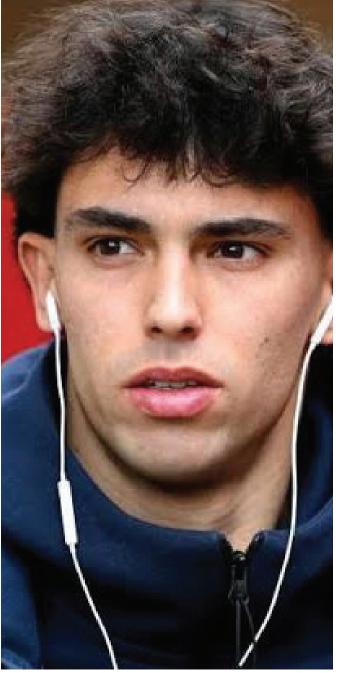
According to Arryadia, a Riyadh sports newspaper, Félix will earn \$10 million a year. Saudi Arabia has shaken up football by spending heavily

on stars from Europe, including Ronaldo's arrival in 2023. The conservative desert nation will host the World Many of the signings have been ageing stars, but Félix

bucks the trend along with Mateo Retegui, 26, the Serie A top-scorer who joined Al Qadsiah last week.

French international Theo Hernandez, 27, left AC Milan for Al Hilal in a reported \$29 million deal earlier this

Top coaches have also been lured to Saudi Arabia, including Italy's Simone Inzaghi who led Al Hilal to an upset win over Manchester City at the Club World Cup. At Al Nassr, Félix will be working under Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, who was sacked by Al Hilal in May following their defeat in the Asian Champions League semi-finals.



João Félix

FAMILY DYNAMICS

 WITH AISHA AUYO,

I am achieving so much, yet society makes me feel like nothing without marriage

In this week's episode of Neptune Prime's Family Dynamics with Eesher, a successful young woman opens up about the emotional toll of societal expectations. In a world where a woman's worth is often unfairly measured by her marital status, her story is one of academic and professional achievement, yet behind the accolades lies a silent struggle for acceptance, love, and understanding.

Dear Sis Eesher,

My heart is heavy. I am 27, a Master's degree holder, and recently admitted into a PhD programme. I work with the government, and I run a business on the side. Yet, despite all these accomplishments, society makes me feel like I'm not enough simply because I'm not married.

I am AS genotype, and this has made compatibility a challenge with potential suitors. I've had to walk away from several prospects due to this issue. It's painful, but I've always tried to stay hopeful.

But lately, I feel like depression is slowly consuming me. People no longer hide their cruel comments they say it to my face: "You're too old," "What were you doing in your early 20s instead of getting mar-

I am hurting, Sis Eesher. I cry often. I truly desire marriage, a home of my own, but it hasn't happened yet, and it's not my fault. Why am I being made to feel guilty for something beyond my control?

Please help me. I'm tired. I'm drowning in sadness, and society is not making it any easier.

Dear Anonymous,

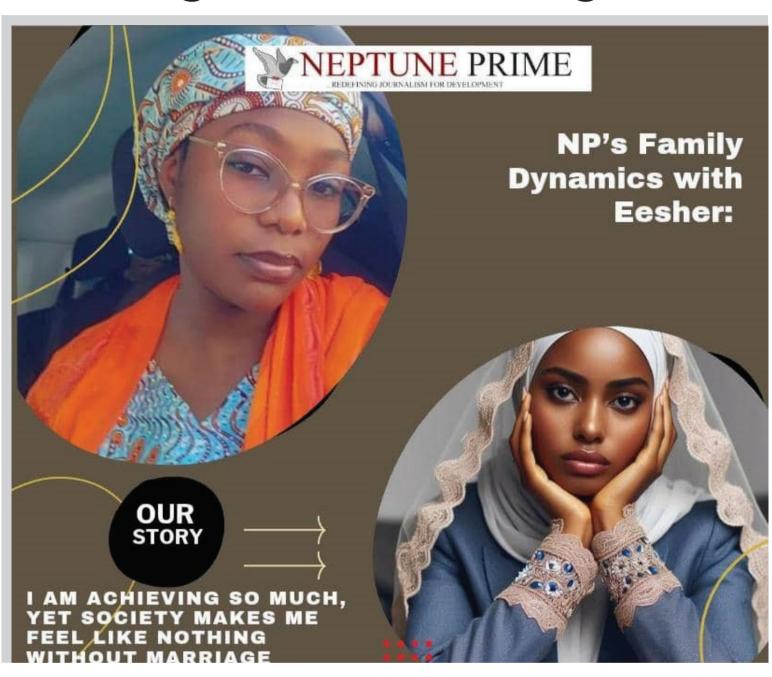
Come close. Let me first hold your heart gently and remind you: You are not broken. You are not behind. You are not a failure.

What you are is brilliant, accomplished, faithful, and deeply human. You have climbed mountains others only dream of.... an MSc at 27, admission for a PhD, a stable job, and a business, all in a society that often does not make it easy for women to thrive independently. These are not small things. These are extraordinary things. And yet, I see that the absence of marriage in your life is being treated like the absence of worth.

That, my dear, is the cruel lie of a deeply flawed society, one that reduces the value of a whole human being to a single status box: Married or Not Married.

But you must not let that lie live rentfree in your soul.

Your pain is real. The disappointment, the longing, the incompatibility caused by your genotype, it's a heavy burden to carry. And when people, sometimes even family mock den heavier. But let me say this clear- Marriage is not a trophy you failed to win. It





or pity you, they only make that bur- ly: Their ignorance is not your truth. is a divine arrangement that happens on divine

timing — and it is not delayed by your choices, nor denied by your worth. Allah sees you, hears you, and is never late in His plans.

You are allowed to feel sad. But please do not let it convince you that you are less. You are allowed to cry. But please don't let your tears wash away the beautiful woman that you are.

You are not alone in this journey. Many sisters walk this path with quiet pain. But you, for speaking up, are giving a voice to their silence. And that, too, is a form of courage.

So take your time, beloved. Keep loving, keep praying, keep becoming. Marriage will come — but you are already whole. Let no one tell you otherwise With all my love, Sis Eesher

SOCIALS/FASHION

QUICK STATISTICS ON FASHION

aware of underskirt or patroning such!

due to advanced methods of sewing

Nigerians women replaces panties with

of Nigerians patronise

78% patronise nature

of Nigerians can't live without jeans

of Nigerians still patronise fairly used cloths, bags and shoes

of Nigerians patronise can't dress without jeans



Nigeria: A Fusion of Modest Elegance and Timeless Style

Northern Nigerian bridal glam is known for its luxury, captivating style, and deep cultural richness.

A Northern bride on her wedding day is a graceful combination of traditional and contemporary looks that emphasises elegance and sophistication.

Here's a breakdown of what's trending in Northern Nigerian

bridal fashion in 2025.
The Bridal Wrapper Look (George & Lace)

• Brides often wear richly embroidered George wrappers

paired with elegant blouses.

• Colour choices: Gold, white, royal blue, emerald green, maroon, champagne, or blush

· Lace blouses are designed with structured shoulders, dramatic sleeves, and detailed beadwork.

Modest Royal Gowns

Gowns tailored for modesty — high necks, long sleeves, full-length skirts. They are adorned with rhinestones, crystals, pearls, sequins, and hand-beaded lace appliqués.

