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NATIONAL Ambassador

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"Uplift the people, project the nation"

March 18, 2024

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The Deputy Governor's wife Mrs. Adaeze Emetu (centre), who represented the Governor's wife Mrs. Pricilla Otti and others, during free glaucoma screening and treatment event, recently

ABSG Commemorates World Glaucoma Week With Free Eye Screening, Treatment

By Chibunna Ikeokwu

The Abia state government has joined the rest of the world to commemorate the 2024 glaucoma week with the theme, 'Uniting for a Glaucoma-free world'. To celebrate the Glaucoma week, the Abia state government in collaboration with the state's ministry of health, offered free glaucoma screening exercise and treatment across its health facilities statewide as a proactive measure. The wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, who led stakeholders in a statewide walk to create awareness on the dangers of glaucoma describing the disease as a thief of vision and the leading cause of blindness. Mrs. Otti who was represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Adaeze Emetu, explained that statistics has

shown that a staggering 80 million individuals worldwide suffer from glaucoma, with an alarming 50% unaware of their condition. She noted that the disease which is insidious and often asymptomatic in its early stages, can inflict irreparable damage and advised regular eye check and early detection as the key to prevent loss of sight. According to her, "this year's theme underscores our shared responsibility in mobilizing communities worldwide to join forces in the battle against glaucoma-induced blindness". However, Mrs. Otti, called on Abians to engage actively and partake in the initiatives orchestrated within Abia state by Gov. Otti to combat this formidable adversary by constantly having their eyes checked and endeavour to

raise awareness to deepen the understanding of glaucoma. Earlier, the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Ngozi Okoronkwo represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Ify Uma advised all to ensure regular eye check by specialists to prevent glaucoma from further damage to their eyes. She called on the government to extend its eyecare centres to the rural areas. In her address, the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Special Duties, Dr. Betty Emeka Obasi, said that they engaged in the 'walk for sight' to create awareness on the debilitating disease called glaucoma. Dr. Betty noted that

glaucoma is irreversible but early detection and treatment is key to preventing sight loss. Meanwhile in a lecture series, a consultant ophthalmologist, Dr. Anya O. Anya, disclosed that glaucoma comes without symptoms and advised anybody above the age of 40, to have their eyes checked regularly. He said that, it is not enough to know that you have glaucoma but taking your medications judiciously will prevent further damage to the eyes. Dr. Anya, however commended Gov. Otti for revamping the health sector adding that he looked forward to seeing such achievement in the rural areas.

Otti Moves To Enhance Sound Monitoring Of Projects

-By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has said that it has taken steps to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, to enhance oversight of all ongoing projects across the state. Commissioner for Information and Culture, Prince Okey Kanu, stated this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the previous Executives Council Meeting, chaired by Governor Alex Otti. The commissioner emphasized that the monitoring and evaluation unit will improve the smooth implementation of government projects and guarantee that the government receives value for money across its initiatives, projects, and processes. Prince Kanu said that as a responsible and responsive government, the present administration would continue to put up measures to ensure that all money at its disposal are judiciously utilized for the benefit of Abians and other residents. "Of course, you know that the Monitoring and Evaluation unit is domiciled in the office of the Governor and has been strengthened to ensure that there's value for money over government initiatives, projects, processes etc. "As a responsible and responsive government, that is the way to go to ensure that all government initiatives and projects are executed in a manner that will ensure that resources of the state are optimally deployed to achieve the best outcomes that will ensure dividends of democracy for all Abians and residents in line with government's promises and policies. "Over the weekend, most of you must have read where His Excellency was out there inspecting some projects. It speaks to what the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit does and in carrying out their own functions, to ensure that everybody executing any project on behalf of the state government, does so in line with stated goals", he said. Prince Kanu also noted that the present government through the Ministry of Works is currently handling 27 road projects across the state, with some already commissioned, while others are at different levels of completion.

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News

Abia Govt Sets Up Committee For Transparent Distribution Of Federal Government Food Aid

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti has set up a committee to oversee the transparent distribution of Federal Government food items to address the issue of scarcity occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidy in the state. The Committee which is to be headed by the Mayor of Obingwa LGA, Dr. Eric Egwuibe has its membership to include; the Special Adviser to the Governor on Policies and Interventions, Rev Fr. Christian Anokwuru, Representatives of the Christian Association Nigeria, (CAN), Muslim sect, Traditional rulers, the Nigerian Police and the DSS. Governor Otti who set up the Committee, Wednesday, at the Banquet Hall, Government House Umuahia, during a Stakeholders Meeting, noted that the composition of the Committee aligns with the directives of the Federal Government through the National Emergency Management Agency, (NEMA). The Governor represented by the Chief of Staff, Pastor Caleb Ajagba noted that state recently received a letter from the Federal

Government on the allocation of food items to the state. He outlined the breakdown of the grains allocated the state to include, "663 Metric Tons of Maize representing 13,260 bags of 50Kg and 79.9 Metric Tons of Garri, representing 3,196 bags of 25 kg to be shared equally among the LGAs. The Chief of staff pointed out that although the commodities have not yet arrived, the Abia State Ministry of Agriculture has provided a warehouse for storage upon arrival. Pastor Ajagba said the state will conduct a comprehensive inventory of the received items to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the distribution process to provide accurate account to the Federal Government through NEMA. He added that 20% of the grains will be allocated to faith-based organizations, including the Muslim sect represented by JMI and the Christian sect represented by CAN while 3% of the food items will be distributed to boarding schools across the LGAs as directed by the Governor.

Pastor Ajagba reaffirmed government's commitment to transparency in managing all aid received from the Federal Government, international and local agencies, to ensure fair and equitable distribution to the people. While noting that the present administration encourages transparency, the Chief of Staff to the Governor underscored the government's dedication to serving the people of Abia State efficiently. "One thing the Governor wants to stress is that this is a very transparent administration and so we don't want to keep anyone in the doubt or in the dark as to what accrues to this state. "The same way he has demonstrated capacity, competence and transparency in the Management of this state, everything that accrues to this state whether from the Federal, the international donor agencies or the local organizations will always be declared so that Abians will know at what point they're receiving. "Whatever they are receiving, Abians will also know how what is being

received is being made available to everyone so that at the end of it all, they'll know that indeed, a new Abia is here. "That is why we have called on everyone here today so that we can sit round the table and be able to take stock of what has been made available and then decisively deal with the issue of how they will be made available to the end users. "We also want to encourage the level of transparency that the Governor has shown to be replicated everywhere across board", Ajagba said. He urged stakeholders to participate in ensuring a fair and transparent distribution process. The interactive meeting featured contributions from various stakeholders including Mayors from the 17 LGAs of the state, Civil society groups, Women and Youth Association, Persons with Disabilities, representatives of faith based Organizations NLC, TUC among others. Representatives of the Police, DSS, NSCDC, principals of schools, Executive secretary state emergency Management Agency were part of the meeting.

Otti Moves To Enhance Sound Monitoring Of Projects

Continued from Pg.1

The Abia State Government has said that it has taken steps to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, to enhance oversight of all ongoing projects across the state. Commissioner for Information and Culture, Prince Okey Kanu, stated this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the previous Executives Council Meeting, chaired by "What it speaks to, is the fact that the state government is laying a

lot of emphasis on road infrastructure, as one of the key indices of development of the state. So, on a continuous basis, roads and more roads will continue to be rehabilitated or constructed". Prince Kanu assured. On the forthcoming free medical mission to be conducted by the Association of Nigerian Physicians in America (ANPA) next month, the commissioner noted that about 2500 patients had so far registered, adding

that over 5,000 patients are expected to benefit from the programme. Addressing the recent disturbances between students at the Abia State University (ABSU), which lead to the unfortunate loss of life, Prince Kanu said that the state government, in response to the situation, swiftly dispatched security agencies, to restore peace and order on the campus. He advised students across tertiary institutions in the state to

refrain from violence and disruptive actions that could jeopardize their safety and academic pursuits. The Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr Chinedu Ekeke, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Monitoring and Evaluation, Mazi Ugochukwu Okoroafor and the S.A on Media and Publicity Mr Ferdinand Ekeoma, were among the dignitaries present during the briefing.

Chief Of Staff To Abia Governor Charges ITF

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Chief of Staff to the Governor, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, has urged the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to revamp its curriculum, operations, and services to meet the evolving demands for skilled manpower nationwide. Speaking at Government House Umuahia during a meeting with ITF management, Pastor Ajagba enjoined them to continue to pursue more vigorously the objective for which the fund was established.

He emphasized the need for the Fund to align with Governor Alex Otti's vision of restoring Aba as the industrial hub of the state. The Chief of staff to the Governor, urged the ITF to innovate and drive development effectively across the state, emphasizing the importance of providing, promoting, and encouraging skills acquisition in industry and commerce with a view to generating a pool of indigenous

trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the private and public sectors of the economy. He promised that the Abia State Government would partner the ITF in their programs. In their separate speeches, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, and the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Labour Matters, Sir Godson Anucha, while describing the meeting as apt, reiterated the present administration's

commitment to capacity building. Earlier, the Area Manager, Industrial Training Fund, Aba Area Office, Mr Nwigboji Nwafagu said the ITF which is one of the leading skills training organization in Nigeria is focused on setting, regulating training standards, providing human capital development intervention using a crop of highly competent professionals. Mr Nwafagu also used the opportunity to commend

Change Of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Xiomara Rosado, now wish to be known and addressed as XIOMARA ROSADO EZENWA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

XIOMARA ROSADO EZENWA

I, formerly known as Alex Emmanuel Osita. Now wish to be known and addressed as E M U C H A Y EMMANUEL OSITA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

EMUCHAY EMMANUEL OSITA.

I, formerly known and addressed as Mr. Okwo Iheanyi Chibueze, now wish to be known and addressed as MR. NWANKWO IHEANYI CHIBUEZE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MR. NWANKWO IHEANYI CHIBUEZE

I, formerly known and addressed as Ngozi Onyinyechi Ojirika, now wish to be known and addressed as LAWRENCE NWOSU NGOZI ONYINYECHI. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

LAWRENCE NWOSU NGOZI ONYINYECHI

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Onwugharauba Ngwu Charity which is in my Bank Verification Number and Onwugharauba Nwoji Charity which is in my payroll is same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as ONWUGHARAUBA NGWU CHARTIY. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ONWUGHARAUBA NGWU CHARTIY.

I, formerly known and addressed as Mgbalagwu Damian Chisom, now wish to be known and addressed as APUTAZIE DAMIAN CHISOM. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

APUTAZIE DAMIAN CHISOM.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Nwokocha Oluomachi Joy, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. NWANKWO CHIBUEZE OLUOMACHI JOY. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. NWANKWO CHIBUEZE OLUOMACHI JOY

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Gabriel Peace Chisom, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ORJI PEACE CHISOM. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. ORJI PEACE CHISOM

This is to affirm that Onyemauwa Ugochukwu Kenneth which was wrongly written on my Bank Verification Number (BVN) and my Bank Account with Access Bank Nig. Plc and Onyemauwa Ugochukwu Kenneth is same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as ONYEMUWA UGOCHUKWU KENNETH. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ONYEMUWA UGOCHUKWU KENNETH

This is to affirm that Ojigwe Esther Onwukwe which was written on my Bank Account with Polaris Bank and Ojigwe Esther Nkechinyere which is written in my National Identification Number (NIN), is said to be the same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as OJIGWE ESTHER NKECHINYERE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OJIGWE ESTHER NKECHINYERE

This is to affirm that Iheasonwu Chimaobi Destiny which was wrongly written in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) and Iheasonwu Chimaobi Destiny which was written in my National Identification Number (NIN) is said to be same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as IHIASONWU CHIMAObI DESTINY. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

IHIASONWU CHIMAObI DESTINY

Governor Otti for the quality work he is doing especially in the areas of infrastructural developments, and solicited government's partnership to enable them discharge their duties effectively in the state. Highpoint of the meeting was the handover of ITF training brochures to the Chief of Staff.

News



The Gov. Dr Alex Otti, (centre) with the conference of former Speakers of Abia State, recently

Conference of Ex- Speakers Commends Otti, Labour Party On Governance, Developmental Projects

By Amarachi Uzoukwu
The Conference of Former Speakers of the Abia State House of Assembly, has praised the developmental projects undertaken by Governor Alex Otti's Labour Party administration.

The former speakers drawn from the various political parties made their feelings known when they accompanied Governor Otti to inspect ongoing road projects in Aba, the commercial nerve center of the state and its environs.

Some of the ongoing road projects inspected during the tour include; Pepples Road, Ndoki Road, Old Court Road, Ehi Road, Port Harcourt Road.

Others are; Omuma Road, Industrial Road, Umuodu Avenue, University Road, all in Aba, and Mgbedeala-Omoba Road in Isialangwa South LGA.

