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“Uplift the people, project the nation”

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Gov Otti Launches Disbursement Of 1 Billion Interest-Free Loan For 10,000 Abia Entrepreneurs

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, has officially launched the Disbursement of One Billion Naira Interest Free Revolving Loan under the State Cooperative Support Scheme for 10,000 beneficiaries.

The scheme, aimed at

empowering women and young entrepreneurs targets Nano and Micro businesses across the state's 184 wards, Speaking at the Launch, held at the International Conference Center, Umuahia, Governor Otti emphasized that the scheme represents his

administration's practical commitment to supporting Nano, Micro, and Small-scale entrepreneurs. Otti who acknowledged the industrious spirit and potential of Abians, highlighted that 70% of the beneficiaries are women and young entrepreneurs and

added that the scheme would enhance their businesses, improve family incomes and contribute to the economic growth of their communities "Our administration is very particular about developing the business-consciousness of the people at the

grassroots because it is the most effective way to tackle the crisis of endemic poverty, and worrisome unemployment rate. "As we had said many times before now, Ndi Abia are very industrious and will move mountains if given the rightsupport.

"Today, we are now matching words with action by identifying no less than 10, 000 hardworking individuals who shall immediately benefit from a one billion naira interest-free credit facility to support their enterprises in different parts of the State.

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Ndoki Community Accuses Monarch Of Corrupt Practices

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The people of Ohuru Ndoki in Ukwa-East Local Government Area, Abia State, have accused their traditional ruler, HRM Eze Obinna H. Nwagbara, of mismanagement of public properties and gross abuse of office, among others.

In a letter addressed to the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Prince Uzor Nwachukwu, copied to Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, Commissioner of Police, Mayor, Ukwa-East Council, Dr. Ngozi Nwagbara among others, they alleged that the traditional ruler, conspired with Mr. Henry Nwaigwe and Thank God Ekeke and sold nine pieces of electricity transformers (consisting of six 500 KVA and three 300 KVA), belonging to the community and converted the proceeds to personal use.

The petition which was also sighted by our reporter, further accused the royal father of fraudulently converting HR3 Lister, donated by Anambra/Imo Rivers Basin Authority to the community to his personal property as well as sold theatre beds, refrigerator, and other equipment belonging to Ohuru Health Centre.

Contributing, an indigene of the community, Mr. Darlington Ahunanya, alleged that Eze Nwagbara has been selling the community palm fruits which generates over N1,800,000 monthly and has refused to account for the proceeds, nor embarked on any developmental project with the proceeds.

Ahunanya also accused the traditional ruler of suffocating Ohuru Development Union and Youth wing of the community, explaining that those groups should have served as checks to the activities of the community

ruler.

They further accused Eze Nwagbara of destroying some of the cultural artifacts of the community, calling on the Abia State governor, to urgently investigate the corruption cases leveled against Eze Nwagbara, to forestall breakdown of law and order.

They vowed to take Eze Nwagbara to court of justice if Abia State Government refuses to help them recover the community property.

Reacting to the allegations, the traditional ruler of Ohuru Ndoki Autonomous Community and the Chairman, Traditional Rulers Council, Ukwa-East LGA Chapter, Eze Obinna H. Nwagbara, denied the allegations.

He explained that Ohuru used to have 11 electric transformers, but the Council-of-Chiefs and Eze-in-council, unanimously disposed six transformers as scraps, adding that they were not in good shapes.

On the alleged HRS Lister, Refrigerator and hospital beds belonging to Ohuru Health Centre which he allegedly converted to personal use, Eze Nwagbara also denied it, noting that the health centre is not part of his jurisdiction, maintaining that the facility has a government employee who is in-charge.

Also in his reaction, Mr. ThankGod Ekeke said that those issues raised by the petitioners were false insisting that the electricity transformers sold were in bad shape.

Efforts to reach Mr. Henry Nwaigwe proved abortive as calls and text messages put across to his phone line, got no response, as at the time of filing this report.



The SSA to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Adefulire with Governor Otti on an inspection tour of some of the equipments in the SDG Multipurpose Hospital, Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State.

NULGE Identified As A Critical Agent Of Governance

Ndubueze Ngozi

The Nigerian Union of Local Government of Employees (NULGE) State chapter paid a courtesy visit to his office at Government House Umuahia, pointed out that any government that wants to touch the people's lives

when the new executive must take the union seriously. Prof Kalu maintained that the present administration led by Governor Alex Otti is determined to rebuild the state and has not toyed with the welfare of Abia workers. He revealed that salaries are paid when due. The SSG called on them to see themselves as agents of government at the grassroots, hence contribute their quota on the rebuilding agenda of Governor Otti.

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News

Governor's Aid Calls For Unified Efforts In Combating Drug Abuse

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Oluebube A. Chukwu Foundation, (OACF), a non governmental organization, has called for sustained collaboration between agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies in the ongoing fight against drug abuse.

Founder of the OACF and Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Due Process, Dr Oluebube Chukwu, made the call while speaking on the sidelines of the 2024 United Nations Day Against Illicit Trafficking and Drug Abuse.

The event, themed "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention," was organized by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in Umuahia recently.

Dr Chukwu who underscored the need for a united front to address the prevalent issue, noted that the fight against substance abuse requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders.

"Substance abuse is not just a problem for individuals; it affects families, communities, and the nation as a whole. We need everyone, young people, parents, educators, community leaders, and policymakers, to join hands and work towards a drug-free society".

The governor's aide who stated that the 2024 United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse serves as a crucial opportunity to reflect on the progress made and address upcoming challenges, urged stakeholders to join in the collective effort to combat and support those affected by substance abuse.

Describing youths as the future leaders, Dr. Chukwu tasked them to be at the forefront of the anti-drug movement and ambassadors of a drug-free, healthier and more prosperous nation.

Dr Chukwu highlighted the importance of preventive measures, education, and awareness campaigns to curb the rise of substance abuse among youths.

"Education is key and by informing our youths about the dangers of drug abuse and providing them with the tools to make healthy choices, we can prevent many from falling into the trap of addiction", Dr Chukwu stated.

He appealed to international organizations to increase support for local initiatives aimed at reducing drug abuse and added that Global cooperation is essential to enhance resources, as well as foster an environment where youths can thrive without the threat of substance abuse.

Chukwu commended the Governor Alex Otti led administration and the NDLEA

for their relentless efforts in combating illicit drug abuse noting that their partnership has been "a cornerstone in the fight against the scourge of drug abuse".

"Their dedication and hard work have set a foundation upon which we must build a stronger, more collaborative approach", he

said.

The 2024 United Nations Day Against Illicit Trafficking and Drug Abuse, featured discussions on collaborative efforts and innovative approaches to strengthen the fight against drug-related issues.

The event was attended by the Abia State Governor, Dr Alex

Otti, represented by the Chief of staff, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Adaeze Emetu, key stakeholders and government officials, health professionals, community Leaders and representatives from various NGOs.

Damaged Mmam Bridge Will Soon Become History, - Hon. Ogah

- By Chinaza Onyema

Member representing Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Hon. Amobi Ogah, has assured the people of Umuobasi Autonomous Community of Isuochi in the Umunneochi Local Government Area that the issue of Mmam Bridge will soon become a thing of the past as he had already pushed for its reconstruction on the floor of the Green Chambers.

Hon. Ogah gave the assurance when he played host to a delegation of Umuobasi Town Development Union (UTDU), Abuja Branch, who paid him a visit in his office, at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja.

Leader of the UTDU delegation, Mr. Onyedikachi Spear Ekeh, had earlier during his remarks, congratulated the lawmaker on his election, on behalf of the Umuobasi Community and consoled him on the death of his mother.

The delegation, while thanking Hon. Ogah for considering two of their sons, Mr. Emeka Elem and Smart Duke Madu in key appointments, reminded the member to ensure the actualization of the reconstruction of Mmam Bridge while still in office.

The UTDU delegation includes Mr. Onyedikachi Spear Ekeh, Ogbuehi Chigozie Odoemela, Dr. Uchenna Madu, Mr. Aham Onwu, and Mr. Chukwuemeka Elem.

Recall that Hon. Ogah had in February this year, said that the abandoned Mmam Bridge serves as a constant reminder of the negative impacts of the civil war and urged the Federal Government through Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to reconstruct the bridge. He had said during plenary that 13 years after the construction of the bridge, located at Mbala Isuochi, in Abia State, it was destroyed by the National troops on September 15th, 1968, during the Nigerian/Biafran Civil War to aid their advance towards Okigwe.

According to him, "The destruction of this bridge for the past 55 years without being reconstructed which the people waited with the hope that the government would one day rebuild, cut off smooth inter-community trading between Isuochi and Oji River people in addition to the remaining parts of

the country which was existing before the destruction of the bridge.

"The Mmam Bridge served as a gateway for motorists and commuters traveling to Enugu, Onitsha, and the Northern parts of Nigeria, facilitating free trade between many communities along the path, with a smooth flourishing of economic and social activities.

"The people of Isuochi who live in cities such as Enugu, Onitsha, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria, and other parts of Western and Northern Nigeria typically pass through the Achi-Awlaw-Mmam Bridge route.

"Also, Mbala people have been cut off from neighbouring states and access to agricultural land. This has led to a lack of economic activity in Mbala town and thus, the negative impact is evident.

"With the established Mbala Cashew plantation that contributes significantly to the economy of the region where Abia State produces an estimated cashew production figure of 45,000 metric tonnes per year, it is beyond doubt that a plantation of this magnitude in Mbala can improve the economy of the state

in particular and that of the nation in general, more especially in terms of job creation opportunities which is very critical more especially, at this trial moment of youth unemployment.

"However, the bridge leading to this vital agricultural "cash cow" has been neglected for too long, over 55 years now. I am highly disturbed by this neglect and the failure of the past governments to reconstruct this Mmam Bridge despite its national economic and social importance.

"The lack of this reconstruction, unfortunately, serves as a bad reminder of the unfortunate negative impact of the civil war on the elderly and even on the youths of that Community. Its reconstruction can boost inter-community trade, farming, and other social activities in the entire region."

The house in its resolution then, urged the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to reconstruct Bridge and also mandated the House Committee on Legislative Compliance to follow up the resolution with the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to ensure compliance.

Be Good Ambassadors: SSG Advises Abia Indigenes Recruited Into Nigerian Army

By Ndubueze Ngozi

Successful candidates for the 78 Regular Recruitment intake from Abia State have been charged to embrace the opportunity of their training to learn and become outstanding soldiers in the country.

The Secretary to the State Government, (SSG), Prof. Kenneth Kalu who stated this in his farewell speech to the Abia indigenes of the 78 Regular Recruitment intake at the 14 Brigade Ohafia, congratulated them for passing the two weeks rigorous screening, adding that their decision to join the Nigerian Army is a testament of their courage and patriotism.

The SSG represented by the Permanent Secretary, office of the SSG, Lady Oge Maduka, urged them to uphold the values of peace, security and justice, as they embark on their six months training in Zaria.

Prof Kalu, who assured them that government recognizes the

sacrifices they are making and will continue to support them, called on them to make honour, dedication and commitment their watchword, because they carry the pride and integrity of a great nation.

Speaking, the State Recruitment officer Lt. Colonel O. D. Arthur, who pointed out that, out of the 170 candidate allotted for each state, 88 candidates were successful after the two weeks training and screening in the state. He disclosed that many of them were disqualified on health grounds.

He explained that the successful candidates will be leaving the state for a six months training at the Nigerian Army Depot, Zaria. Speaking; some of the candidates, Alloy Ornament from Obingwa Local Government Area, and Ekeoma John from Bende Council who pointed out that the training had been an intensive one, expressed happiness that they are among those chosen for further training in Zaria.

Gov Otti Launches Disbursement Of 1 Billion Interest-Free Loan For 10,000 Abia Entrepreneurs

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Our model is geared towards improving production, creating jobs, and reducing poverty to the barest minimum", Otti stated.

The Governor who outlined plans to extend the scheme to 100,000 businesses over the next 36 months, urged beneficiaries to repay their loans to pave way for others to benefit and ensure the scheme's sustainability.

"As soon as we begin to see a measurable rise in business consciousness amongst our people at the grassroots, we shall go into partnership with international development institutions and agencies to increase the pool of funds available for borrowing so that instead of initial 100,000 direct beneficiaries projected for the next 36 months, we can raise the estimate to about a million, or more.

"Members must remember that when an individual deliberately defaults, the resource pool is depleted, and the chances of other members benefiting become thinner", he cautioned.

The Governor, however, assured that appropriate mechanism for monitoring and assessment would be put in place and added that the Government is proposing to build a unique data-driven economic development model around the

initiative to ensure it's sustainability.

Also, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs. Blessing Felix, appreciated Governor Otti for being "consistently committed to the welfare of Abians", as well as providing support and resources to run the scheme.

In his address, the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Cooperative Societies, Hon. Ishmael Onuoha, emphasized that the interest-free loan is not a handout but is structured to reward those who generate profits with additional funds.

Hon. Onuoha who described the initiative as commendable, expressed gratitude to Governor Otti for fulfilling one of his campaign promises by providing a revolving loan to create wealth noting that it is the first time one billion Naira has been allocated to support small business operators and boost the local economy.

Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries, Pastor Mrs. Mercy Amalaha, thanked Governor Otti for the unprecedented gesture and urged fellow beneficiaries to make judicious use of the funds.

The event also featured the hand-over of 15 brand-new 18-seater Buses to the Abia state harmonized task force.

NULGE Identified As Critical Agent Of Governance

Continued from Page 1

Earlier in her speech, the new President of NULGE, Lady Linda Unaeze, said they came to present the new executive of NULGE to the SSG as well as appreciate him for his valuable contributions in assisting the governor realize his vision. She commended the ongoing developmental strides of the present administration and

urged the Governor Otti, to sustain the good work and pledged their unalloyed support to the present administration.

The State Secretary, NULGE, Comrade Ikechukwu Abugu, thanked the SSG for the warm reception. He appealed to the governor to look into the challenges facing the local government employees in the state.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Ogbu Chinyere Oma, now wish to be known and addressed as EMERUWA CHUKWUDI CHINYERE OMA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviations Umuahia and the general public should please take note.
EMERUWA CHUKWUDI CHINYERE OMA.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Chima Miracle Uchechi, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. MIRACLE UCHECHI CHUKWUMA SAMUEL. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
MRS. MIRACLE UCHECHI CHUKWUMA SAMUEL.

Reconciliation of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Chinenye Anosike Ogbonna, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. CHINENYE DANIEL. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Registrar Abia State College of Education Technical Arochuku and the general public should please take note,
MRS. CHINENYE DANIEL

I wish to state that Chidebere Moses was wrongly written in my BVN instead of Moses Chidebere Nwanja which is my true and correct name as written in my NIN and Permanent Voters Card (PVC), that both Chidebere Moses in my BVN and Moses Chidebere Nwanja are one and same person. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
MOSES CHIDIEBERE NWANJA.

