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1000 Petty Traders From Abia Benefit From Renewed Hope Initiative Programme

By Chibunna Ikeokwu

About 1000 Abians have been empowered with #50 million from the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) programme of the first Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu.

This is part of Tinubu's continued commitment to drive economic growth among women for better family lives.

The wife of the president has earlier launched a business recapitalization grant for petty traders in the country through her Renewed Hope Initiative(RHI) programme.

Presenting the 50-million-naira cheque to 1000 female petty traders in Abia State Government banquet hall, Umuahia, recently, Senator Oluremi Tinubu said that the programme is being launched simultaneously in all the 36 states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory, as it aims at gifting 37000 female petty traders grant to support their businesses.

Oluremi Tinubu, represented by the wife of the Chief of Staff to the President, Mrs. Salamatu Gbajabiamila, said that the grants provided is to assist the women petty traders in overcoming some of their business challenges, expand their businesses, create more employment and contribute more robustly to the economy.



Christian Association Prays For Unity Of Ndigbo

By Okereke Kate

The Christian Association of Igbo Ministers (CAIM), has successfully concluded its annual summit in Abia State, culminating in a heartfelt appeal to the Igbo people to come together in prayer, seeking God's divine intervention to heal and restore their land.

In its 6th World Summit held at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, Abia State, the gospel ministers of Igbo

harped the need to come together, to chart the way forward in the South-East region.

Speaking during the summit, the International President of CAIM, Apostle Solomon Chukwuemeka Okorie, emphasized that the primary objective of the summit is to unify the Igbo nation through the power of the gospel.

He stressed the importance of supporting and empowering Igbo

ministers in their respective ministries, fostering growth and collective progress.

“It's a common phenomenon among Ndigbo to extend support to outsiders in various spheres, including politics, ministry, business and more, rather than, empowering their own kin”. An attitude, he said, must be discarded in order for the region to witness substantial

growth and meaningful advancement.

“This mindset has significantly contributed to the major challenges facing us. Unlike other regions that thrive due to robust internal support, the South-East remains hindered by backwardness and marginalization, primarily because its people fail to empower their own.”

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Abia Gov, Dr Alex Otti and Minister of State Police Affairs, Hajiya Suleman-Ibrahim, during the Citizens' Town-hall Engagement on Strengthening Community Policing in Nigeria, at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.

Gov Otti Reaffirms Commitment to Security

By Amarachi Uzonkwu

Governor Dr. Alex Otti, Abia State has reiterated his administration's unwavering commitment to enhancing security across the state.

He stated this, at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, while declaring open the Renewed Hope Agenda: Citizens Town Hall Engagement on Strengthening Community Policing in Nigeria.

The governor emphasized that the event themed, "Community

Policing: Building a Safer Nigeria Together," underscores the importance of collaborative efforts towards ensuring a safer society.

He noted that security remains a top priority for his administration, hence the establishment of the Joint Security Taskforce, codenamed, "Operation Crush", as a key initiative aimed at combating insecurity and criminal activities throughout Abia State.

Governor Otti highlighted the importance of security, and

emphasized that without a secured environment, all efforts towards infrastructure development and the welfare of citizens would be in vain.

He said; "Our focus on security revolves around the understanding that everything we plan to do in terms of infrastructure development and welfare of the citizenry will amount to nothing, if our people are constantly at the mercy of our land. Those were not just empty words. The governor further stated.

"On assumption of office in May last year, I announced that security of lives and property shall be the number one priority of the state government, as stipulated in the Constitution.

"Right from the inauguration podium, I made it clear that we were prepared to give everything to keep our people safe from criminals and those who trade and threaten the security and peace of our land. Those were not just empty words.

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News

CHANGE OF NAME

Abia SSG Identifies Solutions To Brain Drain Syndrome In Nigeria

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Secretary to Abia State Government (SSG), Prof. Kenneth Kalu, has identified improved economy and evaluation of the reward system for professionals in Nigeria as veritable tools towards addressing the Brain Drain Syndrome ravaging the nation.

In his address as the keynote speaker at the 13th Induction and Oath-taking ceremony of the 2022/2023 graduands of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Prof. Kalu also named other factors to include; concerted efforts by all stakeholders to restore trust in public and private institutions.

Prof kalu who spoke on the theme; "the Brain drain and young Nigerian graduates: immediate challenges and long term implications" revealed that optimal migration of skills from one country to another is not bad but however explained that it becomes a troubling phenomenon when it is threatening the effectiveness and efficiency of critical institutions of the state.



Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu Delivering A Keynote Lecture During An Induction Ceremony At Unizik Recently.

He advised the graduands to abide by the oath as well as begin to conduct research and invest in home grown submissions to tackle emerging health challenges.

Also speaking, the Acting Vice chancellor Nnamdi Azikiwe University Prof. Carol Arinze Umobi represented by Prof. Fedrick Odibo congratulated the graduands, adding that the day marks the realisation of their long held dreams and enjoined them to see the oath and induction lecture as important and should not be submerged to

the conviviality of the events

In her opening remark The chairman of the occasion, Lady Ada Chukwudozie thanked God for making the day a reality and prayed God to bless and grant all those who found time to grace the occasion journey mercies.

Speaking Mr Valentine Izibor said the brain drain has both positive and negative implications and called on all government at all levels to do the right thing and the citizen to become more active in holding the leaders accountable for a

better nation.

The ceremony which attracted the presence of the Governor of Anambra State Prof. Chukwuma Soludo represented by his commissioner for Housing pharmacist Paulinus Onyeka, SSA to Abia state Governor on Due process, Mr Oluebube Chukukwu, the wife of the SSG, Mrs. Ifeyinwa kalu, featured presentation award of recognition to the key note speaker, Prof. Kenneth kalu by the VC Nnamdi Azikiwe University.

Christian Association Prays For Unity Of Ndigbo

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Apostle Okorie disclosed that CAIM is out to change the narrative in the South-East, calling on Ndigbo to assist their indigenous pastors, as well as, desist from sowing seed of discord among men of God and churches in the region.

In his message, Pastor Marius Arugwe of the Christian Pentecostal Mission (CPM), said one of the problems of the South-East, is the inability to grab political power, adding that if the region would come together to fight for it, then, things would change.

According to the cleric, the effects of the on the South-East region, is quite enormous, translating on every facet of the regional economy. He added that if Ndigbo can humble themselves in prayer, God will heal their land and also their

authority will be regained.

"If an Igbo man must rise, he must seek for genuine power which is gotten from God. No revolution comes without power. When you get power from God, then you will govern your nation, state, community and family effectively", the cleric further stated.

Speaking with our reporter, the General Overseer of Jesus Pentecostal Miracle Church, Bishop Stephen Otuonye, said the summit was apt, as it would help change the mindset of the people.

The cleric said Ndigbo should cultivate the habit of helping their own, investing in each other and raising younger ones for the ministry, to create a formidable region.

Also, Dr Emmanuel Ogbonna, of the famous Voice of the Cross-Gospel Band, expressed excitement about the summit which he said

would help the region experience significant progress and development.

He added that except Igbo ministers humble themselves in prayer, God can never heal their land.

A member of Voice of the Cross, Apostle Lazarus Chukwuoma, highlighted the importance of unity among Igbo ministers, spanning both preaching and singing ministries, in driving kingdom progress.

He commended CAIM leaders for addressing the lingering crisis within Voice of the Cross and predicted that the group would rebound with renewed strength and empowerment.

During an interaction with CAIM's Abia State Co-ordinator and Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee for the World Igbo Prayer Summit 2024, Martin's Okerefor, he emphasized that

the summit offered a unique opportunity to pray for the harmony, advancement, and growth of the Igbo nation, as well as the prosperity of the land.

According to Okerefor, the yearly summit serves as a convergence point for Igbo ministers nationwide, aimed at fostering a collective drive towards promoting peace and unity in the land.

He added that the programme would be of immense benefit to the Abia State chapter of CAIM, to spread and gain more momentum.

According to him, to drive the Igbo nation forward, there must be unity of purpose. He admonished admonishing Igbo ministers to cultivate the habit of helping each other, instilling discipline, integrity and character, shunning bickering and envy in the kingdom race.

Gov Otti Reaffirms Commitment to Security

Continued from Page 1

"We made good our promise a few weeks later by setting up a joint task force codenamed "Operation Crush", and gave them a very simple mandate to make Abia a safe place for law abiding citizens and a very uncomfortable territory for criminals".

The governor noted that the town hall meeting offers a valuable opportunity for a robust engagement between citizens and security

operatives aimed at fostering a greater understanding of their roles in assisting to prevent crime as well as maintaining peace.

He called for the co-operation of all Abians in securing the state, maintaining that security is the responsibility of all citizens.

In her remarks, the Minister of State for Police Affairs, Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, stated that the meeting aims to transform

the Nigerian Police Force into a world-class institution suited for the 21st Century.

She added that the goal is to create a Police Force that is responsive, intelligence-driven, community-oriented, and technologically advanced, while also excelling in maintaining public safety, upholding the rule of law, and fostering trust through transparent and accountable practices.

The Minister of Labour

and Productivity, Dr Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, in a goodwill message, described the town hall meeting as timely and essential for Abians. She commended Governor Otti for prioritizing security and ensuring that all parts of the state are protected.

The event also featured a panel interactive session, and the presentation of a security award to Governor Otti, in recognition of his efforts in strengthening security in Abia State.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Ajaero Loveth Chibuzo, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. TREASURE LOVETH BLESSING LAZARUS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. TREASURE LOVETH BLESSING LAZARUS.

I, formerly known and addressed as Blessing Arunsi Lazarus and Blessing A. Lazarus, now wish to be known and addressed as PRINCE BLESSING LAZARUS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

PRINCE BLESSING LAZARUS.

I, formally known, called and addressed as Miss Ezekwesiri Oluomachi Loveth, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS LOVETH OLUOMACHI ONUOHA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS LOVETH OLUOMACHI ONUOHA

I formerly known, called and addressed as Miss Nwakamma Happiness Udodirim now wish to be known, called and addressed as NWAKAMMA GOODNESS UDODIRIM. All documents bearing my former names remain, valid Key Stone Bank Plc, Access Bank Plc and the general public should please take note.

NWAKAMMA GOODNESS UDODIRIM

I, formerly known and called as Miss Atuma Roseann Chidinma, now wish to be known and called as MRS AGOHA ROSEANN CHIDINMA. All former documents bearing my names remain valid.

Bende Local Government and general public should please take note.

MRS AGOHA ROSEANN

I, formally known, called and addressed as Miss Adindu Blessing Ezinna, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS UCHECHUKWU-ELENDU BLESSING EZINNA. All document bearing my former names remain valid.

The general public should please take note.

MRS UCHECHUKWU-ELENDU BLESSING EZINNA

ADDITION OF NAME

This is affirm that ONYIBE SUNDAY EMMANUEL and ONYIBE SUNDAY which appeared in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) with Access Bank are same person.

I, now wish to be known and addressed as ONYIBO SUNDAY EMMANUEL. All document bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ONYIBO SUNDAY EMMANUEL

I, formerly known, called and addressed as Nnadeke Osorachukwu Chikodi, C. now wish to be known, called and addressed as NNADEDE CORDELIA C H I K O D I OSORACHUKWU. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

NNADEDE CORDELIA CHIKODI OSORACHUKWU

Correction of Name/Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Praise Agbocha Irozuru which appeared in my Bank verification Number (BVN) with Union Bank Nig. Plc and Irozuru Praise as same person.

My date of birth was wrongly written as 1/1/196.

I now wish to be known and addressed as IROZURU PRAISE and my date of birth as 16th September 1968.

All document bearing my former names remain valid. Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and the general public please take note.

IROZURU PRAISE

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Sam-Onuoha Faithful which was written in my NIN and Onuoha Faithful O. which was written in my Bank Verification account (BVN) are same person. I, now wish to be called and addressed as SAM-ONUOHA FAITHFUL O. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Union Bank Plc and the general public should please take note.

SAM-ONUOHA FAITHFUL O.

Correction of Date of Birth / Change of Name

This is to affirm that Chidinma Glory Chimuanya which appeared in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) with Union Bank Nig. Plc and Chidinma Glory Adindu which appeared in my First Bank Account are same person and my date of birth which was wrongly written as 9th day of February 1983. I, now wish to be called and addressed as Adindu Chidinma Glory and my correct date of birth is 1st January 1983.

ADINDU CHIDINMA GLORY

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Chikezie Chibuike which was wrongly written in my International Passport and CHIKEZIE VICTOR JOHN are same person. I now wish to be called and addressed as CHIKEZIE VICTOR JOHN. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CHIKEZIE VICTOR JOHN

News

Fubara Pledges To Complete Reconstruction Of Igbo Etche Road In 3 Months

From Jane Maduadugwo, PH

Governor, Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State has assured that the failed section of the 16.5km Igbo Etche road, which cut across two Local Government Areas of Obio/Akpor and Etche, currently under repair, will be completed in three months for use by residents and other commuters.

He gave the assurance while on inspection of the road whose deplorable state had made it difficult for commuting and completely abandoned for over eleven years.

The governor, who was accompanied by the Commissioner for Works, Eloka Tasie-Amadi, and other top government officials on the inspection, expressed satisfaction over the spate of work done so far by the contractors, stating that the road will be completed for use by the people in the next three months, no matter the cost.

"We are here this afternoon to see for ourselves the extent of job the contractor is doing concerning this deplorable road. This road is about 16.5kilometers and it cuts across two local government areas, Obio Akpor and Etche. In Obio Akpor it affects the Rumukrushu, the Atali and the Eneka axis before entering Etche."

"It's a major access road that most traders both from Aba and deep down Etche normally use to do their business in Oil Mill Market. From information this road has been bad and impassable in the past 11 years." He further stated.

He said the decision to fix the road was in line with the mantra of his administration, which is Rivers First, and assured that proper attention will be given to fix the road, despite the rainy season to alleviate the plight of the people.

"And you know our mantra, the people first, we felt it is very important no matter what it is going to cost us and the situation as it is rainy season, we insisted that we must do something about this road so that it can improve the lives of our people here."

"So, I have come to see what they are doing and I am really impressed with the extent of job. It shows the contract understands our passion to make our people happy and I'm really impressed. I will be coming here again because I have assured them that in the next three months this road must be put use." He said.

Gov. Fubara who defied the rains also visited the Zonal Hospital, Ahoada to assess level of works done and expressed satisfaction. He assured that as one of the key development agenda of his administration, he is sure of delivering the project before the first quarter of 2025.

"We have seen what they are doing and I can say that we are also impressed. We are very sure that before the first quarter of next year this project will be delivered to the good people of this Senatorial district." He also stated.

The governor who was conducted round the Zonal Hospital building by the Commissioner for Health, Dr. Adaeze Chidinma Oreh, later proceeded to inspect works at the Government Girls Secondary School, Ahoada where the Commissioner for Education, Dr. Ovy Chinedum Chukwuma, also showed him round the facilities and was satisfied with ongoing works.