Speaking with newsmen on behalf of the former Speakers, Rt. Hon. Stanley Ohajuruka, while commending the efforts of Governor Otti, noted the importance of good governance, and encouraged the Governor not to relent in bringing democracy dividends to the people.

Ohajuruka who emphasized that although the former speakers are from different political parties, said that one does not have to be affiliated with the same political party to recognize positive achievements.

The former speaker noted that Governor Otti had shown a posture of a statesman, transcending party affiliations. He urged him to engage

individuals from diverse political backgrounds in decision-making processes.

"Governor Otti has shown us that he is not just a governor for Labour Party where he belongs. We are very happy for that and we want to encourage him to ensure that everybody is brought on board towards contributing their own quota".

He highlighted the overwhelming support demonstrated by the people of Abia State and emphasized the need for the Governor to remain focused and work tirelessly to meet the high expectations of the populace.

"We are quite impressed with what we saw, we are deeply impressed and we want to encourage him (the

Governor) to do even more.

You could see from the outpouring of support the people were showing. You could see the happiness that ensued everywhere we went; so we want to commend him for the laudable initiative and projects he has brought in Abia state.

"My advice to him is to remain focused and work even harder. Expectations are very high and this is time for governance", Ohajuruka stated.

Ohajuruka who assured Governor Otti of their support, pledged to provide valuable suggestions and ideas to aid in achieving the governor's developmental goals and urged the people to rally

behind the Governor in his efforts to deliver the dividends of democracy.

"We have assured him that we will also avail ourselves with very useful suggestions and ideas that will help him achieve his developmental goals in Abia State.

"We want the people of the state to support him and believe in his ability to bring the dividends of democracy to them. He had shown capacity, he had shown that he is genuine and that he has the interest of the people at heart.

"We do not have any doubt in our minds that he will achieve what he has set to achieve for the people of Abia State", Ohajuruka affirmed.

Also speaking, Rt. Hon. Christopher Enweremadu expressed happiness with the

Zik's Wife, Decries Abandonment Of Husband's Hostels In UNN

By our correspondent

Professor Uche, wife of first Nigerian President Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, has expressed displeasure over the dilapidated condition and abandonment of the hostels her late husband built at university of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), popularly known as Zik's flats.

She stated this in Nsukka when Zik's Memorial Foundation and Nsukka Ezue paid her a courtesy visit at Zik's residence at Onuiyi Haven Nsukka, in Nsukka Council Area of Enugu State.

Mrs. Azikiwe applauded the groups for the visit and their concern over the abandonment of 21 two-storey buildings, 12 bungalows and refectory the late Zik built at the university while alive.

The ex- Nigeria's first Lady said the family was not happy over the abandonment of Zik's flats for so many years by UNN managements.

"I have personally made inquires from the university's management about the Zik's flats, no genuine reasons were given to me but later I was told it has been contracted to a developer but it's almost five years now, no work has been done.

"If UNN can't rebuild the place, they should hand it over to Zik's family, if is too much for us to handle, we will use Build Operate Transfer (BOT) arrangement to rebuild the flats,"she said.

Professor Azikiwe described as false, baseless and unfounded rumour in some quarters that the abandonment of the flats was because Zik's family is in court with UNN, adding that they are not in court with the premier University founded by her late husband.

"We have no misunderstanding whatsoever, the only thing we are saying is that we are worried and not happy on the dilapidated condition of Zik's flats for many years," she maintained.

Resumption Of Academic Activities: Otti Pledges To Assist MOUAU

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has pledged to collaborate with stakeholders and management of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), to facilitate the full resumption of academic activities, following its closure over students' protest.

Governor Otti stated this while addressing management of the university, who paid him a visit at his Nvosi country home

The governor charged the university management to address the root cause of the students' unrest to prevent future disruptions. He promised to engage with them on various issues, including the upcoming launch of the agric business incubation centre which would soon be operational by the institution.

He directed his Principal Secretary and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Professor Monica Ironkwe to engage the Institution on the way forward.

Regarding the longstanding court case of unremitted PAYE taxes instituted against the MOUAU by the Abia State Internal Revenue Service two years ago, the governor Otti assured that efforts would be made for an out-of-court settlement.

He expressed willingness to tackle issues hindering the university's acquisition of a Certificate of Occupancy for its agricultural purposes and appreciated his nomination as a trustee member by the National Institute of Food Science and Technology.

Unpaid Salary Arrears: ASOPADEC Chief Assures Staff Of Payment

By TasieEbere

The General Manager, Abia State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ASOPADEC), Dr. Joshua Ogadinma Onyeike, has appealed to the staff to be patient with the commission, as it is working out modalities to ensure that their unpaid salary arrears would be cleared soon.

Onyeike, who disclosed this at the lobby hall of his office after a brief ceremony marking his 58 birthday, said that as a man who serves in the vineyard of God, does not only believe strongly in the Biblical injunction of giving a worker his reward as when due but operates in that prism.

While he pointed out that Governor, Alex Otti, has shown great concern over their plight, promised that the efforts he had made with the management of the Commission will yield results that would bring relief and succour to them.

He, however, urged the staff to be committed to their duties and shun acts capable of forming a clog in the wheel of progress and thanked them for their good wishes to him on his birthday and stated that he owes gratitude to God for making him to be alive to witness another year. He therefore thanked God for the numerous good tidings He has done for him.

Earlier, in the office of the General Manager, Director of Works, Mr. Emeka Gberamakor and Director of Finance, Mrs Urego Ukaegbu of the Commission, in their goodwill messages described Venerable Onyeike as a good man that God has blessed the Commission with and wished him happy celebration and blessings from above.

Also speaking, the Laburu Party Chairman of Ukwa West Local Government Area, Elder Iheyirichi Dike and a Chieftain of the party in Ukwa West council Hon. Anselem Eletue applauded the exploits of Venerable Onyeike as their leader in Ukwa West, stressing that his pragmatic style of leadership has brought transformation to the people of Asa Land, they pledged their support and loyalty to the general manager of ASOPADEC, as well as wished him well in all his endeavors in the new age.

Commissioner Warns Citizens

From Julie Okoroafo

The Cross River State Health Commissioner, Dr. Henry Ayuk, has warned the citizens never to engage in self-medication, in treating the measles outbreak that has been confirmed in Navy and Penniel Primary Schools in the State.

He stated that at the sight of the infection, the affected person should be taken to the health care centre immediately for prompt treatment.

According to him, the confirmation of the disease came from the Ministry of Health in the State, as they responded swiftly as of the time of the outbreak, which helped to nip it on the bud before it will spread.

The commissioner said, if the sickness is reported early enough, it will help in treating and combating the disease.

Speaking further, he said, it comes in form of rash and cough in children.

As a very contagious infection, the Commissioner gave precautionary measures in order to curtail it, which include immunization exercise and thorough cleanliness, both personal and environmental.

While speaking, the commissioner recommended the ongoing vaccination for children, both in the affected and non-affected areas in the State.

He therefore encouraged parents, guardians and care-givers to respond positively in vaccinating their children as the infection is easily contracted by unimmunized children.

News

Abia, Currently Envy Of Other South Eastern States

By Nwokoma Blessing

Abia state is currently the envy of other South Eastern states because of the speedy and monumental impacts it is recording in various strategic facets of her economy within the shortest period of the current administration when juxtaposed with what other states and administrations struggled to achieve in very protracted time.

Frank Ifeanyi, a popular Nigerian artist whose stage name is ANYIDONS stated this at Aba recently during an official unveiling of EVANSI N O HUMANITARIAN FOUNDATION code named "New Hope To The Helpless,

Vulnerable, Less Privileged Widow/Widowers and Out-Of-School Children.

The artist and grand winner of the King of Hi - Life fest 2018 organized by Nigerian Breweries stressed that if things should continue the way it's going in Abia for the next eight months he and other notable Nigerians especially Igbo business men and women will move their business interest down here in Abia and particularly Aba, the Enyimba city.

He opined that the way to judge a performing government is not by hiring jobless youths who will occupy the internet space to be praising the non-existent projects by their bosses. He said that the projects of the current government

speaks volumes of the strides of Gov. Alex Chioma Otti led government.

Ambassador ANYIDONS extolled the vision, transparency and people oriented policies of Gov. Otti which has propelled the state to the forefront among the community of States in the south East and beyond thus making it an investment destinations for potential business men and women.

Speaking earlier, Dr Uche of Imo State university eulogized the efforts of Gov. Otti to tackle the infrastructural deficits of Aba headlong after the failures of the previous administrations to do the needful. The academia emphasized that Abia is regaining their pride

and thus people can proudly say his they are Abians. He prayed that the governor should strive for excellence and not disappoint millions of Abians who voted for him.

The clinical and developmental psychologist who said that he lived in Aba for over 30 years even before going to the university for studies and later lecturing at Imo state and have seen governors and governments come and go but this one is unique, with vision and had started on a good footings.

A Town planners; ChinanuNkuma who represented the commissioner of Land and Survey, in Abia state pledged the readiness of Governor Alex Chioma Otti government to deliver on their promises to Abians.

Nigerian Legion Holds L.G.A Chapter Elections

By Ngozi Ndubueze

Elections into the various local govt chapters of the Nigerian Legion, Abia State Council have taken place.

The elections which were held at different times in the LGA chapters recently filled the posts of Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen and Treasurers respectively.

Our correspondent who monitored proceedings reported that officers emerged for the various positions in the 17 local government areas of the state and stated that the elections in took place in their various Headquarters.

In their remarks, the Leaders of the electoral teams, Assistant Commandant Emma Ogbuehi (NSCDC)(rtd) and Tony Izim, Assistant Director DSS (rtd) explained that the essence of the exercise was to enable Government know the strength of Legionnaires in the state in order to carry them along in the scheme of things.

They stressed the need for the legionnaires to embark on sensitization and awareness campaign to enable those that have not registered to do so.

In addition they stated that candidates were elected in 3 key positions of chairman, Deputy and Treasurer while revealing that the position of the secretary is not elective but an in-house affair in line with the provisions of the Legion Act.

The team leaders lauded the legionnaires for the orderly manner they organized themselves and expressed confidence that those elected would perform very well in their respective positions and urged them not to disappoint those who elected them.

Meanwhile, the elections in Umuahia North saw the

Gov Otti Commends Women

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has congratulated Nigerian women as the world celebrates this year's International Women's Day.

Governor Otti, in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, KazieUkoh, commended the women for their resilience and devotion to duty, at the home front, in the workplace and society at large despite numerous challenges that both nature and the society have imposed on them.

He described Nigerian women as epitome of grace, knowledge, beauty and strength, who have achieved so much in different areas of life, globally, adding that the country, and indeed the world, owe them a debt of gratitude for their contributions towards ensuring global economic, social and political development.

Speaking on the theme of this year's IWD, "Inspire Inclusion", Governor Otti said his government has been deliberate about empowering women through improved budgetary allocation to the various sectors that have direct implications on the welfare and well-being of the women and the girl child as well as appointment of women to strategic positions in government.

"It is worthy of note that women occupy strategic positions in health, education, agriculture and poverty alleviation in the State Executive Council, while out of the total 24 Permanent Secretaries in the state, 17 of them are women. This is unprecedented in the history of the state civil service.

The Governor further stated that he has already given approval for the state to begin immediate disbursement of funds at zero interest to women entrepreneurs among other operators of small and micro enterprises in the rural areas, through the state's cooperative programme.

"This is in fulfillment of our campaign promise to empower our women in building their businesses at the grassroots and help to create wealth across the state. No less than 50 persons per ward are expected to receive the sum of N100,000, each," he disclosed.

Governor Otti used the opportunity of the celebration of the International Women's Day to thank all Abia women, including his wife, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, for their support, and for having faith in him, as their Governor, and entrusting the leadership of Abia State to his government.



■ Road construction work in Abia by Gov. Alex Otti's government, recently.

First Lady Decries Proliferation Of Baby Factories In Aba

By Chibunna Ikeokwu

The wife of Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has expressed sadness over the discovery of yet another baby factory in Aba, Abia State.

The Governor's wife noted that on the month that the world is celebrating the remarkable achievements of the women folks, it is disheartening to learn about unscrupulous elements who go about exploiting young girls for financial benefits thereby destroying their future.

Mrs Otti restated the love everyone has for women and condemned a situation whereby women are used to commit evil and achieve selfish ends. In her words, she said "We love our women, we want them to thrive, we want them to reach their potentials, therefore we totally condemned this act, it is against any societal moral compass and most importantly

it is illegal"

"We vehemently condemned the appalling existence of baby factories in Abia state where young girls were raped, forced into pregnancy and have their babies forcefully taken away from them for profits"

The wife of the Governor stated that this practice endangers our young girls as it exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases.