Some brides opt for ball gowns or A-line silhouettes with regal

Hijab & Veil Styling

Some brides often wear a coordinated hijab made of silk or soft tulle, styled with rhinestone accessories.

Long bridal veils are either plain, lace-trimmed, or embroidered with the couple's initials or wedding date.

Traditional Attire Segment (Kamu Ceremony)

For Kamu (traditional Hausa/ Fulani ceremony), the bride

• Luxurious wrappers (atampa, brocade, or velvet)

• Matching head ties (gele) or turban

· Heavy coral or gold beaded

· Henna (Lalle) on hands and feet — often with glitter or floral designs.

Henna Art (Lalle)

Brides are seen with elaborate black henna designs on the palms, fingers, arms, feet, and

Trending designs include the gold-glitter henna, white henna, or lalle with embedded stones.

Jewelry & Accessories Layered gold necklaces, Fulanistyle earrings, and beaded waist

Embellished clutches and velvet or brocade slippers to match the

Maang tikka-inspired forehead

chains are also popular. Makeup Look

Flawless soft-glam makeup with well-defined brows, neutral lips, and long lashes is very common. Brides opt for glowing skin, soft contour, and subtle shimmer eyeshadow sometimes paired with coloured contact lenses and perfectly styled brows.

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

TECHWORLD BY MUHAMMAD KUKURI MuhammadKukuri@neptuneprime.com.ng

GAMESCIENE

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

GADGETADDICT

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

Chinese authorities summon US tech giant, Nvidia, over "security issues"

Chinese authorities summoned Nvidia representatives to "serious security issues" over some of its artificial intelligence chips, as the US tech giant finds itself entangled in trade tensions between Beijing and Washington.

Nvidia is a world-leading producer of AI semiconductors, but the United States effectively restricts which chips it can export to China on national

security grounds.
A key issue has been Chinese access to the "H20", a less powerful version of Nvidia's AI processing units that the company developed specifically

for export to China. The California-based firm said this month it would resume H20 sales to China after Washington pledged to remove licensing curbs that had halted exports.

But the firm still faces obstacles — US lawmakers have proposed plans to require Nvidia and other manufacturers of advanced AI chips to include location tracking built-in capabilities.

Beijing's top internet regulator said it had summoned Nvidia representatives to discuss recently discovered "serious security issues" involving the

of China said it had asked Nvidia to "explain the security risks of vulnerabilities and backdoors in its H20 chips sold to China and submit relevant supporting materials".

The statement posted on social media noted that, according to US experts, location tracking and remote shutdown technologies for Nvidia chips "are already matured".

The announcement marked the latest complication for Nvidia in selling its advanced products in the key Chinese market, where it is in increasingly fierce competition with homegrown technology firms.

CEO Jensen Huang said during a closely watched visit to Beijing this month that his firm remained committed to serving local customers.

Huang said he had been assured during talks with top Chinese officials during the trip that the country was "open and stable". "They want to know that Nvidia continues to invest here, that we are still doing our best to serve the market here," he said.

Nvidia this month became the first company to hit \$4 trillion in market value — a new milestone in Wall Street's bet that AI will transform the global economy.



Nvidia

consultancy told AFP the move by China to summon Nvidia was "not surprising in the sense that targeting individual US companies has become a common tool in the context of US-China tensions"

"What is surprising, however, is the timing," he noted, after the two countries agreed to further talks to extend their trade truce.

"China's action may signal a shift toward a more assertive stance," Wubbeke said. Beijing is also aiming to reduce reliance on foreign tech by promoting Huawei's domestically developed 910C chip as an alternative to the H20, he added. "From that perspective, the US decision to allow renewed exports of the H20 to China could be seen as counterproductive, as it might tempt Chinese hyperscalers to revert to the H20, potentially undermining momentum behind the 910C and other domestic alternatives.'

New hurdles to Nvidia's operation in China come as the country's economy wavers, beset by a yearslong property sector crisis and heightened trade headwinds under US President Donald Trump.

web update

Conversations with ChatGPT could be subject to legal disclosure" - Open AI CEO

The Chief Executive Officer of OpenAI, Sam Altman, has warned that user conversations with ChatGPT could be subject to legal disclosure. raising concerns over the absence of privacy protections for interactions with artificial intelligence tools.

In an interview on the This Past Weekend podcast hosted by Theo Von, Altman said many users now treat generative AI as a trusted adviser. often sharing sensitive personal information. However, unlike communications with doctors, lawyers, or therapists, AI chats are not legally

"People use it, young people especially, as a therapist, a life coach," the OpenAI chief stated. "Right now, if you talk to a therapist or a lawyer or a doctor about those problems, there's legal

"If you go talk to ChatGPT about the most sensitive stuff and then there's a lawsuit or whatever, we could be required to produce that," he added.

Describing the situation as "very screwed up," Altman said conversations with AI should enjoy similar legal protections to those with licensed

If think we should have the same concept of privacy for your conversations with AI that you do with your therapist or whatever," he said. The warning comes amid growing concerns

from users and privacy advocates about how AI companies handle data.

Although platforms like ChatGPT are designed with safeguards, the lack of regulatory frameworks means that conversations may be vulnerable to legal requests.

ChatGPT currently has between 800 million and one billion weekly active users as of mid-2025, reflecting the platform's rapid growth.

Earlier this year, the number stood at around 400 million weekly users, doubling from approximately 300 million in late 2024.

The platform has also accumulated about 10 million paying subscribers and one million commercial plan users.

OpenAI aims to cross the one billion user milestone by the end of 2025. With such a vast user base and growing dependence on AI for personal, professional, and emotional support, the issue of privacy has taken on greater urgency. Von, the podcast host, admitted he had avoided using AI tools partly because of uncertainty over who might access his data.

"I think that makes sense to really want the privacy clarity before you use it a lot, the legal clarity," Altman said in response.



Lagos gov't empowers secondary school teachers with AI training

Lagos State Ministry of Education in collaboration with Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Alumni Association of Nigeria and US Consulate, has trained 50 public senior secondary school teachers in educational district six of the state on how to harness the opportunities of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning.

At the two-day training, the general secretary of the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Alumni Association of Nigeria. Mr Iyke Chukwu, said the workshop is to improve the participants' skills in using technology to improve learning conditions.

"What we are trying to do is to empower these teachers with skills related to the use of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, Innovative teaching and learning, so that they can go back to their school and improve the quality of teaching and learning in their respective schools. Educational landscape is changing, technology is virtually taking over every aspect of human endeavours, so why not bring tech into



education as well, if it is helping other sectors?

"For teachers to be at par with what is happening globally, they need this capacity building so that they can be exposed to the potential of what technology can help them achieve in their respective classrooms," he said Chukwu maintained that the workshop is a train-the-trainer initiative, and it will have a multiplier effect because participants are expected to cascade the knowledge gathered and share it with other colleagues.

The General Secretary, who is optimistic that the training will scale up the students' learning outcomes and further raise the standard of education in Lagos state, said that it is a one-off programme that will have a long-lasting impact. One of the trainers, Mr Olalekan Adeeko, said the training was designed to expose the teachers in Lagos to how they can leverage Artificial Intelligence tools in the classrooms. He said, "There are lots of things that they do in the classroom, like note-taking and marking, and they are expected to teach individual students the best way, it is a difficult task to do alone. With AI, educators can leverage these tools to enrich their lesson plans, create instructional materials, and differentiate between students based on their capabilities." Omotayo Olamilekan, a participant and Chemistry teacher at Matori Senior Grammar School, described the training as timely, innovative, and impactful.