Gov. Fubara on his way back from Ahoada inspected the 33.5 kilometers Elele-Umudioga-Egbeda-Ubimini-Ikiri-Omoku Road and was excited by the ongoing works.

Monarchs Unite To Address Fallen Standard of Abia Traditional Institution

Okereke Kate, Chukwuemeka Chijioke

Traditional rulers under the aegis of Royal Renaissance Group, an integrity group, has moved to reform the traditional institution, restoring its lost glory as well as helping it gain its pride of place in Abia.

Seeing the recent misconduct and low carriage exhibited by some royal fathers, as a result of the decline in the standard of the traditional institution, the group was formed to pursue the vision of reformation of the

required standards and appropriate behaviors in the traditional institution.

At its monthly meeting hosted by the Secretary of the group and Traditional Ruler of Eziama/Mgbaja Ossah Ibeku Autonomous Community in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State, Eze Chiabuotu Emelike, the group re-emphasised its commitment to champion a new course in the kingship institution of Abia State.

In an interview with the Chairman of the Royal Renaissance Group, Eze Bobby Aguocha, who was

represented by the secretary, Eze Emelike, said the group started in 2022, with the aim of changing the trajectory of the traditional institution in the state and as well, revamp the system.

According to him, the traditional institution in Abia State has been engulfed with royal fathers with questionable characters and the group is geared to correct the wrong by showcasing the acceptable moral conduct befitting of a traditional head.

He said the body is not a parallel body to the Traditional Rulers Council, but a respectful association of like minds who are

championing change in the larger traditional council and also setting some kind of standard by their conduct, carriage among others.

Eze Aguocha frowned at the unacceptable behaviours of some monarchs most especially in their public conduct, speech and general disposition, which had brought suspicion in the quality of Ezes.

"We believe Ezes are supposed to carry themselves with carriage, be an example to their community, conduct themselves, dress and speak in the public properly. But the

reverse has been the case overtime in our revered institution and we are moved to bring the desired changes in the traditional stool of Abia State".

He added that their membership cuts across the 17 local government areas of the state, with a campaign to raise the ethical behavior of Ezes in Abia State.

"A lot of Ezes have indicated interest to join us, but we are careful about our selection, so we don't bring in people that will jeopardize our vision", the monarch stated.

Eze Aguocha further charged community leaders to raise the bars for the selection of traditional rulers that will represent the community well and as well, bring a good name or image to the community.

He, however, re-emphasized that becoming a member of the group is not based on wealth accumulation, education or class, but centers on good conduct and carriage.

The monarch restated that the association would do a lot of good to the traditional system, apart from repositioning and lifting up its standards, it would help to change the behaviours of other monarchs who abridge the set standard.

He further commended the State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, for his transformation agenda in Abia, believing it would bring a reform to the Ezeship stool, helping to achieve the goals desired of the kingship stool.

Also, the former Chairman of Umuahia North Council of Traditional Rulers, Eze Edward Ibeabuchi, said it was high time, sanity be restored to the traditional system of Abia State.

According to him, he has been an Eze for over 23 years, lamenting the decline in the system, which he stated gets worse by the day, therefore, the need to form the Royal Renaissance group, to help champion change in the entire traditional institution.

He added that it is an aberration for royal fathers to conduct themselves in unspeakable manner, pointing that their goal is to show the light and correct the trajectory.



■ Cross Section of Renaissance Group Members During their monthly meeting in Umuahia.

Bishop Oyedepo Advises Youths During Convention

The Bishop of the Living Faith Church worldwide, David Olaniyi Oyedepo, has advised youths to follow God's plans.

He urged youths not to make decisions without God. Bishop Oyedepo said only God can lead anyone to stardom in one's career and not otherwise.

"Don't pack your bag and ask God if you should go. Don't tempt God. Asked God for his plan because his plan is already blessed," Oyedepo said.

He explained that knowing the plan of God requires one to "separate yourselves to a quiet place to hear

God".

You need an ornament of a quiet and meek spirit to hear God speak. One must be in the spirit to hear the voice of the spirit, and one must be spiritual to embrace the voice of the spirit," he emphasized.

The Living Faith General Overseer thus said at the just concluded Annual Youths Alive Convention, AYAC2024.

"Access to the voice of God is what takes you to stardom. We are where we are today as a church by following the voice of the spirit.

"Staying where God says you should stay and doing what God says you

should do is what guarantees your stardom.

"The voice of the Lord is in the Bible, and following what God says makes you a frontline in your chosen career. But you need an open ear to hear what God is saying. The voice of God guarantees supernatural victory and supernatural favour," he further stated.

It allays all fears. If you hear from God, you become fearless and unstoppable. God's voice instills supernatural confidence.

"The reason you shake is because you didn't hear from God. You can't hear from God and lack confidence," Oyedepo told the church youths.

Abia Assembly Confirms ABSIEC Chairman, Others

By Chukwuemeka Chijioke

The Abia State House of Assembly has screened and confirmed the Chairman and some member nominees of the Abia State Independent Electoral Commission, ABSIEC, sent by the Governor, Dr Alex Otti.

Announcing the development on the floor

of the House, the Deputy Speaker and presiding officer for the day, Rt.Hon. Augustine Okezie, named those confirmed to include the Chairman designate Professor George Chima and other members designate were Dr. Kelechi Okere, Joseph Uzoma Akara, Nkemdirim Kalu and

Bertha Ehumadu.

According to the deputy speaker, the other two nominees, including Ekele Queen Ahuchogu and Onyemauche Elekwe, who were not present, would be screened when they present themselves.

The House also screened and confirmed the governor's nominees, for

the position of Auditor-General of the state, Mrs Eke Ngozi Ogbonnaya - Ugwo.

The House also at plenary passed into law H.A.B.21: The Abia State 2024 Appropriation Virement Bill, 2024.

The bill seeks to vire the sum of One Hundred and Seventy-One Billion,

Seventy-Four Million, Six Hundred and Sixty-Four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixty-Five Naira (N171, 074,664, 965.00) only in the 2024 Abia State Budget Appropriation Law for the services of the Government of Abia State for the year ending 31st December 2024 and for other related purposes.

News

Rivers LG Boss Awards Bursary To 400 Students

From Nzeuzor Jane, PH

The Chairman, Caretaker Committee of Ogu/Bolo Local Government Area of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Evans Bipi, has awarded bursary to over 400 undergraduate students of the local government origin, in tertiary institutions, across the country.

The beneficiaries, drawn from over 16 tertiary institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of health sciences, constitute the first batch of the bursary scheme by the Ogu/Bolo Caretaker Chairman.

The gesture which is anchored on the policy trust of the caretaker chairman, on education development aims to promote academic excellence, ease the financial burden of tertiary education on parents and guardians, and reduce the rate of school dropouts by indigent students of Ogu/Bolo LGA.

The disbursement of bursary to the students by the Bipi, is a timely intervention amidst the current economic crunch in the country where school authorities are in dire straits to maintain the standard of education, while parents and guardians struggle financially to sustain the education of their children and wards in higher institutions.

Providing timely financial relief in the form of bursary to the student community is a vital life-line for most of them whose academic journeys were on the brink of being cut short due to financial difficulties.

The kind gesture by the Ogu/Bolo Council boss portrays him as a divine helper, a visionary and compassionate leader who prioritizes the needs of students because he has their best interest at heart.

It also underscores the chairman's unwavering commitment to the welfare of the student community as encapsulated in his robust youth development, policy of empowering young people with education and skills development to enable them reach their full potentials.

He considers bursary payment as a valuable investment in the future leaders of Ogu/Bolo LGA and a deliberate step towards securing the future of young people.

The decision by the

Ogu/Bolo Caretaker chairman to alleviate the financial hardship faced by students of the area in tertiary institutions, thereby easing the financial burden on their families, has been widely applauded as the first of its kind in the area for over 10 years. This is in contrast to the immediate past administration that was never interested in the payment of bursary.

It is instructive to state that the amount received by each student under the bursary scheme by the Ogu/Bolo Caretaker Chairman, Rt. Hon. Bipi, is the highest paid by any administration in the history of the local government area.

For beneficiaries of the bursary scheme, it was the first time in their academic pursuit they have benefitted from such financial support from the local government council. They expressed delight and appreciation to the Ogu/Bolo Caretaker Chairman for the gesture, while promising to channel the funds to the intended purpose.

On her part, the Secretary of the Bursary Committee and former Vice-Chairman of Ogu/Bolo LGA Mr. Christy Tamunobereton-ari, lauded Bipi for alleviating the plight of students of the area in tertiary institutions, going through financial difficulties in their academic pursuit, at this challenging time.

She emphasized that by meeting them at the point of their need, it shows that the caretaker chairman is attuned and sensitive to the plight of the student community.

On his part, the Special Assistant on Student Affairs to the Ogu/Bolo Caretaker Chairman, Tamuno-Opubo Eretoru, described the gesture as a timely safety net to the students and a testament of the unwavering commitment of the chairman to the advancement of education in the area.

He commended Rt. Hon. Bipi, for his exceptional generosity and selfless dedication to the student community.

The verification exercise for continuation of the bursary payment to the 2nd batch of the undergraduate students by the Ogu/Bolo Caretaker Chairman is expected to commence soon.



■ British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Dr Richard Montgomery and Gov of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti at his Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa home.

Gov Otti Approves Comprehensive Upgrade of Amachara, Abia Specialist Hospitals, Unveils Plan To Boost Water Supply, Sanitation

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti has approved the comprehensive upgrade and retrofitting of the Amachara General Hospital and Abia Specialist Hospital Umuahia.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu disclosed this while briefing Journalists on the outcome of this week's Exco meeting presided over by the Governor.

According to the Commissioner, the upgrade is to enable the facilities offer expanded scope of high quality Medicare in special areas including internal medicine, cardiology, neurology,

surgical services, general brain and spine surgeries among others.

He said the intended upgrade will come on stream between the next 12 to 15 weeks, adding that both facilities and structures in the two health institutions would be affected.

The Commissioner also revealed that the Exco approved the Abia Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene Accelerated Programme which includes the upgrade of water facilities and water treatment.

He added that state government would install 10 solar powered facilities across the three senatorial zones of the state.

Prince Kanu revealed that

the Governor would on Wednesday, flag off the 41.4 kilometer Arochuku-Ohafia Federal road maintaining that the aim is to provide comfort and convenience to Abians.

Contributing, the Commissioner for Health, Prof Enoch Ogbonnaya Uche said the complete overhaul of the Abia Specialist Hospital and Amachara General Hospital are designed to elevate the health institutions to centers of excellence in various medical specialties.

Prof Uche noted that the comprehensive upgrade of the hospitals will not only improve the existing facilities but will also introduce new, state-of-the-art equipments and services.

He revealed that the state government has approved funds for the recruitment of high-caliber specialists across various medical fields to ensure that Abia people receive the best in terms of quality healthcare services.

"In the succeeding days and weeks, some of this retrofitting and upgrade of services will become manifest", Prof Uche stated.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Power and Public Utilities, Mr Ikechukwu Monday, the state has also embarked on Abia Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene Accelerated Programme initiatives to address water supply issues, which are critical to public health.

According to him, the initiative conceived as a coordinated, three-phase program will see existing boreholes retrofitted with solar power systems, particularly in rural areas, to ensure consistent water supply without reliance on the power grid.

"When we took office, we assessed all the water facilities in the state and found that none of the 58 core water facilities was producing even a liter of water" he stated.

The Commissioner who highlighted the importance of water in raising public health standard within the state said, water treatment facilities will be integrated based on thorough water quality analysis to ensure safe drinking water for the populace.

Mr. Monday also announced plans to improve sanitation and hygiene across the state adding that the state "aims to achieve zero open defecation and would construct modern, solar-powered public sanitation facilities, including washrooms and toilets, across the three senatorial zones".

Govt Engages Consultants For Transformation Of Enyimba Hotels To Five-star Status

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has announced the engagement of two consulting firms to assist in the rehabilitation and refurbishment of the long-abandoned Enyimba Hotels, Aba, to a Five-Star status.

The Commissioner for Information and Culture, Prince Okey Kanu, disclosed this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the Exco meeting presided over by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu who noted that the two firms of consultants would assist the state in reaching an agreement with the proposed international brand managers for the hotel, said that government is committed to completing the necessary paperwork, for the commencement of the project.

According to the commissioner, the hotel would

be well expanded beyond its original state to accommodate an International Conference Centre, among other facilities befitting a five-star hotel.

He said; "With the engagement of the consultants, their job would be to guide the state into an agreement with the proposed international Brand Managers of the hotel and this would happen within weeks.

"Of course, we are all aware that the state government wants to turn Enyimba Hotel into a five-star hotel.

"An international brand has been on the books to take over and manage that hotel, so a few of the paper works would be done now we have engaged these consultants.

"That is why I said within weeks, all these would be done with and that project will commence".

Prince Kanu also revealed that the state government had secured a vendor for the Ovom Erosion site, in fulfillment of Governor Otti's promise during

an on-the-spot inspection of the erosion site recently.

"During the course of the inspection, the governor promised to provide immediate succor to all the victims affected by the erosion.

"It is, therefore, most fitting that within a space of 72 hours, His Excellency has fulfilled that promise with the procurement of those vendors.

Also speaking, the Director-General, Greater Aba Development Authority (GADA), Mr. Uche Ukeje, said that the role of the contractor at the Ovom erosion site would be to stop the erosion from further encroachment as well as to reclaim the area already devastated.

He added that the Enyimba Hotel which was acquired by the Aba Chamber of Commerce, industry, Mines and Agriculture (ACIMA), over 30 years ago, would be rehabilitated by the state government and be made more expansive.

NATIONAL Ambassador

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

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
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Abia @ 33

On Tuesday, August 27, 2024, Abia – God's Own State turned 133 solid years of her existence as one of the states in the South-East geographical and geopolitical delineation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Hurray!!

Created out of the old Imo State on August 27, 1991 – by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (Rtd). The then Head of State, Abia administration has been midwived by several rulers including five military administrators with Rtd. Group Captain Frank Ajobena as the pioneer Administrator and five democratically elected civilian governors with late Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu as the pioneer-Civilian Governor.

Dr. Alex Chioma Otti (OFR) is the incumbent Governor who mounted the saddle on May 29th, 2023 is now 15 months and some days in office.

When one compares the rate and quantum of achievements recorded so far by Dr. Otti administration, and the past 32 years snail-speed development of the previous administrations, one might be wrongly termed "Psychophantic" to conclude that Otti's administration has surpassed the rest – within such a short period.

An elaborate analysis of these achievements in the areas of general administration, economic development, physical infrastructural development, social cohesion, security, education, commerce, healthcare and so on, will testify to the fact that Governor, while he was campaigning to be elected, promised to bring positive and noticeable changes to Abia, and that Abians "Should weep no more"

What he has done so far aligns with Charles Darwin (73 years – an English Naturalist who wrote "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent but the one most responsive to change".