According to her, "individuals exploiting the poor economic vulnerabilities of our young girls and poor education to lure them into the nefarious act do not mean well for the girls.

Recognising the challenge, the Governor's wife restated her commitment to training young girls in skills acquisition and empowering them to start their own businesses.

She also revealed that the

victims of the baby factory will be taken care of until they deliver their babies but sounded a note of warning to those engaged in the illicit act to desist from it and leave the state or wait for the full weight of the law.

It could be recalled that 16 women who were at various stages of pregnancy were rescued by the Rapid Response Squad of Abia State Police Command on the March 7 in Aba, following credible intelligence gathered on the goings on at the baby factory.

The Public Relations Officer of Abia State Police Command, ASP Maureen Chinaka, who briefed newsmen at the Police headquarters in Umuahia, while parading the rescued women and their children, alongside two suspects, said a

total of 16 pregnant girls and eight children were rescued. She noted that the eight children were 5 males and 3 females.

The Police PPRO further stated that two suspects, Onyinyechi Okoro from Ihechiowa (F), Arochukwu LGA who is 29 years and one Ekene Okezie (M) from Arondizuogu, Imo State, were also nabbed at the baby factory.

The police spokesperson pointed out that discreet investigation is already ongoing on the matter to discover more facts regarding the discovery and advised the Abia public to be security conscious by reporting any suspicious person or activities around them. The PPRO assured that the Command is committed to securing the safety and security of law-abiding residents of the state.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation" Tuesday 16th January 2024

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
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Glaucoma: "The Silent Thief Of Vision"

Last week between Monday 11th to Friday 15th March 2024 was marked globally as the "Glaucoma Week". It was a very important event as the eye is undoubtedly one of the most important organs of the body. A good sight vision is one of the best riches any person can possess. Glaucoma disease has been identified as one of the limiting factors in achieving good eye health. Eye scientists have identified it as the leading cause of irreversible blindness. It is also very dangerous as it is asymptomatic making them to name it the "Silent thief of the vision".

Other facts about Glaucoma are the following.

About 80 million people have Glaucoma world wide About 50% of those who have Glaucoma are unaware they have it.

Glaucoma is asymptomatic in early stages and may have done irreversible damage by the time it is diagnosed

An estimated 90% person of people with glaucoma are

in the developing countries

It is also prevalent in the South East region of Nigeria They therefore have pointed out that regular eye examination is the key to early detection and management. This is just as early detection and management can lead to saving and preserving eye vision.

It is the above facts that make the world Glaucoma week a very important one.

The world Glaucoma week is celebrated annually as

part of efforts to raise greater awareness about this medical condition and ensure that proactive actions are taken to contain this rising scourge. The week is intended to drum up awareness about the importance of taken preventive measure to contain the scourge.

All these measures are very important as there is no known cure for glaucoma. It is only early detection and treatment can help prevent vision loss.

Adherence to medical protocols is also critical in managing the disease.

The campaign in Abia State was given added

impetus by the interest shown by the Abia State Government, the State Ministry of Health, the Abia Eye Specialist Hospital, The Special Adviser to the Governor on Special Duties, Dr (Mrs.) Betty Emeka - Obasi who herself is an optometrist and other critical

stakeholders. Such interest was demonstrated by all the measures that were put in place to make the campaign a huge success in the state.

The activities during glaucoma week in Abia included amongst other things, free screening checks on patients, free drugs, lecture talks and an awareness walk that took place on Thursday 14th which started from the Government House Gate and ended at the Secretariat.

We must commend the efforts of the aforementioned officials in making the exercise a huge success.

However, the campaign to reduce the incidence of the disease and give succor to those suffering from the scourge should not be left to the government alone.

There is need for a broader participation by groups such as faith-based organizations, Corporate Bodies, Charity Institutions, Trade Unions, Political Organizations and indeed the general public in the campaign.

The effort to fight the scourge should be seen as a collaborative activity and every person should join to make the world a Glaucoma free one.



NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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Dr. Alex Otti And His Governorship Trail

Dear Editor,

Let me use your widely read newspaper to appreciate the governor of Abia state, Dr Alex Otti on his doggedness and fighting spirit in making Abia better.

Truly Abia people did the right thing voting him in as the executive governor of Abia.

Within the short period of his administration, Abia has developed from where it used to be.

Civil servant are smiling home with their regular salary on the 28th of every month unlike what was obtainable in the past when salaries delay till second week of the next month.

While, this is commendable as every worker deserves his/her wage, there is urgent need for an upward review of the salary to reflect the present economic reality. The governor should also expedite account on the implementation of the #35,000 wage award which he promised pending a general consensus on a new national minimum year.

The roads are being rehabilitated, most of major roads in the state capital, like Wordbank, Agbama, Umuafia, Low cost etc are all wearing new looks with the gutters all opened up to embrace the oncoming raining season.

This is also appealing that the road rehabilitation should extend to Olokoro axis, especially between Holy Ghost junction uptill Ahia ukwu.

Even as we appreciate Gov. Otti for ensuring that Pensioners receive their monthly pension, efforts should be made to pay them their full pensions and arrears of pensions and gratuities paid by the end of this month as promised by the governor.

With the massive infrastructural upliftment happening in the Abia, within the first year of Gov. Otti's administration, imagine what will happen in the coming days of this administration.

I sincerely appreciate our governor for not disappointing Abia voters who massively voted and defended their votes

May God guide, bless and protect our governor. He will not be distracted in Jesus name.

Indeed, Abia is in safe hands and Abians are not weeping Again.

By Okechukwu Ubani
Umuahia

Features

Sunset at Noon: Herbert Wigwe (1966 - 2024)

By Kashim Ibrahim-Iman

If life be long, I will be glad
 That I may long obey;
 If short, then why should I be sad
 To soar to endless day?
 And so it was for Herbert, the sun set at noon.

I wrote most of this tribute while on the flight back from China to attend Herbert's funeral. My mood had shifted from the initial shock and devastation to that of grieving and a deep sense of loss of a friend who had become my brother. To that of thanksgiving to the Almighty, for the gift of Herbert in the first instance to his family and friends, his staff at Access Holdings and for his extraordinary accomplishments, for his energy and drive, his vision and mission, passion and compassion, his industry, and his humanity.

Yet the tributes have hardly relented and have only grown more intense as time has passed. It is almost like the kind of treatment reserved for kings and statesmen. Except, one can say that, for Herbert, the subject of our grief was the de-facto Prince of the banking industry, and he was a man who did extraordinary things with the ordinary things that he found in his life's path.

Herbert had the audacity to dream. He dreamt big and made it happen.

Herbert and I were friends but not particularly close until he decided it was time to conquer the Pensions Industry. He reached out to me through our mutual friend - Nduka Obaigbena with the intention of acquiring my PFA. What started as a pure business relationship, deepened into a close friendship. He was regularly in my house, if I was in Lagos, I would call him and his response was "you dey house, I dey come", and he would always be coming from Aliko's house (so I can understand Aliko's tears and deep sense of loss).

He was a financial whiz kid, indeed a colossus, who straddled the financial services industry, redefining it in his own unique way. Herbert has been described as a "visionary". Literally, he and Aigboje set out with a vision to make Access Bank one of the top banks in Nigeria. They took over a bank of very modest reputation and swiftly turned it into a formidable national financial services behemoth and is now transforming into a global conglomerate. Not satisfied with turning Access Bank into one of the top five banks in the country, they then set out to make the bank one of the top banks in Africa by 2027. Already, by January 2024, Access Bank had acquired six banks across western, southern, and central African regions.

In their days running Access Bank, Aigboje and Herbert earned reputations as taskmasters. (Aigboje describes it, in his 2021 memoir, as "our fabled work ethic"). Critics saw them as willing to go to any lengths to achieve whatever they sought. The landmark takeover of Intercontinental Bank in 2011?—?which tripled their customer base?—?was believed to be a hostile, even ruthless, one. Not uncommon allegations, admittedly, at that level of performance. Similarly, the merger repositioned the Nigerian banking sector on the African continent as the combined entity had the potential of ranking amongst Africa's top 10 banks according to The Bankers' Magazine's review of top African banks.

Ironically, Herbert's most telling impact was not just about the mergers and acquisitions or about his corporate conquests. It was not in the number of businesses or branches in his fledgling conglomerate. When Access Bank bought Diamond Bank in 2018, the resulting entity became the biggest lender in Africa by customer base. It means that the bank lent to more people and entities than any other financial institution on the continent. It also meant that the bank became a leading provider of capital to the private sector, particularly MSMEs in the continent.

Selling the PFA to Herbert was an easy decision for me. We had grown it to the point where I was convinced that we needed an institutional investor that could drive the business effectively to compete against Stanbic IBTC. There were more than 10 suitors out of which I zeroed down to only 2, Access and GTB. During his tribute on Wednesday night, Segun Agbaje

mentioned that Herbert was his friend and at the same time, his competitor, he meant every word of that. Segun also wanted to buy the same PFA. He pleaded with me not to sell to Herbert, but Herbert won at the end. Herbert assured me that he could compete against Stanbic. He was emphatic that he would enter the market with at least N1 trillion assets under management. He was able to quickly achieve this by acquiring First Guarantee Pensions and Sigma Pensions in quick succession, Herbert was in too much of a hurry to grow any business organically, his preference was for mergers and acquisitions (Buy then Build). He then set his sights on Premium Pensions, the second largest in the industry. We both worked relentlessly on this, my assignment was to engage the two major blocks in Premium Pensions. When the infighting in Premium got messy, Herbert quickly turned his sights in the direction of ARM



Pensions and engaged his friend Deji Alli and the rest is history. In a couple of months, he was able to enter the industry with assets under management of over N2 trillion. Vintage Herbert.

Much has also been said about Herbert's state-of-the-art university in his Isiokpo hometown. In truth, the university is no ordinary one. Like all things Herbert, the institution has grand visions to close Africa's skills gap in finance and technology, and ultimately to help shape Africa's future.

Again, just like everything else that Herbert conceived and executed, the University was neither a whim nor a product of purposeless ambition. He got me involved in this project as well, my specific assignment was to get the license out from the National Universities Commission (NUC). The executive secretary of the NUC, Prof. Abubakar Rasheed was a member of the board of

trustees of The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) which I chaired. The university bears the mark of an important part of Herbert's bigger vision. The institution is a product of the HOW (Herbert OnyewumbuWigwe) Foundation, which he founded in 2016 to support health, education, and capacities of young people. The university, billed as the first Ivy League institution in Africa, came straight out of the foundation's five-year strategic plan to provide quality education and shape the future of education in the continent. This may sound very idealistic. But then who would have put their money on Herbert and his partner taking a small bank that ranked outside the top fifty in the country and turned it into the biggest lender on the continent?

The objective of the university, not surprisingly, is to build expertise of Africans in finance and technology. It is very obvious, therefore, that the university's goal and outlook synch almost seamlessly with Herbert's triple passions in finance, technology and human capacity.

In itself, The Wigwe Foundation is another testimonial of a life driven by not one, but multiple visions, each amplifying the essence of the other. In just five years, the foundation had trained dozens of Nigerian doctors abroad, funded the education of thousands of out-of-school children in northern Nigeria, and supported the operations of health facilities.

From his banking legend to the other sectors in which he has affected society and broken the boundaries of possibilities, Herbert has operated like a human force perpetually on the move, pausing only to conceive another vision after attaining the last one. It is almost inevitable that only death would have placed a limit on the heights that Herbert was bound to attain. He was in a hurry to get so many things done, like he knew he had limited time on this earth.

Up to the time of his death, Herbert was still very actively pursuing his visions, doing deals, and setting personal targets. In January, just weeks before his death, Herbert's Access Bank announced a deal to acquire Uganda-based Finance Trust Bank, the seventh bank it would be acquiring within a short time. The full take-over was scheduled to happen in June, just four months from the time of his death. Earlier in the year, he had wanted to put ATMs at a chain of filling stations in Cameroon, but the owner had refused. In her tribute, Iyabo Soji-Okusanya said that shortly after Herbert's death, she told her colleagues that instead of sitting down to mourn, Herbert would wish them to keep working, cutting deals. They went back to work and tried to revive the deal, this time, the owner accepted, he said he could not deny Access Bank this after the tragic occurrence of Herbert's death. In death, Herbert was still closing deals for the bank. He had also planned to take up mentoring of the students at the Wigwe University, scheduled to start operation in September this year.

Herbert was a very generous man, HRH Khalifa Sanusi in his tribute on Wednesday spoke glowingly about his generosity, Pastor Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) also spoke of his immense generosity during his tribute. He supported several worthy causes at home and abroad.

Given the timing of his death, one would be tempted to say that these plans belonged on the list of his unfinished business. But knowing him as we do, it is hard to imagine that Herbert envisioned and planned for everything except the fate of his legacy.