News



■ The newly commissioned SDG Multi-Purpose Hospital in Ugwunagbo

Gov. Otti Commissions SDGs Multipurpose Hospital In Ugwunagbo

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has commissioned the 100 bed Sustainable development Multi-Purpose Hospital in Obeaja Autonomous Community in Ugwunagbo Council built by the Federal Government under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Speaking during the ceremony, Governor Otti thanked President Bola Tinubu for his commitment to the healthcare sector which saw to the completion of the long-abandoned project.

The governor also commended the FG for renaming the earst while SDGs Mother and Child Hospital to a Multipurpose Hospital that would accommodate the healthcare needs of other members of the society.

While emphasizing the importance of healthcare in his administrations strategic agenda, Governor Otti highlighted the 2001 Abuja Declaration, in which heads of African countries, pledged to allocate at least 15% of their budgets to the healthcare sector and pointed out that Abia State's 2024 budget has met the target.

"Healthcare occupies a major position in our strategy as a government. I am happy to report that the current 2024 budget of the Abia State government which

we are half way in implementing, allocated 15% of the budget to healthcare.

"So, what you have done here is consistent with the objective of this government", Gov Otti stated.

The governor noted that the goal of his administration for the health sector is in alignment with the Federal Government's Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to reduce maternal mortality to 70 per 1000 live births by 2030.

He said that Abia State has made significant progress in maternal health, with the state's maternal mortality rate dropping from 1,047 per 1,000 in 2020 to 531 in 2022, and further to 136 in recent reports.

The governor, however, expressed optimism about future improvements assuring that with his administrations deliberate focus on the healthcare sector, the state would witness a downturn in infant mortality rates.

"We are doing well but we are not there yet. We still have a long way to go but we have moved.

"The numbers for Abia may not be very current but I've seen numbers like 171, as at 2021. What is clear is that before this time, child or infant mortality actually increased from the numbers in 2016 & 2017 about 83 per 1000 to 2021

and the Numbers increased to 115 per 1000.

"The current numbers are not here yet but I can assure you that by the time the numbers would start coming out, we will be getting downward to actually less than 80.

"And why should it be that way, because this government is very deliberate and focused on healthcare delivery", the governor remarked.

He unveiled plans for a comprehensive medical village, designed to curb medical tourism, which costs Nigerians between \$1.6 billion and \$2 billion annually.

"Our goal is that by the time we finish with our medical village, at least 10 per cent of \$2 billion will be spent in our state," he announced.

Governor Otti who assured that the state government would assume the management of the newly commissioned hospital, promised 24-hour security, additional land for the building of doctors' quarters, and the establishment of a facility management team to maintain high standards.

In an address, the wife of the Governor, Mrs Priscilla Otti, represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs Adaeze Emetu, said that the realization of the project is part of the unwavering

commitment of the present administration in providing quality and accessible healthcare for all.

In her remarks, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Princess Adefulire, noted that the project conceived in her first tenure under former President Muhammadu Buhari has come to fulfil the dream of every mother for a safe delivery in a healthy and conducive environment.

Princess Adefulire noted that the project is in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of the President Bola Tinubu administration's commitment to prioritizing key interventions with multiplier effects on multi-dimension poverty.

She said that similar projects have been executed across the 36 states of the federation under the Sustainable Development Goals to promote the living standard of the people.

In her address, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Ifeyinwa Uma-Kalu, said the hospital was established to serve the community without limitations as women and children bear the brunt of failed systems.

She appreciated Governor Otti for changing the narratives in the healthcare services and described the project as another milestone towards achieving a sustainable and efficient healthcare services in the healthcare ecosystem of the state.

Gov Alex Otti Congratulates BIR Boss On his 2nd Inaugural Lecture

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Governor of Abia State Dr Alex Otti has congratulated the Chairman Board of Internal Revenue Prof. Udochukwu Ogbonna on his second inaugural lecture titled: "Infrastructural Development and Improved Internally Generated Revenue in Nigeria, The Buddy-Buddy companion held at Rhema University Nigeria, Aba.

Governor Otti represented by the Secretary to Abia State Government, Prof. Kenneth Kalu identified the inaugural lecture as very vital in the life of the academia and made a case for institutions of higher learning globally to focus more on solving practical Problems that will impact positively on the lives and wellbeing of the people than theoretical knowledge.

He lauded the authorities of the institution for the able way they have been piloting the affairs of the university and urged them not to relent.

He explained that the present administration has the interest of the people at heart and has embarked on massive infrastructural development across the state, adding that plans are on top gear to setting up of the Abia innovative and industrial park to attract more business opportunities in the state and urged Abians to complement the effort of the present administration by paying their taxes regularly.

Presenting the inaugural lecture titled "infrastructural development and improved internally generated revenue in Nigeria, Aba.

The chairman board of internal revenue, Prof Udochukwu Ogbonna identified internally generated revenue as a veritable tool in the enhancement of infrastructural development and called on Government to allocate more fund to infrastructural development.

In his speech, the vice chancellor, Rhema university Aba, Prof. Ogbonnaya Onwudike congratulated and commended prof Ogbonna for a thought provoking lecture as it focuses on the need for all to pay their taxes for massive development of our society.

The event which featured presentation of a plaque to Prof. Ogbonna attracted the presence of top government functionaries as well as cream de la cream in the academic world.

Igwu Bridge In Ozu Abam, A Disaster Waiting To Happen"

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Ozu Abam is arguably the largest of the 25 villages that make up Abam in Arochukwu Local Government Area of Abia State. Ozu Abam also serves as a gateway to over 20 other villages in Abam.

Abam is predominantly an agrarian community serving as one of the major food baskets of Abia State. Oil palm, cocoa and rubber plantations abound in commercial quantities in Abam. Food crops like cassava, yam, maize, potatoes are produced in very large quantities across all villages in Abam

To access Ozu Abam and by extension various other Abam communities, you will have to pass through a bridge built across the Igwu River located in Ozu Abam. This bridge variously known as Igwu bridge or Omenuko Bridge was built in the colonial era.

This same bridge also serve as alternative access to people traveling to Ohafia, Arochukwu and other communities along the Bende - Ozu Abam - Ohafia - Arochukwu road.

In the last 20 years, the bridge started showing signs of severe weakness and structural wear occasioned by old age and constant heavy traffic on it. Heavy vehicles and trucks that come to evacuate farm produce for distribution to other parts of the State and the Country, make constant use of this bridge on daily basis. The design and construction of the bridge did not take into account urbanization, increased agricultural produce and rapid population growth of the aforementioned communities.

In recent times, a lot of accidents have occurred due to the very narrow nature of the bridge, leading to loss of lives and properties.

The President-General of Ozu Abam Development Union, Capt. Chibuikwe Eke Usim decried government neglect of the bridge, which is essentially a disaster waiting to happen if urgent steps are not taken to construct a new bridge.

He complained that several pleas made to the government both at federal and state levels during past regimes were not heeded. He, therefore, called on the Abia State Government to intervene despite the fact that the Umuahia- Bende - Ozu Abam- Ohafia Road is considered a Federal Road. Usim also called on the senator representing Abia North in the Senate, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, and the member representing Arochukwu/Ohafia Federal Constituency at the Federal House of Representatives, Honourable Ibe Okwara Osonwa, to urgently intervene before over 23 communities in Abam will be cut off from the rest of the State and Country.

"The bridge is extremely narrow, currently very shaky, severely eroded, lack stanchions and on the verge of collapse. It is indeed a disaster waiting to happen. The communities served by this bridge are many and definitely deserve a safe and modern access bridge. A stitch in time saves nine," Usim further stated

News

Gov. Otti Pledges To Reach Targets Of SDGS

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has said that the state is completely sold out to the Sustainable Development Goals agenda because his administration understands what each component seeks to achieve, and the direct, and remote net positive impacts they are bound to have on present and future generations.

Speaking during an advocacy and sensitization visit on the acceleration of SDGs implementation in the state by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, at the Government House, Umuahia, Gov. Otti, also restated the commitment of his administration to doing everything it can, to reach the targets of the SDGs that fall within the limits of its constitutional responsibilities.

The governor who was represented by his Deputy, Mr. Ikechukwu Emetu, said his administration has also made infrastructural development a priority in line with the major landmarks of the SDGs framework.

"We are not unmindful of the corrosive effects of inflation and the decline in the value of the naira on the earnings of the average individual. At any point, we must persevere in the faith that those running our economic and financial system can turn the tide around in good time because ultimately, we cannot seriously hope to tackle poverty and hunger, which are critical components of SDGs framework, in a macroeconomic environment that is headlined by price uncertainties", he further stated.

The governor who appreciated the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Orelepo Adefulire, for her commitment to the SDGs programme, recalled that the SDGs framework suffered major setbacks in the last few years following new developments that could not have been anticipated in 2015 when different world leaders including former President Muhammadu Buhari committed themselves to the implementation of inclusive global development agenda.

He expressed optimism that at the end of the stakeholders' forum/engagement, that practical ideas on attaining the SDGs target would be achieved.

Speaking earlier, Princess Adejoke Orelepo Adefulire had disclosed that Nigeria has just six more years to achieve the 2030 SDGs agenda.

She said that the advocacy and sensitization exercise was to see how her office will work together with the critical stakeholders both actors and non-actors to accelerate the achievement of SDGs.

ASUU Decries Rot In Education System

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru, Okere Ugochiyere and Precious Ekebuisi

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), has decried alleged rot in the university system, urging Federal Government to wake up and implement the renegotiated agreements with the academic body.

The ASUU Chairperson, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), Abia State, Prof. Michael Chikezie Ugwuene, who disclosed this to newsmen during a peaceful rally at the institution, insisted that FG's urgent attention in this regard was necessary to avert imminent unpleasant consequences.

Ugwuene noted that ASUU is contending with the FG over the implementation of the 2009 agreement both parties had and advised President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to rise up to the occasion and address the lingering issues with the union to save the University system from further decay.

He said, "The FGN/ASUU agreement signed into law in October 2009 has four major components: condition of service, funding, university autonomy, academic freedom, and other matters related to regulations and the working environment, among others."

Ugwuene highlighted their grievances, which include gross inadequate funding of the universities, a nonchalant or insensitive attitude of the federal government towards the welfare of lecturers, withholding of lecturers' salaries by the federal government, politicization of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA), as well as others made up of non-payment of promotion arrears and non-payment of minimum wage arrears.

He further included; violations of university autonomy through the introduction of Integrated Personal and Payroll (IPPIS), the illegal dissolution of governing councils, the imposition of the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard, and the proliferation of public and private universities.

According to him, "This agreement was reached with the noble intent to provide conducive teaching, learning, and research environments and, by extension, arrest brain drain, attract the best brains to the Nigeria University system from all over the globe, and position Nigerian public universities on strong pedestals to compete effectively with other universities in the world," he regretted, that unfortunately, this vision has become a mirage as successive governments of Nigeria have consistently, through non-implementation of the agreement, undermined the existence and integrity of Nigerian public universities.

"ASUU MOUUAU hereby calls on Mr President to rise to the occasion and address the lingering issues for which ASUU has struggled to attract the attention of the government for their solution in order to make the universities in Nigeria take an enviable place among the universities in the world.

"The government's urgent attention in this regard is necessary to ward off imminent unpleasant", he stated.



■ Governor Alex Otti exchanging pleasantries with the SSA to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Adefulire, during the commissioning of SDG Multipurpose Hospital by Gov. Otti in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State

Build According To Specifications, President Tinubu Tasks Developers ... performs ground breaking of 250 Renewed Hope Housing Units in Abia

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The ground-breaking ceremony of the 250-Housing Unit Renewed Hope Estate, under the flagship of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has been performed in Abia State with a charge on the developers, Messrs Camp David Global Synergy Ltd, and Messrs Finuch Investment Ltd, to ensure that they build according to specifications.

Performing the ceremony on behalf of the President at Umuoche in Bende Local Government Area, the Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Mr. Ahmed Musa Dangiwa, warned the developers to be committed to delivering quality work as per the contractual terms to ensure durability, as he will not tolerate substandard work.

He further tasked the developers to ensure that the project would be ready within three months, "so that we can begin the process of getting Abia indigenes to purchase and move in".

He said, "We have created different options to enable everyone who has a source of income and livelihood to own these homes when they are completed. These include single-digit mortgage loans that beneficiaries can repay over 30 years and rent-to-own schemes provided by the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria, and outright purchase options for those who can afford to pay upfront.

"Statistics shows that the construction of one housing unit creates an average of 25 direct and indirect jobs. So, for these 250 housing units, we hope to create jobs for over 6,500 people in various trades, from professionals like architects, civil engineers, and mechanical engineers to masons, plumbers, tilers, and electricians.

" This is in addition to the

economic activities, including those selling food, supplying blocks, and providing building materials".

"The value chain effect of construction work on this site is significant and creates a positive economic impact. I want to state that under the Renewed Hope Agenda of His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, we at the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development are very particular about giving Nigerians value for money.

"We are diligently funding these projects from the N50 billion 2023 Supplementary Budget that Mr. President approved for the ministry, to ensure sustainability, quality, and geographic spread.

"I want to assure states not being covered under the 2023 Supplementary Budget that they will be included in the ministry's 2024 Budget on the condition that they provide land at no cost to enhance affordability".

He appreciated Governor Alex Otti, for promptly granting the request for the provision of land at no cost, adding that this singular action had helped to reduce as much as 30 percent of the cost of the units in the estate for the benefit of potential home owners.

The minister described the ceremony as a continuation of the nationwide groundbreaking exercise for housing projects under the Renewed Hope Cities and Estates Programme of the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, which President Tinubu launched in February, with the commissioning of a 3,112-housing unit in Karsana, Abuja.

According to him, under Phase One of the programme, the Federal Government planned to deliver a total of 50,000 housing units across

Nigeria.

"This includes 7 Renewed Hope Cities that will have between 500 and 1,000 housing units per site in each of the six geopolitical zones in the country and the FCT, while the estates will have 250 units per site in the remaining (30) states. With this housing programme, we plan to unlock the massive potential of housing development to create jobs, uplift lives, and boost economic development", he added.

Furthermore, he disclosed the initial preparatory that work for the construction of the Federal Secretariat at Ekeoba, Ohuhu Clan in Umuahia North Council is ongoing, adding that the actual construction work will begin soonest at the site.

He said that the awarded contract for the secretariat was in line with plans of the government to have a strong presence in each state of the country.

Speaking also, Governor Otti who was represented by his Deputy, Ikechukwu Emetu, who applauded the project, said, the state policy on housing was in agreement with that of the Federal Government, for the country.

"We thank President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for this laudable project. This project will create jobs for Abians and keep our youths busy.

"We are trying our best to create the ease of doing business in Abia State. We will assure you as a government and everybody working in this very project, that the security that you need in making sure that this very project is delivered and our people take possession of this, will be guaranteed", Otti said.

The Abia Governor, who said his administration would continue to promote the importance of shelter, which is one of the three most basic needs of man, and which cannot be over-emphasized, thanked the President for the decision to ensure that Nigerians have roofs over their heads.