The Governor, while outside Government House before May 29th, 2023, knew that Abians had been crying and wailing for a positive change in their

governance and he resolved to bring about that much wanted and needed change.

Within one year of his leadership, he has pursued the philosophy of Peters Drucker (95 years, an Austrian-American Consultant) who wrote "Effective Leadership is not about making speechless, or being liked (by all), Leadership is defined by results, not attributes".

The achievements of Governor Otti so far are too numerous to be reeled out in a newspaper Editorial Column. Shall we write about the massive road constructions, rehabilitations enveloping the length and breadth of the entire State, the new lease of life in the Civil/ Public Servants, teachers, the coming back to life of many pensioners who were on their way to the land of the dead as a result of the very insensitive attitude of past governments towards them, or do we write about the progress made, within this one year, towards restoration of security of lives and property of residents in the State and lots more? It will definitely be inexhaustible.

All we are pleading for is that as Abia moves into her 34th year of existence, let Abians and non-Abian resident here, rise to support this administration to achieve more successes, by avoiding unwarranted negative, destructive criticisms over-loaded with bitter hatred in both the print, electronic and social media.

Let those in the Vanguard of these inglorious negative criticisms in Abia note the writings of Tiffany Wirifrey (a US Consultant) that "you can't stop greatness; you can only try to delay it. And when you try to delay it, it just gets greater because it gains new strength".

Governor Alex Otti will ever get greater if only he will align himself with Helen Keller's view of "keep your face to the Sunshine and you cannot see the shadows" – realizing that "negativity is the enemy of creativity".

Let us embrace peace, love and unity so that on 27th August, 2025, it would have been an Eldorado for us Abians and non-Abians resident and doing one businesses or another here.

Happy 33rd birthday Abia.

Celebrating Abia At 33

Dear Sir,

Let me use your widely read newspaper to felicitate with the Executive governor of Abia state, God's own state, Dr Alex Otti, on the 33 years of existence of the state. It has been a journey of highs and lows with each successive administration contributing its own quota to the development of the state.

Though, it is not yet Uhuru for the state, we all agree that Abia is not where it was 33years ago.

Going down memory lane, Abia was created on August 27, 1991 by the former Head of State, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida (rtd) alongside other eight states including Enugu, Delta, Yobe, Kogi etc. It has passed through 5 military administration and 5 civilian governors, with Dr. Alex Otti serving currently as the 5th civilian governors of the state.

I believe this 33 years celebration of Abia will mark the sustenance of great infrastructural developments being witnessed in Abia and also the beginning of more developmental initiatives by the present administration.

As Oliver Twist, Abians will keep asking for more till we realise the Abia of our dreams.

The coming onboard of Dr Alex Otti administration as the 5th civilian governor of the state has witnessed the emergence of the 'new Abia' where things are done differently and results are already showing. This is a clear departure from the old ways of governance from previous administrations.

As they say, Change is the only permanent thing in life, as such Abia has witnessed changes in its 33years of existence. Changes in political, economic, physical and administrative sphere.

As Abia celebrates, let us dwell on the positive changes and improve on them, hold on those things that bind us together, rather than divide us and come together to build our dear state.

Amongst all the states created with Abia, 33years ago, Abia cannot be said to be lagging behind. Abia has continued to raise its head amongst the community of states.

As Abians, when we reflect on our 33years thus far, we have reasons to be grateful to God.

We must chart the way forward to ensure that Abia resources work for all Abians, irrespective of status, gender, locality as been championed by the present administration.

At 33, Abia is old enough to have a benefitting Government House where governance can take place in a conducive environment, and I want to specially appreciate Dr. Otti's determination and promise to bequeath Abians with a benefitting world class Government House. I am optimistic that a World Class Government House will be one of the Legacies to celebrate Abia's 34th birthday.

To all Abians, let us arise and toast to a greater Abia.

From Okechukwu ubani
Umuahia

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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Reconciliation of Name	Change of Name
<p>This is to affirm that Ubani Dennis Ngozi and Chief Don Ubani is said to be same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as CHIEF DON UBANI. All document bearing my former names remain valid.</p> <p>The general public should please take note.</p> <p>CHIEF DON UBANI</p>	<p>I, formerly known and addressed as Iwuajoku Maryjane Nwasinachi now wish to be known and addressed as CHIDINMA NWASINACCHI THOMAS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, National Identity Management Commission. The West African Examination Council. and the general public should please take note.</p> <p>CHIDINMA NWASINACCHI THOMAS.</p>

Business/Economy

Banks Approach Ngx To Raise Funds For Recapitalization

By Kelechi Eme-Ogidi

Commercial banks operating in the country with approvals from their shareholders have approached the Nigeria Exchange group (NGX), formerly the Nigeria stock exchange for fresh funds/capital to meet up with the new bank Recapitalization policy.

Recently, the Governor of the central bank of Nigeria (CBN), Dr. Olayemi Cardoso in a desire to drive the \$1trn (one trillion dollar) economy projection of President Bola Tinubu's administration and strengthen banking sector resilience announced a new minimum capital requirements for banks operating in the country. The new capital requirements for the commercial banks range from #100bn to #500bn depending on the type of licence held by bank. While the banks operating with international licence has a new minimum capital requirement of #500 billion, banks with national and regional licences are to Recapitalize to the tune of #200bn and #100bn respectively.

To comply with the new recapitalization policy, most banks are already in the capital market to raise fresh funds to shore up their capital base. Although the recapitalization policy has a two-year plan that will end by March 2026, findings by National Ambassador Newspaper showed that over 11 banks' shares are on sale. Specially FCMB, Access bank, Fidelity bank, GTco, Zenith bank, UBA, Stanbic IBTC holdings LTD, etc are offering their shares for sale to the public. Further findings revealed that the banks are scrambling for fund through public offers, right issues, private placements etc. While some banks are opting out for public offers, right issues, others others are giving old and existing shareholders and opportunity to own its shares. Access bank gave right issues to existing customers while FCMB, Fidelity banks are seeking existing and new shareholders' support to raise Capital from NGX. UBA on its own, is considering a mixture of capital raising methods including right issues and private placements while Stanbic IBTC holdings LTD had launched a strong

capital raising initiatives that include Rights issue and debt capital raise. These banks may be likened to the early birds as more investigations revealed that FBN, Ecobank etc are also coming to the capital bank to raise funds.

Confirming the recent development, a visit to some of the banks showed that materials advertising the share offers were conspicuously placed on strategic places within the bank premises. Some bank staff who spoke on the condition of anonymity revealed that they have

been giving targets on the number of shares to sell. A stockbroker, Mr Paulius Amos disclosed that activities on his stockbroking firm is picking up as his clients are paying up for the right issues given to them by their banks and increasing their shareholdings.

According to the CBN regulations for compliance to the new recapitalization policy, besides the option of injecting fresh equity capital through public offers, rights issues and private statements, banks can also use the option of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) and

the final option is to upgrade or downgrade licence authorization in a situation where banks cannot meet up with the new minimum capital requirement. Experts are of the view that by the end of the recapitalization exercise, the number of commercial banks operating in the country will reduce as a result of mergers and acquisitions.

It is expected that at the end of the recapitalization exercise, Nigerian banks will be liquid enough to play big in the global business, strengthen the financial system and make it robust to be able to withstand economic crisis.

POS Operators Decry Cash Scarcity In Banks, Now Buy From Other Sources

Point of sales (POS) operators have lamented the scarcity of cash in banks and revealed that they now buy cash from supermarkets, filling stations, transport companies, traders etc to remain business in as they do not get enough cash from the banks. According to some POS operators interviewed, they no longer rely on the banks but rather source cash from other avenues. 'The banks are always complaining that they do not have cash, most times when you go to the bank branches to withdraw over the counter, they will tell you the amount of money they will pay, sometimes, you may not get up to #50,000 from the banks', Mr Emeka Kalu, a POS operator lamented. Kalu further disclosed that to continue in business, he has to reach out to some business outlets like filling stations, transport companies, supermarkets, shopping malls, traders who generate heavy cash to get cash and credit their accounts accordingly. Continuing, he said, because of high demand of cash from other POS agents, most of these outlets now sell the cash to them. So, now we buy cash and that is why we have to increase our service charges to still remain in business, Kalu stated.

In the same vein, Miss Precious Ibem, who does POS business within Agbama Housing Estate, Umuahia confirmed that getting cash from the banks recently has been difficult. She said that banks most times ratio the amount of cash they give to customers by putting a limit on the amount you can withdraw from the counter. She explained that tellers will tell you, they can only pay you #5,000, sometimes #20,000 and these amounts are very minimal to the volume of cash we need for our daily transactions. So, we have to supplement whatever cash we get from the banks with the ones we get from other sources to continue in business. Ibem explained that they have to increase their service charges because of the associated costs in getting cash. Unlike before where she charges #100 for transactions

between #1,000 to #10,000, she now charge #100 for transactions below #5000, #200 for transactions from #5000 to #10,000 and the charges increase depending on the transaction amount. In some locations, the charges are higher depending on how much the POS operators bought the cash other sources.

Commenting on the issue, an operations manager in one of the banks visited who spoke on the condition of anonymity disclosed, that the banks are not entirely to be blamed on the cash scarcity as accused by the POS operators. 'We do not hoard cash, we

pay based on the amount of cash that is available to us, sometimes, in order for the available cash to go round to as many customers as possible we have to put a cap on the amount to withdraw across the counter', the anonymous source



explained. She further disclosed that the amount of cash deposits had drastically reduced as customers no longer bring money to deposit in the banks so they rely mostly on CBN for cash supply. 'Most of our heavy deposit customers like the filling stations, Bureau-de-change, supermarkets, etc are big time POS merchants and have so many POS terminals around the town, so instead of bringing their cash to banks, they distribute the cash they generate to their POS operators thereby creating artificial cash scarcity in the banks', she further revealed. Further investigations revealed that most supermarkets, shopping malls etc, have a list of POS agents whom they supply cash to, also traders have their favourite POS operators who they give cash. Most shops also use their merchant POS machines for business. So when next, you wonder why POS operators have so much cash to give their customers while banks' ATMs remain empty, cash are now being sold and do not get to the banking halls.

Nigerian First Lady Empowers 1000 Petty Traders In Akwa Ibom With Business Recapitalization Grants

Lovina Emole, Uyo

The Renewed Hope Initiative of The Wife of the Nigerian President, Senator Oluremi Tinubu through her Renewed Hope Initiative empowered 1000 petty traders in Akwa Ibom State with grants to boost their capacity.

The event tagged, "Economic Empowerment" Recapitalisation" took place simultaneously across the nation, held in Uyo at the Banquet Hall of Government House and saw each of the business women, go home with the sum of Fifty Thousand Naira only.

Represented at the event by the Akwa Ibom State Deputy Governor, Senator Akon Eyakenyi, Senator Oluremi Tinubu in her remarks, said the empowerment programme was part of her continued commitment to better lives in the family units, stating that through the provision of grants, women who are harshly impacted by the ongoing economic reforms in the country would be able to navigate through the challenges faced.

She noted that over a billion naira has been earmarked for distribution to 37,000 women petty traders across the nation for business expansion and growth, saying economic empowerment remains a cardinal objective of RHI.

Senator Tinubu who charged the beneficiaries to make good use of the funds received, described them as the heart of the local economy and stated that more women would be captured in subsequent batches.

"To the 1000 women petty traders who are the beneficiaries of this programme, I say, you are the heart of our local economies, the foundation of our communities and the unsung heroes of our nation. You have shown incredible resilience in overcoming countless challenges to build your businesses. We celebrate your hard work and determination."

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno who was represented at the event by the Secretary to the State Government, Prince Enobong Uwah, in his remarks thanked Senator Oluremi Tinubu for the initiative which he said is geared at fostering successful families through agriculture.

He added that the empowerment programme for petty traders was a step in the right path as it will go a long way in redefining economic development and prosperity in the state.

While noting that the empowerment programme aligns with the ARISE Agenda of his administration, Governor Eno said his administration places high premium on agriculture, and that it has made available a two-billion-naira facility for traders to access, stating that this would ensure food production and security in the state.

In an opening remark, the Wife of Akwa Ibom State Governor and Coordinator of Renewed Hope Initiatives, RHI, Pastor Patience Umo Eno, noted that the renewed hope initiatives have brought new enthusiasm to petty traders, with many expressing their desire to expand their businesses and create positive impacts on their families. This, she said, will ultimately strengthen family bonds and unite the community.

Represented by the State commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Welfare, Dr. Ini Adiokpan, the Governor's Wife commended Governor Umo Eno led administration for ensuring that the Renewed Hope Initiative is implemented in the State, with additional juicy packages to support and better the lots of the elderly and vulnerable cluster in Akwa Ibom State.

On behalf of the beneficiaries, Mercy Udofia Udo, spoke on behalf of the recipients of the Recapitalisation Grants to Petty Traders, generously provided by the President's Wife through The Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI). She expressed heartfelt gratitude to the President's Wife, conveyed through Pastor Patience Umo Eno, wife of the Governor of Akwa Ibom State, for selecting them to receive this kind gesture. The grant will enable them to expand their businesses, enhance their livelihoods, and relieve their families from the burden of borrowing from LAPO (Local Alternative Financing Organizations). The initiative will also contribute to the growth of their economy, leading to a better quality of life for them and their families.

Highpoint of the event was the symbolic presentation of a cheque for fifty thousand Naira only to each to a few beneficiaries by the wife of the President of Nigeria, represented by the Akwa Ibom State Deputy Governor, Senator Akon Eyakenyi.

FOCUS

China, Nigeria, and Hostage Aircraft

By Dakuku Peterside

Every story has two sides, but when a country's reputation as a sovereign and an investment destination comes under threat, it calls for immediate concern and action from its citizens and leaders. The recent unfolding of a concerning development has significant implications for Nigeria's global standing as an investment hub. A Chinese company, Zhongshan Fucheng Industrial Investment Co. Ltd, secured a court order in France following an arbitration award initiated in 2017, with the Ogun State Government over a contractual relationship that dates to 2010. The arbitration panel ruled in favour of Zhongshan, stating that "It is clear that Zhongshan is the effective winner in these arbitral proceedings, in that it has proved its version of events is accurate, successfully resisted Nigeria's jurisdictional and preliminary objections, established a valid claim against Nigeria under the Treaty, and obtained an award for substantial damages." This is not just a legal victory for the Chinese firm, but a red flag for Nigeria's global investment reputation that demands immediate attention and action.