It is also hard to mourn Herbert like we do regular people, however tragic his death was. There is just too much to celebrate and reflect, even for someone who died at such a relatively young and vibrant age. The only service we can do to his memory is to continue to reflect on what we can learn from his life of relentless aspirations and serial triumphs.

After listening to all the tributes, I would like us to emulate that of his friend, partner, and brother Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, who asked us to clap for Herbert for 10 minutes during the evening of tributes.

I hereby call on all Nigerians to pause and clap for Herbert Wigwe for an extraordinary life of remarkable achievements,

Adios, Dear Friend and Brother.

News

MOUUAU Students Cry Out Over Continuous Shut Down Of Institution, Call On Abia Govt To Intervene

Okereke Kate

Students of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), have cried out to the Abia state government to intervene in the continuous shut down of academic activities in the institution, following the clash that exhumed between students and management of the school, leading to the indefinite closure of the institution. Some of the students who

spoke with our Reporter in anonymity decried the prolonged shut down of the school, saying it could lead to the loss of an academic session if prompt action is not taken. The students who said they were already taking their first semester exams, pleaded for the quick resolution of the crisis so they could return to school. According to the students, some of them who have already paid their fees are suffering the

problem caused by nonpayment of tuition fees, pleading for the school to tamper justice with mercy. They pleaded for a timely resolve, so they can return to school to finish up their exams, as they have stayed almost four weeks at home already. Recall, that recently the management of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, shut down academic activities in the institution indefinitely, following a massive protest by students. In a statement signed by the Vice Chancellor, Prof.

Maduebibisi Iwe, said the varsity woke up to experience the violation of the long-existing peace in the university. According to the statement that read, "Miscreants took over the university, chasing and pursuing the Vice-Chancellor, damaging his official vehicle and those of his officials claiming that they were not allowed to take their 1st Semester examination owing to their failure to pay their fees. "The university's record show that more than 70 per cent of the students had paid their fees and were peacefully taking their examinations, while more than 2,000 were in the queue to pay and register their courses before the miscreants and hoodlums took the stage to cause trouble and disrupted the long-standing peace of the university. "As part of efforts to safeguard life and property on campus, the management of the institution on behalf of the Senate, thereby, ordered an indefinite closure of the school. "All students were advised to vacate the university premises immediately, but not later than 5pm on Tuesday, February 6, 2024," the statement added. However, National Ambassador Newspapers gathered that the students were protesting over the increment of their tuition fee and when they pleaded for more time to pay up, the vice chancellor ordered they should be chased out of the exam hall, which later resulted in the protest by the students.

“Some of the students who spoke with our Reporter in anonymity decried the prolonged shut down of the school, saying it could lead to the loss of an academic session if prompt action is not taken.”

”

Joy Unspeakable As Abia Women Benefits From Nigeria For Women Project.

By Charles Ogbonnaya



Abia State among others, and are in government has improved the livelihood of Abia women in the three local Government Areas of Isiala Ngwa North, Obingwa and Ohafia by paying about three (3) billion naira to Abia women through the Nigeria for Women Project, a project designed to improve the livelihood of women. Nigeria for Women Project which exist in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria namely - North-west (Taraba State); North-east (Kebbi State); North-central (Niger State); South-west (Ogun State); South-south (Akwa Ibom State); and South-east (Abia State), is a World Bank Assisted Project that is counterpart funded by the Government. Interacting with newsmen, the Abia State Project Coordinator, Mrs Chinenye Amos-Uhegbu said that, Project formed women into Women Affinity Groups (WAGs), as a platform to achieve the project objectives. According to her, "Because of the success story we gathered from these women who are petty traders, artisans, seamstresses and a village head from Umuomainta-Nbawsi ward 10, Pastor Nnamdi Aliche, expressed delight that Nigeria for Women Project has positively impacted and empowered about 90 percent of the rural women, who prior to the project were without hope and solely dependent on their husbands for financial help. He disclosed that the Community has also assisted the Project by releasing land for free for the realization of the Project's objectives. Some of the beneficiaries who include Mrs Ezinma Akudo, Palm oil processor from Osusu Community in Isiala Ngwa North; a Petty trader, Mrs Chibudo Angela Kasarachi; and a Cassava(fufu) processor, Mrs Pleasure Chinyere Eze, shared their experiences, fears and bravery about WAGs, and appreciated the the Governor, Dr. Alex Otti and his wife, Mrs Priscilla Otti for supporting the Project. They said they are now financially independent and contribute meaningfully in their respective families as a result of the Project.

Disbursement Ceremony Of Starter Packs To 34 Graduates Of Community Based Training Scheme (cbts) Beneficiaries

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The National Directorate of Employment, NDE Abia State, has disbursed starter packs to 34 Community Based Training Scheme (CBTS) beneficiaries in five skills namely Hair Dressing, Fashion and Designing, Make Up artistry, Electrical Installation and GSM Repairs.

The State Coordinator, NDE, Mrs Tessa Wachuku who represented the Director General, Mallam Abubakar Nuhu Fikpo, congratulated the beneficiaries for making it to the second list out of 85 participants that were trained as the first list of 34 beneficiaries were earlier on



resettled. She advised them not to despise the days of little beginning and put the equipment to good use. She reiterated that the starter packs are loan packages

which will be paid back over three years after a period of moratorium. The Director, Vocational skills development department ably

represented by Mrs Agnes Ogbaga encouraged the beneficiaries to begin immediately to do business with the equipment so they can be proficient and in turn

become employers of labour thus help to curb unemployment in the state and nation at large. The dignitaries who graced the occasion were Deputy Mayor of Umuahia South LGA, Hon Oledingwa Nwabueze, state president of National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), Lady Agnes Okafor Okoroafia who was represented by Mrs Ngozika Oriaku and the Head of Industrial Arbitration Panel, south east zone, Barr (Mrs) Ifeanyi - Okolo Chioma. They all gave goodwill messages of felicitations and encouragement saying that skill acquisition is the way to go in today's world. Responding on behalf of the

beneficiaries, Mr Onyemachi Izuchukwu thanked the federal government, the them and all who in one way or the other made today possible and a success. He promised that they will not disappoint the directorate but will put the equipment to good use. In her vote of thanks, the Head, Vocational skills development department, Miss Chinyere Onyekwere thanked all who graced the occasion and encouraged the beneficiaries to make judicious use of the opportunity given them so as to have a multiplier effect. The equipment was displayed and inspected by dignitaries and attendees at the ceremony.

Health

Lack of Good Emotional/Mental Health Care can jinx a Great life & Business.

By: Jacqui Iwu

Welcome everyone to my first Edition of -YOUR BODYIMAGE! In this space, I will be talking about several neglected characteristics/factors of life which either add or rob us of our total health and body image. Let me also say that, I am not going to sugar coat anything i am saying in this column so we can really understand how bad certain things we deal with are.

In Africa, there are certain aspects of life that are taken for granted which also turn out to be the most vital aspects that fuels/destroys good living and success in our businesses, career.

Have you heard of anyone in Nigeria sharing his/her mental situations? Infact when you hear such discussions, they are talking about the mad man or woman roaming the streets. I am sorry but ... it might sound harsh to say this, but we have a lot of Nigerians with mental issues in suits, designers' gowns walking the streets of Nigeria. You see such persons in our banks, business offices, shopping malls, local markets, even churches and mosques. Don't even get me talking about the husbands/wives and children we have in our homes.

You walk into a shop and after pricing an item, you quietly left either because, you noticed the item is not exactly what you want or the price is beyond your budget. Next thing, the shop owner starts to abuse you, cursing you with all kinds of ugly names. At times you see them shouting at you as you walk away asking you to come and take it for free. Oleshi...barawo! Seriously? All these names because you refused to buy from them?

Hahhaaa! Anger+desperation + lack of emotional control+ mental problem rolled up in one bubble huhhhh?

How about your boss walking into the office and you said- Good morning sir! He snapped at you and slammed his door at your face! Transferred aggression?

Now don't even get me talking about the daily drama that happens with most husbands/wives at home. Infact some of these emotional dramas has become a routine that, if one partner decides to calm down one good day, the other one will be suspicious...of the partner having a hidden agenda. Can you believe a situation so bad that when someone is not acting abnormal, his/her spouse starts suspecting there is fire on the mountain? In other words, normal has become abnormal to such couples.

There are people whose moods swings like a pendulum and



God help you if you call / visit them at such moody conditions... God help you! The funny part is that, most of them are even bold enough to tell you their mood is bad daily and they can't deal with anything you need as if it's healthy to be regularly moody & bitchy. We all have our good and bad moods but when it becomes a daily stuff, cracking you up to scream at your children, workers, spouses, then it's a mental condition that should be treated.

Is there still need to list the causes of these emotional / mental disorders? We all are aware of the hardship going on in our country. There are various factors that trigger these mental disorders like- sour love relations issues, divorce, stale marriage, terminal diseases, failure to succeed etc. Apart from these, the accumulation of STRESS due to the fight to survive in a downward spiral economy like Nigeria can turn an "Angel into a crack head".

The socio-Economic rot in Nigeria which have pushed everyone old and young into hustling everybody to survive hunger, avoid ghetto life, enjoy luxurious life has messed with lots of people's mental health. Some people just walk the streets looking for ways of survival but nothing comes up. Those who

swore to die in the process dip their mind and souls into all kinds of ugly stuff you don't even want to hear about. For this group of people, their own mental issues/torture is way beyond what I am talking about here. You can only live with them to observe their own mental instability and torture.

For the regular man and woman who decides to earn a living in an honest way, if by mistake, he lost all either by robbery attacks, kidnapping, or natural disaster, the emotional and mental disorder is unbearable. Such people will not come out dressed in rags like the usual mad persons in the streets. They will still be mingling with the society. You would not know they have a mental issue till you trigger it by mistake.

Question now is, how do you tackle Emotional / Mental health? First, you can't solve a problem which you fail to acknowledge is there with you. Most Nigerians do not even want to believe they have mental issues. To such person, you are insulting them and calling them crazy. So how can such person with such mindset seek help?

Abroad, no one is shy of being certified as having mental breakdown. Such persons go all out to seek for clinical therapy, counselors depending on the area of the mental issue. They believe in speaking out and getting the necessary help unlike in Nigeria.

I guess, the patient/doctors confidentiality also plays a huge role here. I have heard many Nigerians talk about their doctors, counselors exposing their mental health to the public so this has hindered most people not to share their private matters with therapists.

If you ask me, I think Nigerians still have this believe that mental health is not serious health issue so, if you are lucky to have read this today and this sounds like you, stop the negative mindset and seek help. Mental Health is very much real and lots of people in Nigeria are walking around with mental problem disrupting other people's life, career, and business.

Hey, there is nothing to be ashamed of too. It's better for you to get help you need than to allow yourself fall apart to the extent that people will be avoiding to either see you, associate with you or even do any business transactions with you. By the way, doing a business transaction with someone with a mental health is very difficult because, he/she keeps disorganizing your plans/actions and focus.

Let us continue this discussion by adding your voice too!!

GOVERNMENT OF ABIA STATE OF NIGERIA

ABIA STATE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (ABIA SPHCDA)

No. 2, Adelabu Street, Umuahia.

INVITATION FOR TENDER

The Abia State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Umuahia hereby invites bids for tender from competent, reputable and interested contractors for the following under listed jobs.

SCOPE OF WORK

1. Supply of Hilux Van
2. Supply of laptop
3. Supply of Office Equipment
4. Renovation of Health Center
5. Expansion of cold Store and
6. Renovation of Office complex.

TENDER/PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Prospective tenders are required to submit their pre-qualification bid containing the under-listed documents in clearly marked envelope to the office of the Executive Secretary within two weeks from this publication.

The opening of bids follow immediately after close of submission of the following documents:-

- (a) Evidence of payment of non-refundable appropriate tender fee.
- (b) Certificate of Registration with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
- (c) Company profile including personnel and Equipment.
- (d) Details of verifiable experience on similar projects.
- (e) Current Tax Clearance Certificate of not less than 3 years.

(f) Current finance status of the company.

(g) Certified true copies of Memorandum and Articles of Association of the company.

TENDER PROCEDURE

Completed tenders should be sealed in an envelope and clearly marked to indicate the project being tendered for to the office of the Executive secretary of the Agency before 12noon on the day of close of tender.

Please, note only those contractors that are pre-qualified and found suitable for the work will have their tenders considered for the award of contract for the project.

Closing date for the submission of the tender is 2 weeks from the date of this publication and the opening of the tenders follows immediately thereafter in the conference room of Abia State Primary Health Care Development Agency.