In his speech, the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, Alhaji Tijjani Gwarzo represented by the Director Engineering Services, Nwofo Samuel stated that the broad aim of the Federal Government through the Renewed Hope Estate was to turn the country into a huge construction site, unlock the power of the housing sector to create jobs, boost economic development, and help achieve President Tinubu's goal to build a one trillion dollars economy.

Speaking, the Commissioner for Lands and Housing, Mr. Chaka Chukwumerije, also pointed out that the government's strides in the housing sector was in alignment with President Tinubu's vision on the provision of affordable housing to Nigerians.

Speaking, on behalf of the contractors, Ugochukwu Otti, disclosed that the Renewed Hope Estate in Abia comprises 50 units of 1-bedroom semi-detached bungalows, 150 units of 2-bedroom semi-detached bungalows, and 50 units of 3-bedroom semi-detached bungalows.

He said that the project was designed in a way that makes them affordable by using organic designs to allow for future expansion as the income of beneficiaries increases.

According to him, the estate would be well serviced with network of roads, articulated water system and electricity.

Speaking on behalf of Bende Community, the Ohuga IV of Bende, Eze Anthony Chukwu, expressed delight that the project will stimulate the economy of the area.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation" June 21, 2024

Dr. Otti As A Listening, Governor

According to Peter Nutty of the Fortune Magazine, "of all the skills of leadership, listening is the most valuable". This means that for one to make a good leader, one is expected to have a listening ear to the matters concerning his or her subjects or followers.

This leadership quality becomes more relevant and valuable when one is a political leader such as of a State Governor, a Local Government Chairman etc.

It is at this juncture that we make reference to the actions of the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti (OFR) towards some policies his administration has so far churned out which met Abia citizens expectations, because he has a listening ear.

Firstly, the Governor on assumption of office, listened to the peoples cry against the hitherto, unfavourable time of the monthly Environmental Day exercise of 9am to 11am imposed on Abians by the past Okezie Administration and returned the time of the exercise to 7am to 10am. A more suitable time that gives Abia residents enough time to finish the clean-up exercise and still go ahead with the rest of the day's engagements.

Secondly, when the issue of the daily ticket fee paid by the Keke Napep operators allegedly changed to a weekly bulk payment for the ticket, it did not go down well with the keke operators.

They took to the streets protesting against that new directive. It did not take the Governor time to direct a reversal to the popular daily ticket payment, which consequently restored order, peace and normalcy to the keke transport sector of Abia economy.

The third instance where the Governor demonstrated that he is a listening leader was when the issue of online uploading of credentials of workers in the State Civil/Public Service came up. Government had directed workers to upload their credentials online. This directive came up on the heels of the discovery that over 7,000 (Seven Thousand) workers occupying various positions in the State Civil and Public Service, did not possess the requisite and relevant academic and professional qualifications commensurate to the positions they were occupying hence the need to truly ascertain the authenticity or otherwise of their claims.

As human beings in a society where the opposition party to the government in power usually and hurriedly cashes in on any slight slip in policy, to whip up scandalous sentiments, this government directive was grossly misinterpreted as another round of "endless verification exercise" and almost threw the state into an industrial anarchy.

Here again, Governor Otti, through the State commissioner for Information and Culture, Prince Okey Kanu, in his usual humility and commitment to decorum, came out to explain that the online uploading exercise had nothing to do with the verification Exercise.

He chooses to offer the explanation because he is a genuine leader and a molder of consensus. Such Leadership tendency aligns with Martin Luther King (Jnr)'s assertion that "a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus, but a molder of consensus."

Lastly, the most recent episode involving Keke Napep and "Okada" Operators in Aba and Umuahia concerning the Governor's reaction to the people's outcry against the proposed restriction order on the time of operation is another clear testimony of his penchant for listening to the voices and feelings of the people.

It would be recalled that Government, through the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, had proposed that from (1st July) Keke and Okada Operators were expected to start plying the roads from 6am and close at 7pm every day. This proposal elicited strong opposition from many citizens who called for a review of the policy.

Consequently, again, the State Chief Executive, moved by compassion, gave his nod to the option of extending the date of commencement of the proposed policy to the 1st day of August, 2024 to enable government carry out wider consultations before implementation.

This is quite commendable and the Governor deserves accolades for giving Abians the platform to bring up their ideas about the regulation of Keke and Motor-cycle (Okada) Operators, because, according to Seth Godin (1960) an American Author "Leadership is the art of giving people a platform for spreading ideas that work".

Perhaps, had the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs not made the announcement on the time restriction proposal, Abians and residents here in could not have voiced out their views on the proposal.

Having reasoned with the people and residents of Abia State, and extended the commencement date, it has become expedient to use this period of review and reorganization (1st July - 1st August) to reconsider the timing.

We are of the opinion that it will be of greater economic benefit to adjust the time of starting and closing from 6 am to 10pm daily. The 7pm time appears too early, as most traders, travelers and business men and women are usually rounding off their businesses to start going home.

Apart from subjecting the people to a risky long walking distance, they will be exposed to the dangers of robbery, physical attacks by hoodlums and other criminals including kidnappers.

Making businesses to close by 7pm will automatically kill the much-needed night life which is yet at its nascent stage in the state. It will further decimate the economic prospect of the state.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
THE EDITOR
NATIONAL AMBASSADOR
P.M.B 7245, UMUAHIA
E-mail:nationalambassador@gmail.com

Kidnapping, Ritual Killing- Menace To Humanity.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to use a column in your widely read newspaper to discuss this societal decadence Nigerians are currently experiencing -ritual killings.

It is so disheartening and inhuman that virtually every news time on radios or television, one gets to hear and watch about ritual killings.

If it doesn't happen in the North, definitely it had happened somewhere in the South, otherwise one will hear a location in the West or East of the country where such had happened. What wickedness can be more than this, where a person or group of people takes pleasure in sniffing life out of fellow humans in such a cruel way?

I mean many will not only kill but cut out parts of the body for sales. It is the height of wickedness against God and humanity, which must be abated.

Our country is a blessed one having such a uniqueness of different cultural heritages and languages with hitherto had strengthened the unity between their citizens.

Time when Nigerians happily go to farm, travel to other states for trading, works in distances place away from their homes without any fear is now a history, as one is not even sure of peaceful sleep at night again. Supposed brothers, neighbours, loved ones is now an agent of the devil whose assignment is to steal, kill and destroy.

It is pathetic to know that many of the perpetrator of this evil act are guardians, teachers, siblings, friends, employees, employers even partners, which makes the victim so vulnerable because there is no iota of suspicion.

Many confused when caught to sell the victim for as low as #150,000 sometimes putting blames on bad economy, but no justification whatsoever is enough to take the life of a fellow human.

It won't be wrong to say to other the hardship and food scarcity the nation is currently passing through is as a result of the deadly act of incessant kidnapping and killings.

There are records of killing of farmers on their farms, kidnapping business men and women yet killing some after collecting ransom.

Man is a social being and can not live in isolation, it is on this note therefore that, I wish to plead with government at all levels to brace up on the nation's security policies.

There should be continuous awareness of the need for fear of God (our creator), love for one another and value for humanity. Our cultural heritage must be sustained. Awareness should on daily basis be given to pupils and students of Primary and Secondary even tertiary institutions on the need for security consciousness.

We must value life more than money, no amount is worth the life of another person, we should not be a part of any kidnapping or killing.

The nation's law should also have its course on anyone or group of people caught in such act to serve as deterrent to others.

Ezewuru Adaeze Mary
Umuahia

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Chinedu David Offordum and Chinedu David Okonkwo is said to be same person, I now wish to be known and addressed as CHINEDU DAVID OKONKWO. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
CHINEDU DAVID OKONKWO.

Correction of Name

This is to affirm that Nmezi Comfort Udo and Nmezi Udo are same person and my correct date of birth is 01-01-1954 which was wrongly written in my Account and BVN as 14-14-1955 and 19-09-1957 respectively, now wish to be called and addressed as NMEZI UDO. First Bank Plc and the general public should please take note.
NMEZI UDO

Correction Of Date Of Birth

This is to affirm that I, Joseph Cecilia was born in January 18, 1974, and not June 15, 1944 which was wrongly written in my National Identification Number (NIN). My correct date of birth is January 18, 1974. The general public should please take note.
JANUARY 18, 1974

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	Prince Blessing Lazarus

Family Matters

How To Create A Happy Home

By Okechukwu Ubani

God wonderfully designed every home to be a happy place respective of the situation. When it is not so, it is evident that something is actually missing and both parties need to find the missing link. Most people dream of a perfect and happy home where joy with milk and honey plus around peace, prosperity and fruitfulness abound; but they are not ready to pay the price, every happy and success home both parties involved most paid a heavy price, if you don't want to the price for a happy home your dreams of a happy home may not be achievable. I want you to know that having a happy home is possible, but it does not happen by chance; it is by choice and practical effect from you.

The Word of God says...Every house is built by some man; but he that built all things is God (Hebrews 3:4). In the natural, you cannot own a

house by merely wishing it; in the same vein, you cannot have a peaceful and exciting home except you play your part.

At this point, it very important we examine some of the spices for a happy home:

Joy and Excitement

Joy and excitement are the spices of life. Unfortunately, they are the major things lacking in most homes today. Some couples even find it difficult to smile at one another or to greet each other, the wife will look the other way and the husband will also look the other way. But the Word of God says: Rejoice, and again I say rejoice (Philippians 4:4). The home is not meant to be dull as a result of cold wars between husband and wife or lack of love between family members. Rather, it is meant to be a place of excitement, peace and

enjoyment. God created the family in such a way that the joy or pain of each member affects the others (2 Corinthians 2:2). You have a responsibility to create excitement in your home so that God can reside with you.

Praise

Another way of building a happy home is by locating the good qualities in your spouse and children; then praise them for it. Don't focus on their weaknesses and mistakes. I

remember a pastor preaching the other day he told the story of a woman who came for counseling because of her marriage, he told her to draw a circle for and said, "Put a dot in the circle for every mistake your spouse has committed." The woman started putting dots in the circle for as many offences as she could remember. "He insulted me; he didn't give me money and

so on." At the end, the pastor said he discovered that there was much undotted space left. He then said, "Madam, the undotted space in the circle is larger. That means the man is not as bad as you want me to believe."

So, no matter what might have happened in the past, there will still be some good qualities in your spouse. Focus on those positive points and the bad ones will fade away. Appreciate God for your family members and be determined to be happy with them. Cast away bitterness from your home and let every unpleasant situation in the past be forgiven and forgotten for good. Also, as a family, create time to praise God together.

This will fill your home with God's presence because wherever God is, there is fullness of joy, and pleasures forever more (Psalm 16:11).

Appreciation

Whatever you don't appreciate will soon depreciate. A simple "Thank you", can do a lot to strengthen the relationship between you and your spouse and other family members. Learn to appreciate others for their good deeds around the home and for kind gestures shown towards you. Also be thankful to the Lord for your family, no matter the situation. The Word of God says: Out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry; and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few... (Jeremiah 30:19). I want you to know that thanksgiving always has a multiplying effect on whatever you are giving God thanks for. If you thank Him for the peace and joy you have presently in your family, He will multiply it. With thanksgiving, you can turn your home into a place of joy and endless laughter!



Wisdom for Living with Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

Storms are inevitable as we journey the path of destiny in life, so navigating to a safe haven entails having a good and right perception. See challenges, difficulties, pains, losses as part of requirements needed for a victorious life; it is called Experience.

Progress in life requires viewing things positively, situations and events are actually what you call them. What you see and termed "failure, frustration, another see and terms it opportunity to try again. Do not bury your head in perpetual regret owing to a mistake, be counted among people who learns from mistakes and make headways.

Learn from them and forge ahead with courage and confidence, failure is just an event not your identity.

You only become a failure, when you permit it to become your companion

and you gradually exchange your name for it, when you continuously dwell in failure, if you won't allow any other thing permeates your mind except failure, you allow it becomes your imagination and daily assertion then it becomes your identity.

See beyond that defeat.

"Light was called out of darkness".

Pronounce what you intend to see not what is happening around.

"And whatever Adam calls them, that's what they bare".

Do not because of one failure and disappointment term yourself "worthless" look beyond it.

Failure, frustration, rejection will fade away if you won't stop calling yourself a success, a

celebrity and a sort after.

Smile and say to that report that is giving you daily doses of weeping, giving you suicidal thoughts "I will try again, you have only showed me I didn't do it right that last time".

Do not throw in the towel. "A living dog is better and worth more than a dead lion"

Things are truly what you call them.

"Give definition to your

desire".

Planning is powerful, but planning is always as a result of imagination.

"If I can see it, then I can be it, I believe I can fly"

There is no sustainable success when there's no definition to desires.

"We are not affected by just what happened to us as humans rather we are affected by the meaning and interpretation we tied to what happened to us" -

Apostle Joshua Selman.

Meanings attached to an experience causes either joy or depression.

Display of happiness, victory, depression or sorrow is as a result of the meaning we read to events around us.

One's reason for weeping thinking he/she has failed is another's reason for celebration, joy and happiness.

"Final year student commits suicide in Ebonyi for failing one course" that was a news on Friday morning 24th May, 2024, but I tell you many other students experienced worst than that, some failed more than one course. Yet, they looked beyond the failure, encouraged themselves became determined to success, failure not withstanding. They had extra year, rewrote those

courses and graduated with good grade. They refused to give up on life because of a singular incident.

"If you faint in the days of trouble, little is your strength".

For one person losing out on a business deal worth hundreds of thousand is not enough reason to go bankruptcy but to another is a suicide mission because the money wasn't all his or hers in the first place.

Perception helps us navigates through storms, for there's always two sides to a coin.

Do not give up! Go through the process, every step is essential.

It doesn't look exactly like the destination you visualized, do not settle for it. Your glorious destiny will definitely blossom, stand up and try again.

There's always a light at the end of the tunnel.

Perception- A Requirement For Scaling Through Storms

☞ If you faint in the days of trouble, little is your strength ☞

News

Mrs Otti Calls For Laws To Protect Women, Children

By Chibunna Ikoku

The wife of Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has appealed to the state government to enact laws that strongly protect the rights of widows and their children upon the demise of their spouses and as well, get committed to the full implementation of the female inheritance law and the violence against persons prohibition laws in Abia to protect widows and vulnerable women.

Mrs Otti made the appeal recently in an event to commemorate the 2024 International Widows day celebration held at JAAC Building Ogurube Layout in Umuahia.

Speaking on the theme of this year's event titled; "Land Rights For Widows", Mrs Otti represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Adaye Emetu, expressed plans to support indigent widows through micro finance loans, healthcare services, skill development and vocational training, computer literacy programmes, adult education, co-operatives and legal assistance, among others.

According to her, "as a government, we shall be contributing our part out in supporting about 500 indigent widows in the first instance through initiatives that shall be implemented to provide assistance and ameliorate poverty".