This ruling is a significant blow to Nigeria's absolute sovereign status and the doctrine of sovereign immunity. The order has since been upheld by a US court, which dismissed Nigeria's sovereign immunity defence in enforcing the \$70 million investment treaty award. The US court was scathing in its judgment, asserting that Nigeria had "gruesomely" violated the Chinese firm's fundamental and commercial rights. This ruling has led to the dramatic seizure of three Nigerian aircraft in France—aircraft that belong to the federal government. The seized jets include a Dassault Falcon 7X, a Boeing 737-7N6/BBJ, and an Airbus A330-243, all stationed at Paris-Le Bourget and Basel-Mulhouse airports.

While initially a dispute between a subnational government and a private firm, this situation has spiralled into a crisis with broader and more severe implications for Nigeria. It raises critical questions about Nigerian subnational entities' conduct and the federal government oversight of international contracts. Can subnational entities enter into agreements guaranteed by sovereign that do not include national assets or support? What level of due diligence should subnational governments observe before they engage in contractual relationship with foreign firms? More importantly, does this case reflect a more profound, systemic issue within Nigeria—a culture that lacks respect for contracts and international agreements?

The case also casts a spotlight on the perceived weaknesses of Nigeria's institutions, which need more authority or respect on the global stage.

This perception is troubling and raises the question: do foreign investors lack confidence in Nigerian institutions? These are not rhetorical questions but rather pressing concerns that demand a thorough investigation and straightforward answers. The implications are dire, as evidenced by this case, which has resulted in public embarrassment for the country and the potential loss of much-needed funds due to poorly negotiated and managed contractual relationship. A thorough investigation is crucial to restore trust and confidence in Nigeria's international business dealings.

This situation is not an isolated incident but part of a worrying trend. It calls to mind earlier cases, such as the P&ID arbitration ruling in 2010, where Nigeria was found tardy in a failed gas supply and processing contract. Though this was reversed but it left a scar. Similarly, in 2019, a UK court awarded an Irish

engineering firm \$9.6 billion in damages against Nigeria over a failed gas project. In that case, the firm went so far as to instruct its lawyers to identify Nigerian assets worldwide that could be seized to enforce the arbitration award. These incidents paint a troubling picture of Nigeria's handling of international contracts and the country's reputation on the global stage.

The ongoing dispute with Zhongshan Fucheng Industrial Investment Co. Ltd is likely to negatively impact Nigeria's global standing, especially when the country is desperately trying to attract foreign direct investment. This case highlights the often poorly structured nature of Nigeria's international contracts, where subnational governments and even private companies have found ways to entangle the

 The time has come for Nigeria to reassess its approach to international business dealings. This reassessment must focus on restoring confidence among global investors,



federal government in their questionable and often poorly thought-out deals. The result is a further tarnishing of Nigeria's already fragile reputation. Following the Dangote saga where there is perception that Nigeria could not treat its own businesses fairly, this is another blow to Nigeria's global image. The country already suffers from a prevalent negative perception regarding the sanctity of contracts, largely due to inconsistent adherence to contractual obligations. The federal government's failures to uphold these commitments, particularly at the subnational level, only exacerbate the problem. This disregard for the sanctity of contracts contributes to a growing cynicism about Nigeria as a reliable destination for investment and business. It is crucial to uphold agreements and respect contracts to restore Nigeria's reputation.

The symbolism of this saga is still visible to us. Beyond the immediate damage to Nigeria's national reputation, this incident brings broader issues related to leadership, business ethics, and the sacrosanct nature of contracts. It underscores the importance of continuity in government—where all governments inherit their predecessors' assets and liabilities and should not cancel contracts arbitrarily. Moreover, this situation highlights the critical need to build solid, responsive, and trustworthy institutions that command respect locally and internationally and can handle the complexities of international business contracts. It is an anomaly that contracts involving Nigerian subnationals or firms and foreign businesses always situate arbitration in foreign lands when local institutions are available and ostensibly capable of fulfilling this role.

This incident lays bare Nigeria's leadership challenges and sensitivity to foreign investment disputes. If not resolved diplomatically and swiftly, such disputes could severely jeopardize Nigeria's

diplomatic relations and economic credibility. I am happy the minister of foreign affairs is rising up to the challenge. The needless dispute between a negligent subnational entity and a private firm, which has dragged sovereign assets into the fray, could strain diplomatic ties between Nigeria and China. Recall that the root of this matter is the bilateral investment treaty signed by Nigeria and China in 2001 and since then we have seen progress in trade and investments on both sides. This recent imbroglio is particularly concerning at a time when the federal government is expending billions of naira to woo foreign investors. The dispute has cast a stark light on the nature of business transactions in Nigeria, revealing the many dangers they pose to investors, especially when projects collapse or are mismanaged. The potential loss of much-needed funds due to poorly negotiated and managed contractual relationship is a stark reminder of the economic impact of such disputes.

The recurring cases of Chinese companies taking advantage of Nigeria's open business doors are increasingly worrisome. It is imperative that the federal government, particularly the Office of the Attorney General, take a closer look at international contracts entered by state governments to insulate sovereign assets from exposure. This situation raises significant constitutional questions: does the federal government have the constitutional authority to regulate or even approve contracts entered by subnational entities?

The ongoing dispute between Zhongshan Fucheng Industrial Investment Co. Ltd and the Ogun State Government, which has now implicated Nigeria's sovereign assets, is a stark reminder of the importance of upholding the sanctity of contracts and ensuring due diligence in international agreements. The federal government must take decisive action to safeguard Nigeria's reputation as a reliable investment destination. This includes strengthening institutions, enforcing contractual commitments, and resolving disputes through diplomatic channels. Please government must address these issues to ensure good diplomatic relations and not deter much-needed foreign investment, compromising Nigeria's economic future.

The time has come for Nigeria to reassess its approach to international business dealings. This reassessment must focus on restoring confidence among global investors, ensuring that all levels of government adhere to international best practices, and building institutions that are strong, respected, and trusted by domestic and international stakeholders. Nigeria can repair its reputation and safeguard its national interests in an increasingly interconnected global economy by doing so.

This incident is more than just a legal or diplomatic issue; it is a wake-up call for Nigeria to realign its policies, practices, and institutions with global business demands. The country cannot afford to continue this path of negligence, laxity and mismanagement. As this case has shown, the cost is far too high—not just in monetary terms, but in terms of Nigeria's global standing, credibility, and future prosperity. It is imperative that Nigeria learn from this episode, take corrective action, and ensure that such incidents are not repeated in the future. The nation's economic future and place in the global community depend on it. As for the foreign business sharks that aim to reap off Nigeria's through dubious business deals that cannot hold waters, it is time we isolate and deal with them and their Nigerian companions. Convicting some of these criminals will serve as a deterrent to others and help reduce such incidents in Nigeria.

Ambassador Woman

with

By Ihuoma Egbeogu.

Sexual dissatisfaction is described as a state of irritation, agitation or stress resulting from sexual inactivity or dissatisfaction. It involves a psychological or biological response to having an unsatisfied sexual desire. It is a very common experience that affects people irrespective of their age, gender, feelings that could happen to a person at one point or the other.

However, the agony of sexual dissatisfaction in women is usually not glaring. A woman under such torture most times pretends that all is well while dying within. In a seminar where women had the opportunity to express their problems, I gathered the opinion of several women who happened to suffer this pain of sexual dissatisfaction. Most women complained that their husbands at the early stage of their marriage satisfied them well. But over time it has drastically dwindled. These women expressed so much concern

because they do not have an option but to live with this agony. Most often, when there is a discrepancy in the amount and quality of sexual activity a person seems to have, when compared to what they desire, automatically sexual dissatisfaction sets in.

However, sexual dissatisfaction can be triggered by so many factors. It could be caused by where there are set boundaries or restrictions in a relationship.

Perhaps a religion that prevents engaging in the desired sexual activity. These restrictions would be very detrimental for a healthy relationship.

Furthermore, sexual incompatible choices in partners due to limitations associated to geographic location, socioeconomic status, or ethical culture or religious community are

some are of the causes of sexual dissatisfaction in women. Most often, when the libido of a partner doesn't correspond with that of the partner, sexual dissatisfaction sets in.

The Agony Of Sexual Dissatisfaction In Women

In addition, partners rejection of sexual advances for personal reasons would lead to sexual dissatisfaction. This rejection could be triggered by mood swings, stress, health challenges and so on.

Sometimes cultural norms or roles associated in choosing a partner that may contradict ones sexual preference is a source of sexual dissatisfaction. This could be likened to your partner not being accepted by the family and community. In extreme cases, a total rejection of the person by the community involved because of choosing a partner that was rejected by

the family or a partner that doesn't fit into a cultural norms.

At one point or the other, women tend to pretend for obvious reasons and deny or suppress their sexual desires. This ends up in sexual dissatisfaction.

While at other times a woman would be horny and desire for sex, but these desire is unfulfilled, sexual dissatisfaction occurs.

Moreso, a woman maybe sexually aroused when the partner is unavailable as a result of distance or incapacitated. In such a situation, the agony of sexual dissatisfaction is usually

unimaginable. Finally, the culmination of the causes of sexual dissatisfaction is premature ejaculation or delayed ejaculation. This is a major cause of sexual dissatisfaction in women. In an interview a woman who pleaded anonymity lamented bitterly about the husband's inability to satisfy her as a result of premature ejaculation. The agony she lamented is unquantifiable.

There are some remedies in curbing sexual dissatisfaction in women.

Information they say is power. When one is informed about how to satisfy a woman, sexual dissatisfaction is midway solved. Though sexual dissatisfaction could be hard to deal with but it would be relieved or minimised. Since lack of good sex information often leads to feeling not sexually satisfied in a relationship, doing a research and learning is a great way to improve sexual satisfaction. Reading erotic books can help fill in missing pieces about sexual functioning. Perhaps reading things that resonate when shared with a partner will help curb sexual dissatisfaction.

Another way of curbing sexual dissatisfaction is by

talking frankly with your partner. However, it is expected you talk about your sexual desires and explore what has actually stopped you from acting on them. By so doing, these normalizes sexuality in ways that can increase comfort, intimacy, awareness, perspective and willingness to ask for what you want and enquire what your partner wants as well.

Furthermore, engaging a couples counselor or sex therapist could also help curb sexual dissatisfaction.

A crucial study of each others sexual language and attachment styles is another way of curbing sexual dissatisfaction. When you under study these sexual languages, your sexual desires are bound to be attained.

In conclusion, sexual frustration or dissatisfaction can be hard to deal with but when the aforementioned ways of curbing it is critically adhered to, it is reduced to the barest minimum. Since unmanaged sexual dissatisfaction can lead to conflict within yourself and your relationship, it is imperative that men should take cognisance of this impending problem in their relationship to avoid divorce or worse still, cheating partners to attain satisfaction.

Information they say is power. When one is informed about how to satisfy a woman, sexual dissatisfaction is midway solved.

Wisdom for Living

with

Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

Determination - A Sure Way To Success

He who cannot deny himself of pleasures today, is not qualified for the trophy tomorrow. It takes pains to understand and cherish gains. One must bear the cross before wearing the crown.

No one succeeds by accident. Success answer only to "I won't give up, I will try again". "I must have it, I will not quit". Failure has no option than to run far from a life of determination, hardwork, diligence and sacrifice.

Mere wishing does not produce desired result. Trailblazers, pacesetters, champions are people who lived sacrificially.

They are not mindful of present pains, rather they take encourage in the gain awaiting them.

For them, it is until success is attained even while passing trying pains, trials and failures, their glance is fixed, nothing distracts them, rather they let go of everything that

might hinder them or bring about delay in the actualization of their dreams.

Victory is achieved, success is attained, battle won, a trophy can only be gotten after engaging in warfare not funfare, which invariably means one must engage tirelessly, climb mountains, fight with every strength and enablement in order to become successful, a champion, and a winner.

Daily exercises, trainings and unending studies towards improving self are prerequisites to emerging a champion, these always inconvenience the human body and often brings a halt to pleasures. That is sacrifice, denying oneself of seemingly today's pleasure and comforts for tomorrow's gains.

Michael Anuoluwapo wrote "A jobless man applied for the position of "office boy" at a large company in Lagos.

The employer said. "Give me your email address, and I'll send you the application to fill in."

The man replied, "I don't have a computer, or an email."

"I'm sorry," said the employer, "if you don't have an email, you can't have the job."

The man left with no hope.

With only N3400 in his pocket, he went to a poultry farm, bought one crate of egg, then started frying and selling them within the nearest campus. In two hours, he doubled his capital.

He repeated this 3 times and returned home with N10,200.

The man realized that he could survive this way. He started to go everyday earlier and returned late.

15 years later, he had built one of the biggest food retail companies within the campus. He started to plan his family's future and decided to get life insurance.

He called an insurance broker and chose a protection plan.

The conversation concluded, the broker asked him for his email.

The man replied: "I don't have an email."

The broker curiously said, "You don't have an email, and you succeeded in building an empire. Imagine what position you could have reached if you had an email?"

The man paused and replied: "I could have been an office boy!"

Never let anyone's opinion about you stop you from reaching your

TRANSITION TO GLORY

We gratitude to God, we the family of chief Nnabuihe Akoma of Mbisara Amawom Oboro in Ikwuano LGA of Abia state, regret to announce the passing away unto glory of their beloved wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunty and grand mother.

Late Lolo

NMA CORDELIA AKOMA

AGED:

72

YEARS

BURIAL ARRANGEMENT

FRIDAY 30TH AUGUST 2024:

8.00am: Body leaves City Gate Mortuary, Umuahia.

9.00am: Brief stop at Mbakamanu, Amawom Oboro, Ikwuano.

9.30am: Body lies in State at her husband's compound.

10.00am: Funeral Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Amawom.

1.00pm: Interment

Signed:
Chief Nnabuihe Akoma
 For the family



MAY HER GENTLE SOUL REST IN PEACE, AMEN

Features

The Petulant Fault-Finding Mission of Abia PDP e-Rats: An Admission of Achievements & Performance of Gov. Alex Otti.

“In the absence of a great dream, pettiness prevails” – Robert Fritz

Abia North, which was hitherto cut-off from the rest of the state, has been reconnected. The indigenes and visitors to the communities along Umuahia, Ohafia and Arochuku corridors can now drive home seamlessly without recourse to unnecessary bypasses. This was impossible less than a year ago though the reconstruction is still ongoing.

Civil servants and retirees are sure of their salaries and pensions before the end of the month. There are no longer dichotomy between the so-called core and non-core civil and public servants in the payment of salaries and pensions.

The arrears of workers' salaries left by the immediate past administration are being cleared by instalments alongside the wage award approved by the Governor.

The ongoing reforms and transformation of the civil service as the engine room of productive government is not just about rehabilitating and retrofitting the buildings but also changing attitudes, mindsets and expectations of the state workforce toward achieving a more efficient service delivery.

The promotion and confirmation of civil servants are now executed solely based on merit, while Permanent Secretaries are selected on merit from the pool of the best Directors in the ministries after they have successfully passed through written examinations and oral interviews.

Mega projects are at the planning stages and Gov. Otti does not say what he cannot do. The Abia Industrial Innovative Park as an ambitious undertaking is gaining steam and investors are queuing behind the project.