According to him, "Using the Internet to teach, implement multimedia in our teaching and learning, because we need to prepare ourselves for the students of tomorrow.

"Teaching has gone beyond the way it used to be, and if we are not prepared, we will be left behind. The current generation of students knows more than the teachers, and we must be on our feet," he said.

WORLD NEWS

BY MERCY ADAJE

MercyAdaje@neptuneprime.com.ng



L-R: Nigeria's Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu and Ghana's Foreign Affairs Minister Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa

Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu visits Ghana over "Nigeria must go" protests

Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu and Ghana's Foreign Affairs Minister Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa

Bianca Odumegwu-Ojukwu, Nigeria's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, has appealed for calm as some Ghanaians demand the deportation of Nigerians from their country.

The minister spoke on Wednesday during a joint press briefing in Ghana. She said the viral videos had caused anxiety, necessitating her visit to the country for a firsthand assessment of the situation.

"Since I arrived, I haven't seen people burning tyres in the streets or carrying placards everywhere calling for Nigerians to be deported," she said. "This shows that the Ghanaian

"This shows that the Ghanaian government and the president have stepped up to the situation — I would say there's no cause for alarm, they are handling the situation effectively, and we will continue engaging stakeholders."

Odumegwu-Ojukwu also explained that they had met with some of the leaders and individuals involved in a bid to deescalate tensions.

Samuel Ablakwa, Ghana's Foreign Affairs Minister, said the ministry is addressing the matter and has met with some leaders of the Nigerian community. "The Ghanaian government will ensure that everyone in the country — citizens and non-citizens — is protected," he said.

He added that while the country will protect everyone, people also need to be "law-abiding and avoid criminal activities and actions that could divide us".

Over the weekend, a group of Ghanaians staged a protest demanding that Nigerians be sent back to their home country, alleging that their behaviour does not align with Ghanaian values.

The protesters, who were mostly traders from the local retail market, carried placards and other items while stating that their Nigerian counterparts were causing problems and were allegedly involved in criminal activities.





Palectine

Canada, UK, France to formally recognise Palestinian state in September

Prime Minister Mark Carney has said Canada plans to recognise a Palestinian state in September, becoming the third G7 nation to make such an announcement in recent days.

Carney said the move depended on democratic reforms, including the Palestinian Authority holding elections next year without Hamas.

Israel's foreign ministry rejected Canada's announcement, calling it "a reward for Hamas", while US President Donald Trump said it would make a possible trade deal between the US and Canada "very hard".

However, most countries - 147 of the UN's 193 member states - formally recognise a Palestinian state.

Carney said Canada would formally recognise the state of Palestine at the upcoming UN General Assembly.

He cited the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel by Hamas as reasons behind Canada's dramatic shift in foreign policy.

His remarks came a day after the UK announced it would recognise a Palestinian state in September - unless Israel agreed to a ceasefire and other conditions - and a week after France unveiled a similar plan.

"The level of human suffering in Gaza is intolerable and it is rapidly deteriorating," Carney told reporters on Wednesday.

He said a recognition of Palestinian statehood would hinge on commitments by the Palestinian Authority to fundamentally reform its governance and to demilitarise the territory. Canada had long been committed to a two-state solution as part of a negotiated peace process,

Carney said, but he added "this approach is no longer tenable".

"The prospect of a Palestinian state is being eroded before our eyes," he said.

Carney told the news conference he had spoken with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas earlier on Wednesday about the announcement.

The Palestinian Authority controls parts of the West Bank through the Fatah party, led by Abbas, while Hamas runs Gaza. Neither territory has held an election since 2006.

Carney's announcement was criticised by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It said in a post on X that Canada's plan "harms the efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza and a framework for the release of the hostages".

Canada's Conservatives also took issue with Carney's announcement.

"Recognising a Palestinian state in the aftermath of the October 7 terrorist atrocities sends the wrong message to the world," the opposition party said in a statement.

The prime minister has been under pressure to address Palestinian statehood since the UK and France, close allies of Canada, came out with their own statements on the issue in recent days.

The US, a close ally of Israel, has not followed suit. On Thursday, Trump posted on his Truth Social network: "Wow! Canada has just announced that it is backing statehood for Palestine. That will make it very hard for us to make a Trade Deal with them."

Canada is one of the largest US trading partners, and the White House is in talks with several countries before Friday, when a range of US tariffs kick in.



Big congrats on heading to Russ Mr. Kumar!

info@primentimmigration.com | www.primentimmigration.com | +919082

Vis

Russia extends e-visa from 60 to 120 days

Russia has announced that it will expand the extent of its electronic visa programme, beginning August 23, by doubling the validity period from 60 to 120 days and extending the maximum stay from 16 to 30 consecutive days.

The development, announced this week will make the country more accessible to travellers from 64 eligible nations while preserving the programme's single-entry restriction.

The e-visa, introduced nationwide in August 2023, has quickly become a popular means of entry into China.

Since its rollout, more than 1.2 million people have used it, with the largest numbers arriving from China, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Turkey, India, and Estonia. Russian officials noted that the changes

Russian officials noted that the changes were designed to give visitors greater flexibility to plan longer or more meaningful tourism, business, or cultural exchange

Officials stated that the application process will continue to be digital and simple.

Applicants can upload their documents via the official government portal and usually get approval within four calendar days.

The application fee for the process is approximately \$50, with children under six being exempt from this cost, aside from any bank charges.

Travellers will now have four months from the issuance date to enter Russia and can stay there for a maximum of 30 consecutive days.

Authorities have reiterated that entry will be restricted to 105 designated checkpoints, which include major airports, railway stations, seaports, and specific land borders. It further explained that crossing at other points will still require special authorisation from the Federal Security Service.

Although the extension of both validity and stay duration marks a significant shift, the e-visa remains single-entry, and travellers who leave Russia must apply for a new visa to return, although officials have indicated that this too may eventually change.

In June, Maxim Reshetnikov, Russia's minister of economic development, said the government was considering introducing a multiple-entry e-visa.

No timeline was, however, given, but the proposal is viewed as a breakthrough for business travellers and regional visitors who might need to move in and out of Russia frequently.

DID YOU KNOW?

BY VIVIAN OKAFOR

The Earth doesn't have a static shape, it changes constantly

The name Earth is at least lipsoid. 1,000 years old. All of the planets, except for Earth, were named after Greek and Roman gods and goddesses.

However, the name Earth is a Germanic word, which simply means "the ground." When the solar system settled into its current layout about 4.5 billion years ago, Earth formed when gravity pulled swirling gas and dust in to become the third planet from the Sun. Like its fellow terrestrial planets, Earth has a central core, a rocky mantle, and a solid crust.

Earth is closer to an ob-late spheroid, meaning it's slightly flattened at the poles and bulging at the equator. This shape is due to the centrifugal force created by Earth's rotation.

It's not a perfect sphere but rather an ellipsoid. This term describes a sphere that has been slightly compressed along its axis, giving it a flattened appearance at the poles and a wider middle.

As the Earth rotates, it exerts a centrifugal force, pushing outward. This force is strongest at the equator, causing the Earth to bulge there.

While the Earth appears round from space, its shape isn't perfectly smooth. Factors like mountains, ocean trenches, and even variations in gravity cause deviations from a perfect el-

The Earth's shape isn't static. It changes constantly due to tides, tectonic plate movement, and even events like earthquakes and meteor strikes.