Mrs. Gladys Ike
Ag: Executive Secretary

Ambassador Woman

with
Ihuoma Egbeogu

Children are blessing from God. They desire to be pampered by their parents. They are usually overly dependent on their parents for virtually all their needs. However, the menace of over dependent children cannot be over emphasized. In the olden days, children were more responsible and independent. Their parents made them do their chores. They grew up being hard working and imparted on the society positively. But the new generational parents are beclouded with the notion " my children will not suffer how I did". Because of this, they end up over pampering their wards. When a parent will cook food for a child who is of age, just for them to keep reading their books and have good grades in school. Meanwhile, the olden days parents will draw a time table for all activities of the home. A child does what he/she ought to do and still come out outstanding in his/ her academics.

Furthermore, some parents go to the extent of washing the clothing of a teenage child because they believe he/ she can't wash them properly. They surround them with domestic servants that do everything for them. What eventually become of such children? They become over dependent and cannot assume any task on their own. Such children will not be able to cope with the harsh challenges of life.

Parents go to the extent of arranging "expo" to help their children pass exams. The children that were given the best lesson teachers, attended the best schools with air conditioned class rooms and good amenities. Despite all these comfort that should give that child an edge over other children, the parents still resort to paying for "special center". A slang in the new generation where children are being supplied with answers for their examination questions. Tell me how an over dependent child like this can make it in life.

In addition, some parents lie on their children's behalf to get them out of trouble. They are so many trending cases like this.

The Menace Of Over Dependent Children

At one point, these children that you lie for become untamed and you begin to lament that your enemies are after you. A lot of parents have lost their children to the vices encountered in the society. That is why "yahoo boys" are on the increase. Learn to make these children independent.

Parents sometimes engage in a combat for their children. An interview with a proprietress who pleaded anonymity said oftentimes, some parents usually attack her teachers violently for melting out disciplinary action on their wards. Such attitude should be confirmed. When a parent goes to the extent of defending her child even when they are wrong and are at fault. That child is overly dependent and cannot stand the test of time.

However, parents go an extra mile of taking decisions for their adult children. They even impose a spouse on their children. They sponsor the marriage rites and wedding. They rent an apartment for them and make them comfortable. They give their children the impression that they do not need to struggle or suffer. The parents work themselves round the clock to attend to the needs of these children who have become over dependent. While these children catch fun by going from one resort to the other, cinema houses, play games, watch films etc. Eventually

when you are no more they to meet their needs, these over dependent children will face real life challenges, they become helpless. At this stage, they will realize the havoc you have done to them and curse you even in your grave.

It has been poised that over dependent behaviour restrict a child's access to his/her environment. A child is surrounded with the notion that there are excessive amount of threat that he/ she will not be able to cope with on his/ her own.

When a child is over dependent, it reduces the opportunity for the child to develop competence. This will eventually lead to an increased level of anxiety in the child.

Furthermore, such children lack the skill to successfully navigate challenges in their environment. Over dependence could increase avoidance and reduce the opportunity for a child to develop appropriate social behaviour.

Howbeit, over dependence decreases a child's perceived competence and social acceptance. A child tends not to believe in himself/ herself. They can't assume a task on their own. They see their parents as a part of themselves that they can't do without.

In conclusion, it is expedient that parents stop raising over dependent children. Allow these children to face realities of life. While raising children, give them an age appropriate domestic tasks. It is sheer ignorance to think that doing everything for your children is a mark of honour or a way of bequeathing royalty on them.

Furthermore, always teach them to be useful and make their impact felt positively wherever they find themselves. Encourage your children to always leave their foot prints on the sands of time. Teach them good morals that will help them in life. Teach them to be courteous, respectful, friendly, cheerful, tolerant, obedient, hospitable etc. These virtues will help them become independent and successful in life



Parents go to the extent of arranging "expo" to help their children pass exams.



Family Matters

By Okechukwuubani

Remember When you two were younger, you two argued a lot, not actually because you two did not love each other but because you were not matured enough to understand each other. When you clock 10 or 20 years in marriage, it is assumed at that particular stage, both of you have understood each other and knew what each other can do and may not be able to handle issues easily.

Marriage is not a gender battle, don't enter into marriage and start dragging by saying, I am the man or I am the woman if you do that your marriage may not last up to five years. marriage is a beautiful union between a man and a woman, both created in the image of God with unique strengths to journey together in the union called marriage.

The truth is that almost every married couple considered quitting, doubted whether they would last at some points, when overwhelmed by challenges like house rate, children school fees, utilities in the house and all the necessary things to keep the union going. That season comes to shake the both of you and test how serious you are about the marriage. It is now behoves on both of you to plan together as husband and wife, so as to withstand every situation. If you manage that season well, the early season of marriage where bills will be coming from left, right and centre then you will be a stronger and better couple.

If you two started your marriage on a shaky foundation, maybe the man didn't want to marry the lady, on the process of dating, he impregnated her, which may have resulted in both getting married. This has become a blunder caused by both of

Don't Quit Your Marriage

you at the beginning. It doesn't mean that your union is doomed to fail. You can actually take control of that marriage and steer it in the right direction. You can search anywhere in the world but you will never find someone who knows you, puts up with you, and has proven to be dependable like the one you have invested years in each other. For that, don't take your husband or wife for granted

Love has to transcend sagging boobs, baldness, grown hair, fat, stretchmarks, physical challenges and sex because as you grow older, all the beauty face, the big boob, big breast and the things that were around at the beginning may no longer be available.

Indeed, you will realize that it was the person inside the body of your spouse that you fell in love with.

That friends you made your priority and ignored your

spouse will easily leave you but your spouse will always be there. Have your priorities right. make your spouse your priorities and it is only your spouse that will always be by you during good and bad times.

Your mother, father, brother, sister and uncles don't actually know your spouse. It wasn't them that find the person for you, their opinions should not be the absolute guide. You know each other best. it is your home not your father or mother's home.

The memories, legacy, wisdom and assurance of love you transfer to your children are the greatest inheritance. It makes no point to work so hard to make money for your family and at the end, lose your family.

As you work, be smart and make time to enjoy quality time with your spouse and children

There is no challenge you two cannot overcome only if you are united and you work together, put down unnecessary ego in your marriage.

Your husband or wife is into your life for an assignment, to make you better, to give you a helping hand, to compliment and support you, to help you fulfil your purpose. Do not fight that assignment. As you age and get closer to death, the weight of responsibility in marriage will dawn on you. You will be more conscious that you will have to give an account to God on how you treated the spouse God gave you all these years.

You will remember how you two met, the promises you made to each other's family, the vows you made and if you lived by them.



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News

Akwa Ibom Governor Releases Funds For WAEC Candidates

Lovina Emole, Uyo

Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Umo Eno, has released a sum of N778,998,500 as payment for the 2023/2024 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in the state.

The Commissioner for Education, Mrs. Idongesit Etiebiet who made this disclosure in an interview with newsmen in her office in Uyo, said the amount was initial payments for 48,797 candidates participating in the sub regional examination this year.

She gave the breakdown of the amount to cover NIN registration fee, biometric registration, funds for administrative cost, as well as 50% of the WASSCE fee.

She said that, the increase in sundry charges for the examination has raised the yearly payment fee by the State Government from N1 billion - N1.5 billion.

She further noted that, the West African School Examination fee which was

N18,000 naira, has been increased to N27,000.

"The release of the initial payment by the State Government is to enable the students to participate in the examination, and the Government is expected to pay a balance of over N700,000,000 in due course."

The Education Boss commended the Governor for remaining committed to the welfare of students despite the apparent economic realities in the country, expressing the belief that students will work hard and justify the huge investments committed by government to their course.

"You could recall that, very recently the government had released additional N100 million to cater for bursary of students of Akwa Ibom State origin at various tertiary institutions across the country, while grants ranging from N250,000 - N350,000 had also been given to students with disabilities, starting with tertiary institutions."



The General Overseer, Omega Power Ministry, King Apostle Chibuzor G. Chinyere (right), with others from a Taiwan company, Maxxi Tyre, at Ohanku, Ukwa East, recently.

Governor Diri Charges Workers

By Owinma Goodness

Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, has said that, his administration is working towards cushioning the effects of the prevailing economic hardship in the country on workers in the state.

Diri stated this while addressing chairman of the state chapter of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Comrade Barnabas Simon, who led members on a nationwide protest to Government House, Yenagoa.

He assured to meet with the state's Head of Service and the NLC chairman to discuss the modalities to reduce the working hours of civil servants in the state with a view to mitigate their plight. He appreciated the NLC for peacefully carrying out the protest, also, the security agencies for allowing the protest to hold as it was a national directive to all Nigerian workers.

"I want to assure that, as a worker-friendly government from day one, we will consider the issues you have raised, particularly the reduction of man-hours of workers. I am going to dialogue with the Head of Service and the Bayelsa State NLC chairman and look at appropriate steps to reduce the working hours of our workforce. The current economic situation has no boundaries. Workers are affected. The federal government and states are also affected. In all our projects, contractors are also asking for cost variation", he stated.

He attributed the rising inflation in Nigeria to the monetary policy reforms of the federal government in allowing the floating of the country's currency.

"The currency, as you know, is strictly for the Federal Government, state governments can only advice because, issues concerning the currency are on the exclusive list and the whole problem revolve around our

currency. I do believe that the president would not want to punish citizens of this country. I am sure that the federal government is also weighing the options of some of their policies. I believe that our president is a listening leader and he is going to do something concerning this whole things", he added.

On the request for palliative, Senator Diri advised the NLC to rather work with the government to seek ways of stabilising the naira. According to him, "today our currency has lost one of its basic functions, which is store of value, because on a daily basis, the naira depreciates. I advice the NLC chairman to ask for the restoration of the value of the naira, which is the number one thing. The moment that is done there will be no protest."

The governor also urged workers to diversify their incomes by engaging in productive ventures such as farming and trading to augment their earnings.

In his address, the state NLC Chairman, Comrade Simon said the removal of fuel subsidy was the death knell that brought about the prevailing economic woes.

He lamented the high cost of living due to the high inflation in the country as well as the soaring exchange rate of the dollar to the naira. Comrade Simon demanded that interim measures be put in place to assure the sufferings of workers, which include reduction of man-hours of workers and provision of palliative to cushion the effect.

He reaffirmed the commitment of the NLC to support government in driving good policies for workers, adding that it will reject further impoverishment of the workforce.

From Lovina Emole, Uyo

The Executive Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator, Douye Diri, has lauded the efforts of the National youth Service Corps (NYSC), programme in development in the state.

Diri made this known through the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth Development, Mrs. Grace Tarinabo Alagou, who represented him, during the closing ceremony of 2024 Batch 'A' Stream I Orientation Course held at the NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp, Boro Town.

According to Mrs. Alagou, corps members had continued to play key and critical roles in community development, which is essential to national development.

Mrs. Alagou noted that, the presence of corps members in all the nooks of crannies of the state made them beneficial for community development as they initiate, execute and commission vital community development service projects.

The representative of the governor emphasized that corps members had made positive impact on pupils and students for them to become good citizens and leaders of tomorrow.

She stated that, "The security and welfare of Corps members will remain top priority of the government to enable them serve the nation in the state better and the Government will continue to provide conducive environment for them to have a rewarding service year in Bayelsa state".

Mrs. Alagoa urged all Corps employers as well as critical stake

holders to assist corps members to settle down in Bayelsa State as their home and enjoined the corps members to shun induced rejection, stating that truancy, absenteeism and redundancy will not be tolerated by the government.

The State NYSC Coordinator, Mrs. Okpalifo Obiageli Charity, commended the NYSC corps members and camp officials for their high level of cooperation and discipline that ensured a hitch-free orientation course.

She also called on the corps members to emulate their predecessors by carrying out their duties diligently, describing primary and secondary assignments as important cardinal programmes of the service corps.

While thanking the

governor, the government and good people of Bayelsa State for their immense support to the scheme, the coordinator appealed to all corps employers to help the corps members to quickly settle down to render quality services to the state.

The coordinator urged the NYSC members the same time she advised them to remember at all times that they are ambassadors of the NYSC, their families and the institutions they graduated, as to be wary of acts that can portray the scheme in bad light. She encouraged them to build on the skills acquired during the in-camp Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme, to empower

Industrial Market Traders Lament Over High Cost Of Building Materials

Okereke Kate

Traders of Industrial Market, Umuahia, also known as Timber Market, have lamented the high cost of building materials, which they attributed to the removal of fuel subsidy by the nation's President, calling for the return of the subsidy so that the prices of goods can normalize.

Speaking with National Ambassador, during the yearly market prayers, the President of Industrial Market Umuahia, Hon Ejike Urama, who spoke through the Secretary of the market association, Mr. Simeon Onyeagba, said the removal of fuel subsidy in the country has triggered other aspects of the economy to rise astronomically, stating that it is only when the subsidy is restated that the frequent rise in the prices of commodities can be relaxed.