The governor's wife also condemned all obnoxious widowhood practices, adding that her office is always open and ready to protect the right of widows under compulsion to engage in unwholesome practices to mourn their spouses.

Mrs. Otti, distributed food items and empowered 51, indigent women drawn from the 17 Local Government Area of the state with cash to start their own businesses.

In her address, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs Ngozi Felix, encouraged widows not to lose hope, adding that Abia State government will continue to build a future where all widows can live with dignity, security, and hope.

She explained that the International Widows Day celebration is a work to encourage action in achieving full rights for widows.

According to her, "the ultimate goal of the day is to develop resources and policy to empower widows and allow them to have access to education, work, healthcare and lives free of violence and abuse following the death of their husband.

The keynote speaker, Mrs. Chibuzo Ehiemere, however, advised women to understand the type of marriage they are contracted to and marry under the act of the law.

This, she explained, will accord widows the full right as enshrined in the law without anybody denying them their right.

Ehiemere also appealed to the public to ensure that widows are supported and protected within the ambit of the law.



Abia State Government Top Executives and The Executives Of The Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), During Their Interactive Session At Micheal Okpara Auditorium, Umuahia.

Abia Governor's Wife Hails Abuja, NDLEA Over Efforts To Combat Illicit Drugs

Chibunna Ikoku

The wife of the Governor of Abia State, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has lauded the collaboration between Abia State Government, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and other security agencies in the state, for their efforts to combat illicit drugs and other substance abuse in the society.

The governor's wife was speaking at an event to commemorate the 2024 United Nations Day against illicit trafficking and drug abuse, organized by the NDLEA, to create awareness on the dangers of drug abuse.

She noted that drug and substance abuse has become a major cause of death in Nigeria, accounting for the death of 2.5 million people annually, according to a 2024 report by the NDLEA; even as 14.4 million people fall into the trap of addiction yearly across the country.

Represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs. Adaye Emetu, the governor's wife described this year theme "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in

prevention", as quite timely and redirects us to look at the challenge of drug abuse mainly from a preventive prism.

According to her, "Abia State Government recently acquired a new office for the NDLEA here in Umuahia, I am also aware that Governor Alex Otti, has offered to support the agency to equip and properly manage its rehabilitation centre for addicts and other victims of drug abuse in the State"

"This is in line with the holistic agenda of the state government to develop a holistic mechanism for dealing with the crisis of drug abuse, particularly among vulnerable young people".

"My office is presently coordinating multiple initiatives to promote social consciousness about the dangers of drug abuse in various communities".

"We are also working with community stakeholders, particularly women leaders, to

enlighten our youth on how their future and dreams could be blown apart if they fail to guard themselves against certain exposures that would ultimately lead to physiological harm, prison time or death", she stated.

However, Mrs. Otti commended the leadership of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and other security agencies in the State for their commitment to the fight

against illicit drug trafficking and consumption.

Earlier in his remarks, the state Commander, NDLEA, Mr. Amos Adelanwa Adetunji had said that drug abuse has become a global menace that needs urgent and quick response to salvage.

Adelanwa called on patent medicine dealers to desist from selling psycho narcotic drugs to youths and appealed to the stakeholders to support them by providing operational vehicles and other logistics needed to eradicate illicit drugs and substance abuse from the society.

Institute Advises Rivers Govt To Adopt Agric Practices

From Jane Nzeuzor and Jane Maduadugwo P/H

The Nigeria Institute of Town Planners, has called on the Rivers State Government to adopt a sustainable agricultural practice to reduce soil and grand water pollution.

The Chairman of the Nigeria Institute of Town Planners in Rivers State, Dr. Simeipiri Johnbull, in an interview, asked the state government to come up with a master plan as well as district plan, local plan and subject plan to address the challenges facing the environment.

He stressed that sustainable agricultural practices must be prioritize in the agricultural revival project to prevent soil and grand water pollution.

Dr. Johnbull further stated that there should be comprehensive proper planning, guided by master plan and involving town planners, to integrate green infrastructure to manage store water, reduce urban air pollution and combat climate change.

He also said that regular

disentiles of water ways and implementing measures to reduce pollution are necessary to reverse the decline of aquatic life and maintain healthy water system.

Dr. Johnbull, however, appealed to the Rivers State Government to investigate and review harmful practices such as illegal landfills, oil bunkering and waste dumping into water bodies.

Also, an environmentalist, Felicia

Onwuka, wants the government to empower women to advance sustainable agriculture and forestation practices.

In an interview with our reporters, she explained that despite playing crucial role in agriculture and natural resource management, women frequently face barriers to accessing land resources and participating in decision making processes.

She, however, urged the government and extractive companies to invest in sustainable agriculture practices such as agro-forestry and regenerative agriculture. She stated that these practices enhance soil fertility, reduce erosion and boost diversity.

UAE Moves To Partner Bayelsa On Agric, Gas, Development

From Ovwuna Goodness, Bayelsa

UAE is ready to develop in Nigerian Niger Delta Region on its gas, agriculture and seaport resources with the support of the United Arab Emirates.

This was made known by its Ambassador to Nigeria, Salem Saeed Al-Shamsi, who appreciated the State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, for his great work in the state during a meeting held at the embassy in Abuja recently.

He commended the state governor for establishing a new ministry on blue economy in order to develop the state's maritime potentialities effectively and also for maintaining peace and successful elections in the state.

"We appreciate this visit and the opportunity to explore areas of co-operation and support, also ready to discuss any area of interest between Bayelsa and Abu Dhabi, and willing to support the state towards developing its oil and gas resources, its agricultural sector and the seaport. The Dubai Ports team will meet with your team and they can discuss how to develop your seaport. We will arrange a meeting with (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), team on oil and gas development as well as with our agriculture minister", he said.

He appreciated the relationship between his country and Nigeria, stating that all outstanding issues between both countries will be resolved soon. The ambassador also commended Nigerians for

their resilience in the face of the country's economic challenges, saying they are ready to support President Bola Tinubu and Nigeria to overcome it.

Senator Diri appreciated the team and its opportunity of meeting with them, noting that their visit was divine as the ambassador already had in mind virtually all he wanted to discuss with him.

"The state seeks private investors to develop its seaport at Agge in Ekeremor Local Government Area and expressed excitement about the proposal of the envoy, saying the port will serve the whole of the Niger Delta and the South East. "Bayelsa is an oil and gas-rich state but is seeking investors on gas as an alternative revenue source and as the country transits to gas", he said.

Focus

Beyond National Profligacy

By Dakuku Peterside

Jonathan Tepperman's book, "The Fix", is about how some nations fixed significant social challenges like inequality, corruption, and civil wars using innovative leadership and policies. No one has yet written a book about how nations fix profligacy. Therefore, it is justifiable that Nigerian leaders have not bothered to read a book that does not exist. When such a book is eventually written, Nigeria's chronicle of shameless profligacy will qualify as a unique case study. It is perceived as a culture our elite have come to embrace or tolerate as an acceptable national social habit. Profligacy, defined as reckless or wasteful extravagance, is a concern in various aspects of Nigerian society. It touches different levels, from personal lifestyle choices to government spending and business practices. This culture of profligacy, if left unchecked, will continue to drain our resources, hinder our development, and perpetuate a cycle of corruption and mismanagement.

Social habits are ingrained behavioral patterns that shape societies and influence how things are done. It might have a good or bad impact. Andrew Sykes, co-author of "The 11th Habit" believes that the collective culture of a people shapes their habits, and habits cyclically reinforce culture. The habits of a nation reflect its values. This habit of profligacy among Nigeria's ruling cadre is interconnected with the culture of corruption, lack of accountability in public life, short-term thinking, and lack of personal stake in the Nigerian project. Most importantly, it is proof of a total disconnect from reality. Since the Nigerian civil war, a deeply ingrained culture of wasteful expenditure and consumption-driven governance has plagued successive Nigerian governments. However, this is not a fate we are bound to. With the right cultural shifts and systemic reforms, we can break free from this cycle and build a more responsible and prosperous Nigeria.

There is substantial empirical evidence linking this culture of wastefulness to our oil economy, which provides the government with oil revenues at all levels without accountability. Oil receipts have increased spending, often on non-essential projects that do not benefit the citizens. With an abundance of oil money and less emphasis on accountability and transparency, an environment of profligacy became prevalent and is now a national social habit. This profligacy, in turn, fuels corruption and mismanagement, creating a vicious cycle that hampers our progress and development. It is crucial that we recognise and address this interconnectedness to pave the way for a more responsible and accountable Nigeria.



There is no responsible public affairs management culture, which feeds the decadent habit of wastefulness that our elite has adopted. Our weak institutions encourage mismanagement since they cannot enforce laws and regulations. A political patronage and nepotism culture has made us prone to wrong priorities, and we need the ability to plan strategically. Oversight by the legislature is highly compromised. Decisions made by public authorities are now driven more by personal interests than by sustainable use of resources for common interests due to a combination of economic pressure and poverty.

The Nigerian government is often criticised for high spending on non-essential items, such as luxury cars for officials, unreasonable cost of renovation of offices and accommodation, large delegation to

foreign trips and frequent travel expenses. This is particularly controversial given the country's significant economic challenges and infrastructural gaps. Corruption is a considerable issue, with funds frequently misappropriated or embezzled. High-profile cases of public funds being diverted for personal use contribute to a culture of extravagance among some officials. The civil service and government agencies often have large, inefficient workforces, leading to unnecessary expenditures on salaries and administrative costs.

Examples litter our landscape to prove that there is nothing untoward in the culture of profligacy. For brevity and conciseness, I will give four examples. First, NNPC, the national oil company, spent \$25 billion (over N12 trillion) over 20 years on turnaround maintenance of Nigeria's four refineries, yet none can refine a drop of oil. The average cost of building a 350,000-bpd refinery is about \$ 3.5-5 billion. This may not convince you about a national habit that has calcified. Between 2010 and 2020, crude oil theft led to the disappearance of 619.7 million barrels of oil worth N16.25 trillion, according to NEITI, an extractive industry transparency watchdog. None of these two high-profile cases resulted in arrest, prosecution, or national protest. It is normal and an acceptable national habit for the elite and average citizen. You will be tempted to think that this habit of national profligacy is restricted to the oil and gas industry. You are dead wrong!

Second, how can we quickly forget what qualified for a national embarrassment in 2023 when the government

 **There is substantial empirical evidence linking this culture of wastefulness to our oil economy, which provides the government with oil revenues at all levels without accountability.** 

registered 1,411 persons—a mixture of court jesters, government officials, professionals, a sprinkle of environmental activists, academia, and political jobbers for COP 28 in Dubai? Nigeria had the third highest delegation to COP 28, even though we contribute less than 0.0001% to climate change and its minimal impact on us. A public uproar was raised, but it came down before long because it is our culture and an acceptable habit amongst the elite.

Third, most recently, Nigeria's delegation, according to The Cable, a digital news platform, was the largest among 187 countries to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 112th conference in Geneva, Switzerland. This is happening at a time when the economy of the country is in some form of life support. The final example that raised curiosity was the news that the government reportedly spent N90 billion to subsidise the cost of the 2024 Hajj pilgrimage for citizens. The arithmetic of a huge subsidy for what ought to be a private religious obligation in a period of economic distress required advanced economic numeracy to solve. The list of our profligate habits as a nation is unending.

Profligacy is not only akin to the political class and government. We see a preponderance of activities that scream profligacy at personal and social life levels.

Nigerians are known for hosting grand and often extravagant celebrations, including weddings, birthdays, and funerals. These events can involve large guest lists, expensive venues, elaborate decorations, and abundant food and drink. There is a strong emphasis on displaying wealth and status, often through acquiring luxury goods such as high-end cars, designer clothing, and expensive jewelry. This can sometimes lead to excessive spending and financial strain. At social events, it is common to see money being "sprayed" or thrown at people, particularly the celebrants, as a sign of generosity and celebration. This practice, while culturally significant, is often seen as wasteful. EFCC is working hard to clamp down on this practice.

There is often societal pressure to conform to specific standards of appearance and lifestyle, leading individuals to spend beyond their means. This includes pressures to host large, expensive events or to own the latest luxury items. Maintaining social prestige and not "losing face" in many Nigerian communities can lead to extravagant spending. This can involve keeping up appearances through high expenditure on clothes, homes, and social activities. Both the government and private individuals often accrue significant debts to finance their extravagant lifestyles or projects, leading to financial instability and long-term economic challenges. Resources are sometimes misallocated to non-essential projects or luxurious expenditures, neglecting crucial areas like healthcare education, and infrastructure.

In the business sector, some Nigerian corporations, especially those in the oil and gas sector, tend to pursue luxurious corporate lifestyles, including high-end office spaces, expensive company retreats, and lavish entertainment expenses. There are over-invoicing and kickbacks, where inflated contracts and procurement costs are used to siphon funds for personal gain.

Our entertainment industry is the window for showcasing opulence and luxury. Our Nollywood and Afrobeats often feature extravagant displays of wealth. Music videos and films frequently showcase luxury cars, opulent houses, and designer outfits. Our celebrities, including musicians, actors, and influencers, often lead lavish lifestyles, displaying their wealth and success through expensive purchases and luxurious vacations. This creates a culture of aspirational spending among fans and the public.

Understanding and addressing profligacy in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that includes cultural shifts and systemic reforms. Leaders have to lead by example. We need to implement stricter regulations and oversight on government spending, enhancing transparency and accountability, and reducing waste in public sector expenditures; promote cultural values that prioritize modesty and prudent financial management over ostentatious displays of wealth; increase financial literacy among the public to encourage responsible spending and saving practices; and enhance corporate governance standards to reduce wasteful spending and corruption in the business sector.

Early signs are that those in power today have not only adopted the worst practices of the past but have also positively embraced them. If we continue along the same path, we will be stuck in an endless economic crisis and stagnation. Nigeria and Nigerians deserve better leadership in combating profligacy! We must escape this vicious cycle that has brought us to the quagmire we are in now.

Opinion

Visionary Strategies: Governor Alex Otti's Blueprint For Success

Oluebube A. Chukwu

Within the vibrant political landscape of Nigeria, Governor Alex Otti of Abia State stands as a beacon of transformative leadership and innovative governance. With a career marked by notable achievements in banking and finance, Otti has seamlessly transitioned into public service, bringing a pragmatic and forward-thinking approach to his role as governor. His blueprint for success is a testament to his commitment to revitalizing Abia State through strategic vision and meticulous planning.

At the heart of Governor Otti's vision is a comprehensive plan to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life for all Abians. Recognizing the state's rich agricultural potential, Otti has prioritized modernizing agricultural practices and boosting productivity. By introducing advanced farming techniques and providing essential support to local farmers, he aims to make Abia a key player in Nigeria's agricultural sector. This initiative not only promises food security but also creates job opportunities and stimulates the local economy.