The most accurate representation of Earth's shape is the geoid, which is a model that takes into account all these variations in gravity and surface fea-

A sphere is a perfectly round 3-dimensional object. Earth is like a big bag of molten lava spinning on its axis. Because of the "bulging" caused by the Earth spinning, the Earth is not completely round, and thus is not a sphere. Instead, we use the term "oblate spheroid," or "ellipsoid."

Notice that the difference between the diameter of the Earth at the equator and the poles is about 42 kilometres. This may not seem like a lot given that the overall diameter is over 12,000 kilometres, but it can impact our coordinate values by over 100 metres. While the Earth appears to be round when viewed from the vantage point of space, it is closer to an ellipsoid. However, even an ellipsoid does not adequately describe the Earth's unique and ever-changing shape. Our planet's diameter bulges at the equator due to the centrifugal force created by the Earth's constant rotation. Mountains ris-



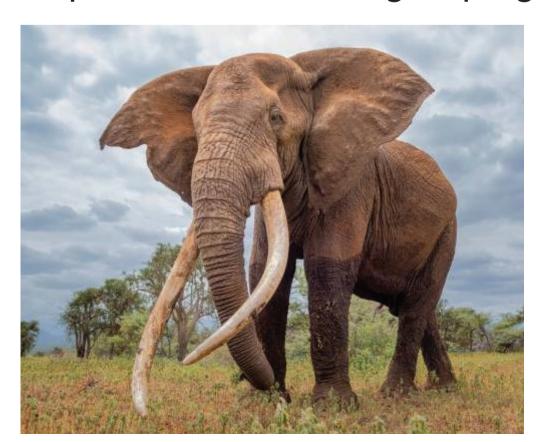
ing almost 30,000 feet and ocean trenches diving over 36,000 feet (compared to sea level) further distort the shape of the Earth. Sea level itself is irregularly shaped. Slight variations in Earth's gravity field cause permanent hills and valleys in the ocean's surface of over 300 feet. Additionally, the shape of the Earth is always changing. Sometimes this change is periodic, as is the case with daily tides that affect both the ocean and the crust; sometimes the change is slow and steady, as with the drift of tecton-

ic plates or the rebound of the crust after a heavy sheet of ice has melted and sometimes the shape of the planet changes in violent, episodic ways during events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or meteor strikes.

The National Geodet-

ic Survey measures and monitors our ever-changing planet. Geodesy is the science of measuring and monitoring the size and shape of the Earth, including its gravity field and determining the location of points on the Earth's sur-

Elephants have the longest pregnancy period among mammals



The mammal with the longest gestation period is the elephant, specifically the African elephant, with a pregnancy lasting around 22 ral lobe region (the area responsible for mem-months. This is significantly longer than most ory) is exceptionally developed, with a greatother mammals and is likely due to the complex development of their large bodies and brains.

Elephants are large and highly intelligent animals. Their gestation period allows for the full development of their large brains and bodies be-

Elephants typically carry only one calf at a time, and the lengthy gestation supports the development of a relatively large and mature offspring. Elephant calves are born relatively helpless and rely on their mothers and other herd members for years of care and protection that is why it holds the record for the longest gestational period among land mammals, with pregnancies lasting approximately 22 months.

Elephants are usually born weighing over 200 pounds and are nurtured in the womb by their mothers in diverse habitats across Africa and

Elephants are highly intelligent mammals, they're born this way, which takes time. They also have an impressive brain to show for it. Being the largest of all land animals, the elephant's brain is similar to that of a human but three times larger with three times as many neurons, 250 billion.

They say, 'an elephant never forgets', and there's some truth in that saying. Their tempoer number of folds, meaning it can store more information.

It allows for the retention of details that are vital for elephant survival, such as where to go to find food and water, and how to get there. The matriarch of a herd can lead family members to waterholes by calling up complex mental maps that cover hundreds of kilometres.

Elephants rank alongside dolphins and chimpanzees in terms of levels of intelligence. They're adept at problem-solving, from piling up blocks to reach food to using branches and rocks as tools.

Their trunks allow them to be dextrous beasts, using them to move and manipulate objects in much the same way that we would use our hands and arms.

They're one of the very few species that understand what pointing means. For example, many dogs understand it, but chimpanzees do not.

Elephants can also recognise themselves in a mirror, another rarity in the animal kingdom, as only the great apes, crows, and bottlenose dolphins display the same levels of self-aware-

LIVING LEGENDS

BY ZARA AHMED

Pete Edochie, Ace Actor, Broadcaster

Chief Peter Uwadiegwu Ogugua Edochie, popularly known as Pete Edochie, was born on March 7, 1947, in Nigeria.

He is one of Nigeria's most talented actors, Edochie was honoured with an Industry Merit Award by Africa Magic and a Lifetime Achievement Award by Africa Film Academy.

Once an administrator and broadcaster, Edochie came into prominence in the 1980s, when he played the lead role of 'Okonkwo' in a Nigerian Television Authority adaptation of Chinua Achebe's all-time best-selling novel, Things Fall Apart.

Edochie is Igbo by tribe and a Catholic. He studied at St. Patrick's and St. James Primary School, Zaria, before attending St. John's College for his secondary education. He also studied at the School of Journalism and Television in England

Edochie got into radio broadcasting in 1967 at the age of 20 as a junior

programme assistant after which he was elevated to the level of a director. He was director of programmes but doubled sometimes as Deputy Managing Director and occasionally acted as Managing Director.

He left Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) because the government decided to politicise the affairs of their FM station, thereby resulting in the entire management being asked to move out, including him.

He was to be the immediate successor to the MD but had to leave and join the movie industry. Before that, he had featured in Things Fall Apart and had won an International Award. He was interviewed by the BBC for his role in Things Fall Apart.

In 2005, the Actors Guild of Nigeria placed Edochie and several other actors, including Genevieve Nnaji, Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, Nkem Owoh, Ramsey Nouah, Stella Damasus Aboderin, and Richard Mofe Damijo, on a one-year ban from filming, after they were said to have been collecting huge fees from producers due to their perceived A-list celebrity status.

In 2009, Edochie was kidnapped and later released by his captors, unharmed. In September 2017, Edochie endorsed the Wikimedia Movement in Nigeria by appearing in a video to increase awareness and use of Wikipedia among the older generations.

Edochie was honoured with the African Film Legend award at the African Film Festival (TAFF) in 2020.

He is married to Josephine Edochie and blessed with six children.

Edochie's grown-up children are also making waves in the entertainment industry and other areas of specialisation. His sons include Leo Edochie, Uche Edochie, Linc Edochie, Gene Edochie, and Yul Edochie. His daughter is Eva Edochie. Linc Edochie is an actor while Yul Edochie is a well-known actor and producer.



Adesina

Akinwumi Adesina, First Nigerian AfDB President, Economist

Akinwumi Adesina, CON, CGH, is a Nigerian economist, who served as the President of the African Development Bank. He previously served as Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. Until he was appointed Minister in 2010, he was Vice President of Policy and Partnerships for the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

Adesina was elected as the President of the African Development Bank in 2015 and re-elected for a second term in 2020, becoming the first Nigerian to hold the post. Born to a Nigerian farmer in Ibadan, Oyo State, he attended Ejigbo Baptist High School (EBHS) and had a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics with First Class Honours from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Nigeria in 1981.