The Abia Airport, a joint project of both the Federal and Abia State Governments, has been

put out to tender, following the location of an appropriate site.

The building of a Medical Village, which occupies a pride of place in the development agenda of Gov. Otti's Government, has been allocated a space and the process is being perfected.

The completion and expansion of Enyimba Hotels, Aba will soon be flagged-off.

The construction of the transportation hub and terminal in Umuahia, the state capital, is a flagship project that is also dear to the Governor's heart. It must start and end during Gov. Otti's administration.

The due diligence for an intercity light rail project within the state is being handled by some private investors.

The government is also working round the clock to attract investment in cyber-optics infrastructure for easy and cheap access to Internet connectivity. This is to create a pathway to leading the emerging digital economy and cyber-space.

A uniform public schools structure has been approved and the old structures are being rehabilitated, reconstructed and retrofitted around the State. Of the 900 public schools in the state, 221 are at various stages of repair. The initiative meant that all the public schools shall be fenced and secured for quality teaching and learning.

Additionally, the 180 public schools taken over or encroached into by the agents of the last administrations have been revoked and shall be recovered and returned back to the schools.

A new educational curriculum is being developed and digital and knowledge-based skills shall be integrated therein to prepare Abia students for the emerging knowledge-based economy. This is to equip them with the requisite skills to become global citizens.

The state Teaching Hospital is receiving the best attention to transform it into a centre for quality training and healthcare delivery. The Specialist Hospitals are not left out. All the General Hospitals and Primary Health Centres are being enumerated and need assessment documented for proper intervention aimed at putting them into effective use.

The Abia PDP e-Rats coordinated resort to talking and writing about firing, sacking or resignation of appointee(s) of the governor on a daily basis is a clear indication that they have nothing to talk and write about.

Gov. Alex Otti hired his appointees without consultation with the stakeholders and agents of Abia PDP and reserves the right to relieve, fire, sack, reassign or redeploy any of his appointee(s) without consultation with Abia PDP e-Rats. He was given a mandate by the people of Abia to transform the state with a team freely selected and appointed by him. Therefore, the Abia PDP uproar over resignation or sacking of a governor's appointee amounts to much ado about nothing to the extent that it does not affect the machinery of Government and the welfare of the people.

The jobless Abia PDP e-Rats have become so irritatingly idle and unreasonable that they noticed the replacement of the Governor's ADC. The ADC is a Policeman within a specified rank requested by the Governor and posted by the Police High Command. His allegiance is to the Police authorities and can be ordered back to the Force Headquarters. The assignment is for officers within a specified rank and one can no longer be ADC, when promoted to a higher rank.

In the last few days, the Abia PDP e-Rats have been clinging on to the sight of a new ADC, which is a testimony to the reality that they have not seen any serious subject to talk and write about but just needed to continue ranting on the social media space. They concocted and jumped on the false story of the sacking of Gov. Otti's

ADC, who got a scholarship for a PhD programme at Kentucky University, USA and obtained a study leave from the Police Authorities. It is a case of drinking gokocleanser for the treatment of a non-existent ailment.

The former ADC is a decent man and served a man of character as his boss. The era of obtaining questionable PhDs from the state-owned university, while serving as appointees of government is over. What time does an appointee of the government or ADC to the Governor have to be able to pursue an academic programme in Law or PhD as was rampant during the immediate past administration? Of course, it was a case of degrees and academic certificates for sale to political appointees, who never attended classes!

The former ADC has proceeded on a study leave to upgrade himself for career progression, while the PDP e-Rats are busy spreading lies in the state.

Just yesterday, they were all over the social media space talking and writing their usual concocted falsehood about the illusionary and imaginary resignation, sack and retirement of the Hon. Commissioner for Finance, Mr Mike Akpara. The misinformation could not run far before it was proven to be lies from the pit of hell. Mike Akpara is the Hon. Commissioner for Industry and SMEs after the minor cabinet reshuffle by the Governor to rejig his team to bring new ideas and energy to the expanded State Executive Council.

They have shamelessly kept quiet without apologising to the public for misinforming them and will not hesitate to churn out other concocted falsehood and figures after their strategic propaganda meeting last night.

Ctz. Ukoha Njoku Ukoha
Chief Press Secretary to the Executive Governor of Abia State.

...To be Continued.

Opinion

Bola Ahmed Tinubu: A National Political Travesty

By Oji Oji Agwu

Nigeria has reached a dangerous political precipice. What is happening today with Tinubu led government has brought the political and socio-economic mechanism of Nigeria to the fore. The connivance, scheming and rudderless political machinations of the past 64 years has been laid bare with the last Nigerian Presidential elections that "produced" Bola Ahmed Tinubu. All the events of the pre and post elections of this period revealed a Country balkanized with ethnic prejudice. A Country so deeply enmeshed in tribalism and institutionally vowed exclusion of a particular race in certain positions, even if it entails hoisting a moving corpse, in the contraption called Nigeria. The level of corruption at the centre is so scandalous that one begins to imagine if there is conscience in the spiritual make up of this people leading the Federal Government of Nigeria. My spirit contrite when I look at the agony and hopelessness of Nigerian citizens. The aged, widows, orphans and the incapacitated, what is their condition in Nigeria of today?

There are two lessons to learn by Nigerians from the socio-economic and political situation of the past 24 months. One, the "Hunger Protest" that raged across the Nation, especially in the North and South West, is a clear indication that hunger and starvation that bad leadership and governance precipitates knows no tribe or racial prejudice. It is a natural phenomenon that unsettles all. It is oblivious of religion, tribe or party persuasion and loyalty. Two, supporting a candidate in an election based on tribal, religious and ethnic sentiment is political harakiri, as in the case of BAT, an ill-wind that blows no good.

Consequently, Nigeria is in dire economic straits, rising insecurity, starvation and hunger has pervaded the society; in midst of plenteous human and natural resources. If you take a deep look into the faces of Nigerians you will see frustration, despondency and glaring signs of suicide contemplation. There is no sign of reprieve at all. During the reign of King Louis XVI of France between 1774 to 1792 the notoriety of his government and the poverty in France that

led the famous French Revolution that started from 1789 to 1799 is a far cry of what is happening today in Nigeria. Even the President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has not shown any sign of remorse. His last National broadcast in response to the "Hunger Protest" depicted a quality of menace and exuded the confidence of a man that is merely "taking his turn". Even, the National broadcast gave subtle encouragement to the law enforcement agencies to crush innocent citizens of Nigeria driven to peaceful protest by unbearable hunger and hardship. Senator Godswill Akpabio, President of the Senator, in utter disrespect for Nigerians made jest of the protesters, telling them to continue on the streets while he and the other "owners" of Nigeria are ensconced in Aso Rock Villa enjoying themselves. I think Aso Rock Villa is a contemporary Nigerian version of Versailles of pre-Revolution France. A place that is not in touch with the happenings in the larger society. A place for the Lords of the Land and their Mistresses, away from the hoi pollois of Nigeria to avoid poverty tainting them.

However, all the advanced Countries of

the world that their societies are heterogeneous have always put the best of their best in political leadership positions without recourse to racial lines. In fact, quality, real quality is their sine qua non for choice of candidates they elect to positions of trust and responsibility; not mediocrity or biased ethnic sentiments and propaganda. And that is why they have succeeded in building strong egalitarian societies not the epileptic socio-economic and political structure of our clime.

Nevertheless, BAT has less than three years, all things being equal, to finish the political revelry with his buddies. All the emotional tantrums, by way of Hunger Protest, agitation and all, are infinitesimal fraction of the solution to the political malaise. It is of no consequence. BAT is more hardened than King Pharaoh. Let us continue to leak our wounds till the next elections. Still, it all depends if we change our timid, retrogressive and archaic political mentality. Or the vicious political cycle that has arrested, stunted our political growth and socio-economic development will continue ad infinitum.

Photos Speak



Gov of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti (right) and Prof Ogonnaya Uche, newly sworn in Commissioner for Health, Abia State, during their inauguration in Gov's Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa LGA home.



Gov. Alex Otti (Centre), Pastor Caleb Ajagba, Chief of Staff to Abia Gov, Prof Keneth Kalu Abia SSG, Ubochi Chinedu, Comm for Basic & Secondary Educ., Kingsley Nwokocho, Comm for Trade & Commerce, Dr Uwaoma Ukandu, Comm for Finance, Abia Gov, Dr. Alex Otti, Comm for Women Affairs, Dr. (Mrs) Maureen Ijeoma Aghukwa



Dr. Alex Otti of Abia State (right) and the newly sworn-in Commissioner for Women Affairs, Abia State, Dr. (Mrs) Maureen Ijeoma Aghukwa, during their inauguration by Otti.



Gov. Alex Otti (right) and Mr David U. Kalu, newly sworn-in Commissioner for Science, Technology & Innovation, during their inauguration by the governor.



Abia Gov, Dr Alex Otti, (right) and Ubochi Goodluck Chinedu, newly sworn-in Commissioner for Basic & Secondary Education, during their inauguration by the Gov in his Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa LGA home.



Abia Gov, Dr Alex Otti, (right) and Kingsley Chibueze Nwokocho, newly sworn in, Commissioner for Trade & Commerce, during his inauguration by the governance recently.



The General Manager Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, Hon. Jones Nnanna Ike during his speech at the funeral of his mother at Oheake Secondary School Premises Idima Abam, Arochukwu Council.



Cross section of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation staff, during the funeral of Hon. Jones Nnanna Ike's mother's funeral recently in Ndi Asaka Idem ABAM Arochukwu.

Photos Speak



■ Abia State Gov, Dr Alex Otti and his wife, Mrs Priscilia Otti, during the 2024 Abia Women August Conference at Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia



■ Abia Gov., Dr Alex Otti flanked by his wife, Mrs Priscilia Otti and the immediate past Comm. for Women Affairs, Mrs Blessing Felix (1st left), during the 2024 Abia Women August Conference at Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



■ Gov, Alex Otti (front, right) British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Dr Richard Montgomery and others, at the Gov's Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa home.



■ Presentation of an award to the Secretary to Abia State Government, Prof Kenneth Kalu (left) by acting Vice Chancellor during an induction recently at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.



■ Some of the delegates at 2024 Abia Women August Delegates Conference (AWADEC) at International Conference Centre, Umuahia recently.



■ Dr Uche Ogah, CEO, Masters Energy, Chief Ochi Orji, President general, Isuochi Dev. Union (IDU), Dr. Oluebube Chukwu, SSA to Abia Gov on Due Process and Public Procurement and others, during the August meeting of IDU Women's Wing in Isuochi.



■ Cross section of Azumini Oganihu Women, during their August meeting recently in Azumini Ndoki Ukwa East Local Government.



■ Dr Oluebube Chukwu, SSA to Abia Gov on Due Process, Hon Amaobi Oga, Member Repr Isuikwuato/Umunneochi, Sir Chris Igwe, CEO, Mainland Oil & Gas Ltd and his wife, Amb. Mrs Peace Igwe, during a courtesy visit by Hon Amaobi and Dr Oluebube to Sir Igwe in his Amuda Isuochi home, recently.



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News

Asopadec, Commended For Development Strides

By Ebere Tasie

The Abia State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ASOPADEC), has been commended for embarking on impactful development projects in Asa Land, one of the oil producing local government areas of Abia State.

Speaking during a visit to one of the projects of the Commission in the area, a stakeholder of the area, Dr Gregory Enyinnaya, expressed happiness with the on-going reconstruction of Ezendioma Obehie Road through 144 Battalion Road in Ukwa West Council and disclosed that people living within the communities have suffered untold hardship owing to the dilapidated state of the road over the years. He thanked Alex Otti for intervening in the reconstruction of the road through ASOPADEC.

According to Dr. Enyinnaya who hails from Umuada Isi Obehie Autonomous Community, the people are hopeful that the road would be completed on record time and that it will improve economic activities of the area while pledging their loyalty and support to the Labour Party in the area led by the General Manager of ASOPADEC, Ven. Joshua Onyeike and administration of Dr Alex Otti.

Also speaking, the Chief Executive Officer of Anstro

Global Concept and contractor handling the road project, Mr Anselm Eletue, said that work had started with the construction of the drainage system for the road which will be followed by earthwork. He thanked the General Manager of ASOPADEC for awarding the contract to him, and assured that he will deliver quality work to the people.

Eletue pointed out that Ven. Onyeike has striven to change the narratives in ASOPADEC since he assumed office as the general manager of the commission, outlining some of his achievements to include reconstruction of Umuokomiri Obehie Road, sustained the scholarship scheme of the Commission, construction of water boreholes in and around Ukwa land and beyond, reconstruction of Abia Orie, Umuajuohia Obuzor Asa as well as ongoing construction of Asa Civic located at Obehie, all in Ukwa West LGA.

In his remarks, the Director of Works, Mr. Emeka Gberemako, expressed satisfaction with the pace of work and quality of materials being used for the reconstruction of the road.

He, however, pointed out that there were minor observations that required corrections, which, according to him, is the essence of the inspection.



■ Cross section of the newly sworn-in Commissioners in Abia State, during the inauguration by Gov Otti in his Nvosi Isiala Ngwa LGA of Abia State

Abia Govt Engages Citizens On 2025 Budget Planning ...Highlights Achievements in Financial Management

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning and UNICEF, in a bid to enhance citizen participation in the budgeting process, engaged citizens in discussions on the 2025 Budget planning.

The event tagged the "2025 Citizens Budget Engagement Forum", is expected to play a crucial role in shaping the future of the state's financial planning and ensure that the needs and aspirations of citizens are reflected in the final budget.

Stakeholders from various sectors include Representatives from different local Governments, the Civil Society Organizations, MDAs, Open Government partners, Religious Leaders, Farmers, Person's living with disabilities were among participants at the event.

Speaking at the forum held at the Aguiyi Ironsi Conference Centre Umuahia, the Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Mr Kingsley Anosike emphasized the importance of public participation in the upcoming 2025 budget Christened "Budget of Sustained Momentum".

He noted that the interaction would provide citizens with an opportunity to understand and contribute to the budgetary process.

Anosike said the primary objective of the event was "to discuss the state's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and gather feedback on the expectations of the various groups concerning development projects slated for inclusion in the 2025 budget".

"It is a pre session before we go into budgeting and we do it annually", Anosike stated.

The Commissioner

emphasized that the 2025 budget is designed to sustain the momentum of development that has characterized the present administration's activities over the past 14 months.

"Basically this government works for the citizens interest and the budget is designed for the interest and betterment of the citizens.

"We expect that the citizens will benefit more from the 2025 budget and that is why it has been christened budget of Sustained Momentum.

"We have ramped up activities in terms of developmental projects over time in the last 14 month. The budget for next year is supposed to sustain that momentum and close out even stronger", he explained.