Education and healthcare are other critical pillars of Otti's blueprint. He understands that a well-educated and healthy population is the foundation of a prosperous society. Under his administration, there has been a significant increase in investment in educational infrastructure, teacher training, and access to quality education. Healthcare services have also seen remarkable improvements, with the governor spearheading projects to upgrade medical facilities and ensure that essential healthcare services are available to all citizens, particularly in rural areas.

One of the most striking aspects of Governor Otti's leadership is his emphasis on transparency and good governance. He has implemented robust measures to combat corruption and ensure that public funds are used efficiently and effectively. This commitment to accountability has restored public confidence in the government and attracted investors who are keen to

contribute to the state's development.

In the realm of infrastructure, Otti's administration has embarked on an ambitious agenda to modernize Abia's roads, bridges, and public utilities. Improved infrastructure is not only facilitating easier movement of goods and people but also attracting businesses and fostering a conducive environment for economic activities.

Governor Alex Otti's blueprint for success is a well-rounded strategy that addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by Abia State. Through innovative policies, steadfast leadership, and a commitment to inclusive growth, Otti is not just transforming Abia State but also setting a benchmark for visionary governance in Nigeria. As his administration continues to roll out impactful initiatives, the future of Abia State looks promising, reflecting the governor's unwavering dedication to building a prosperous and sustainable society.

Governor Otti's blueprint extends beyond immediate reforms, envisioning a future where Abia State thrives on a sustainable and diversified economy. One of his standout initiatives is the promotion of technology and innovation. Understanding the global shift towards a digital economy, Otti has launched programs aimed at fostering tech startups and encouraging digital literacy among the youth. By creating technology hubs and providing training in digital skills, he is positioning Abia to be a leader in Nigeria's tech revolution.

Environmental sustainability is another cornerstone of Otti's strategy. With increasing awareness of climate change and its impacts, the governor has championed green initiatives that promote environmental conservation and sustainable practices. From encouraging reforestation projects to implementing waste management systems, his administration is actively working towards creating a greener, cleaner Abia State.

Governor Otti also recognizes the importance of engaging with the global community. His administration has actively sought partnerships with international organizations and investors to bring in expertise and capital for various developmental projects. These collaborations have not only accelerated the

implementation of critical infrastructure projects but also introduced global best practices to the state's governance.

A crucial element of Otti's leadership style is his inclusiveness. He has made concerted efforts to ensure that women, youth, and marginalized communities are integral to the development process. Through policies that promote gender equality and social inclusion, Otti's administration is fostering a more equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the state's progress.

The cultural heritage of Abia State also holds a special place in Otti's blueprint. By promoting arts, culture, and tourism, he aims to celebrate and preserve the rich traditions of the state while also turning them into economic assets. Cultural festivals, historical site preservation, and the promotion of local crafts are all part of his strategy to boost tourism and create a unique identity for Abia on the national and international stage.

Governor Alex Otti's tenure is marked by a blend of visionary thinking and practical action. His blueprint for success is not just a plan but a dynamic process of continuous improvement and adaptation to new challenges and opportunities. With a team of dedicated professionals, Otti is steering Abia State towards a future that promises prosperity, sustainability, and inclusiveness.

As the state continues to witness transformative changes, the citizens of Abia are experiencing firsthand the positive impacts of Otti's leadership. From improved public services to enhanced economic opportunities, the governor's initiatives are laying a strong foundation for a brighter future. Governor Alex Otti's visionary strategies and unwavering commitment to the well-being of his people are setting a new standard for governance in Nigeria, inspiring hope and confidence in what a dedicated and forward-thinking leadership can achieve.

Oluebube A. Chukwu, PhD is the Special to Abia State Governor on Due Process.

Features

Resurgence Of Cholera And Matters Arising

By Greg Odogwu

Now that the cholera epidemic is back on our shores, I hope we learn lessons that will last. This is important because this year's epidemic is particularly of greater concern, with the World Health Organisation saying present global cholera cases are enormous, and it has run out of vaccines. Therefore, we have to build our resilience to the extent that we should be able to handle such outbreaks for the first three months without looking up to the United Nations for help. Now is the time to permanently build cholera emergency response into our governance structure, as we did for annual floods and other seasonal ecological hazards.

Meanwhile, because cholera is directly linked to a dirty environment and poor sanitation, our politics needs to also tilt towards deliverables that are more WASH-friendly. It is not today we have been harping on the need for the electorate to vote for politicians willing and able to provide them water, sanitation and hygiene when elected into office. Perhaps, with the widespread panic this outbreak has wrought in the minds of the citizens, the voters would realise how their lives are in their own hands, and vote accordingly, in the next election.

Indeed, if our political leaders do the needful, we shall use one stone to kill two birds. Cholera has stuck with us like a leach because we are the open defecation capital of the world. A determined thrust towards ending open defecation will have a direct impact. So far, we have been fortunate enough that the epidemic has never gone out of hand like it did in Zambia a few years ago, where a national stadium was used as a containment centre. Unequivocally, it should be a priority for our leaders because cholera is tied to poverty.

Since the discovery of the bacterium, *Vibrio Cholerae*, by Italian anatomist, Filippo Pucini, in 1854, cholera still remains a significant public health problem in many parts of the world. However, the WHO reports of cholera cases around the globe show a pattern. Developed countries in Europe, Latin America and the United States managed to eliminate cholera by water and sewage treatment over a century ago while Africa has been struggling with the infection to date. The escalating levels of poverty, stunted economic development and inadequate access to basic social needs such as health services, clean water supply and improved sanitation continue to regulate the transmission of cholera in Africa.

My thinking is that the worsening economic hardship in our land is a culpable factor in this year's cholera outbreak. There are a couple of reasons why this year's cholera outbreak is different

Indeed, if our political leaders do the needful, we shall use one stone to kill two birds. Cholera has stuck with us like a leach because we are the open defecation capital of the world. A determined thrust towards ending open defecation will have a direct impact. So far, we have been fortunate enough that the epidemic has never gone out of hand like it did in Zambia a few years ago, where a national stadium was used as a containment centre. Unequivocally, it should be a priority for our leaders because cholera is tied to poverty.

from that of 2021, the last national epidemic. First, it started in Lagos, a southern state, while the previous one started in the North. In 2021, the first surge was in six states with 1,786 reported cases – Bauchi, 1,239 cases; Kano, 362 cases; Niger, 62 cases; Zamfara, 55 cases; Kaduna, 59 cases; and Plateau, nine cases. And by June 27, 2021, it was in 15 states, plus the Federal Capital Territory. Within days, the FCT confirmed the death of seven people from the outbreak. Northern Nigeria, by virtue of its climate, has problems with record in the streets. I see this as a pointer to a troubling reality – the hardship in the country is getting out of hand.

During its contact tracing, the Lagos State Government confirmed that many people in the Eti-Osa Local Government Area reported drinking contaminated tiger nut beverage. Although some media channels went to town with the half-truth of tiger nut being the culprit, the government later clarified that it took the tiger nut incidents as a 'major denominator' in its investigations and contact tracing.

However, what must be noted is that Lagos, an upwardly mobile megacity with no known IDPs, has become an epicentre of sorts in this year's outbreak. Ordinarily, one would assume, like many media outlets did, that the tiger nut was the primary cause of the contagion as there is evidence pointing in this direction. Yet, when all things are considered, it is better to go with the explanation of LSG that there are many possibilities. The singular case of tiger nut drink could just furnish us with the theory to work with. The notion is that poorly prepared food drink is a risk factor. It could be zobo, kunu, soya drink; there is always this possibility that in these hard times when people can eat anything to survive, one could likely eat oneself into the hands of cholera.

Photo Speak



Gov. Otti delivering a speech as he commissioned SDG Multipurpose Hospital in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State.



Governor Alex Otti exchanging pleasantries with the SSA to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Adefulire, during the commissioning of SDG Multipurpose Hospital by Gov. Otti in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State



Representative of Abia Governor's Wife, Mrs Adaeze Emetu delivering a speech, at the newly commissioned SDG Multipurpose Hospital in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State.



Some of the equipments (operating table) at the newly commissioned SDG Multipurpose Hospital in Ugwunagbo LGA of Abia State.



Dr. Alex Otti (right), exchanging pleasantries with Mr Donald Duke (left) during the funeral service of Dr. Doris Dana Fisher (Amachree), recently.



Dr. Alex Otti (left) exchanging pleasantries with Alhaji Lai Mohamed, former Minister for Information & Culture (right), during the funeral service of Dr. Doris Dana Fisher (Amachree), recently.



Dr. Adedeji Adeleke, Davido's Father (left) with Gov. Alex Otti of Abia State, during the Davido's wedding at Eko Hotel, Lagos,



David Adeleke (3rd left) Gov. Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State, (4th left) Senator Ademola Adeleke, Osun State Governor (center), Gov. Alex Otti of Abia State (4th right), Sen. Enyinnaya Abaraibe, (1st right) and others, during the Davido's wedding at Eko Hotel, Lagos recently.

Photo Speak



Gov. Alex Otti (center), Comm. of Police CP Kenechukwu Onwuemeli (left) and Speaker, Abia State of Assembly, Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa, during their visit to the Families of Slain, Wounded Police Officers in Aba Abia State .



The Abia-born CEO of Roxettes Motors, Arch Kaycee Orji Kelechi presented his fleets of Roxdtees motors Hilux to Gov. Alex Otti in his Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa home



Abia State Gov, Dr. Alex Otti, commiserating with the Family of Slain Police Officer in Aba Abia State .



Wife of Abia Gov. Priscilia Otti (3rd left) and Deputy governor's wife Mrs. Aдаeze Emetu (3rd left), as Face of Afrique Styles Queens received warm welcome and support from Abia Governor's wife in Umuahia



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti being usher in during the South East Governor's Forum at Government House, Enugu.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti exchanging pleasantries with his Imo State Counterpart, Sen. Hope Uzodinma during the South East Governor's Forum at Government House, Enugu.



Abia State Head of Service Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Obioma and Zonal Chairman, Nigeria Institution of Management Charters, Prof. Jude Njoku during their interactive session at Michael Okpara Auditorum, Umuahia



Governor Alex Otti, (left) Oba of Lagos, His Eminence Rilwan Akiolu (The Eleko of Eko) (right), during the Governor's recent visit at the Oba's Private residence in Lagos.



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News

Gov Otti vows to stop attacks on security agents

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has vowed to put an end to the recent attacks on the security agents in the state by yet-to-be-identified gunmen.

Governor Otti made the vow, recently, when he visited the homes of two police officers killed by yet to be identified assailants and two wounded officers in the hospitals, where they are currently receiving treatment.

Recall that the police officers were attacked in the evening of Friday, June 28, at a security checkpoint around Opobo Junction, Obingwa Local Government Area of the state.

Governor Otti awarded scholarships up to university level to all the children of the two slain officers and assured them that Abia State Government would support the families for their upkeep.

He commiserated with the affected families, the police authorities, especially the commissioner of police in the state and the Inspector General of Police over the unfortunate incident and assured that government will bring the perpetrators to book.

"This is a time to reassure the security agencies that the state is behind them. And, then also reassure Abia citizens that the state is equal to the task and we are not going to let this go away without identifying and bringing to book all those who are directly or remotely involved.

"It's very unfortunate. We felt after all we have done including rounding up some of the people that were involved in the last attack, this would not happen again. For it to happen so quickly, we have also met and we have decided to change strategy", he further stated.

Governor Otti urged the people not to panic but to go about their normal businesses, assuring them that the state would do everything to protect them.

"The people know that this government will not rest on its oars, and everybody should go about his businesses. We don't want people to panic, we don't want people to get discouraged, we are equal to the task and this is a wake-up call.

"Security agencies have also intensified all their efforts to ensure that this does not happen again", Otti said.

Asked whether he was suspecting the enemies of the state to be behind the attack, he said, "We do not want to speculate but like you rightly asked, it is reasonable to suspect that the enemies of the State, particularly those who don't want to see any good or want any good for Abia people maybe somehow connected with this".

"That's a suspicion, but we believe by the time investigations are over and all the intelligence that are being gathered are put together, we will know exactly where this is coming from".

"But like one former head of state once said, for an insurrection to prevail over a government, then something is wrong. We believe that our government is not going to succumb to this kind of blackmail. And, we are going to fish them out wherever they run to", the governor vowed.

The State Commissioner of Police CP Kenechukwu Onwuemelié, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, the Mayor of Aba North, Ide John Udeagbala, the Mayor of Aba South, Hon. Uche Nwaogu, SSA to the Governor on Transport, Dr. Obioma Nwaogbe, among other government officials accompanied the Governor during the visit.

Abia Assembly Concludes Modalities For Legislative Financial Autonomy

By Chukwuemeka Chijioko

Following the recent passage of the Abia State House of Assembly Service Commission law and the scepticisms surrounding its complete financial autonomy, the Speaker of Abia State House of Assembly, Rt.Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa, has assured that modalities are in top gear to ensure complete autonomy of the commission.

Emeruwa who stated this in a press conference held at the Assembly Complex recently disclosed that the passage of the bill into law was to ensure smooth administrative running of the Assembly and for the state to be at par with their counterparts across the federation.

The Speaker however, thanked Governor Alex Otti for harkening the clarion call of the people by swiftly signing the bill into law and re-emphasized that the complete financial autonomy will soon be assented to by the Governor.

In his contribution, the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Austin Okezie, said that the Abia State House of Assembly Service Commission law was apt and timely stressing that the entire legislative workforce should be grateful to the state governor while noting that the 8th Assembly deserves commendation.

He also stressed that constituting the body that will pilot the affairs of the commission is a laudable achievement that has been accomplished so far and reaffirmed that the core part of the autonomy which is the total financial autonomy is in motion.

The deputy speaker, however, promised that the 8th Assembly remains committed to enacting laws that would benefit all Abians.

Speaking also, the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Legislative Matters, and a former lawmaker, during the 6th Assembly, Hon. Luke Ukara Onyeani, thanked the leadership of the 8th Assembly for a job well done and pointed out that they started the bill during their era up to the point of signing it into law but it wasn't successful.

He equally thanked Governor Otti for living up to his promises and urged the Parliamentarian Staff Association of Nigeria, PASAN, Abia State Chapter, to live up to expectation.

Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, the PASAN Chairman, Abia State Chapter, Comrade Sunday Kalu, expressed gratitude to the Governor, Otti and the leadership of the 8th Assembly for ensuring swift establishment of the commission, stressing that it has been their yearnings for years.

According to him, the struggle started during the administration of former Governor, Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, but the bill was not actualized until this day.

Kalu, while appealing for the complete financial autonomy be fully approved by the governor, promised that the State Chapter of PASAN, will do what is expected of them.



Tricycle Operators in Abia State

Govt Shifts Tricycle Operation Restrictions Decision To August 1 ...introduces CNG Buses In Abia

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has shifted the planned enforcement of the new operational hours for tricycles and motorcycles in Aba and Umuahia from July 1 to August 1, 2024.

The Commissioner for Information and Culture, Prince Okey Kanu, announced the decision during a press briefing on the outcome of Executive Council Meeting, chaired by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu stated that the extension was in response to the pleas and yearnings of the citizens which the state government got through various feedback channels.