He was the first student to be awarded this distinction by the university. He pursued further studies at Purdue University, Indiana and briefly returned to Nigeria in 1984, to get married. He obtained his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics in 1988 from Purdue, where he won the outstanding Ph.D. thesis award for his research work.

From 1990 to 1995, Adesina served as a senior economist at the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA) in Bouaké, Ivory Coast. He has worked at the Rockefeller Foundation since winning a fellowship from the foundation as a senior scientist in 1988. From 1999 to 2003, he was the representative of the Foundation for the Southern African area. From 2003 to 2008, he was an associate director for food security.

Adesina was Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture from 2010 to 2015. He was named Forbes African Man of the Year for his reform of the Nigerian agriculture sector when he introduced more transparency into the fertiliser supply chain.

In 2010, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon appointed him as one of 17 global leaders to spearhead the Millennium Development Goals.

Adesina received the 2010 Borlaug CAST

Adesina received the 2010 Borlaug CAST Communication Award from the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (CAST), the year that the award was renamed after agricultural biologist and 1970 Nobel Peace Prize winner Norman Borlaug.

On 28 May 2015, Adesina was elected the presumptive President of the African Development Bank. He began his tenure on 1 September 2015.

In September 2016, Adesina was appointed by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to serve as a member of the Lead Group of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement. In 2017, he was awarded the 2017 World Food Prize.

On 27 August 2020, Adesina was re-elected as President of the African Development Bank for a second term of five years.

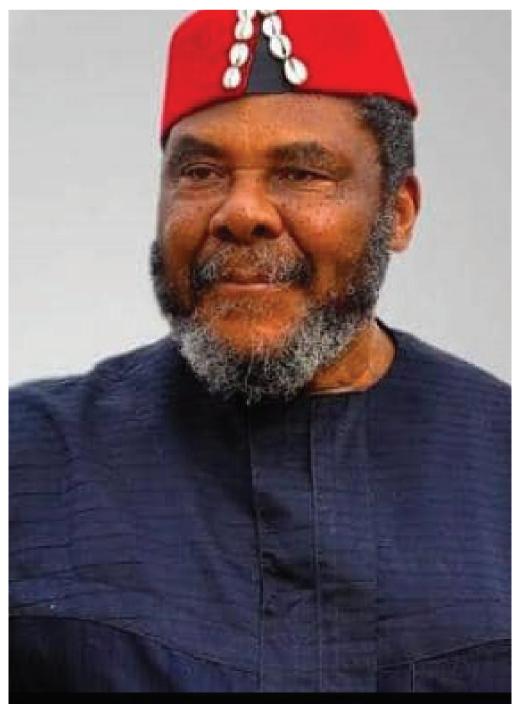
In March 2024, the 2023 Obafemi Awolowo Leadership Award was officially presented to Akinwumi Adesina, during a ceremony held on 6 March at the Continental Hotel in Lagos.

In May 2025, former Mauritanian finance minister Sidi Ould Tah was elected to replace Adesina after the end of his second term in September 2025.

While at Purdue University, Adesina and his wife, along with another couple, started a Christian group called the African Student Fellowship.

Adesina is known for his innovative and transformative approach to development, advocating for solutions that address Africa's unique challenges and unlock its potential.

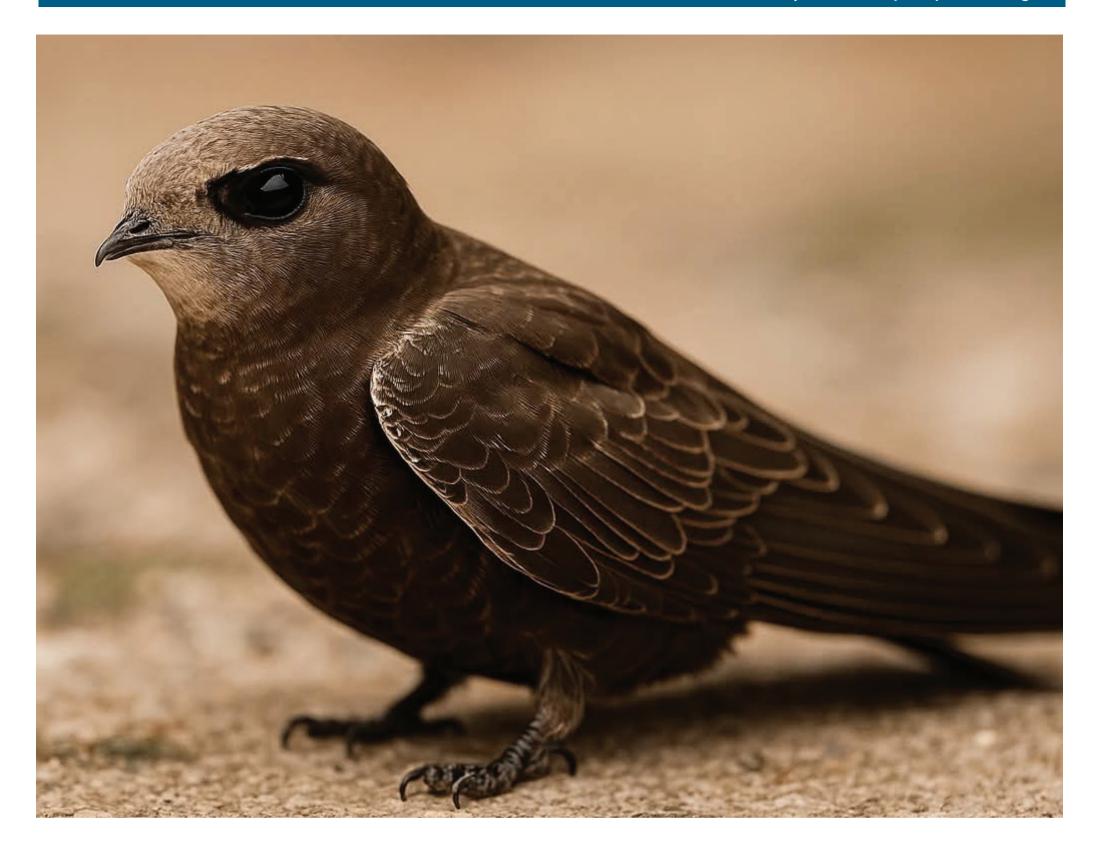
Dr Adesina and his wife, Grace, have two sons, Rotimi and Segun.



Edochie

ANIMAL WORLD

BY MARYAM UMAR MaryamUmar@neptuneprime.com.ng



Did you know there's a bird that spends almost its entire life in the sky?

master of the air. This occasionally incredible bird doesn't their wings. to, but because it can't. Swifts have tiny, weak legs that aren't built for walking or standing on flat surfaces. Instead, they cling like hooks to vertical ledges cliffs, tree bark, or building walls.

Swifts don't hunt insects crawling on the ground. They catch them midflight with their mouths wide open, slicing through the air like silent arrows.

And here's the most amazing part: swifts can sleep while flying. Yes, really. They soar high into the atmosphere and for hours, drifting in animals

flapping

because it doesn't want of freedom living, eating, and even dreaming in flight.

Next time you look up at the sky, remember: some creatures are born never to touch the ground.

Meet the mighty Bactrian

Nature's ultimate off-road vehicle, perfectly built for the brutal climates of Central Asia's deserts and mountains!