Food Crisis: Embrace Home-Garden Now - Agric Expert, Onwuka Tells Women

By Chukwumeka Egejuru

An agricultural expert, Prof. Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka has charged Nigerian women to embrace home-garden to cope with the increasing cost of living.

The Director, Centre for Gender Youth and Child Development (CGYCD), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU) who stated this during the 2024 Abia Women August Delegates Conference (AWADEC) in Umuahia, Abia State, expressed worries over the wave of hunger and starvation facing most families and households hence, the need to take proactive steps.

In her lecture entitled; 'Abia Women: Rise to win, utilizing growth opportunities amidst current economic challenges', Prof. Onwuka stated that food crisis looms in Nigeria, enjoining Nigerians, especially women to grow some of the crops they consume.

The founder, Hope for Farmers Women and Girls Initiatives (HOFWGI), also noted that growing one's crops is a way of saving money and also enjoying fresh crops produced at home.

She added that the smallest backyard space can produce good amount of vegetables, fruits, herbs among others at the least expense.

Prof. Onwuka described home garden as a small piece of land near, within or adjacent to a building where human settles, stating that Nigerians can grow food in and around their

The Commissioner outlined proposals for recurrent expenditure and reiterated the state government's commitment to capacity building in the Education and Health sectors.

He highlighted the state government's efforts to enhance the living standards of the people and urged citizens to support the government's efforts by ensuring timely payment of their taxes.

Anosike commended the prudent financial management of the state under the leadership of the Governor Alex Otti, noted that the government has managed to undertake various projects without resorting to borrowing.

He revealed that the state has adopted technology driven measures to enhance revenue collection including the introduction of Single Treasury Account which he said, has effectively curbed revenue leakages.

In her remarks, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Lady Mercy Jibuonu, highlighted that the 2025 core circulars have already been distributed to the MDAs adding that the meeting would enhance their contribution to the 2025 budget.

Lady Jibuonu stated that the forum aligns with the governor's vision for a new Abia and stressed the need for all Citizens to contribute to the growth of the state.

homes.

She further revealed that home-gardens are not done on soil alone but can be done in water solution called hydroponics and in air called aeroponics.

Having a home garden can help reduce the wastes in household, through their conversion into organic fertilizer.

In her words: "Crops like yam, pepper, tomatoes, telferia spp (fluted pumpkin) among others could be planted at homes using tyres, containers, sack and poly bags to utilize the space available at the balconies, kitchen counter, small yards among others".

She encouraged urban and peri-urban households without farming space to plant in their balconies with containers.

Prof. Onwuka added that they can also build shelves to put the containers, using them as aesthetic to beautify the environment, insisting that home-garden also promotes nutritional security and the consumption of healthy food crops they consume among others.

Earlier in her remark, the wife of Abia State governor, Mrs Precillia Otti, had announced that the state will key into the "Every Home a Garden" competition, a pet project of the wife of the President, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, adding that the enhanced star prize of N25 million is irresistible.

Mrs. Otti Reiterates Government Resolve To Empower Women

Chibunna Ikeokwu

The wife of Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti has reiterated Governor Otti's commitment towards supporting women farmers in the state by providing them with farm inputs and other necessary assistance to excel in their agribusinesses.

Mrs. Otti stated this at the ongoing Isiala Ngwa North August Women Conference which took place at the reconstructed Isiala Ngwa North LGA Motor Park, where she empowered no fewer than 50 indigent women with bags of rice and cash donations to start their own businesses.

According to her, "as you continue to invest your efforts in farming, be rest assured that under Dr. Alex Otti's leadership, the state government has taken decisive measures to rid our forests and farmlands of criminal threats"

"As I mentioned during the launch of the second edition of the August Women's Delegate Conference in Umuahia, where we empowered over 300 women in various fields, we remain committed to supporting our women farmers by providing them with farm inputs and other necessary assistance, acknowledging their vital role in the food supply chain and encouraging them to excel" Mrs. Otti said.

The governor's wife also revealed that the state government has provided one-billion-naira interest-free loan to 10,000 small

and micro-entrepreneurs across the state, with 70 per cent of the beneficiaries being women and youth, adding that she is confident that these recipients will use the funds to expand their businesses and secure their future even as the Governor also pledged further support to those who manage their funds effectively.

However, Mrs. Otti reminded the women, as home-builders, they should take full advantage of the economic opportunities around them, noting that whether in agriculture or entrepreneurship, women participation is vital to the success of families and society.

In her remarks, the wife of the Mayor of Isiala Ngwa North Council, Lady Cynthia Nwankwo, applauded Mrs. Otti for identifying and supporting them with various empowerment and cash donations to start their own businesses.

She expressed delight that August meetings today in the Southeast has become a rallying ground where women discuss issues affecting them and ways to attract development to their various communities.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of the council, Sir Cyprian Nwankwo reiterated his resolve to replicate the good work Governor Otti is doing in the state to his local council.

He encouraged the women to be united and support the Governor Otti led administration in Abia State.

News

Gov Otti Hails Abia Women's Role In State Development

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, has commended the vital role of Abia women in fostering state development, describing them as the "pillars upon which the superstructures that guarantee the enduring progress of every society are rested".

Governor Otti made the remark while declaring open the 2024 Abia Women August Delegates Conference, (AWADEC), held at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia.

The governor highlighted the achievements of Abia women both within the state and in the diaspora, pointing out that women are breaking grounds across various fields, including academia, sports, business, and public service

He reaffirmed his

administration's commitment to breaking down barriers that have historically limited women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles, and emphasized that his administration is doing a lot to support women.

"I am glad to report that in the New Abia, we are steadily shattering the glass ceilings that kept women away from very important seats at the decision-making table.

"As I said here last year, we are very deliberate in assigning key positions to women because from my experience, women have proven to be very reliable, dedicated and are less likely to be drawn to the distractions that most men are susceptible to.

"It is instructive to note that much of the progress we have made as an

administration come from the support and insights we receive from the women who understand our pain points as a society, better than most of us", Gov Otti remarked.

The governor, while noting that the theme of the conference, "Utilising Growth Opportunities Amid Current Economic Challenges", is apt, called on the women to adopt innovative thinking and a departure from past practices that have hindered economic progress.

He further urged the women to explore opportunities in agriculture, trading services, and entrepreneurship as pathways to economic recovery and sustainability, assuring that they would continue to hold a pride of place in the New Abia.

Earlier in her speech, the wife of the governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti had said the

event provides opportunity for Abia women to reflect on the last one year and thanked the governor for believing that Abia women can move mountains if given the opportunity.

Mrs. Otti who announced that there would be the Abia version of the home garden competition envisioned by the wife of the president, assured that government would support individuals who show interest in home garden.

Contributing, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Mrs. Blessing Felix, noted that female folks bear the brunt of the economic challenges and stated that the conference would afford Abia women the chance to engage, empower, network and collaborate.

The event which featured lectures, exhibitions and cultural dances, attracted women from all walks of life.

Executive Moves For More Development Of Okai-Item Community

By Okereke Kate and Charles Ogbonnaya

Community development is rooted in the belief that all people should have access to health, well-being, wealth, justice, basic amenities and opportunities.

This is the case of Okai-Item Community in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, as the executive has moved to reposition the community for better quality of life for the people of the area.

In an interaction with newsmen, the President General of Okai-Item Autonomous Community, Ogechukwu Samuel Ogba, who came on board alongside other members of the executive in 2021, said they were driven to bring changes to the Okai-Item community and as such, have deployed workable strategies to actualize their goals.

According to him, when they took over the saddle of leadership, the age grade system, which is used to attract meaningful development to communities, for over 25 years had not been functional in Okai-Item, with over four set of age grades unrecognized.

For him, getting the age grade system working again, was a major priority, giving the significant role they play in community building. He said so far, they have been able to revive the system, graduating four age grades and by December 2024, they will graduate a new set.

Outlining other achievements of the present executive committee, the president general disclosed that they have been able to address the issue of electricity in the area. According to him, for over three years the community has been without electricity due to the huge debt of over N300,000 accrued on electricity bills.

He stressed that though the executive has been able to clear the bills but the issue has not been totally addressed, due to some electrical facilities that were vandalized.

In addition, Ogba hinted that plans are in top gear to partner with some foreign counterparts from Bulgaria, who are interested in food value chain and disclosed that over 8000 hectares of land lying fallow in Okai, had been marked for the project, which according to him, would help put Okai in the world map and as well, make Abia State to be food sufficient, if properly harnessed.

The president general further revealed that the nine villages of Umuezoke, Umuokoroacha, Aghu na Ugah, Amachara, Umuogbuenwo, Amaudara, Umuaka Ukwu, Akikaregu and Umuobor, in Okai-Item, are currently battling with poor road infrastructure, adding that as an agro area, the people find it difficult to bring out their farm produce to nearby markets, which eventually lead to waste of their produce and also slowing down agricultural activities.

He pointed that the Okai Community is having boundary issues with its neighbouring community, Akaeze in Ebonyi state, appealing for the state government to intervene, so as to arrest further crisis.

The community, called on the government to help dualize the Okai-Item - Akaeze Road, to enhance seamless transportation of goods and services in that area, as well as, to improve the agricultural produce of Item Community at large.

He stated that the dualization will open up economic value and activities of Abia North, and also, create more trade relationships with neighboring states like Ebonyi and Enugu.

Ogba also appealed, for government to provide soft loans and grants facilities to their local farmers, so as to enable them increase their produce.

He added that urgent intervention in their education sector is equally needed, as most schools in the area, particularly the Community Primary School is facing structural decay with no teachers.

He said government should declare state of emergency on their health centre, because of its dilapidated state and lack of medical personnel and as well, address the persistent water shortages affecting the people.

While, urging his people to strive in maintaining the existing peace in Okai Item community, he commended the efforts of the founder of Vision Africa Radio, Bishop Sunday Onuoha, for mediating and suing for peace between Okai and Akaeze communities and also his contributions in developing the community with the recent construction of a medical facility in Okai Item.

He further beckoned on other sons and daughters of Okai-Item to make meaningful contributions in building the area. He added that the purpose of community development is to bring people together to work towards a common goal, improving the quality of life in their communities. "It's a powerful tool that addresses social and economic issues, promotes inclusivity and diversity, as well, empowers communities to take action," he stated.



■ Some of the delegates at 2024 Abia Women August Delegates Conference (AWADEC) at International Conference Centre, Umuahia recently.

Creation Of New Ministries Will Accelerate Abia's Development

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Senior Special Adviser to the Governor on Due Process and Public Procurement, Dr Oluebube Chukwu, has lauded Governor Alex Otti's recent decision to create new ministries, describing it as a strategic move that would inject fresh perspectives and expertise to accelerate the state's progress.

Dr Chukwu, who disclosed this in his office while interacting with newsmen said the governor's decision demonstrates his

commitment to repositioning Abia State for optimal performance and development.

He emphasized that the new ministries, including Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy, Industry & SMEs as well as Labour and Productivity, would address critical sectors and drive growth.

Dr Chukwu who commended Governor Otti for his visionary

leadership, emphasized that the move showcases the governor's willingness to adapt and innovate in response to the state's evolving needs.

"The Cabinet reshuffle and creation of new ministries are strategic moves aimed at injecting fresh ideas, expertise, and energy into the administration.

"With this bold move, Governor Otti's administration has reaffirmed its dedication to transforming Abia State

into a hub of prosperity and progress", Dr. Chukwu noted.

He assured that the reshuffled cabinet would work harmoniously to implement the governor's development agenda for a new Abia and ensure due process, transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance.

"The people of Abia State should expect enhanced service delivery, improved infrastructure, and economic growth under the able leadership of Governor Alex Otti", Dr Chukwu further stated.

RC: 62806

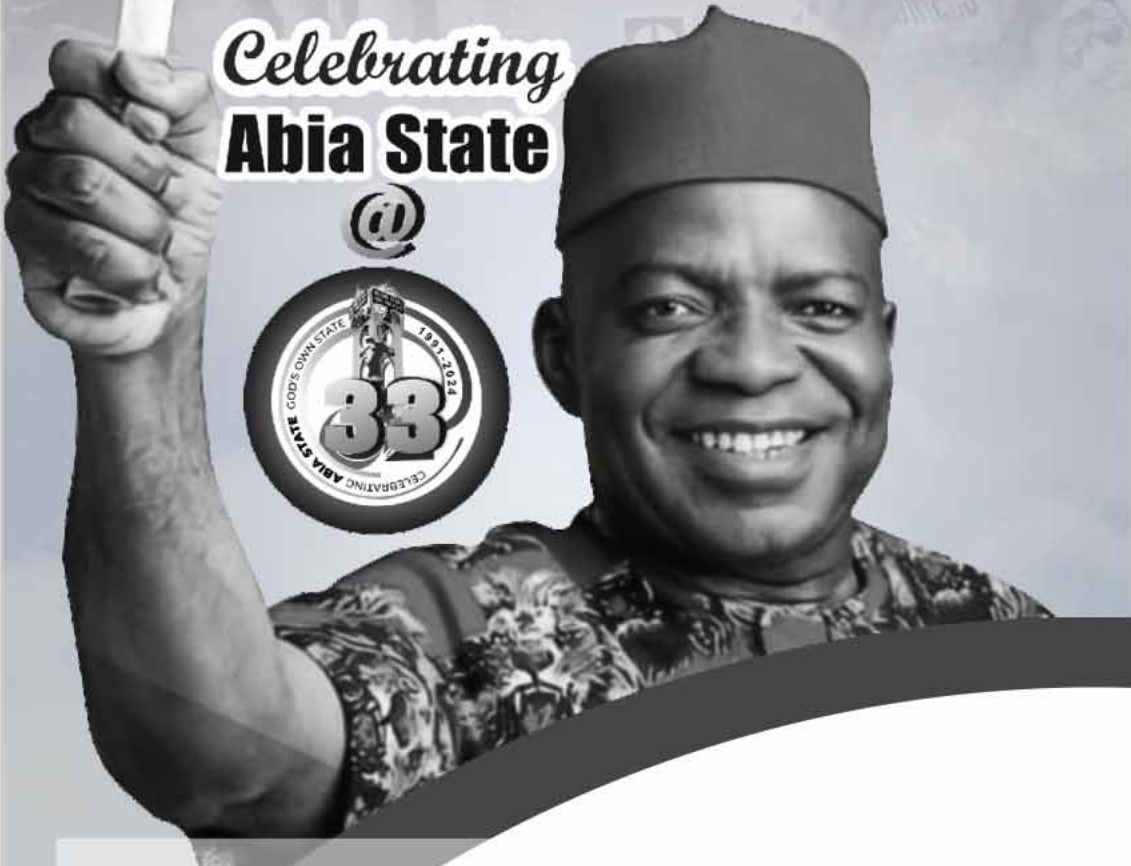
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**Celebrating
Abia State**

With extreme joy for a new dawn in Abia State I the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cosmos Engineering Nig. Ltd, the Management and Staff of my Company do heartily felicitate with the Executive Governor of Abia State.