He said that in preparation for the new enforcement date, the enumeration and registration of all commercial vehicles started on July 1, 2024, adding that the step is crucial for the full implementation of the policy in addition to giving citizens adequate time to prepare for the upcoming changes.

The commissioner announced the plans of the state government to introduce Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) - powered buses in the state. To mitigate any disruptions caused by the restriction policy, Prince Kanu further stated that the state government plans to introduce Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-powered buses in the state to sustain the gains made

by government with regard to extending business hours in the state, particularly in Aba and Umuahia.

"As part of the initiatives and incentives to drive this new policy, the state government plans to introduce CNG - powered buses to complement whatever gaps that would be created by the full implementation of restriction policy

"The arrangement will be such that keke and Okada operators will form co-operatives or clusters to access these buses, the bottom line is to ensure that commuters still move around, especially this period of restriction," Prince Kanu explained.

The commissioner, who also provided updates on the ongoing certificate upload exercise among public and civil servants in the state, said 36,875 academic certificates and 25,458 career documents have been uploaded, with 7,582 documents sent to various institutions for verification.

Prince Kanu, while noting that a good number of workers have uploaded their results, urged those who are yet to comply, to do so in their own best interest.

The commissioner noted that despite the rains, various road projects of the government have been ongoing unabated, adding that the designs for the expansion of Abia

Tower-Onuimo Road is in progress just as other road rehabilitation and reconstructions are going on.

Responding to questions by Journalists on the illegal activities of touts around Corperative axis in Umuahia, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Publicity, Mr. Ferdinand Ekeoma, said that, "Government is intentional about clearing the mess there as well as relocate the people there and those that are at isigate. "We are a government of due process.

"Government had concluded plans to relocate all those at Isigate but if we ask them to leave the place without alternative, we would have caused any lot of economic challenges for people there.

"A very strategic place has been identified and government is about to acquire it. So, it is the same thing that we are going to do in cooperative.

The Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Mr. Ukoha Njoku Ukoha, the State Director of Information, Mrs. Ugochi Ihediwa, were present during the press briefing.

Abia NYSC Boss Calls For Team Work Among Camp Officials

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Coordinator of National Youth Service Corp, NYSC Mrs. Gladys Adama, has called for collaboration and team work between the camp officials.

Adama who made the call while addressing a general meeting of the course officials, at the Multipurpose Hall of the Umunna Bende NYSC Abia Orientation Camp, ahead of the commencement of the 2024 Batch "B" Stream 1 Orientation Course, also harped on emotional intelligence in dealing with the corps members, for a successful orientation course.

According to the coordinator, 'No matter what, treat the corps members with love, deal with them as parents, brothers or sisters.'

In her remarks at the meeting, the Camp Director, Mrs. Florence Animalu, charged the officials to be dedicated and avoid over socialization, while the Camp Commandant, Major PC Otubo, harped on synergy among all camp officials, to achieve maximum security and discipline in the corps members.

Those who attended the meeting were all heads of committees and their members, with each committee head reporting on their level of preparedness for the orientation course which kicked off on Wednesday, June 26.

News



■ Chief Press Secretary to Abia Governor, Ukoha Njoku Ukoha, Comm. for Finance, Mr Mike Akpara, Comm. for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, his Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs Counterpart, Prince Uzor Nwachukwu and the S.A to the Gov. on Media and Publicity, Ferdinand Ekeoma, during a press briefing in Govt house, Umuahia

Gov Otti Condoles With Families Of Slain Policemen

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State, has visited the families of police men who were attacked in Aba by unknown assailants and pledged that the perpetrators will be brought to justice book.

The attack, which took place recently, on the Opobo Road axis of Aba, resulted in the deaths of two policemen and left two others wounded.

Addressing journalists after visiting the victims' families and the hospitals where the injured officers are receiving treatment, Governor Otti who described the incident as unfortunate, vowed to intensify efforts to identify and apprehend those responsible.

He regretted that the attack came few weeks after a similar incident that involved soldiers and assured that there would be a change in strategy to deal with it.

"We thought that with all we have done, including rounding up

some of the people involved in the last attack, this would not happen again. We have decided to change strategy," Otti stated.

He suggested that the attacks could be linked to "enemies of the state", who do not wish well for the people of Abia and assured that government would not let the incident go unpunished.

"We are not going to let this go away without identifying and bringing to book all those who are directly or remotely involved," he affirmed.

Governor Otti said he believes that by the time investigations are over and all the intelligence that are being gathered are put together, government would know actually where the attacks are coming from.

He emphasised that his government would not succumb to the blackmail, saying; "We believe that something is wrong and our government is not going to succumb to this kind of blackmail and we are going to fish them out wherever

they run to.

"It is still early days but like I said, we've started picking up some of the people that were suspected to be involved in the last attack on soldiers and this one we are not going to allow it to die. We are going to follow it through", Otti further stated.

The governor, who was accompanied by the state Commissioner of Police, and the Inspector-General of Police reassured the security agencies that the state government is behind them.

He reassured residents that his administration is equal to the task of protecting the people and urged them to go about their lawful businesses without fear as security agencies are intensifying efforts to ensure the safety of all.

"The people know that this government will not rest on its oars and everybody go about their businesses. We don't want people to panic, we don't want people to be discouraged. We are equal to the task", Governor Otti declared.

Head Of Service Pledges To Work In Synergy With NULGE Executives

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Abia State Head of Service (HOS), Dr Mrs Ngozi Obioma, has said that her office will work in synergy with the executive members of Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), to restore dignity and lost glory in the state civil service.

Dr. Obioma who made this known when she received in audience the newly elected executive members of NULGE, who came to her office on a

familiarization visit, maintained that the business of sanitizing civil service system is not a one-man thing, but that which calls for collective efforts.

The Head of GP service, who appreciated the NULGE executives for identifying with her, called on them, to put all hands on deck, to restore dignity in civil and public service.

She expressed worry on the level of decay in the service and stated that NULGE has an important role to play in the

sanitization of the service, especially, in the local government system.

She reiterated the willingness of the present administration to return the service to its rightful position and solicited their support towards achieving an efficient civil service.

Earlier in her speech, the State president of NULGE, Lady Linda Unaeze, had said the essence of their visit was to present the newly elected Executive members to the HOS as

well as appreciate her for her numerous efforts in repositioning the state civil and public service and encouraged her to sustain the tempo.

She described the Head of Service as intelligent and hardworking person and expressed confidence in her abilities and prayed God to give her all it takes to succeed.

In his vote of thanks, the State Secretary, NULGE, Comrade IK. Abugu thanked the HOS for warm reception and assured her of their maximum support.

Varsity Don, Urges Farmers To Embrace Climate-Smart Agriculture

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Professor Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka, has urged rural farmers to embrace climate-smart agricultural practices, to conserve the environment, improve their yields and ensure food security in the country.

The Professor of Soil Science, who disclosed this during All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) 2024 Agriculture Fair/ Exhibition in Umuahia, Abia State, expressed worries over indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers, on farm lands, adding that it pollutes underground water.

The Director, Centre for Gender Youth and Child Development (CGYCD), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), Abia State further identified indiscriminate bush burning, cutting of trees, illegal waste disposal/management, gas flaring among others as causes of climate change.

In her keynote lecture entitled "Heavy rains and scorching sun: The crazy impact of climate change and technology on agriculture in Nigeria 2024", Prof. Onwuka maintained that everyone should be intentional in reducing the carbon footprint and its impact on the environment, through climate-smart agriculture.

Prof. Onwuka who also decried the food insecurity in the country and the degraded/fragile soils in the southeast Nigeria, enjoined every household to go into home and micro-garden in order to cushion the exorbitant cost of food items in the market.

The founder, Hope for Farmers, Women and Girls Initiatives (HOFWGI), also taught Abia farmers Biochar Production; describing it as a black code in agriculture, which does not encourage green house gas but enhances soil fertility and boost crop production.

Earlier in his remark, a university don, Prof. Ike Nwachukwu, had decried that Abia State is not producing enough food for its domestic consumption but depends on Benue State and Middle-Belt for food supply.

The inability of the state to feed itself, Prof. Nwachukwu said portends danger to the state and South East Region of Nigeria.

He urged government at all levels to take agriculture seriously and encourage young people to embrace farming to ensure food security.

Prof. Nwachukwu who further described agriculture as a goldmine, lamented that there is nothing significant South East Region is producing, insisting that they are at risk of food crisis.

He said, "It is time to shun politics, take advantage of agricultural institutions in Abia state and make farming a worthwhile venture to ensure food security in South East and Nigeria at large".

AFAN Chairman, Umuahia South Local Government Area Mr. Uche Onuoha, thanked Prof. Onwuka and Prof. Nwachukwu for sharing their research findings with them, adding that they would always leverage on their institutions innovations, to improve their farm yields.

Hike In Food Prices: Onwuchekwa Advises Govts To Establish Price Control Boards

By Bestman Orji and Jane Nzeuzor PH

Asocio-political analyst, Joe Onwuchekwa, has decried the continuous hike in prices of food in all parts of the country. He stated this in a telephone interview with our reporters. He said, there is nothing more frustrating than the arbitrary hike in prices of food items especially the essential commodities".

Onwuchekwa, therefore, called on governments at all levels, to set up a price control board and come up with an approved price lists for food and other commodities.

He suggested setting up a taskforce to monitor and regulate the prices of food items as well as ensuring strict compliance while enforcing the new price lists.

According to him, it is frustrating that after a person makes a budget of what to buy and on reaching the market, the person finds out that the prices of such items have doubled

He stressed that the prices of goods have not yet come down but are steadily going up without a measurable increase in workers salaries and wages, noting that "notwithstanding the fact that a few days back, the prices of some items dropped but very insignificantly".

"The only solution to this is for the Federal Government to fine-tune the current decision of fuel subsidy removal by bringing petrol pump prices down to N300 per litre," he said. He stated that this measure will invariably force down the general prices of goods and services including the essential food items, thus consequently and subsequently reducing hardship in the country.

Our reporters who went round Mile 1 Market on Ikwerre Road, to ascertain the current prices of some food items, discovered that prices are still on the high side though there was slight and insignificant reduction in the prices of some items occasioned possibly by forces of demand and supply.

A food item seller, Grace Wisdom told our reporters that garri has reduced in price as one cup is now sold for N200 as against N300. She believed that it will still come down.

According to her, a painter/plastic Custard container sold for N4000 now sells for between N3000 and N3,500. A cup of rice also sold for between N400 and N450, noting that beans rose from N350 to N500 per cup whereas a small tuber of yam is sold for N4000 and above.

Another food items dealer Mallam Hamza, said, "this time every year (normally) yams do appreciate in price, but that the prices of yam this year has doubled basically because of hike in transportation of staple food from the North to the South. "The second reason being that many farmers in the North are no longer farming because of activities of Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes that in most cases result to killings by these herdsmen and also cases of kidnapping which is now rampant in the North".

Our reporters equally found out that sachets of tomatoes which sold before for N150 now is N200; peak milk rose from N500 to N850 and still going up. Indomie has reduced in price but some of them are still going up. Cadbury hot chocolate is now N300, from N150 and so on.

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (3)

By Joseph Jacob and Mercy Emeh

Eze's wife, Chioma had set the table for dinner and was becoming impatient as her darling husband stayed longer than usual. She reached for her cell phone on the table and dialed her husband's number. The response from the operator sent shivers down her spine, "The number you're calling is switched off."

Chioma was alarmed because her husband hardly switched off his phone. She kept her phone on the dining table, crossed the sitting room and put on the television. She sat down to watch a comedy show. She watched it for few minutes and turned off the television. She turned to the home theater, turned it on and switched it off almost immediately. She headed for the bedroom, changed her mind, turned and stood still not knowing which direction to go. "I pray that nothing bad has happened to my husband," Chioma said and slumped into a sofa.

"Mummy, I'm hungry," Obi complained as he walked out from his room to his mother, who curdled him consolingly and said, "Do you want to eat alone? Won't you wait for your dad?"

Before Obi could answer Ada came out from her room with a contorted face, "Mummy, what is keeping daddy this long? she lamented as she sat at the other side of her mother. Chioma crossed her hand on her shoulder.

"He'll be back very soon." Chioma said reassuringly even though she was sitting with trepidation. They children have never taken their breakfast or dinner alone. They have always eaten both meals together as a family. So they were willing to wait for their father.

When it seemed they will be waiting for eternity, the doorbell rang. Chioma and her children scrambled for the receiver, but Obi was the fastest.

"Hello, who...?" Obi asked.

"Obi it's daddy." "Daddy is back." Obi shouted as he hand the receiver to his mother and ran to the door and opened it for his father.

"Dear son" Eze said smilingly as he embraced Obi and attempted to raise him up but found him too heavy. Obi, like her sister, is growing fast weigh beyond his age of thirteen while his sister is one year older.

Eze and Chioma wanted to have more children if not for Chioma's ill health. Gynaecologist advised against having another child.

After freeing himself from the clutches of his children, Eze went to his wife, who was standing with the receiver in her hands. She was glad that her husband was back, but she glowered.

"I'm very sorry darling" Eze apologized as she hugged and kissed her passionately.

"You nearly made me lose my mind. What happened?" Chioma asked with worry all over her face, "It has been two hours since I set the table. The

children have been complaining of hunger."

"I'm very sorry," Eze pleaded as he gently took the receiver from Chioma, replaced it and started leading her to their room.

"Kids, we shall be having our dinner soon. Let's take our bath." Chioma said as she followed her husband to their room.

When they came back ten minutes later, Eze was donning the red jersey of Manchester United while Chioma was donning the blue of Chelsea.

Obi and Ada, who were already seated at the dining table, saw their parents and quickly ran into their respective rooms to change their clothes. Like his mum Obi donned the blue jersey of Chelsea, while Ada had the red of Manchester United. The couple burst into laughter when the kids emerged.

Eze was with Chioma at the table while Obi and Ada were seated by his right and left respectively.

Chioma took charge of proceedings as the different bowls containing, rice, stew, fried fish and plantain was passed around. Before long, the hungry family started attacking the food from four different plates. As usual Eze started asking everyone how their day went.

Obi started first, "We had a test in Integrated Science."

"Really?" Chioma asked.

"Yes mummy."

"I hope you did well?" Eze asked.

"Yes daddy, I was the only person that got twenty over twenty"

"That's my son," Chioma said happily.

"You did well son, keep it up," Eze said as he poured some water into a tumbler.

While still munching a piece of fish that filled her mouth, Ada knew she was next. So she did not wait for his father, who was drinking water to ask her about her day. "My day was good," she started, "We're revising ahead of our Junior WAEC examination. I learnt one thing today that interests me so much..."

"What is it?" Obi interjected.

"Eclipse"

"What about it, Ada", Chioma asked.

"How and why it occurs," Ada said hilariously.

"We're listening to you," Eze said.

"Ok daddy, lunar eclipse occur..."