Unlike its one-humped cousin, the Bactrian camel sports two humps, which store fat (not water!) that it converts into energy during long,

food-scarce journeys.

can

Meet the swift a true and out of sleep while scorching summers to freezing winters, thanks to its thick woolly coat, land on the ground not They are the embodiment tough feet, and ability to arink up to 30 gailons of water in one sitting when it finds it.

It grazes on dry shrubs, salty plants, and thorny vegetation most animals would avoid. Bactrian camels can even close their nostrils and have long eyelashes to protect against blowing sand.
Domesticated for over

4,000 years, they've been essential to Silk Road traders, carrying goods inhospitable across terrain.

Wild Bactrian camels still roam the Gobi Desert but are critically endangered, making every sighting let the wind carry them It thrives where few a precious moment in from nature



BOOKS

BY SERGE NILUS

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion (3)

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK

all the nations will be swallowed up in the pursuit of gain and in the race for it will not take note of their common foe. But again, in order that freedom may once for all disintegrate and ruin the communities of the GOYIM, we must put industry on a speculative basis: the result of this will be that what is withdrawn from the land by industry will slip through the hands and pass into speculation, that is, to our classes.

5. The intensified struggle for superiority and shocks delivered to economic life will create, nay, have already created, disenchanted, cold and heartiess communities. Such communities will foster a strong aversion towards the higher political and towards religion. Their only guide is gain, that is Gold, which they will erect into a veritable cult, for the sake of those material delights which it can give. Then will the hour strike when, not for the sake of attaining the good, not even to win wealth, but solely out of hatred towards the privileged, the lower classes of the GOYIM will follow our lead against our rivals for power, the intellectuals of the GOYIM.

with the credit of the States on the day after the political smash . . .

2. You gentlemen here present who are economists, just strike an estimate of the significance of this combination! . . .

3. In every possible way we must develop the significance of our Super-Government by representing it as the Protector and Benefactor of all those who voluntarily submit to us.

4. The aristocracy of the GOYIM as a political force, is dead — We need not take it into account; but as landed proprietors they can still be harmful to us from the fact that they are selfsufficing in the resources upon which they live. It is essential therefore for us at whatever cost to deprive them of their land. This object will be best attained by increasing the burdens upon landed property — in loading lands with debts. These measures will check land-holding and keep it in a state of humble and unconditional submission. 5. The aristocrats of the GOYIM, being hereditarily incapable of contenting themselves with little, will rapidly burn up and fizzle

WE SHALL ENSLAVE **GENTILES**

6. At the same time we must intensively patronize trade and industry, but, first and foremost, speculation, the part played by which is to provide a counterpoise to industry: the absence speculative industry

will multiply capital in private hands and will serve to restore agriculture by freeing the land from indebtedness to the land banks. What we want is that industry should drain off from the land both labor and capital and by means of speculation transfer into our hands all the money of the world, and thereby throw all the GOYIM into the ranks of the proletariat. Then the GOYIM will bow down before us, if for no other reason but to get the right to exist. 7. To complete the ruin of

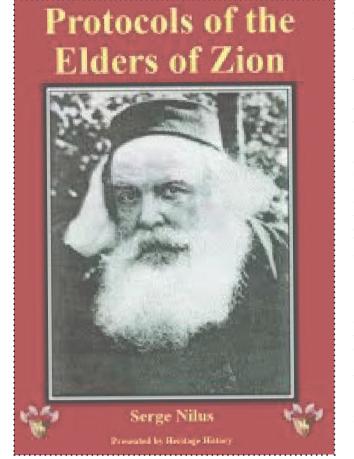
the industry of the GOYIM we shall bring to the assistance of speculation the luxury which we have developed among the GOYIM, that greedy demand for luxury which is swallowing up everything. WE SHALL RAISE THE RATE OF WAGES WHICH, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BRING ANY ADVANTAGE TO THE WORKERS, FOR, AT THE SAME TIME, WE SHALL PRODUCE A RISE IN PRICES OF THE FIRST NECESSARIES OF LIFE, ALLEGING THAT IT ARISES FROM DECLINE AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE-BREEDING: WE SHALL FURTHER UNDERMINE ARTFULLY SOURCES PRODUCTION, DEEPLY **ACCUSTOMING** THE WORKERS ANARCHY AND TO DRUNKENNESS AND SIDE BY SIDE THEREWITH TAKING ALL MEASURE TO EXTIRPATE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH ALL THE EDUCATED **FORCES** OF "GOYIM." 8. IN ORDER THAT

THE TRUE MEANING **THINGS** STRIKE THE "GOYIM" **BEFORE** THE PROPER TIME WE SHALL MASK IT UNDER AN ALLEGED ARDENT DESIRE TO SERVE THE WORKING CLASSES AND POLITICAL ECONOMY ABOUT WHICH OUR **ECONOMIC THEORIES CARRYING** ON AN ENERGETIC

PROPAGANDA. Protocol No. 7: World-Wide Wars

1. The intensification of armaments, the increase of police forces — are all essential for the completion of the aforementioned plans. What we have to get at is that there should be in all the States of the world, besides ourselves, only the masses of the proletariat, a few millionaires devoted to our interests, police and

2. Throughout all Europe, and by means of relations with Europe, in other continents also, we must



create ferments, discords and hostility. Therein we gain a double advantage. In the first place we keep in check all countries, for they will know that we have the power whenever we like to create disorders or to restore order. All countries accustomed to see in us an indispensable force of coercion. In the second place, by our intrigues we shall tangle up all the threads which we have stretched into the cabinets of all States by means of the political, by economic treaties, or loan obligations. In order to succeed in this we must use great cunning and penetration during negotiations and agreements, but, as regards what is called the "official language," we shall keep to the opposite tactics and assume the mask of honesty and complacency. In this way the peoples and governments of the GOYIM, whom we have taught to look only at the outside whatever present to their notice, will still continue to accept us as the benefactors and saviours of the human race. **UNIVERSAL WAR**

3. We must be in a position to respond to every act of opposition by war with the neighbors of that country which dares to oppose us: but if these neighbors should also venture to stand collectively together against us, then we must offer resistance by universal war.

4. The principal factor of success in the political is the secrecy of its undertakings: the word should not agree with the deeds of the diplomat.

5. We must compel the governments of GOYIM to take action in the direction favored by our widely conceived plan, already approaching the desired consummation, by what we shall represent as public opinion, secretly promoted by us through the means of that so-called "Great Power" – PRESS, WHICH, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS **MAY** THAT DISREGARDED, **ALREADY ENTIRELY** IN OUR HANDS.

6. In a word, to sum up our system of keeping the governments of the goyim in Europe in check, we shall show our strength to one of them by terrorist attempts and to all, if we allow the possibility of a general rising against us, we shall respond with the guns of America or China or Japan.

Protocol No. **Provisional Government** 1. We must arm ourselves with all the weapons which our opponents might employ against us. We must search out in the very finest shades of expression and the knotty points of the lexicon of law iustification for those cases where we shall have to pronounce judgments that might appear abnormally audacious and unjust, for it is important that these resolutions should be set forth in expressions that shall seem to be the most exalted moral principles cast into legal form. Our directorate must surround itself with all these forces civilization among which it will have to work. It will surround itself with publicists, practical jurists, administrators, diplomats and, finally, with persons prepared by a special super-educational training IN OUR SPECIAL

SCHOOLS

(Rhodes

Scholars? London School of Economics?) These persons will have consonance of all the secrets of the social structure, they will know all the languages that can be made up by political alphabets and words; they will be made acquainted with the whole underside of human nature, with all its sensitive chords on which they will have to play. These chords are the cast of mind of the GOYIM, their tendencies, short-comings, vices and qualities, the particularities of classes and conditions. Needless to say that the talented assistants of authority, of whom I speak, will be taken not from among the GOYIM, who are accustomed to perform their administrative work without giving themselves the trouble to think what its aim is, and never consider what it is needed for. The administrators of GOYIM sign papers without reading them, and they serve either for mercenary reasons or from ambition.