According to him, the rise in the cost of petroleum products have affected the prices of other goods, as a bag of cement which was sold between #5000 and #5500 is now sold above #10,000, among other increments.

He added that the recent hike in commodities, have slowed patronage, as customers no longer buy building materials as before, while those that buy, purchase in small quantities.

Onyeagba also disclosed that the present economy situation is biting hard, taking turns, most especially on families, as most families find it difficult to eat three square meals daily, he appealed that an urgent action be taken to cushion its effect.

He however, commended the Governor of Abia State, Dr Alex Otti, for the massive road infrastructural work going on in the state and as well, for doing a palliative work at the ever busy

Ikot-Ekpene Road. He congratulated the governor over his Supreme Court victory, urging Abians to be patient as God will use the governor to rewrite the story of the state.

Meanwhile, he called on the attention of the government to the sorry state of roads at the industrial market, stating that most of the roads in the markets are impassable, while the gutters are of low standard, making it difficult for water to flow freely out of the market during rainy seasons, thereby, causing erosion. He equally called for adequate security to be provided in the market and other safety measures.

Another trader, Chief Royal Obi, equally lamented the rising cost of goods, saying that presently he can no longer

stock his shop, because his capital has been affected.

According to him, as at December 2023, a bag of nail was #9000 but today sells above #30,000. "This is a serious problem. The cost of transporting of our goods is high, which also affect the selling price of the goods. Ninety-five (95) percent of Nigerians are suffering. The President should call economy experts to help out", he advised.

Chief Obi, while narrating the poor business environment of the Timber Market, said the roads in the market are in bad conditions, he said past governments had promised to do the roads in the market and as well, assist 500 traders with funds, but failed. He called on the present government to look into the condition of the Industrial Market, as it could provide good

News

Bayelsa Moves To Partner Group To Build Residential Quarters For Doctors

From Owunna Goodness, Bayelsa

The Bayelsa State Government has indicated its readiness to partner with the Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN), in order to build a residential estate for medical doctors at the Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Okolobiri.

The Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewruhujakpo, who gave the indication when the NDUTH Branch of the MDCAN, paid a courtesy visit to his office in Government House, Yenagoa.

Ewruhujakpo disclosed that, government was prepared to make the necessary arrangements for the siting of the proposed estate in a suitable location, under a joint or counterpart funding arrangement with the doctors.

He also suggested that the doctor's contribution for the project could be through their monthly housing allowances, which would entitle them to occupy and own the residential quarters even after their retirement from service.

"On the issue of residential quarters or housing estate, we will do it on joint-venture arrangement. In this case, we will withhold your monthly housing allowances, and with funding from government, build your houses. We will pull out your housing allowances and government brings out the money to pay. At the end of the day, you occupy the houses, and even after your retirement, it remains your property", he said.

According to him, the health needs of the people was a top priority of government, hence it is expanding the Bayelsa Health Insurance Scheme to enable more residents to have access to the scheme. Drawing a positive correlation between health and societal development, an unhealthy society could not be developed, just as an undeveloped society could not be healthy.

He, commending the NDUTH Branch of the MDCAN for building its secretariat at Okolobiri, and assured them, that government would look into the issues of rural posting allowance, official cars and obsolete equipment at the teaching hospital.

"I always tell people, the best way to make society more effective is to make the health of the people in that society to be sacred. There is a relationship between development and health. An unhealthy society cannot be developed, just as an undeveloped society cannot be healthy. For us, as a government, health is not just a priority, it is a necessity, because if we have more healthier people, we will have more productive people.

"There are some services you render that require dividends, and there are others you render without anticipation of dividends. And social health is one of them. That is why you see that over the years, we have maintained our social health insurance scheme, and we are expanding it for more people to have access", he stated.

The Chairman of the NDUTH Okolobiri Branch, Dr. Sambo Biobelete, explained that the visit was to formally invite the deputy governor for the commissioning of the MDCAN secretariat building.

He thanked Senator Ewruhujakpo for always extending support to the medical community in the state, to government for non-taxation of doctors' allowances, and for the inclusion of honorary consultants to benefit from the new hazard allowance.

The chairman also pleaded with the government to do more in terms of improved working conditions, including providing official cars for doctors and state-of-the-art medical equipment at the NDUTH to stem brain drain in the health sector.



Community Development: Bayelsa Governor Commends NYSC Members

From Owunna Goodness, Bayelsa

A new estate, known as Real Estate Academy, has been launched in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The estate was launched recently by a group of entrepreneurs.

Speaking at the ceremony, the President of the Academy, Inimfon Colonel, described Real estate as a gold mine and urged the youths to ensure they grab the benefits by being active participants in the sector.

Inimfon Colonel encouraged them to look beyond government and get involved in Real estates to

create wealth and jobs, noting that such would enable them have a reliable source of income and navigate out of the current economic hardship.

The Academy President said, "Under the current economy you don't sit down and say oh, I work for the government so I cannot do Real estate, no, join us lets transform the world through you.

"There is a goldmine in real estate in this city of Uyo. We can attract the attention of the world to the welcoming environment in Akwa Ibom

State and we smile to the banks, courtesy of real estates.

"Enterprise valley academy will be a lighthouse of education, empowerment, and prosperity for all. We want to innovate how we approach real estate, elevate our understanding and ultimately dominate our parts to success."

Also speaking, the Chairman of the Board of Enterprise Valley Academy, Gideon Ekanem, said "The real estate sector helps you not just to invest. You also earn money as a broker, or as an investor. The opportunities are just

massive when you come into the academy, we hold your hands through the process".

In their reactions, attendees at the inauguration expressed delight over the academy, saying it would be an opportunity to gain valuable experience in the sector, to create wealth for themselves.

Encouraging participants at the event, an Uyo based celebrity real estate promoter, Uche Sandra, said "just few years

ago, I felt I was making a mistake being in Uyo, my economic life was not encouraging, but immediately God opened my eyes to the goldmine in real estate my life changed. This state is currently the most sort after destination in Nigeria".

Another participant, Etini Uko said, "instead of going for iphones, and other personal belongings, as young people, it is better to invest in our future, by acquiring knowledge and that is why I attended this event and also registered for the academy."

Entrepreneurs Launch Real Estate Academy in Akwa Ibom

From Lovina Emole, Uyo

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Opinion

Beyond The Touted Marginalization Of Igbo Traders In Lagos

It goes without saying that Nigeria is a plural society of diverse tribes, ethnicity and cultural persuasions, which makes for a charged atmosphere in daily interactions and course of doing business. This comes to the fore, more often than not, because a huge chunk of the population is semiliterate, at best. Despite this multiplicity of tribes and tongues, Nigeria, essentially, stands on a tribal tripod: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

These are the three prominent tribes that either promote mutual coexistence in the country or, conversely, drive the attendant fissures. Regrettably, the story of Nigeria has more to do with the latter than the former. The fissures indeed are gaping and bursting at the seams. Even before the Nigerian civil war of 1967 - 1970, when the Hausa and Yoruba tribes connived and almost genocided the Igbo and their nascent Biafra out of existence, the tension of mutual coexistence had always lurked at the background. There is always palpable tension and mutual suspicion. Ethnic coloration is rife and a

given.

These tensions and mutual distrusts rear their ugly heads mostly during elections. The last elections of 2023 was no exception. Unscrupulous politicians take undue advantage of this situation to pitch one tribe against the other, just to attain their selfish, political interests.

Since the last general election, Ndi-Igbo - a tribe gifted in trade and merchandise - have come under heavy attack in Lagos, it would appear. This saw many of their shops and businesses being brazenly demolished. Their wares and places of doing business have been bulldozed in Alaba, Lekki, Lagos Mainland, Ladipo, Ikeja and the list goes on. Even their residential quarters have not been entirely left out.

There's no gainsaying that a lot of Igbo traders lost their sources of livelihood since the last election, but a deep introspection will reveal that there is more to it than meets the eye. To say the least, the Lagos State government has been brazen and most uncharitable

in this demolitions. The State government says it is on a drive to clear the waterways, demolish buildings without permit and dilapidated structures that pose a threat to the environment.

According to the General Manager of the Lagos State Building Control Agency, Gbolahan Oki, the government is demolishing "physically distressed" buildings in the markets. He went further, "All illegal structures that would endanger the lives of business men and women will be pulled down. Such buildings are at risk of imminent collapse and also poses great danger to other adjoining buildings/structures in the market.

"The demolitions are to enforce building regulations and prevent building collapse. Some lack permits and necessary documentation".

In spite of these reasons, politicians invoke ethnic coloration to hoodwink and gaslight their tribe to undermine the apparently good intentions of the

government, all in a bid to achieve their selfish interests.

Ndi-Igbo say they're targeted and punished for their political persuasions. Their crime being that they dared field a parallel candidate for the 2023 presidential election in the person of Peter Obi of the Labour Party, who is of Igbo extraction, as against a Yoruba man, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress. The political fireworks didn't end at the presidential level. Even locally, at the State level, while the cream of the Yoruba population in Lagos rooted for the incumbent Babajide Sanwo-Olu for governorship of the State, the Igbo found accommodation with Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivor of the Labour Party. Adding to the mix and intrigues, Rhodes-Vivor's wife and mother are both of Igbo extraction, sending the wrong vibes of Ndi-Igbo wanting to take over the political apparatus of Lagos, as it were.



How can I manage it?

My husband informed me that he will be having a visitor, who is also his business partner and a very good friend. He dropped three thousand, seven hundred naira (N3,700) on the table. ~~My husband told me to prepare food for his visitor.~~ He is coming home to have lunch, his friend likes pounded yam and doesn't eat red meat.

I tried to explain to him that the money, he dropped won't be enough, he ignored me and walked out. Will the N3700 be enough for white meat let alone the ingredients that I will be using to prepare the soup? It is true that, we have yam in the house, just tell me how can I manage it?

I used the money to prepare yam porridge instead of cooking rice, because he likes yam. His visitor came and refused to eat the food I presented to him, when he left, my husband called me a disgrace. This is causing trouble in our house right now.

Please Auntie Eby, if you were in my shoe, tell me how you would have managed such amount of money to prepare the food of his choice. And what will I do to earn my husband's forgiveness?

Anurika - Onitsha

Anurika, go quietly before your husband and ask him for forgiveness, promising him that you will not derail from his instruction ever again. He will forgive you. As a helper and a wife, you are supposed to support with money from your purse to make him proud before his visitor.

For him to have told you that, his friend would take lunch in your house means he had been eating in his friend's house also. Actually, you disgraced your husband and he is supposed to be angry with you. Assuming, you have no money, you should have managed the money judiciously to prepare soup meant for just two persons,

since there is yam in the house.

The money is not enough to prepare soup for the whole family, I mean children inclusive, yes, I know, but then you should have tried otherwise, like prepare small soup for just your husband and his friend.

Why not cook bitter leaf soup?

Let's follow it this way: Bitter leaf - N300, cocoyam (Ede) - N400, crayfish - N400, Dryfish (Mbaso) - N500, Kpomo (isiEfi) N1,000, use the remaining 700 to buy two pieces of big snail (Eju). You have red oil, maggi, salt, pepper and onions in the house, use a small pot and cook the soup to good taste. Prepare the pounded yam dish out to your husband's visitor with three or four pieces of kpomo and the two snails including some pieces of dried fish in a beautiful bowl. You also present to your husband his own food because they are not going to eat in the bowl of soup just that no snail will be in your husband's soup. This is to make him proud and remember to pay him back because the snail is also good for him.

Least I forget, find out from your husband if the visitor likes snail before you prepare the soup, if the answer is "No" then buy a piece of stock fish for say N700, from the market to replace the snail. Make your home a happy one and be polite in your explanations so that your husband will listen and see reasons with you.

Should I say "Yes"?

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu,

My mother is introducing me to a man, who I have no interest in, because he is a son of her friend, beside he is rich. Should I say "YES"? I thought it is good for me to choose a man and introduce to my mother as my suitor, she doesn't know my choice. I tried explaining to her but she insisted.

Chioma - Umuahia

Chy, that you know that money is not everything, gave me a reason to believe you know what you want and what is good for you. Be yourself, try to convince your mother, explain to her certain things you cannot cope with if you are forced to marry a man who is not your choice. Your mother believes that, she cannot lead you astray and she knows what is good for you. At the same time, she wants you to marry a rich man so as to enjoy life, but she might not know that, it is not every rich man that makes their wives happy. The money may be there but how about love? Money cannot buy happiness and peace of mind in

the home. If your mother insists that she wants the man in question to be her son-in-law, because of her friendship with his mother, you should know that "all that glitters are not gold". Maybe she believes that the devil she knows is better than the angel she doesn't know. Give the man a chance for cordial relationship with you so you can get to know the kind of person he is. He might be a good man and what you want actually, otherwise take it to God in prayer, His direction is the ultimate

I made up my mind not to travel home.