"What is lunar?" Obi interjected again

"Obi, it refers to the moon." Chioma explained and turned to Ada to continue.

"Lunar eclipse occurs when the sun and the moon are in line with the earth between them. The moon will be darkened by the shadow of the earth cast by the sun."

"You're right, Ada" Eze said.

"What about eclipse of the sun?" Chioma asked.

"It occurs when the moon comes between the sun and the earth, thereby preventing the rays of the sun from reaching the earth. This will cause darkness in some

parts of the earth."

"I heard that eclipse of the sun happened some time ago in this part of the world," Obi said.

"Yes my son," Chioma started, "My grandmother told me that she was in their farm with her mother that day. They thought the world was coming to an end. So they held themselves until the eclipse was over."

"My dad told me," Eze started, "goats were bleating, cockrels were crawling, dogs were barking and parents were calling on their children to know where they were"

"I wish I was there then" Ada said.

"You will be crying," Obi teased her.

"Shut up. Do you think I cry anyhow like you?" Ada fired back.

"It's ok, kids" Eze said and the dining room became quiet except for the sounds of cutlaries, "Honey, how was your day?"

"It was fine. We had a send forth party for the outgoing permanent secretary, Mrs. Ugorji. I didn't know when I broke down in tears. She was very good to me."

"Is she retiring or is she being transferred to another ministry?" Eze asked.

"She's moving to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. I'm praying let her replacement be as good as her."

"How did you do about transportation?"

"Ah, Honey, if not for a colleague I would have been late to work. What about you?"

"I met a secondary school friend, who gave me a ride. Yet I got to the office few minutes late."

"Were you queried?" Chioma asked alarmingly.

"No, I came before my boss."

After eating they played whot. Eze had Ada by his right and Chioma by his left, while Obi was sitting opposite him.

"I and mummy have emerged champions five times," Obi said happily while his father shuffled the cards

"Haven't I won once?" Ada asked.

"Just once," Chioma repeated. "Chelsea five..."

"Manchester United one." Obi completed.

"That is how it's going to be in tomorrow's UEFA Champions League clash," Chioma boasted.

"That can never happen," Eze protested still shuffling the cards, "Lukaku will show Chelsea pepper."

"Daddy, don't worry, Kante will neutralize him and Willian, Hazard and will fire from all cylinder." Obi boasted.

"Obi, when you call your players," Ada started, "Don't forget that we have David De Gea, Paul Pogba, Jesse Lingard..."

"Ada, if you like, call all the players in Man Uche," Chioma interrupted and went ahead mockingly, "What Obi and I are doing to you and your dad tonight is what Chelsea will do to Manchester United tomorrow."

"Do you think you people have won?" Eze asked as he shared the cards.

"Honey, why not?"

"OK" Eze said shaking his head, "I'm going to win all the remaining games."

"Honey, let's see. If you talk the talk, you work the work."

At this point, Eze turned up the first card after he had shared four cards to each of them. The card he turned up was Triangle 1, "All of you should hold on," Eze started, "General market, general market again, continue and last card."

"It's a lie," Chioma shouted.

"Yes mummy," Obi agreed, "Daddy used a Circle 14 for the first general market. It should be a triangle."

Everyone burst into laughter. The alarm clock struck 10 p.m.

"It's time to go to bed." Eze declared. Obi packed the card and left for his room. Ada followed him after bidding their parents good night. Eze checked to ensure that the door was locked before the couple retired to their room.

Long after Chioma had slept with her head on his chest and her arm across his tummy, Eze was awake thinking of how to raise three million naira and how he would subsequently make big money in Germany.



Who is James Hadley Chase?

Whether it is crime fiction, thriller or espionage, James Hadley Chase is the king. He gave his readers suspense, shock, horror and graphical description that gave them a shiver down the spine and left them spellbound.

But, who really is James Hadley Chase?

He was born in Rene Lodge Brabazon Raymond on December 24, 1906 in London, England, he was the son of Colonel Francis Raymond of the colonial India Army, a veterinary surgeon. His father intended his son to have a scientific career and had him educated at King's School Rochester, Kent.

Chase left home at the age of 18. In 1932, Chase married Sylvia Ray, and they had a son. In 1956, they moved to France. In 1969, they moved to Switzerland living a secluded life in Corseaux-sur-Vevey, on Lake Geneva. Chase died there on 6 February 1985.

When he started writing,

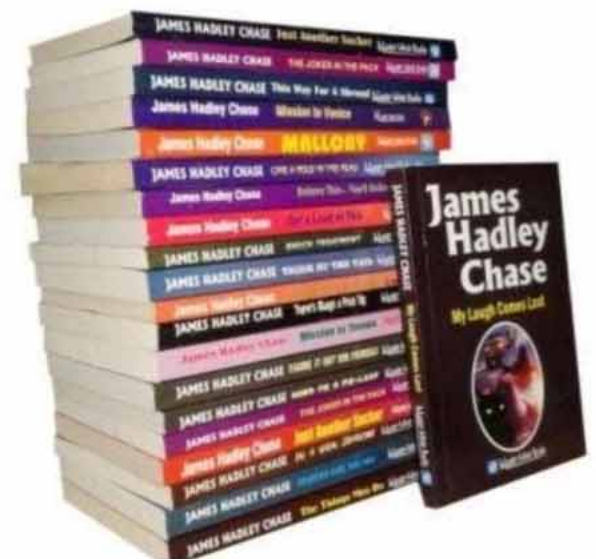
surprised.

His early books contained some violence that matched the era in which they were written, though this was considerably toned down as plots centred more on circumstantial situations to create the high degree of tension that was the hallmark of his writing. Sex was never explicit and, though often hinted at, seldom happened.

In several of Chase's stories, the protagonist tries to get rich by committing a crime - an insurance fraud or a theft. But the scheme invariably fails and leads to a murder and finally to a cul-de-sac, in which the hero realises that he never had a chance to keep out of trouble.

Women are often beautiful, clever, and treacherous; they kill unhesitatingly if they have to cover a crime. His plots typically centered on dysfunctional families, and the final denouement echoes the title.

In many of his novels, treacherous women play a significant role. The protagonist



he took up five pseudonyms: James Hadley Chase, James L. Docherty, Raymond Marshall, R. Raymond and Ambrose Grant. The Canon of Chase, comprising of 90 titles, earned him a reputation as the King of thriller writers in Europe.

All of his novels were so fast-paced that the reader was compelled to turn the pages in a non-stop effort to reach the end of the book. The final page often produced a totally unexpected plot twist that would invariably leave even his most die-hard fans

falls in love with one and is prepared to kill someone at her behest. Only when he has killed, does he realise that the woman was manipulating him for her own ends.

Chase's best market was France (more than 30 books were made into movies) where all of his ninety titles were published by Editions Gallimard in their Serie noire series. He was also very popular in other European markets, as well as Africa and Asia.

CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

"Writing flare might be natural; Writing skills are learnt."

Dingba Igwe

Religion

God's Plan For Your Life

Pastor Sam Adeyemi

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The most important question you'd ask in your life is the question "What on Earth am I here for?" Jere. 1:4-5 tells us that God knew everyone of us before we were formed in the belly. This is what we've learned about entering God's rest. God has a plan. The foundational work of creation was completed in the first six days as seen in Genesis. When He created Adam, He had factored out what every single person was going to be and what our assignments here on Earth was going to be!

Also Read: Don't Be A

Passive Christian By Bishop Mike Okonkwo

Psalm 139: 14-16 shows that it is very comforting to know that you're not a biological accident. When we live out of alignment with God's purpose for our lives, that's when we struggle. We run into big problems and everything loses meaning and becomes gloomy.

How do I know my purpose and find out what on Earth I'm here for?

Develop intimacy with God. If you don't know any other reason you were born, you were born for God! Your number one priority should be your relationship with God. Pursue an intimate relationship with God, every other thing will fall

in place from there. You can't find your purpose except by revelation. Matt. 16:13 shows that your purpose cannot be decoded from the human mind. You have never existed before, you're unique so when people try to fit you into existing mould or compare with others then there will

be problems.

Read the Bible. Read it for inspiration and the stories about other people. Read as much as you can about Jesus. Hebrews 10:5-7 shows that Jesus Christ was the forerunner of all of us. What was written about Him influences us too. The Bible will give you

Pursue an intimate relationship with God, every other thing will fall in place from there.

inspirations, you will catch revelation about you. Ask God's questions while you're reading. The Bible gives you God's vocabulary. It's easier for the Holy Spirit to speak to you when you have the scriptures. Like 4:16 shows that Jesus found His destiny in the Word.

Explore your wiring. You're designed for your purpose. Every instrument and equipment is designed for a purpose. That purpose is found in the mind of the manufacturer. The purpose is inherent in the design. You're perfect for your purpose. Explore your wiring in terms of temperament. It gives you pointer to what you were designed for. You cannot turn your gift on yourself. It is given to you for service, to add value to people.

Reflect on your experiences. The Holy Spirit is always there. Stop butting yourself against a wall. There's no point to go through a door where God hasn't opened for you. The Holy Spirit speaks to you in your heart.

Ask for prayers and advice. Ask your friends to pray with you and ask them what they think. Walk with God first so you don't get confused or have the dreams killed. What you want is a confirmation. This is why you need to have mentors.

Pastor Samuel Adeyemi is the Senior Pastor of Daystar Christian Centre, a fast growing, life changing church committed to "raising role models" based in Lagos. He is also the President of Success Power International

Engaging The Mystery Of Tithing For Financial Fortune!

By David Oyedepo

From scriptures, we understand that God's prosperity plan is a covenant, not a promise; that is, we cannot fast or pray our way into it. There is a part we must play before we can commit God to do His part. Therefore, until our part of the covenant is fulfilled, we cannot commit God to bless us. As it is written, but thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 8:18). From the above scripture, God has a covenant in place that empowers us into realms of financial fortune. It is not the doctrine of a church but His covenant.

Also, note that God's covenant of financial prosperity is as binding as His covenant of day and night (Genesis 8:22; Jeremiah 33:20-21). As long as the covenant of the day and night is in place, God's covenant of abundance remains in force. It is, therefore, an ever reliable and dependable covenant. We must understand that the giving covenant is as much a New Testament

phenomenon as it is the Old Testament covenant. As it is written, Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:15, 19). But giving does not only meet our financial needs, it meets all other needs. While the giving covenant has so many channels such as worship offering, giving to the poor, giving to parents etc, we discover that the anchor channel of this covenant is TITHING.

What Then, Is Tithe?

Tithe is the tenth of our increase or income. It is our covenant acknowledgment of God's blessings in our lives that entitles us to continuous flow of same (Malachi 3:10). Tithe is also God's portion that makes the remainder meaningful. It is tithe that gives value to other avenue of giving. When we stop tithing, we stop the flow of God's blessings. This is why we must understand that tithing is not a church doctrine; it is a law of the

Kingdom that launches the believer into realms of financial fortune.

Tithing is God's principal term of the covenant of abundance (Malachi 3:8-11). It is the law of the Spirit that launches us into realms of financial fortune, which is part of the provisions of redemption (2 Corinthians 8:9). Thus, tithing is ordained to make rich and grant us access to our wealthy place in Christ (Psalm 66:10-12; Proverbs 3:9, 10). We can therefore conclude that tithing is a Kingdom mystery that confers us with mastery over finances. It is a covenant obligation for everyone that desires to step into his/her wealthy place in Christ. It is our only guarantee to step into the realms of financial fortune; there is no short cut.

Averts All Curses, Spells and Enchantments: Tithing averts the curse of the Lord. It is written, Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation (Malachi 3:9). Why? Because the curse of the Lord is in the house of a thief (Zechariah 5:4). The tithe belongs to God and refusing to tithe is viewed as robbery in scriptures. Furthermore, every tither is blessed of the Lord and therefore becomes, 'uncurseable' (Numbers 23:8).

Protects us Against the Assault of the Devourer: It stops the devourer from attacking our health, families, businesses, career etc (Malachi 3:10-11). Tithers are entitled to health and vitality.

Empowers us to live a Debt-free Life: Borrowing may not be a sin, but it is

definitely a weight. Tithing is the cheapest way to lay aside indebtedness. With blessings which we do not have enough room to receive being released to us through tithing, there can be no place for borrowing (Malachi 3:10).

Divine Ideas: From the windows of heaven, what we have pouring out is rain, which is a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and its mission among others is to make us of quick understanding (Malachi 3:10-18). This gives us access to divine ideas so that we begin to think at God's own frequency and command same order of results accordingly. For instance, Abraham the tither pioneered the first cattle ranch business (Genesis 13:1-3). Isaac pioneered the first irrigation farming in scriptures and Jacob the tither pioneered the first animal husbandry business according to Bible history. All tithers have free access to divine ideas that lead the way to their blessings.

Guarantees Long Life: Abraham the tither died at 175 (Genesis 25:7), Isaac at 180 (Genesis 35:28) and Jacob was 147 years old (Genesis 47:28). Also, John D. Rockefeller, who started tithing from his first pay

cheque and kept at it, became the 1st American Billionaire in history. He had 41 years added to his years after he was told by the doctors that he would not see his 52nd birthday, but he lived to be 93! Tithing entitles us to long life.

In conclusion, all our covenant fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were tithers and they gained access to their wealthy places in life (Genesis 14:19-20, 28:22). Furthermore, redemption connects us to the Abrahamic order of blessings and as a seed of Abraham, every believer is ordained to be a blessing to the world (Galatians 3:29; John 8:39). Although a great future awaits us, we must tithe our way into it like our covenant fathers did. All we need is to receive grace for consistency in our tithing. Tithing will always make a clear difference among believers. This means that financial fortune is impossible without tithing however you must be born again. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me of my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You, Jesus, for saving me! Now, I know I am born again!

Tithing is God's principal term of the covenant of abundance (Malachi 3:8-11).

Entertainment

Davido's Top 5 Lavish Gifts To His Wife Chioma Over The Years

By: Chinwe Onwuzuruigbo

Davido, the acclaimed Nigerian singer, has always had a knack for showering his wife, Chioma, with the finest things life has to offer. Over the years, he has built a reputation for spoiling her with extravagant gifts that often leave fans in awe. From luxurious cars to stunning jewelry, Davido's presents to Chioma consistently make headlines. Here are five of the most luxurious gifts he has given her:

1. ₦45 Million Porsche Car

In 2018, when Davido and Chioma began publicly dating, he stunned her and the entire nation by gifting her a black Porsche worth ₦45 million for her 23rd birthday. The luxury vehicle, with "Assurance" written on the license plate, signified their love and left a lasting impact.

Davido is known for his grand gestures of love. On Valentine's Day in 2019, he arranged a surprise dinner, complete with a saxophonist serenading Chioma as her gifts were presented. Among the gifts were an expensive purse, lots of candy, two bouquets of flowers, a cake, and wine, marking a memorable Lovers' Day celebration.