2. We shall surround our government with a whole world of economists. That is the reason why economic sciences form the principal subject of the teaching given to the Jews. Around us again will be a whole constellation of bankers, industrialists, capitalists and — THE MAIN THING MILLIONAIRES, **BECAUSE**

S U B S T A N C E EVERYTHING WILL BE SETTLED BY THE QUESTION OF FIGURES. 3. For a time, until there will no longer be any risk in entrusting responsible posts in our State to our brother-Jews, we shall put them in the hands of persons whose past and reputation are such that between them and the people lies an abyss, persons who, in case of disobedience to our instructions, must face criminal charges or disappear — this in order to make them defend our interests to their last gasp.

Protocol No. 9: Re-

Protocol No. 9: Education

1. In applying our principles let attention be paid to the character of the people in whose country you live and act; a general, identical application of them, until such time as the people shall have been re-educated to our pattern, cannot have success. But by approaching their application cautiously you will see that not a decade will pass before the most stubborn character will change and we shall add a new people to the ranks of those already subdued by us. 2. The words of the liberal. which are in effect the words of our masonic watchword, namely, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, " will, when we come into our kingdom, be changed by us into words no longer of a watchword, but only an expression of idealism, namely, into "The right of liberty, the duty of equality, the ideal of brotherhood." That is how we shall put it, — and so we shall catch the bull by the horns . . . DE FACTO we have already wiped out every kind of rule except our own, although DE JURE there still remain a good many of them. Nowadays, if any States raise a protest against us it is only PRO FORMA at our discretion and by our direction, for THEIR ANTI-SEMITISM INDISPENSABLE TO US FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR LESSER BRETHREN. I will not enter into further explanations, for this matter has formed the subject of repeated discussions amongst us.

JEWISH SUPER-STATE 3. For us there are not checks to limit the range of our activity. Our Super-Government subsists in extra-legal conditions which are described in the accepted terminology by the energetic and forcible word — Dictatorship. I am in a position to tell you with a clear conscience that at the proper time we, the law-givers, shall execute judgment and sentence, we shall slay and we shall spare, we, as head of all our troops, are mounted on the steed of the leader. We rule by force of will, because in our hands are the fragments of a once powerful party, now vanquished by us. AND THE WEAPONS IN OUR HANDS ARE LIMITLESS AMBITIONS, BURNING GREEDINESS, MERCILESS VENGEANCE, HATREDS AND MALICE.

4. IT IS FROM US THAT THE ALL-ENGULFING TERROR PROCEEDS. WE HAVE IN OUR **PERSONS SERVICE** OPINIONS, ALL DOCTRINES, RESTORATING MONARCHISTS, DEMAGOGUES, S O C I A L I S T S COMMUNISTS, ANI UTOPIAN DREAMERS OF EVERY KIND. We harnessed have all to the task: EACH ONE OF THEM ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT IS BORING AWAY AT THE LAST REMNANTS OF **AUTHORITY** IS **STRIVING OVERTHROW** ALL ESTABLISHED FORM OF ORDER. By these acts all States are in torture; they exhort to tranquility, are ready to sacrifice everything for peace: BUT WE WILL NOT GIVE THEM PEACE UNTIL THEY OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR INTERNATIONAL SUPER-GOVERNMENT, AND WITH SUBMISSIVENESS.

TO BE CONTINUED

NEPTUNE PRIME WEEKEND 2-3:08:2025

SPORTS: BEHIND THE SCENES

BY MARYAM UMAR MaryamUmar@neptuneprime.com.ng



Ali, Wepner

"I lost because I fought a better fighter," Wepner's experience with Ali

"I thought maybe he'd look past me. He just finished knocking out Foreman, he was in camp for seven or eight weeks. I thought maybe he'd take the fight lightly. I was

always in great shape, and I was never knocked out or down. The only time in my whole career I was off my feet was with Ali in the 15th round, and I got up from that. I just figured I could wear him down, you know? Maybe take him late into the fight and knock him out late. But he was so great that even though I pressured him most of the fight, it didn't work. He

was just too good for me, that's all. Everybody says, 'Why do you think you lost?' Well, I lost because I fought a better fighter."

- Chuck Wepner

Muhammad Ali, Liston and the right-hand punch

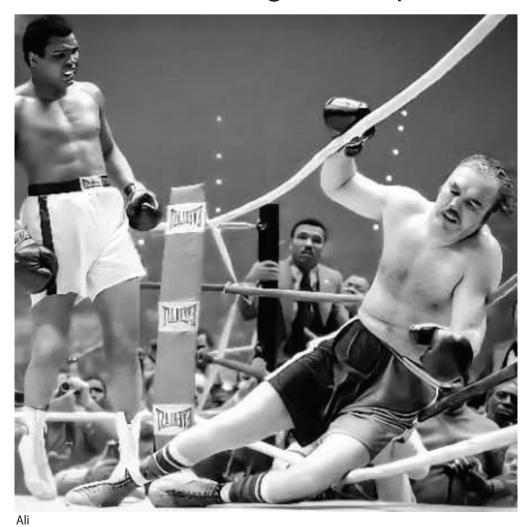
"Well, let me say right away that the right-hand punch which put Liston down was a good one. There was no fluke about it.

Liston was coming in from the ropes when Ali landed the blow, a chopping punch, and it caught Sonny right bang on the side of the face.

When Liston went down, Ali stood over him and refused to go to a neutral corner. He was dancing around like a madman, and I was trying to push him away and, at the same time, looking for the timekeeper, who was a small man and hard to see. Finally, I spotted the timekeeper and he shouted up at me: 'The fight's over. I've counted to 12.'

By then, Liston had gotten up, but when I looked into his eyes, they were glassy, and I knew he was in no condition to continue, so I raised Ali's hand as the winner."

- Jersey Joe Walcott



Muhammad Ali's iconic encounter with Ken Norton

"To begin with, I always have my fighters go out and jab. Especially if they're the clever boxer type. See how his opponent handles that jab. See what he does. See where he goes.

The jab was a big reason why Muhammad Ali never figured out why he always had so much trouble with Ken Norton in their three fights. I thought Ken won all three. But he only got the decision in their first fight, the one in San Diego in 1973, when he broke Ali's jaw. Most people think that was the first time they were in a

Most people think that was the first time they were in a ring together, but a few years earlier they had sparred in Los Angeles when Ali was in exile.

Whatever city Ali was in, he always had his boxing gear in the luggage compartment of his car. Whenever he stepped out of that car, people would gather. So the day he showed up at the Hoover Street gym in Los Angeles, the gym filled up. Wall-to-wall people.

Three other heavyweights were working out, Scrap-iron Johnson, Howard Smith, and somebody whose name I've forgotten. Ali boxed with each of those fellows, then somebody told him I had a young heavyweight, Ken Norton.