His Excellency, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti OFR and the good people of Abians State on this special occasion of the celebration of Abia State at 33 years

Your Excellency, your laudable and land mark achievements for the people of Abia State cannot be over emphasized. I join well-meaning Abians and Nigerians at large to say, a very big congratulation to you.

May God continue to give you the strength and wisdom to take Abia State to an enviable height.

Signed:

Isaac Eghiarwa
Engr. Isaac Eghiarwa



Religion

**Grace for
Financial Success**

By Pastor Sam Adeyemi

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9 -(NIV)

God has made provision for Christians to enjoy provision through grace based on the finished work of Christ. The finished work of Christ is that Jesus Christ went to the cross and satisfied the demands of justice. Jesus died an innocent man and his death is credited to our accounts. When we accept God and Christ, our spiritual reality changes and the nature of sin is removed from us. It is on this platform of grace based on the finished work of Christ that guarantees the provision for us.

Grace means gift. It is something you can never work for. Financial provision or financial success for a Christian is a gift. Last week, we emphasized the fact that when provision has been made for you spiritually, you are now rich since Jesus took your place by taking your poverty in exchange for His riches. To translate this reality into physical reality there is a need to work. Work here signifies adding value, solving problems and meeting a need because money is a means for exchange of value.

Another way for the exchange of value is GIVING. This also follows the principle that 'if value goes from you, value will come back to you' as established last week. In Luke 8:1-3 we further see this principle in place. Jesus added value through healing people and casting out demons from their lives. In return, value flowed back from them to Him, in that they provided for His material needs.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-10 (NLT) we observe that giving aligns with the law of money. To be able to give, we must be working; providing value for others. Ephesians 4:28 shows the complete cycle, where you see the two

platform of grace. It was a gift given you in the realm of the spirit before you got it in physical manifestation. If you got it as a gift, you must be willing to show grace to others as well. You have to let the cycle continue. Practice grace. Give some of what you have received as a gift.

In Prov 11:24-25 (NIV) we are motivated to demonstrate grace by being children of God, Our Father. If you have enjoyed grace from God, you should show grace to others especially those less endowed. You should take care of your spiritual and natural families too. In Romans 8:32, we see that giving is motivated by love.

God also showed us grace through love by giving his best. Every huma

God has made provision for Christians to enjoy provision through grace based on the finished work of Christ.



levels for provision described. The first one is by adding value through work. The grace of God rests upon our resources generated from honest work devoid of stealing or begging. Then there is the next level where you can have something to give to others. What you give determines what you get in return. Giving must be done willingly without being pressured or coerced. When you give value reluctantly it is proof that you are not expecting to get value back in return.

Let's be aware that whatever it is you have, you got it on the

n being is an extension of God. God's word also instructs that we give to ministers of the gospel. Finally, be obedient to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 4: 32, portrays that in the place where there is generosity, there is also great grace. Grace for giving is power.

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

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA



GOVERNMENT OF ABIA STATE MINISTRY OF WORKS

INVITATION TO TENDER

1. The Abia State Government is desirous of executing some road transport infrastructure projects across the state. The designs have been completed and the design drawings have been prepared. The State Government intends to procure contractors for the purpose of executing these contracts.
2. The Abia State Ministry of Works now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the construction/reconstruction and rehabilitation of the roads as set out in the bid document of the various projects. The construction works which will last for between 18 (eighteen) and 30 months shall include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Site clearing and grubbing of roots of trees where necessary,
 - b. Removal of unsuitable materials,
 - c. Cut and fill as applicable,
 - d. Demolition and/or reconstruction of drains, culverts and other drainage/river crossings structures.
 - e. Pavement works which include subbase, base course (mixed materials), asphaltic concrete binder and wearing course, all to specifications as contained in the design drawings.

The actual duration of each project is indicated in the instruction to Bidders for the project.

Abia State is in the South-East Geo-Political zone of Nigeria which is characterized by the rain forest climatic zone's heavy rainfall, and friable lateritic formations.

The location of each project is depicted in the corresponding design drawings in "The book of drawings" for the project. Specific experience in Abia State or the Southeast geo-political zone of Nigeria will be considered as an advantage.

The nine projects are as follows:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH
1	Dualization of Onuimo – Abia Tower Road	5.945km
2	Construction of Onuinyang – Okporoenyi - Oboro – Ikwuano Road Section 1: (Km 0 + 00 – Km 7 + 150)	7.15km
3	Construction of Onuinyang – Okporoenyi - Oboro – Ikwuano Road Section 2: (Amuro – Obuoro – Ikwuano, Km 7 + 150 – Km 13 + 949)	6.799km
4	Reconstruction of Ntigha – Mbawsi – Umuahia Road	11.499km
5	Construction of Obehie - Owaza Road	
6	Construction of Mbala – Umuaku – Ngodo Road Umunneochi	13.5km
7	Construction of Umuogo – Nsukwe Ring Road, Ubakala Umuahia South	5.1 km
8	Construction of Ohanze – Ntighauzo – Obete - Umuoha - Oberete – Akirikaobu Road	21.6km
9	Construction of Umuokpara Ring Road	8.5km

Qualification Criteria:

To be eligible for the construction works, bidders must meet the following criteria:

- a. Must be registered with Abia State Government as a major contractor
- b. Have a general construction experience of at least Ten (10) years.
- c. Have a minimum of Two (2) similar contracts that have been satisfactorily or substantially (at least 80%) completed as prime contractor between January 1, 2019, and the submission deadline.
- d. Provide evidence of firm's corporate registration in Nigeria.
- e. Provide annual audited account for the last three (3) years to demonstrate the soundness of the bidder's financial situation
- f. Provide tax clearance certificate for the past three years preceding the year of tendering
- g. Have liquidity and/or evidence of access to or availability of confirmed positive credit facilities of not less than N200 million
- h. Have no history of court/arbitral award decisions at least for the past Five (5) years.
- i. Bidders are required to submit an Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) Management Strategies and Implementation Plans required to manage the key ESHS risks of the project as outlined in the relevant sections of the tender document. The suitability of the proposed strategies and plans will be assessed as part of the bid evaluation.
- j. Bidders are required to submit an Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) Code of Conduct that will apply to their employees and sub-contractors, and details of how it will be enforced.

Additional information on experience and capabilities requirements for the works are provided in the Bidding Document.

3. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement. The Bureau for Public Procurement BPP guidelines as well as the provisions of the Abia State procurement law 2012 shall be the "Procurement Regulations" guiding this process. This bidding is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Permanent Secretary, Abia State Ministry of Works Ground Floor, Block B, Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia, Abia State, during office hours, 0800 to 1600 hours.
5. The bidding document in English language may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of N500,000.00 (Five hundred thousand naira only per project). The method of payment will be by bank deposit at designated BIR bank accounts using the ABSIN number generated by O/C revenue, Ministry of Works. Evidence of payment shall be presented prior to collection of Bid documents.
6. Any bidder wishing to offer any unconditional discounts must quote such and the methodology for their application in the Bid Submission Sheet.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 12pm local time on Monday 14th October 2024. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "FINANCIAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the conference hall of the Abia State Ministry of Works, Ground Floor, Block B, Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia. All envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the three lowest ranked bids are determined and only their technical bids shall be opened.
8. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Client to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
9. The address referred to above is:

The Conference Hall
Ministry of Works
Ground Floor, Block B
Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat
Ogurube layout
Umuahia
Abia State.

Signed:

Engr Izuchukwu Onwughara
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Work
Umuahia, Abia State.

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (5)

By Joseph Jacob and Mercy Emeh

Chioma was enjoying her deep sleep, when Eze woke her up around 3:30 AM. "Darling sit up, I want us to talk," Eze said tapping Chioma's shoulder.

She stired, yawned and winked, "What is it darling?"

"Sit up, I have good news for you."

Chioma started sitting up and groaning intermitently until she sat up and faced her husband. "I'm listening." She said as she looked at his face, "What happened to you here?" She asked as she gently touched his right cheek.

"I don't know."

"Is it painful?"

"Slightly."

"You'll take pain killer tomorrow."

"I will. I woke you up to tell you that I will be travelling to Germany on Saturday."

Chioma smiled, "Are you playing April fool in March?"

"On a serious note," he looked piercingly into Chioma's eyes, "I'm leaving for Germany on Saturday."

"Why didn't you tell me that you're among the selected civil servants for Master's program abroad?" Chioma asked as she tried to solve the puzzle that made her head muzzy.

"Which Master's program? I'm going on my own."

"How?"

"Uche, that my school mate I told you about is the one taking me along."

"What?" Chioma shouted as many thoughts came into her head and exploded. "What about your job?"

"What job are you talking about? Is it this one I work more and earn less? Is it this one that I cannot feel happy for once at my place of work? Darling, I am abandoning the job."

Chioma bits her lips as pains pierces her heart, "Honey, it is dangerous if not suicidal to determine

the depth of a river with both feet. How could you abandon your job just like that?"

"I don't care about the job..."

"Why not resign properly?" Chioma interjected. "At least you're entitled to some benefits"

"People that retired ten years ago, how many of them have gotten their gratuity. I don't have time to waste chasing benefits that may not come my way after ten years. He that is hunting a tiger has no business chasing rats."

Chioma became muzzy. She picked up her pillow encircled it with her arms and gripped it so tight as if she was venting her anger on the innocent pillow.

"What does Uche do in Germany?" Chioma asked feeling more anger than sorrow.

"He is a businessman. He has assured me that with his connections, I will make millions of naira within the first six months in Germany..."

"And you believed him." Chioma interjected.

"Why won't I believe him? He has fleets of cars and multi-storey buildings scattered across major cities in Nigeria and beyond"

"Have you not been watching, listening and reading the news?"

"News about what?"

"How many Africans lose their lives trying to enter Europe and how many others are held in Libya for slavery..."

"And what do those lies, rumor mongers disseminate, have to do with my travelling to Germany?" Eze asked.

"Darling, you can't pretend that you're not aware that the global economic crises is biting hard in Europe. Don't tell me that you don't know that many

Western economies are battling their highest rate of unemployment. Is it wise to abandon your work for a strange land, where many are already losing their jobs?" Chioma fired back.

"You see why I don't like telling you my plans? You like confessing negative things."

"I don't care what you say. Do we sacrifice discretion for an unfounded positive confession? What difference does it make saying positive things about a course that is bound to be disastrous from inception?"

Eze sighed and lay down with his head on both hands.

"Is Uche fonder of the trip?" Chioma asked calmly.

"No, I'm transporting myself."

"It must cost millions."

"Yes, of course."

"How did you get the money?"

"I borrowed it."

"From the bank?"

"No, from a lender."

Eze answered hesitantly as he feared that Chioma is about to touch the fuse of a bomb that would likely tore their sweet relationship apart.

Chioma moved closer to the fuse, "Did the lender lend you the money just like that?" After fifteen years of

living together, Chioma have studied Eze so well, that she effortlessly realized, when her husband is trying to hide something from her. "Did you hear my question?"

"Yes and the answer you're waiting for is nothing."

Chioma jumped down from the bed, moved round to the side Eze was and shouted to his face, "Eze, stop taking me for a fool. Even kids like Ada and Obi will not agree that a lender lent you millions of naira without any collateral."

"Stop it Chioma," Eze shouted back at her as he sat up, "I'm your husband not your house boy. What is your business with how I borrowed the money? In fact, if you must know, I presented this house as collateral."

Chioma turned away as if she was running away from a horror scene and covered her face with her hands. "I know," she sobbed, "this is the only thing you can present as collateral."

Eze lay back again, turned his back on her and covered himself with a blanket.

Eze is paying a huge prize to reach Germany. Will Uche really take him to Germany or will Eze be duped? Find out in our next publication.



George Orwell-The Master of Fable

Orwell is best known for his allegorical novella *Animal Farm* published in 1945. He was born Eric Arthur Blair on June 25, 1903 in Motihari, Bengal, India.

He was an English novelist, essayist and critic under the pen name of George Orwell, a name inspired by his favorite place River Orwell.

Orwell's father was a minor British official in the Indian civil service; his mother was the daughter of an unsuccessful teak merchant in Burma, present day Myanmar.

After returning with his parents to England, he was sent to a preparatory boarding school on Sussex coast, in 1911, where he was distinguished among the other boys by his poverty and his intellectual brilliance.

Orwell won scholarship to two of England's leading schools, Wellington and Eton, and briefly attended the former before continuing his studies at the latter, where he stayed from 1917 to 1921.

Instead of matriculating at a university, Orwell decided to follow family tradition and in 1922, went to Burma as assistant district superintendent in the Indian Imperial Police.

When he realized how much against their will the Burmese were ruled by the British, he felt increasingly ashamed of his role as a colonial police officer. After returning to England in 1927 on leave, he decided not to return to Burma and on January 1, 1928, he resigned from the Imperial Police. Having left his job, he had the opportunity of realizing his childhood friend of becoming an author.

Orwell first socialist book was an original and unorthodox political treatise titled *The Road to Wigan Pier*. It was published in 1937. While the book was in print, Orwell relocated to Spain where he reported the Civil War. Before long he kept his pen and took up arms for the Republican Militia. He fled Spain when his life was in danger and returned to England. He captured his experiences in Spain in his 1938 published book, *Homage to Catalonia*.

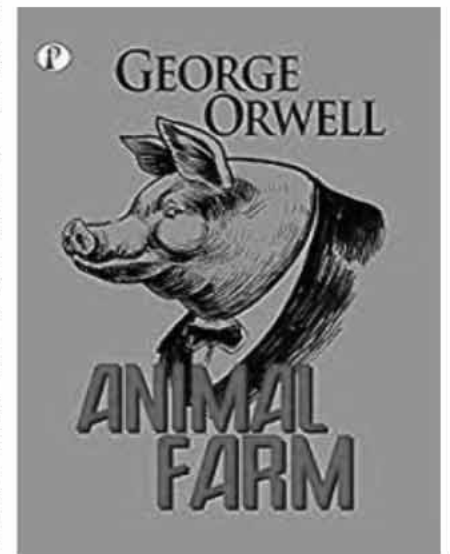
During the World War II, he was rejected for military service due to the injuries he suffered while fighting in Spain. He worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation, where he headed the Indian service.

In 1943 he became the literary editor of the *Tribune* writing articles and reviews that seriously criticized the English government.

In 1944 Orwell finished *Animal Farm*, a political fable based on the story of the Russian Revolution and its betrayal by Joseph Stalin. It became one of Orwell's finest works, full of wit and fantasy and admirably written.

George Orwell's last novel, *Nineteen Eighty-four* published in 1949, was a warning after years of brooding on the twin menaces of Nazism and Stalinism. The novel is set in an imaginary future in which the world is dominated by three perpetually warring totalitarian police states.

Orwell wrote the last pages of *Nineteen Eighty-four* in a remote house on the Hebridean island of Jura, which he had bought from the proceeds of *Animal Farm*. He worked between bouts of hospitalization for tuberculosis, of which he died in a London hospital in January 21, 1950.



CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

Talent is cheaper than table salt. What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work.

Stephen King.

MUST HAVE ACCESSORIES FOR MEN:

Fashion tips
with
Sandra Chibuike
sandychybyke1@gmail.com

Men's accessories are small add-ons to the outfit. Accessories can be used to personalize your style and make it reflect your personal feeling or a certain type of attitude. They can bring warmth to your look, and they can bring up that cool guy in you that you have always wanted to be. On the flipside, accessories can also break the whole outfit when worn wrongly.

Although this rarely happens, you should know it can happen.

Now that you know the general information about men's accessories, we can hop in to see what is acknowledged as an accessory for men today. Without further ado, let me introduce the full list of men's accessories:

JEWELRIES:

Jewelries are personal ornaments that usually contain precious metals or precious stones to further emphasize the jewel's importance to the person. Jewelries are commonly used to show social status and/or personality via different types, styles, and shapes. Jewelries consist of three different subcategories; bracelets, rings, and necklaces. All of which can be worn simultaneously or separately.

- Bracelets: There are a large variety

of brackets to choose from; the beaded bracelet, the solid metal and chain bracelets. They help to enhance one's look, it's one of the easiest ways to showcase a man's personality.

- Rings: Not all like to wear rings. The opinion of too many men is that the only ring a man should wear is a wedding band. Luckily things have changed lately and men have started to realize the beauty of rings as fashion

accessories.

- Necklaces: Necklaces are very common today. Usually, men receive necklaces as gifts for their birthday or as a token of love from their loved ones.

- A gold or silver necklace with a cross-shaped pendant hanging from it is always nice. Also, a chain necklace without a pendant is widely popular among men today.



SUNGLASSES:



Sunglasses are a joy the feeling is for the eye during incredible. If you the summer season. are looking for what Men's sunglasses sunglasses would are one of the most fit you the best, c o m m o n there are many accessories. Not all types to choose people enjoy from; Round wearing sunglasses, sunglasses, Beach found a pair that sunglasses and looks perfect on you Classic sunglasses.

SUIT ACCESSORIES:



These are the little things used to embellish the suit outfit. Some of them are; #Ties and Bow-ties; they make the suit and your look, sleek and dapper. Ties are often used at formal events, as bow ties are usually worn in smart-casual and evening events.

#Clips and Cufflinks: are

insignificant things that are not often thought of as mandatory to wear in either formal or casual events. They simply provide that something extra for the perfect gentleman look.

#Pocket squares: are the finishing touches to your suit. Against common belief, pocket squares are not actually for men, but for men to carry. This means, in addition to being a fashion statement, pocket squares have a deeper meaning. If the woman you are with is crying, pocket squares are offered to the lady to dry her tears. So, you see why it is an important accessory to add to your suit outfits.

WALLETS:

Wallets are, without a doubt, useful accessories for anyone who carries around currency in any form. However, wallets are not as useful as they were a decade ago, as most of the available money is in electronic form. Credit and debit cards along with personal ID cards are the most common combination of items in any wallet.



WRIST WATCHES:

Most men like to wear wrist watches, not majorly as a fashion accessory, but as a time piece. Factors to consider while getting one include, functionality, fitting and durability.



BELTS:

Belts are an everyday accessory for many working men. Belts are designed to keep your pants up, but, especially in rap culture, are commonly used as a fashion statement.



HOW TO WEAR MEN'S ACCESSORIES

There are 3 simple factors to keep in mind when wearing your accessories.

1. Keep it simple:

Make sure you aren't overdoing it with the accessories. If you have decided to wear two or three rings on every finger, a hat, a watch and four bracelets on both hands, you might be overly dressed, which does not look good.

2. Stick to three main colors:

Having three main colors makes it easy to look clean. Four or more colors speak more of an exhibition than fashion.

3. Fit the accessories with your clothes:

Well, this one should be pretty obvious, but if you are wearing a belt with sweatpants or a tie with a t-shirt, it won't fit. Use common sense and a mirror to see what fits the best with your current outfit.

When you are properly dressed with the

HATS/CAPS;

\Hats tend to be more of a Either way, hats are a great statement piece than a subtle way to take your style game accessory. If you want to from 0 to 100.

instantly add a whole dose of personality to any outfit, then wear a suitable hat.

You wear a hat to keep your head warm on a chilly day, or you wear a hat to cover bald hair.



Photo Credit: Pins

Sporting Ambassador



Nigeria At The 2024 Paris Olympics: The Good, The Bad And The Ugly

By Joseph Jacob

The 33rd edition of the Summer Olympics has come and gone with the United States of America emerging the overall champion with a total of 126 medals. Nigeria's participation at the games can simply be classified into three: good, bad and ugly.

THE GOOD

Nigeria's women basketball team, fondly called D'Tigress, became the first African side-male or female, to reach the quarter-finals of an Olympic Games after beating Canada in their final group game.

Recall that the team's first victory at the Olympics came in Athens 2004 and after 20 years, their second victory came and it was enough to shoot them to the knockout stage.

Though they eventually lost the quarter-final match to the United States of America, the Nigerian ladies can hold their heads high.

Second D'Tigress Head coach, Rena Wakama, was named the Best Female Basketball Coach at the Olympics.

The 32 year-old basketball tactician guided the female basketball team to their first ever quarter-finals of the Olympic Games when they beat Canada 79-70.

Wakama is the first Nigerian National Female Basketball Team coach to win the women's Afrobasket title since its inception in 1966.

THE BAD

Nigeria spent a-nine billion naira for the Olympics but could not win even a bronze medal. Team Nigeria participated in 12 sports with 88 athletes. Athletics had 18 men and 18 women, one male athlete represented Nigeria in Badminton, D'Tigress, comprising 12 players represented Nigeria in female basketball, while two male and one female boxers represented Nigeria.

Furthermore, there were two female athletes in Canoeing, one in cycling and 18 players for



D'tigress Made Nigeria Proud At The Paris Olympics

the Super Falcons who represented Nigeria in the female football event.

In swimming, Nigeria went with one male and female athletes but doubled the number of athletes in table tennis. There was one female athlete in taekwondo, two in weightlifting and one male and five female athletes in wrestling.

Is Nigeria lacking in sporting talents that could conquer the world at the Olympics? Not at all. Yemisi Ogunleye represented Germany in Women's Shot Put and won gold. It is Germany's first victory in the event since 1996.

Annette Echikunwoke won silver for the United States of America in the Women's Hammer Throw.

Samu Omorodion was part of the gold winning Spanish men's football team that won the gold medal, while former Crystal Palace of England play maker, Michael Olise was an integral part of the French men's football

team that won silver.

Barthelemy Chinenyeze led the French national volleyball team to win gold medal in the men's volleyball event. Team Great Britain won bronze in the 4x400m. Relay and victoria Ohuruogu was part of the bronze winning quartet.

The United States' men's basketball team that won gold has a Nigerian, Femi Adebayo. It is obvious that if these athletes had pitched their tents with Nigeria, they would have come back from the Olympics empty handed.

With the foregoing, it is obvious that Nigeria has sporting talents in abundance but the sports authorities have not provided conducive environment for these athletes to reach the zenith of their careers.

THE UGLY

The omission of one of Nigeria's medal hopeful, Favour Ofili from the list of those to compete in the 100m event by the Athletics Federation of

Nigeria is a height of incompetence and carelessness being taking too far.

The statement credited to an AFN official by some national dailies in Nigeria where the official outlined Ofili's bad behaviours towards the AFN makes me suspect that the omission was deliberate. The official even went as far as saying that Ofili is free to compete for another nation.

While I am not in support of Ofili's purported indiscipline, my question to the AFN is: what disciplinary action had been taken against Ofili? Probably none. The only way they choose to handle her so called indiscipline is to humiliate the athlete and the country in the world stage.

Which other country did we hear forget to register her athlete for an event the athlete qualified for? Only Nigeria.

The only Africa cyclist Ese Lovina Ukpeseraye had to borrow bicycle from the German team in

order to represent Nigeria at the Olympics.

The Sports Minister, Senator John Ewan Eno explained that Nigeria's inclusion in cycling was sudden owing to the disqualification of some contestants, while the special bike needed to compete in the event will take months before it could be delivered after payment.

Let us accept without conceding that the minister's excuse was cogent, what did the sports authorities do to provide a bike for the athlete, even if it means hiring? Should individual athlete be the one running around to borrow equipment needed to represent Nigeria? What were the Cycling Federation of Nigeria and the Sports Ministry doing?

The Sports Minister has apologized to Nigerians and promised a better outing in the next Olympics. Is this the first time our sports authorities are promising us a better outing next time

immediately after a disastrous outing?

A Ugandan proverb has it that it is easier to wake someone who is sleeping than to wake someone who is pretending to be sleeping. When we choose to wake up from our pretentious sleep we will simply follow the solution given by Nigeria's first Olympic gold medalist, Chioma Ajunwa, "We wait until the last minute to prepare, and then we wonder why we don't win medals. I cried like a baby when I saw our athletes struggling. It's like we're not serious about sports. We're just participating for the sake of participating, not to win. We wait until the last minute to prepare, and then we wonder why we don't win medals. I cried like a baby when I saw our athletes struggling. It's like we're not serious about sports. We're just participating for the sake of participating, not to win."

Africa On Fire As 2025 Afcon Qualifiers Begin

By Joseph Jacob

From Cairo to Kampala, from Dakar to Dar Salam, from Lagos to Luanda, the continent of Africa will be set on fire from September 2-10, when the first two rounds of matches of the Morocco 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers take place across the continent.

In Group A, Tunisia will host Madagascar at the Hammadi Agrebi Stadium in Tunis while Comoros will take on the Scorpions of Gambia in Morocco. On match day two, Scorpions of Gambia will attempt to sting the Carthage Eagles of Tunisia while Madagascar will tread tackles with Comoros.

2025 AFCON host, Morocco will take on Gabon as Central African Republic welcome Lesotho. In the second round of matches, Lesotho will tackle Morocco while Gabon confront Central African Republic.

Cairo International Stadium will be the battle ground when the most successful team of the AFCON, Egypt host Cape Verde while Mauritania will lurk horns with Botswana. On match day two, Botswana will welcome Egypt to the Obed Itani Chilume Stadium in Francistown as Cape Verde confront Mauritania.

After they stunned Nigeria in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers, Benin Republic will storm Uyo to take on the Super Eagles of Nigeria at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium while Libya will confront Rwanda in group D. Round two watches will see the Super Eagles visit Kigali to take on Rwanda while Benin Republic will tread tackles with Libya.

Group E will see Algeria take on Equatorial Guinea as West African brothers, Togo and Liberia fight to finish. In round two, Monrovia will come alive when 1990 and 2019 AFCON champion Algeria visit



Victor Osimhen Emerge The Top Scorer In The Last Afcon Qualifiers With 10 Goals

Liberia. In the other match, Equatorial Guinea will attempt to clip the wings of the Hawks of Togo.

Black Stars of Ghana will attempt to outshine the Palanca Nigaras as Sudan host Niger in group F. On match day two, Niger Republic will host Ghana while Angola and Sudan battle for supremacy.

In group G, defending champions, Cote d'Ivoire will host the Chipolopolo of Zambia while Sierra Leone and Chad clash in Monrovia. In the second round, Chad will lurk horns with Cote d'Ivoire while Copper Bullets of Zambia will attempt to dim the Leone Stars of Sierra Leone.

Stade des Martyrs in Kinshasa will host the clash between DR Congo and Guinea in group H while Tanzania lurk horns with Ethiopia. On match day two, Ethiopia will host DR Congo as Guinea confront Tanzania.

It is going to be Mali against Mozambique and Guinea Bissau against Eswatini in group I first round matches while the second round will see Eswatini take on Mali as Mozambique battle Guinea-

Bissau.

The Brave Warriors of Namibia must be brave indeed when they travel to Douala to take on the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon while Kenya and Zimbabwe go head to head in group J matches as the second round will pitch Zimbabwe against Cameroon and Namibia against Kenya.

Group K will see 1996 champions, the Bafana Bafana of South Africa host Uganda as Congo take on South Sudan. On match day two, South Sudan will lurk horns with South Africa at the Juba Stadium while Uganda and Congo will fight to finish at the Mandela National Stadium in Kampala.

West African brothers, the Teranga Lions of Senegal and the Stallions of Bokina Faso will clash in group L first match while the Flames of Malawi will attempt to consume Burundi. On match day two, Burundi will welcome Senegal as Bokina Faso confront Malawi.

BLAST IN THE PAST: Enyimba International Break 39-Year-Old Jinx

The Africa's club flagship completion, the African Cup of Champions Club currently known as the CAF Champions League began in 1964. It was a competition that separates the boys from the men as winning it places a club among the best in Africa.

The most populous black nation in the world entered the competition with several clubs in the first 39 years of the competition with the best they could achieve being a losing finalist. For instance, in 1975, Enugu Rangers lost 3-1 to Hafnia of Guinea. Zamalek of Egypt defeated Shooting Stars 3-0 in the 1984 final. Four years later, Iwuanyanwu Nationale lost 1-4 to Entente de Setif of Algeria. Shooting Stars came very close again in 1996 but lost 5-4 on penalties to Zamalek of Egypt.

In the first six years of the Champions League era, which commenced in 1997, no Nigerian side could reach the final. History would be made in 2003 as the People's Elephant, Enyimba International qualified to represent Nigeria in the competition for the second time after they crashed out in the second round of the previous season.

In the first round, they took Satellite FC of Guinea to the cleaners defeating them 8-2 on aggregate. They faced ASD Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal in the second round and conquered the Senegalese 4-0 on aggregate.

The People's Elephant

were drawn in group A against Simba FC of Tanzania, ASEC Mimosas of Cote d'Ivoire and Ismailia of Egypt. Enyimba opened their group stage campaign with a resounding 3-0 victory over Simba FC in Aba. Their second group match against Ismailia saw the North Africans wallop Enyimba 6-1. This loss was a wakeup call and the People's Elephants woke up indeed as they defeated ASEC home and away, defeated Ismailia at home before losing to Simba FC away. They topped the group with 12 points and zoomed into the semi-final.

Enyimba International defeated USM Algiers 3-2 to reach the final where they faced Ismailia, who had beaten them black and blue in their first meeting in the group stage.

After defeating the Egyptians 2-0 in the first leg of the final in Aba, Ismailia threatened fire and brimstone, reminding the People's Elephant of how they were roasted 6-1 in the group stage.

Enyimba International went to Egypt and played the game of their lives only to lose by a lone goal via a controversial penalty. On aggregate the People's Elephant won 2-1.

SNzogbu, nzogbu, Enyimba enyi resounded from Aba to the entire country and engulfed the entire continent. The jinx had been broken. A Nigerian club finally won the CAF Champions League.



Enyimba International, Africa Conquerors