3. Patek Philippe Wristwatch Worth ₦16M

Known for his impressive collection of luxury watches, Davido



Davido and Chioma



ensured Chioma also stayed adorned with the finest timepieces. In February 2020, ahead of Valentine's Day, he gifted her a stunning Patek Philippe wristwatch worth ₦16 million.

4. Stacks of Dollars
Luxury and money go hand in hand. In April 2024, Davido gifted Chioma large stacks of dollars ahead of her birthday. His Instagram posts showcased the extravagant gifts, including stacks of cash, roses, and a personalized note, all carefully arranged to dazzle her.

5. A Luxury SUV on Their Wedding Day
The couple recently tied the knot, and

Davido topped off the ceremony by gifting Chioma a brand new white SUV. The moment, captured in a trending video, shows the superstar singer presenting the car and a bouquet of roses to his bride, adding a perfect touch to their special day.

Davido's thoughtful and lavish gifts continue to highlight his deep affection for Chioma, making their love story one of the most talked-about in the entertainment world.

NFVCB Warns Film Makers And Skit Makers Against Same-sex Content

The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB) has issued a stern warning to Nigerian filmmakers and skit makers regarding the production and streaming of content that depicts same-sex relationships.

In an Instagram statement, the NFVCB expressed concerns about the activities of certain "unscrupulous" filmmakers and skit makers who distribute prohibited and unapproved content on social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter.

The agency reiterated that any direct or indirect portrayal of same-sex relationships violates Nigerian law. "Filmmakers/Content Creators should be reminded that it is an offence to directly or indirectly make public show (exhibition) of same-sex relationship in Nigeria," the statement said.

The NFVCB also emphasized the illegality of distributing or displaying any film content, including skits and music videos, without first obtaining classification from the Board. "It is also an offence to distribute or exhibit any Film or Video content including skits and musical videos on any platform without recourse to the National Film and Video Censors Board for classification," the statement added.

The Board assured the public of its commitment to enforcing these regulations, stating, "We are working with relevant security agencies to track the individuals and production companies involved, and will stop at nothing to make sure they face the full wrath of the law."



Don Jazzy Opens Up About Why He Hasn't Remarried

Nigerian music icon Michael Collins Ajereh, professionally known as Don Jazzy, has shared insights into his personal life on social media, revealing why he has not remarried.

During an interactive session with his followers on X, Don Jazzy candidly responded to a fan's question about his marital status. He explained that his decision to remain single is due to his ongoing journey of self-improvement.

A fan's post humorously noted Don Jazzy's frequent activity on Instagram, saying, "Once you open any baddies page on Instagram, the first thing you'll see is 'followed by Don Jazzy'. That man is everywhere." Don Jazzy replied in his characteristic playful manner, "I be ashawo na. Na why I never marry?"



When another fan directly asked, "But DON JAZZY, why aren't you married?" the artist responded, "I dey work on myself. so that when my head correct, my babe go enjoy me."

His honest and humorous responses sparked a flurry of reactions from his followers, with many flooding the comments

with laughing emojis and supportive messages. One fan remarked, "This man self," while another added, "Naso."

Some fans expressed solidarity with Don Jazzy's approach to self-growth. One user commented, "We plenty weh dey your back. Make me sef go work on myself asap."

In April 2021, Don Jazzy revealed he was once married at the age of 20 but divorced two years later. He shared that his marriage to American model Michelle Jackson ended

due to his intense focus on his music career.

Don Jazzy's recent revelations continue to endear him to fans, who appreciate his transparency and sense of humor in discussing personal matters.

TIPS TO MAKE YOU LOOK ELEGANT AND CLASSY ALWAYS

Fashion tips
 with
Sandra Chibuike
 sandychybyke1@gmail.com

If I told you that looking your best always, will be easy, then I would be lying to you. Because it is definitely not. It takes, effort, energy, time, planning, it takes being intentional. And you will not always feel like that. There will be days you just want to be yourself and head out of the door, but guess what? Those are the days you may run into someone very important, someone you would want to meet, looking your very best. And because you are not in your best outlook, you will feel insecure, uneasy and self-conscious around them. Trust me, from personal experience, it does not feel good. Therefore, in this edition, I have listed out some micro tips that will help you appear classy and elegant always.

Have A Self-care Schedule: This entails having a proper schedule for personal grooming, for instance; know how long you can carry your hair before you go for maintenance, the same applies to other self-care routines like; pedicure, manicure, spa, facial treatment etc.

So this means you no longer wait for your hair or nails to get bad before you get them done. You already have a schedule for your beauty routines, when it's time you go for it.

Short Nude Colored Nails: This is specifically for those who are working on a very tight budget, or those who do jobs that give them little or no time for regular self-care routines. Short nude nails, last longer than bright colors. This is because, the brighter shades like red, blue, green, purple etc, will be so conspicuous when they get old and start growing out. And when that happens, it looks tacky. Of course no elegant lady will like to be caught with dirty old nails.

But when the nude nails get old and grow out, they are almost unnoticeable.

It is also advisable to have a nail kit. This kit is a small bag that contains all the nail accessories like; nail glue, nail polish (at least the basic colors), nail file, nail cuticle, nail buffer, nail dissolver, and nail cutter. This helps you to do a quick fix before going to your nail technician.

Have A Go-to Outfit For Lazy Days: I also like to call this outfit Your-tasted-and-trusted-outfit, or Your-when-in-doubt-outfit. This is the type of outfit that you do not spend so much time and effort to wear, yet it makes you appear elegant, well put together and comfortable. It is the kind of outfit that each time you wear it, someone must compliment your looks. It does not make you look any less or demean your personality. Planning an outfit takes a lot of effort and you will not always feel that way, that is why you need the go-to outfits. And make sure you have accessories to match with them.

Have Another Makeup Routine That Takes Less Time: This tip will



help you save time and energy. You can agree with me that it really takes a lot to apply full / proper makeup on a normal day. The exigency involved can be draining, and that is not what you would like to pass through on a day you want to appear casual.

Therefore, you need another makeup routine that probably requires a few cosmetics and less time, and you will still

look spiffy. Personally, on such days, I use only, face powder, eye pencil, nude lipgloss, upper eye liner and I am good to go!

Dress For Your Body Shape:

The way you dress is extremely very important. You are Judged by how you dress. Choose clothes that enhance your looks. Do not be apologetic about it. If it fits perfectly, then go for it. Avoid wearing clothes because you like how it looks on the other person. Go for your

perfect fit.

HAIR: Having a few hair tools at home comes in handy especially times when you are not ready to go to the salon. Now for the hair, I will focus on wigs, braids and natural hair.

Natural hair: you need to have one natural hair style that you can make easily by yourself. With the hair tools you have, you can always style your hair and be good to go.

Wigs: it is good to always have one wig that is styled and ready to be used for the week. When you do not have the time to go to the salon, you can easily wear it.

Braids: I advise you to make braids that can last longer, say 3 to 4 weeks. This style of braids should be easy to park in different ways, just so you do not have the same facial Look all the time.

Choose Timeless Pieces Over Trendy Pieces: These are the types of clothing that are universally flattering and very easy to style. It includes the cut, color and fabrics.

Elegance is timeless. So in your fashion, you need to look out for that timeless piece that fits perfectly. Please do not get it twisted, I did not say you must not wear trendy outfits. You may add some trendy pieces to your fashion, but let it be subtle, let's say 80 percent timeless and 20 percent trends.

You do not want to be caught up in the trends.

Pay Attention To Details: There are little, insignificant things that can mar your appearance. Such things are wearing rumpled clothes, clothes that have holes or torn, worn out colors, fading jewelries, shoes that are peeling etc. Please do not ignore these things.

Commit To Your Appearance: You have to decide that you are going to start taking pride in your appearance. Before you step out, ask yourself "Do I look good in what I am wearing? Am I good enough to face anyone today?" If your answer is YES, then you are good to go!

Finally, remember, you are not looking good to necessarily impress others, you are looking good because of the power your appearance has over you. When you look good, you will definitely feel good, confident and be more productive.



Countdown To Paris 2024: Nigeria At The Olympics In The 21st Century

By Joseph Jacob

Nigeria made her 13th Olympic appearance at Athens 2004 with 72 athletes comprising of 24 men and 48 women. It was the first time Nigeria had more female than male athletes in an Olympic Games.

Nigeria participated in only two team sports, women's basketball and football. However, Nigeria finished 68th with only two bronze medals.

The quartet of Deji Aliu, Aaron Egbele, Uchenna Emedolu and Olusoji Fasuba won bronze on August 28, 2004 in the men's 4x100m relay.

The same day, Musa Audu, James Godday, Enefiok Udo-Obong and Saul Weigopwa won bronze in men's 4x400m relay.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics saw Team Nigeria participate in Athletics, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Judo, Swimming, Table tennis, Taekwondo, Weightlifting and Wrestling. 74 athletes represented Nigeria.

After winning three silver and two bronze medals



Mikel Obi at the 2016 Olympics

Nigeria finished 59th. Dream Team III won Nigeria's first silver medal. They started their campaign against the Netherlands in a thrilling encounter that ended goalless, before defeating Japan and USA 2-1 respectively to top the group with seven points.

It was an all-African affair in the quarter-final as Nigeria took on Cote d'Ivoire and

overcame them 2-0. Belgium emerged Nigeria's opponents in the semi-final and the West Africans made mincemeat of the Europeans 4-1 to book a final against Argentina, whitewashed their South American brothers Brazil 3-0 in the other semi-final.

Angel Di Maria scored the only goal of the final as Nigeria settled for silver.

Nigeria won her second

silver in the women's 4x100m relay through Franca Idoko, Gloria Kemasuode, Halimat Ismaila and Oludamola Osayomi.

Blessing Okagbare won Nigeria's third silver medal in the women's long jump.

Abia State born Chika Chukwumerije won a bronze medal in men's +80kg Taekwondo. Lastly,

Mariam Usman won bronze in women's +75kg weightlifting.

The Olympics train moved to London, United Kingdom and Nigeria sent the smallest delegation to the Olympic Games since 1984. Nigeria was represented by 53 athletes, 30 men and 23 women.

Unfortunately, Nigeria failed to win a single medal for the first time since 1988.

The Olympics went to South America in 2016 and Nigeria stormed Rio de Janeiro, Brazil with 77 athletes, comprising of 51 men and 26 women who participated in 10 sports.

Colombia.

Denmark stood between Nigeria and the semi-final. After 90 minutes of soccer hostilities, Nigeria booked a semi-final ticket with a 2-0 win over the Europeans.

Germany stopped Nigeria 2-0 in the semi-final before Nigeria grabbed the bronze medal with a 3-2 victory over Honduras.

In Tokyo 2020 Games, Nigeria participated with 55 athletes in 10 sports and finished 74th after winning one silver and one bronze medal.

Blessing Oborududu won silver in women's freestyle 68kg wrestling while Ese Brume won a bronze in women's long jump.



Chika Chukwumerije

Nigeria finished 78th after winning only one bronze medal won by John Mikel Obi captained Dream Team V in the men's football event.

Nigeria opened their campaign with a 5-4 victory over Japan. They narrowly defeated Sweden 1-0 to qualify for the knock-out round before losing their last group match 0-2 to

As we countdown to Paris 2024 Olympics, will Nigeria put up an exceptional performance? Nigeria is expected to storm the French capital with 82 athletes, who will compete in 11 sports namely: Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Boxing, Canoeing, Cycling, Football, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Weightlifting and Wrestling.



The Nigerian quartet won Bronze in 2004

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2025 AFCON QUALIFIERS: All You Need To Know

By Joseph Jacob

ALL THE GROUPS

GROUP A
Tunisia
Madagascar
Comoros
Gambia

GROUP B
Morocco
Gabon
CAR
Lesotho

GROUP C
Egypt
Cape Verde
Mauritania
Botswana

GROUP D
Nigeria
Benin
Libya
Rwanda

GROUP E
Algeria
E/Guinea
Togo
Liberia

GROUP F
Ghana
Angola
Sudan
Niger

GROUP G
Cote d'Ivoire
Zambia
Sierra Leone
Chad

GROUP H
DR Congo
Guinea
Tanzania
Ethiopia

GROUP I
Mali
Mozambique
Guinea Bissau
Eswatini

GROUP J
Cameroon
Namibia
Kenya
Zimbabwe

GROUP K
South Africa
Uganda
Congo
South Sudan

GROUP L
Senegal
Burkina Faso
Malawi
Burundi



AFCON Trophy

The draws for the qualifiers of the next Africa Cup of Nations, Morocco 2025 took place recently in Johannesburg, South Africa. Here is all you need to know about the qualifiers and the chances of the Super Eagles to qualify for the AFCON.

The qualifiers are scheduled to kick-off in September and will be concluded in November 2024. All the 48 teams will play two matches each during the international windows that will hold in September, October and November.

The first and second teams in each of the group will qualify for the AFCON

except group B where the 2025 AFCON host, Morocco is playing.

If Morocco wins the group, they will qualify alongside the second placed team. If they should finish outside the first two places they will qualify instead of the second placed team.

Nigeria is placed in Group D where they will face Benin Republic and Rwanda, who are in the same group with the Super Eagles in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, as well as North African side, Libya.

The Super Eagles have already played their first leg qualifiers against Benin Republic losing by 2-1 and they will face Rwanda

when they World Cup qualifiers will resume in March 2024.

Defending champions, the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire will seek to qualify for the AFCON in order to defend their title in Group G, where they will battle Zambia, Sierra Leone and Chad.

Most successful team of the AFCON, the Pharaohs of Egypt will vie for the 2025 AFCON ticket in Group C against Cape Verde, Mauritania and Botswana.

The 35th edition of the AFCON will hold in Morocco between December 21, 2025 and January 18, 2026.



Super Eagles of Nigeria

BLAST IN THE PAST: How Nigeria Won Her First Olympic Gold Medal

The 1996 Olympics could stop the police will remain officer from becoming indelible in the hearts of Nigerians for several reasons. Nigeria's men's football team humbled Brazil and Argentina in their way to winning Africa's first gold medal in the football event of the Olympics.

Chioma Ajunwa is the only woman to compete at both the FIFA Women's World Cup as a footballer and the Olympics as a track and field athlete.

A day before the Olympic conquest by the Dream Team, Nigeria won her first gold medal through a police officer-



Chioma Ajunwa. She competed in the 100m but could not go beyond the semi-final after her 11.14 seconds finish, placed her on 10th position. Rather than give up, Ajunwa competed in her second sport, the long jump and eventually won the gold.

To qualify for the final, she jumped 6.81m to finish second and qualify for the final. In the final Ajunwa leaped an additional 0.31m to a total jump of 7.12m.

Her community in Imo State awarded her a chieftaincy title.

Chioma Ajunwa received so many recognitions. Then Head of State Gen. Sani Abacha gave her national award of Member of the Order of Niger (MON) during the celebration of Nigeria's 50th Independent Anniversary in 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan conferred special Golden Jubilee Independence Award on 50 distinguished Nigerians and friends of Nigeria including Chioma Ajunwa.