Ali didn't even know Norton's name. Ali looked at me and said, 'How about working a round with your guy?' I said, 'Okay.' I took Norton aside and told him, 'Don't try to be a wiseguy. Just be smart. Just go out there and work along with him and try to learn something.'

work along with him and try to learn something.' The first round went like that, but Norton never was a smooth-looking fighter. He didn't have a classic style. Ali had looked him over pretty good. I guess he decided the kid can't fight much. So with this enthusiastic crowd there, Ali decided to give them a show.

Near the end of the round, Ali stepped back and announced to Norton and the crowd, 'Okay, boy, I'm through playing with you. I'm going to put something on you.' Ali really starts punching, but Norton goes right with him. What a round that was, a wild round.

The thing was, Ali didn't think Norton could counter because Norton had been working along with him earlier. But when Ali started punching harder, Norton countered. Norton embarrassed him and Ali didn't expect that. Ali didn't like that at all. The next day Ali walked into the gym screaming, 'I want that Norton, where's that Norton?' But I had told Norton to stay in his street clothes.

Ali looked over and saw Norton standing in his street clothes, then he looked at me and said, 'Ain't he going to work today?' I said, 'No.' He said, 'Why not?' I said, 'Yesterday you came in here looking for a workout. Today you came in here looking for a fight. When this kid fights you he's going to get paid. And paid well."

- Eddie Futch



Ali in the ring



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The Arbiter

BY HASSAN GIMBA





Buhari: May our subsequent leaders die at home (2)

The late General Buhari was a man who, on two occasions, was welcomed into office by Nigerians who dared to hope for a better country. The first was in December 1983, and the second was 32 years later, in 2015. I do not want to include 2019, because it was a defining moment when those Nigerians who were believed to be honest proved themselves wrong. Unlike President Goodluck Jonathan, who had four years earlier told the nation that his ambition was not worth the blood of a single Nigerian and conceded defeat, these self-styled men of integrity held on to power legitimately lost and cared not if Nigerians' blood was shed in the process. They just didn't give a damn.

Ĭ was ecstatic at Buhari's ascendancy to power on the two occasions mentioned. In 1983, freshly introduced toand baptised by—leftist ideas churned out by the then Ahmadu Bello University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' (FASS) fiery idealists— Wilmot, Bangura, Bala Usman and a host of others—with my mind satiated by Africanist writers like Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Walter Rodney, Chinua Achebe, among others, to my utopic mind, Buhari's 1983 foray into governance was a revolution meant to cork the "monumental corruption' being perpetrated - or so I thought.

We now view that period with nostalgia, as there was some decency in the thievery of those thieves compared to the wanton thievery we see today. But then, we celebrated his coming because we thought we would know the kind of sanity restored to Ghana by Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings. We were also enamoured the nationalistic brought fervour

bear on Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) by the dashing 33-yearold Thomas Sankara after overthrowing the Western lackey, Major Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo, in a coup d'état organised by Blaise Compaoré.

Naively, we all agreed that some fifth columnists in Buhari's military government colluded to sabotage him because he was good and they were bad. And so, Nigeria continued limping—or so we thought—because he was not allowed to complete the surgical operation the country needed to run swiftly on both feet.

The late General Sani Abacha can arguably be said to have brought Buhari out of the shell he sulkily retired into after his release from a three-year house arrest, unintentionally launched him on his political sojourn through the instrument of the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). The PTF under him, despite accusations in some quarters of impropriety, financial undertook many laudable projects across various sectors. This prompted many of us to say, "He did those things not as a president; what if he were president?" We were motivated to support his political aspirations to the hilt.

However, due to his to combat efforts corruption during his brief tenure as military Head of State, many people—including civil servants and shady businessmen—did not want his return. Forget the issue of the 53 suitcases saga during the currency change at that time; it did not tarnish his image. When he contested in 2003, I recall a federal permanent secretary telling me that people like him would not allow Buhari to become president. He told me, "Nigeria can



Dr Gimba

only be righted by Buhari, but people like me will never allow him to be president."

That was the prevailing thought everywhere, and that was what made the masses root for him. They believed he would strip the looters to the skin, return the pillaged goods to the treasury, establish equity and justice in the land, use funds judiciously to improve their lot, and make Nigeria great again. I think I shared in that belief. On the day of his swearing-in in 2015, I had the feeling kids felt on Eid days: strutting in new attire and looking at the big ram about to be slaughtered by their father. We used to have a WhatsApp group, Instant News Sharing (INS), founded

by Ibrahim Sheme, a veteran journalist, and I mentioned this feeling there. Some opposed to Buhari's emergence were not happy that we were euphoric. Their "leader", Emma Bello another veteran, if ever there was one—castigated me, even accusing me of blasphemy. Luckily, he was not in a position to issue a fatwa; otherwise, I may not be here writing this testimony!

But why wouldn't I be excited? I was then a special adviser to a Clarke assured of a return if Jonathan won, meaning I would also return. Yet, I worked for the emergence of Buhari, believing Nigeria had descended so low that Buhari's puritanism

what was remaining of a country hurtling towards self-destruction. I sacrificed my comfort for Nigeria—or so I thought. I was not the only one with butterflies in the belly. Nigerians can still recall how many hopeful countrymen started a marathon trekking fad of hundreds of kilometres from one far corner of the country to another to show their optimism in the great Nigeria that Buhari's presidency was going to birth.

I, like millions around the country, saw in him a man of conscience who would govern with empathy, as a father to a beleaguered nation and as a leader who would lay the foundation for our political and economic development. In this, I thought he would gather the best hands irrespective of their political affiliations, religious leanings, or ethnic toga—especially when he declared: belong to everybody and I belong to no one." And Nigerians would have accepted that from him, having voted for him across all the divides.

He could have changed the way Nigeria conducted politics, especially in terms of party funding. The way people willingly donated to his campaign, he could have encouraged Nigerians to own their political parties by donating for their sustenance, rather than continuing the negative method whereby governments at various levels finance them. And in 2015, it would have stood.

He could have stopped being fed with billions of naira since he was collecting salaries and other emoluments. The feeding budget looks as though the president consumes an elephant per meal. And all governors could have followed suit. In 2015, that is. From that year, he could have

was needed to salvage put a stop to the practice of profligacy in which governments at the federal and state levels spend billions of naira yearly buying vehicles from Germany and Japan, thereby keeping their businesses afloat and their economies strong, while destroying our local manufacturing capabilities weakening and economy.

In 2015, he could have declared that no public servant who sends their children abroad for studies or to private schools qualifies to oversee government ministries, departments, or agencies responsible for public education. He could have made Nigeria healthier by building world-class hospitals.

When some people claim that his hands were tied because he had "no helpers", they refuse to recognise that he was responsible for appointing his ministers and that the buck stops at his desk. Six months after the inauguration, when the list of his ministerial nominees was released, we were shocked to the marrow at the calibre of his nominees. And one lost hope further when he retained Godwin Emefiele at the CBN, despite accusing the CBN governor during campaigns of honouring instructions written on "bread (paper) labels' It wasn't true that Buhari was not a politician. He was perhaps a man who

played politicians at their own game and ran rings around them. General TY Danjuma once said Buhari was a soldier's soldier. I dare say he was a politician's politician. He was possibly the best politician of the Fourth Republic for the following reasons.

Hassan Gimba, anipr, is the publisher and CEO of Neptune Prime.

To be continued



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