England footballer Bukayo Saka wins the 2026 Sócrates Award for charity work – presented at the Ballon d'Or ceremony in London

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News

Arsenal and England forward Bukayo Saka received the 2026 Sócrates Award at the 70th Ballon d'Or ceremony held at the London Palladium on 26 Oct 2026. The award, for footballers' social and humanitarian work, was presented by Nigerian singer Burna Boy. With the German charity BigShoe, Saka funded surgeries for 120 children in Kano, Nigeria, in 2022; through it he also supports eye treatment for children in Africa.

Key facts

Ceremony	70th Ballon d'Or, London Palladium, 26 Oct 2026
Presented by	Burna Boy – Grammy-winning Nigerian singer
Reason	BigShoe charity – surgeries for 120 children in Kano, Nigeria (2022); eye care for children
Saka	England, Arsenal; born in Ealing, London; Nigerian parents
Award	Started 2022; France Football with 'Peace and Sport'

Earlier winners	2022 Sadio Mané (Senegal); 2023 Vinícius Júnior (Brazil); 2024 Jenni Hermoso (Spain); 2025 Xana Foundation (Luis Enrique)

Background

- Sócrates: celebrated Brazilian footballer and medical doctor ('Doctor Sócrates'); captained Brazil at the 1982 World Cup. In the 1980s he co-founded the 'Corinthians Democracy' movement against Brazil's military rule. The award honours his voice for social justice.
- Ballon d'Or: started in 1956 by the French magazine France Football; the top individual award for the year's best footballer. The 2025 ceremony was at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris; the 70th (2026) ceremony was at the London Palladium. The Kopa Trophy (best young player) and Yashin Trophy (best goalkeeper) are also presented there.
- Geography: Kano is a major city of northern Nigeria; Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, capital Abuja. First winner Sadio Mané built a hospital and a school in his home village of Bambali (Senegal).

Tamil Nadu link: this news has no direct Tamil Nadu link. A related Tamil Nadu football fact: Chennai-based 'Chennaiyin FC' has won the Indian Super League (ISL) title twice – 2015 and 2017–18; its home ground is the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Chennai.

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