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu, I wonder how and what to do concerning this Easter period, initially, I made up my mind not to travel home because I don't have money. There is a compulsory meeting in my kindred that everybody must attend. Last time, it was hell and shame for me; all of my mates are driving cars. I stayed indoor because I cannot meet up with them. Even my own parents were not happy with me and I wasn't happy with myself either. Please Auntie Eby, tell me what to do, is it better to stay away from the meeting?

Obinna - Aba

Obiano, make sure you are present in your kindred's meeting. That you do not have your own car now should not stop you from attending. You don't know tomorrow, do not hurt yourself or do something stupid in search of money to buy a car or get involved in unholy vices.

Remember, the story of fowl when he refused to attend animal's meeting, his absence at the meeting made other animals to reach a consensus that it will be using as a sacrificial lamb replacing other animals and also for consumption purposes.

Today, men kill fowl for meat more than any other animals, so it is good you join others in taking decisions made in your kindred. Be happy and believe God, for you will make it. Use this season to build your relationship with God, for Jesus Christ is the reason for the season. Explain certain things to your parents. Let them know you need their blessings, love and good advice not being unhappy with yourself. Don't feel inferior before your mates, come out and interact with people, be bold and nice. God will bless your hand-work and it will be your own turn, people will also admire you.

Foreign

Sudan's Military Regains Control Of TV And Radio Headquarters From RSF After Intense Fighting

Sudan's military says it has regained control of the country's national radio and television headquarters from a rival paramilitary group it has been battling for about a year.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces seized the headquarters of Sudan's Radio and Television in the first weeks of Sudan's

Sudan's military says it has regained control of the country's national radio and television headquarters from a rival paramilitary group it has been battling for about a year.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces seized the headquarters of Sudan's Radio and Television in the first weeks of Sudan's

conflict which broke out in April last year after long-simmering tensions between its commander and the head of the military.

In a statement midday the military said it took over the headquarters buildings in the city of Omdurman from RSF fighters who fled the area. It also posted footage online showing its soldiers inside the

headquarters.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF.

The seizure came after months of intense fighting between the warring sides.

The conflict has wrecked Khartoum and other urban cities across the Northeastern African nation. In the western region of

Israel-Gaza War: David Cameron Says BBC Report Into Nasser Hospital Raid 'very Disturbing'

David Cameron has said the BBC report about Palestinian medical staff in Gaza being beaten and humiliated by Israeli troops is "very disturbing".

The foreign secretary called for "answers from the Israelis".

Three medical staff told the BBC they were humiliated, beaten, doused with cold water, and forced to kneel for hours. They said they were detained for days.

Israel said "any abuse of detainees is strictly prohibited".

Lord Cameron told the House of Lords: "These are very disturbing pictures and reports that have come out from this hospital and we need to get to the bottom of what exactly happened and we need answers from the Israelis about that."

The foreign secretary was questioned about the BBC's report by Labour peer, Lord Collins of Highbury, during a series of questions about the Israel-Gaza conflict in the upper chamber.

Mr Cameron's deputy in the House of Commons Andrew Mitchell called for an investigation and a "full explanation" when responding to questions from MPs.

Asked about the BBC report, Foreign Office minister Mr Mitchell said: "There needs to be a full and thorough investigation and accountability for what was reported by

David Cameron has said the BBC report about Palestinian medical staff in Gaza being beaten and humiliated by Israeli troops is "very disturbing".

The foreign secretary called for "answers from the Israelis".

Three medical staff told the BBC they were humiliated, beaten, doused with cold



David Cameron, former Prime Minister, United Kingdom

India's New Citizenship Law Excludes Muslims. Why?.

India has implemented a controversial citizenship law that has been widely criticized for excluding Muslims, a minority community whose concerns have heightened under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government.

The rules for the law which have already been announced. It establishes a religious test for migrants from every major South Asian faith other than Islam. Critics argue that the law is further evidence that Modi's government is trying to reshape the country into a Hindu state and marginalize its 200 million Muslims.

The Citizenship Amendment Act provides a fast track to naturalization for Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians who fled to Hindu-majority India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The law excludes Muslims, who are a majority in all three nations.

It also amends the old law, which prevents illegal migrants from becoming Indian citizens, and marks the first time that India — an officially secular state — has set religious criteria for citizenship.

The Indian government has said those eligible can apply for Indian citizenship through an online portal.

The implementation of the law has been one of the key poll promises of Modi's ruling

Bharatiya Janata Party in the run-up to the general election, which is scheduled to be held by May.

Modi's government has dismissed the notion that the law is discriminatory and defended it as a humanitarian gesture. It argues the law is meant only to extend citizenship to religious minorities fleeing persecution and would not be used against Indian citizens.

Source the associated press



Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi

Russia Says It Killed 234 Fighters While Thwarting An Incursion From Ukraine

Russian officials say Ukrainian long-range drones have smashed into two oil facilities deep inside Russia

The attack by waves of drones across eight regions of Russia displayed Kyiv's expanding technological capacity as the war extends into its third year. The cross-border ground assault also weakened President Vladimir Putin's argument that life in Russia has been unaffected by the war, though he remains all but certain to win another six-year term after eliminating all opposition.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that Moscow's military and security forces killed 234 fighters while thwarting the incursion. In a statement, the ministry blamed the attack on the "Kyiv regime" and "Ukraine's terrorist formations," insisting that the Russian military and border forces were able to stop the attackers and avert a cross-border raid. It also said the attackers lost seven tanks and five armored vehicles.

The reports of border fighting earlier were murky, and it was impossible to ascertain with any certainty what was unfolding in Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions. Cross-border attacks in the area have occurred sporadically since the war

began and have been the subject of claims and counterclaims, as well as disinformation and propaganda.

Soldiers who Kyiv officials say are Russian volunteers fighting for Ukraine claimed to have crossed the border. The Freedom of Russia Legion, the Russian Volunteer Corps and the Siberian Battalion released statements and videos on social media claiming to show them on Russian territory. They said they wanted "a Russia liberated from Putin's dictatorship."

The authenticity of the videos couldn't be independently verified.

Fighters coming out of Ukraine attempted to reach the town of Tetkino, which lies close to the border, according to the governor of Russia's Kursk region, Roman Starovoit. He said Tetkino was being shelled.

"There was an attempt by a sabotage and reconnaissance group to break through. There was a shooting battle, but there was no breakthrough," he said in a video message on Telegram.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the Tetkino attacks were driven back, but

provided no further details.

It also said Ukrainian fighters made at least four attempts to cross into the Belgorod region but all attacks were repelled by warplanes, artillery and missiles.

The representative of Ukraine's intelligence agency, Andrii Yusov, told Ukrainska Pravda that the military groups are made up of Russian citizens.

"On the territory of the Russian Federation, they operate completely autonomously and independently," he said.

In May, Russia alleged that dozens of Ukrainian militants crossed into one of its border towns in the Belgorod region, striking targets and forcing an evacuation, before more than 70 of the attackers were killed or pushed back by what the authorities termed a counterterrorism operation. Ukrainian officials have denied any link with the group.

Meanwhile, one Ukrainian drone struck and set ablaze an oil refinery in the Nizhny Novgorod region, according to regional governor Gleb Nikitin. That region is located some about 775 kilometers (480 miles) from the Ukraine border.

In another deep strike, a drone was shot

down in the Moscow region, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyenin said. Though it was brought down well south of the city center, the drone was close to Zhukovsky Airport, one of Moscow's four international airports.

Another drone hit an oil depot in Oryol, 116 kilometers (95 miles) from Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said last year that his country had developed a weapon that hit a target 700 kilometers (400 miles) away, in an apparent reference to drones.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Ukrainian drones were also intercepted Tuesday over the Belgorod, Bryansk, Kursk, Leningrad and Tula regions of Russia.

Kyiv has staged increasingly bold attacks behind the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line running through eastern and southern Ukraine. It has also increasingly deployed sea drones in the Black Sea, where it claims to have sunk Russian warships.

Kyiv's forces are hoping for more military supplies from Ukraine's Western partners, but in the meantime are struggling against a bigger and better-provisioned Russian army that is pressing hard at certain front-line points inside Ukraine.

Features

Revolutionizing Agriculture for Food Security

By Dickson Paul

Looking at the state of Nigeria's economy, many Nigerians are giving up hope on the possibility of Nigeria working again as a country. This is so because, things are getting worse on daily basis. In spite of leadership failure, Nigeria is still blessed, and it can work again.

Agriculture as we know, is the cultivation of crops and rearing of animals for food and commercial purposes. At least, these two main reasons compel people to go into the practice. Though, the above definition is primary and we believe that Nigerians take to agriculture for any of the above.

Nigeria as a nation, should not have been sufficient ravage by hunger and food scarcity had it been there was responsible and responsive government with good agricultural policies over the years. What is happening now shows that we are not food secured and exist without reserve, this indicates our utmost undoing in the agricultural sector of the economy.

We Should not talk about food scarcity because, agriculture is as old as humanity. Our experience today is as a result of improper planning and unseriousness on the part of government.

Nigeria as a nation is rich and sufficiently blessed with both natural and human resources. The land is fertile and productive. The weather is also conducive for agriculture.

And according to studies, no photosynthesis, no green vegetation. It means, this and few other elements form food for animal and human consumption. Talking about nations with agricultural requirements, Nigeria is among, having excellent supply of surface and underground water not forgetting arable lands and good climate. That is not all, some states in experience eight month of rainfall yearly. Nigeria has eight months of rainfall in many parts of the country. Here in Nigeria, we have rivers and rivulets unlike Israel that has only one source of fresh water and they are exporting food.

A Country with 950 kilometres of coastal land from Badagry to Calabar for fishery and aquaculture should not complain of food shortage unless there is incompetence on the part of government. Honesty, we have all that we need to be food sufficient in every way.



According to research, countries with food security, have a strategic food reserve policy which covers major agricultural commodities for both processed and unprocessed including high level of private sector involvement in strategic food reserve at all levels of government reflecting private/public sector partnership.

Some reasonable Nigerians see the budgetary allocation for agriculture as immaterial as well as serious political joke. With the available arable lands in the country coupled with 90 per cent that is ever green, we are supposed to be food sufficient. We have dams for irrigation which facilitate dry season vegetable production among other agricultural

out-puts but still, we are sharefully fed by a war-on Ukraine nation, alas!

We are bigger than China for example in terms of land but the people are still okay

despite deficiency. Nigeria has the human capacity unlike most of the food secured nations. Among the contributing factors to food shortage is that government has not given agriculture the needed attention and politics are played with the sector even in appointments, programmes, policies among other obstructions.

The government of Nigeria at all levels have deceived the

people so much with agriculture claiming to improve on the sector. They also made us to believe that they have done so much while some so called projects are not traceable because, Nigerian politicians preferred projects that are not traceable and auditable.

A close watch on the agric development in Nigeria shows that, all the while, what the government has been

A close watch on the agric development in Nigeria shows that, all the while, what the government has been doing is to improve the lots of peasant farmers to some extent.



they (government) provides enabling environment since the nation has the needed land and other elements for agriculture to thrive.

The truth is that agriculture is still unattractive to many Nigerians especially, the youths who see the practice as very tedious and an unprofitable venture that depicts low life/locality. As such, people would rather operate a bike (Okada).

Furthermore, investigation revealed that another militating factor against agricultural development in Nigeria is lack of access to loan. The inability to access credit that will facilitate productivity, goes a long way in obstructing commercial agriculture cum food security.

These among other reasons make it very difficult for us to export. Though, it was ridiculous when Nigerians heard that the EFCC arrested trucks loaded with food stuff heading to neighboring countries even when Nigeria cannot feed her citizens, this is not only an "economic sabotage but also wickedness from the pit of hell".

Government should sit up and stand up to their responsibilities so that it can create an atmosphere whereby business can succeed. Let government make infrastructures available as these will lubricate agriculture and other developments. There should be improvement on power supply, effective security, motorable road network, marketing system and other economic drivers that will also fast track a position move in agricultural development and food security.

Both federal and state governments should toe the line of Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umar Bago who on 11th March, 2024 launched mechanisation and revolution of agriculture in the state performed by President Bola Tinubu in Minna, where 300 tractors were purchased for the revolution project.

Even at the local government level, agriculture should be encouraged. It is gradually becoming an escape route to food sufficiency. All hands should be on deck to ensure food reserve as well as reliable green alternative.

doing is to improve the lots of peasant farmers to some extent. When we talk about agriculture, we mean a serious venture not political deception as seen over the years. Agriculture is scientific, commercial and educationally encapsulated not the archaic and nomadic culture of moving cattle here and there or planting half an acre of cassava, maize and other crops depending on your strength or that of the family. We are talking about agriculture for sufficiency and exportation. The problem is that we see the venture as unattractive and only for the poor.

Some may even consider it to be a profession for the rural dwellers. Honestly, we lost focus of what is agriculture. Nigerian government should think about agric investment where people sit on a device and move on a large scale of land and of course, it is capital intensive.

It is not a must that the government at all levels should be directly involved in agric development but they should create the enabling environment to encourage people to engage in commercial agriculture on large scale basis considering the financial involvement.

But from a look at the situation, government may not do much in this area. We are yet to see serious preparation to invest in agriculture.

Some Nigerians are of the view that it will be brilliant if the government should source investors in agriculture while

FASHION BLUNDERS THAT DEVALUE YOUR APPEARANCE

Fashion tips
 with
Sandra Chibuike
 08038311355

Fashion keeps evolving. It is also cyclical. The beautiful floral long dress that trends today may become outdated tomorrow. Most people are caught up in the crazy web of keeping up with the trends, that unfortunately, they have lost the personal uniqueness and comfort that are essential in maintaining a good fashion sense. Trends come and go, many of them may be revamped in two decades and forgotten thereafter till the next go-round.

However, there are the very timeless fashion trends that have remained over the decades. Whichever way you choose to follow, as it concerns fashion, be sure to maintain a moderate and elegant fashion trend. Stay off these mistakes that can devalue your appearance.

1. THREADS PULLING OUT OF YOUR CLOTHES:

No matter how neatly dressed you may look, the sight of untrimmed threads pulling out from your clothing, cheapens your appearance. It may give an impression that you are careless.



2. BRA STRAPS/ SINGLET PEEKING OUT OF YOUR OUTFIT:

Bra by default is an undergarment, which normally should stay hidden. Unfortunately some fashion slaves have altered the normal and introduced a rather indecent trend. But the right thing remains, undergarment should stay under. It doesn't make you less a fashionista, rather it improves on your elegance. The same goes for the males when they wear their singlets.



3. WEARING OVERLY REVEALING OUTFITS:

Elegant ladies do not reveal everything. From the tops to the downs, keep the private parts properly covered. Exposing everything projects a bad image of you as a lady. Leave off some parts to the imagination.



4. WEARING DIFFERENT PATTERNS IN ONE CLOTHING:

It is a fashion blunder to put on too many patterns in one outfit. A striped top cannot be paired with a polka dot. Neither can you wear a red background floral top on another floral trouser or skirt.

5. ALWAYS WEARING SLIDES:

Slides popularly known as slippers are casuals. They should not replace your formal footwear. When you are dressing up for an official event like business meeting, or a date with a friend, it is not fashion wise to wear slides. However, there are slides that can match perfectly with some kind of attires; for instance traditional attires. For the female gender, they can go for slightly heeled slides. Whilst the gents do the flat ones. But making them your permanent footwear for every occasion is a no no!



6. COLOR BLOCKING :

Some people like to always make fashion statements, which is rather weird. It is maturity to know how to tone down your color combinations. For instance, combining a brightly colored shirt with a neutral trouser, tan dress with a pair of yellow shoes, or you can do a monochrome outfit. Putting on too many colors in one outfit, looks like a show-off.

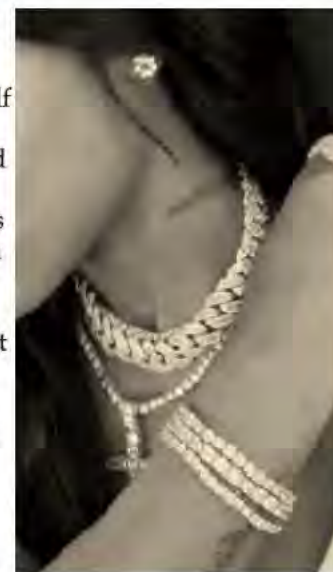


7. VISIBLE PANTY LINES (VPL):

Apart from being a fashion mistake, it is not good for the optics. Panty lines become visible when either of these happens; one is wearing undersized panties, the outer clothing is tight enough to reveal the lines, or one is wearing both the undersized panties and tight outfit. VPL cheapens one's appearance. It is good to wear what fits properly.

8. OVERDOING THE BLINGS:

It is ok to adorn yourself with jewelries appropriate for the kind of outfit you are wearing. But it becomes a fashion blunder when you put on too many jewelries in one outfit. For the jewelry freaks, it is advisable to keep it simple sometimes, too much of the blings will devalue your appearance.



9. WEARING MISMATCHED ACCESSORIES :

This happens when you combine, different colors of accessories that do not compliment each other. For instance, when you wear silver jewelries and put on a dress with gold buttons, or wear a brown belt with black shoes (for the guys) you have simply mismatched your accessories. Therefore you should pay attention to the ornaments your accessories are decked with, also find out colors that compliment each other, just so you do not mismatch them.

10. GAPING SHIRT/TOP:

Even if a button-down shirt fits you correctly, you may still be left with those pesky, gaping holes in between buttons around the bust area. It looks tacky and it devalues your appearance. Smooth and conceal those gaps by applying double-sided tape in between buttons!



If ever you find yourself stuck in any of these mistakes, please do well to come out fast. When you think fashion, think elegance and follow the right trend.

■ Photo credit: PINS

SPORTING AMBASSADOR

With Jacob Joseph



Emmanuel Amunike

Antonio Conceicao

2024 AFRICAN GAMES: The Nigeria Challenge

Team Nigeria is part of the 53 countries vying for honors at the ongoing 13th edition of the Africa Games in Ghana.

Nigeria is being represented by 358 athletes competing for medals in 25 sports. Some of the events have more at stake than just the medal as they serve as qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Events like table tennis, athletics, cycling, badminton, swimming, boxing and triathlon will serve as qualification for the Olympics.

As at press time Nigeria is second on the medals table with a total of 62 medals comprising of 23 gold medals, 18 silver medals and 21 bronze medals.

In the last edition hosted by Morocco in 2019, Nigeria came second, behind Egypt, with 130 medals.

The last time Nigeria won the African Games was in 2003 when it was hosted in Abuja. Nigeria won 85 gold medals, 90 silver medals and 65 bronze medals to win the Games with a total of 240 medals.

PESEIRO SUCCESSOR: Foreign or Indigenous Coach?

Stories by Joseph Jacob

Jose Peseiro has moved on after he failed to reach a contract extension agreement with the Nigerian Football Federation (NFF). In the initial agreement, Peseiro was given the target of reaching the semi-final of this year's AFCON, which he surpassed by taking the team to the final.

The NFF are in search of a new coach and unconfirmed reports have it that the Nigerian football authorities are hoping to unveil a new coach before the international friendlies the Super Eagles will play against Ghana and Mali in Morocco, between March 22 and 26.

The fans are polarized as to whether the glass house should go for a foreign or an indigenous coach. Both foreign and indigenous coaches have brought Nigeria glory in the past.

When Nigeria won her first AFCON title on home soil in 1980, the Green Eagles as the Super Eagles were then called were coached by Otto Gloria from Brazil.

Fourteen years later, another foreign coach, Clemens Westerho from Netherlands coached the Super Eagles to another African conquest in Tunisia.

Nigeria became the first African team to win a gold medal in the football event of the Olympic Games in Atlanta 96 and the Dream Team was led by another Dutchman Jo Bonfrere. Similarly, indigenous coaches have left their foot prints in the sands of time.

Former Super Eagles captain, Stephen Keshi led the Super Eagles to win the 2013 AFCON and led Nigeria beyond the group stages of the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Late Yemi Tella led the Golden Eaglets to conquer Africa and later the world in the 2007 U-17 AFCON and World Cup respectively. Manu Garba and Emmanuel Amunike repeated

the same feat in the 2013 and 2015 U-17 World Cup respectively.

So it is obvious that both local and foreign coaches have made appreciable impacts on our football. Why then are the fans polarized as whether the NFF should go for foreign or local coach?

Many fans feel that hiring a foreign coach is a colonial mentality whereby the Europeans are portrayed to be superior to Africans. They foreign coaches earn higher and are given better working conditions than local coaches.

Secondly, foreign coaches prefer to spend most of their time abroad monitoring foreign players and overlook the local league and home-based players.

Those against local coaches have their own reasons too: Local coaches are often easily intimidated by football authorities who want to interfere with national team call-ups and team selection to the detriment of team performance.

Secondly, there is this Nigerian sentiment of carrying every ethnic group in the country along instead of the best and most qualified. An indigenous coach will be most likely be swayed by such sentiments than a foreign coach, who does not care about local sentiments. All he needs is success and he will not let local sentiment impede his success.

Furthermore, local coaches may not command the respect of players, who most times play in Europe under a more respected coach than the local coach and earn higher than the coach. Local coaches are often tactically deficient as they either refuse to or could not afford to attend refresher courses, which impacts on their ability to properly read games and make the right substitutions.

Lastly, some local coaches have been

accused of taking bribes from players and their agents.

Unconfirmed reports have it that Emmanuel Amunike, US U-19 coach, Michael Nsien and former Cameroon national team coach, Antonio Conceicao from Portugal are all interested in the Super Eagles job.

So, what do you think, should the NFF go for a foreign or local coach?



Nigerian wrestlers sweep the gold medals

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTER-FINAL DRAWS: Manchester City to face Real Madrid

The draws for the quarter-finals and semi-finals of this season's UEFA Champions League took place last Friday at the UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, with mouth-watering fixtures emerging.

Defending champions, Manchester City will take on the most successful side of the competition, Real Madrid, whom they thrashed 5-1 on aggregate in the semi-finals on their way to clinching the title last season, as Paris St Germain lurk horns with Barcelona, who eliminated Victor Osimhen's Napoli.

Arsenal will continue their search for a first Champions League title with a big clash with Bayern Munich, who parades English marksman, Harry Kane while Atletico Madrid will take on Borussia Dortmund.

The first leg of the quarter-final matches will



The covered UEFA Champions League Trophy

take place in the mid-week of April 9 and 10 while the second leg will take place a week later.

Arsenal will face fellow Premier League side, Manchester City in the last four if both sides survive the quarter-final.

International Friendly: Super Eagles Set for Ghana, Mali

By Joseph Jacob

The Super Eagles of Nigeria will lurk horns with the Black Stars of Ghana and the Eagles of Mali in international friendly matches at the Grande Stade de Marrakech in Morocco on March 22 and 26 respectively.

Following the departure of Jose Peseiro, the Nigerian Football Federation technical director, Austine Eguavoen will serve as the interim coach pending the appointment of a new head coach.

This will be Nigeria's first outing since the Africa Cup of Nation, where they finished second after losing the final to host, Cote d'Ivoire 2-1.

Some of that AFCON winning squad have been dropped from the 26 players named for these friendly

matches. They are Jo Aribio of Southampton, Samuel Chukwueze of AC Milan, Paul Onuachu of Trabzonspor of Turkey, Ahmed Musa of ShamsAzar, Terem Moffi of Nice, William Troost-Ekong of PAOK FC, Ola Aina of Nottingham Forest and Zaidu Sanusi of Porto.

There are first call-ups for Gabriel Osho of Luton Town of England and Benjamin Tainimu, who plays for Tanzania side, Ihefu Sports Club.

Other returnees to the squad are Fisayo Dele-Bashiru, Nathan Tella, Tyronne Ebuehi, Cyriel Dessers and Jamilu Collins.

Matches between Nigeria and Ghana are like derbies and are therefore fiercely contested even if it is just a

Matches between Nigeria and Ghana are like derbies and are therefore fiercely contested even if it is just a friendly match. This Friday's encounter will not be an exception.



Super Eagles of Nigeria

friendly match. This Friday's encounter will not be an exception.

Recall that the most recent meetings between both sides was a 2022 World Cup qualifiers. After a goalless first leg in Accra on Mar 25, 2022, the second leg took place at the Moshood Abiola Stadium in Abuja four days later and the encounter ended 1-1. Ghana qualified on the away goals rule.

While Nigeria reached the final of the last AFCON, Ghana had a disastrous outing, crashing out in the group stages after drawing two and losing one of their

three group matches.

This friendly is important to the Black Stars as they want to bounce back to winning ways.

Four days later, Nigeria will take on the Eagles of Mali. The last time Nigeria met Mali was in WAFU Cup of Nations in 2017 and the encounter ended goalless.

Their last competitive meeting was at the semi-final of the 2013 AFCON in South Africa. The Super Eagles of

Nigeria hammered the Eagles of Mali 4-1, to reach the final and eventually won their third AFCON title.

At the just concluded AFCON, Mali won their group and reached the quarter-final, where they lost 2-1 after extra-time to the host and eventual winners, Cote d'Ivoire. So they Eagles will definitely give Nigeria a run for their money.



Andre Ayew in tears after Ghana's elimination at the AFCON