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Gov. Otti Reopens Newly Retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has formally reopened the newly retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat in Umuahia after months of retrofitting, remodeling, and external works aimed at restoring the dignity and productivity of the State's Workforce.

The newly retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat is set to accommodate close to 1,000 personnel and house four different MDAs on

permanent basis as well as four Ministries temporary house.

Speaking at the Ceremony held at the Secretariat Complex, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia, Governor Otti described the renovation of the secretariat as another pointer to his administration's determination to change the face of the State's Civil Service.

He recalled that the initiative followed other significant projects, such as the commissioning of the Joint Accounts Allocation

Committee (JAAC) Building in May, and the improvement of office spaces for the Ministry of Budget and Planning, Civil Service Commission, and other parastatals.

The Governor who underscored the vital role of an efficient civil service in achieving his administration's developmental objectives, reiterated his commitment to creating suitable working environment that supports optimal productivity and dignity of the State Workforce.

"We are not just building and retrofitting structures that excite onlookers; the functionality of the buildings is as important as the aesthetics.

"The extensive investments in the restoration, acquisition and building of office complexes speak to the determination of the State Government to create a robust civil service architecture.

"An effective and responsive Civil Service system is pivotal to the successful delivery of our core governance objectives.

The reforms we intend to push will be stifled without a motivated Civil Service to drive the policies and programmes, continuing, he added. "In the light of the immense role an organised and result-oriented civil service plays in actualising the policy direction of governments, one can say without fear of contradiction that our capacity to pursue certain development objectives are extensively dependent on the quality of the Civil Service", Gov Otti said.

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The Gov. Dr. Alex Otti (3L), Chairman Inmoson Motors Chief Innocent Chukwuma (3R) with The Comm. for Housing Mr Chaka Chukwumeriije (2R) and others during The Commissioning of the Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariate Recently.

Gender Based Violence: FG Orders Varsities To Set Up Help Centres

By Sophina Ovuike, Abuja

The Federal Government (FG) has moved to curb Gender Based Violence (GBV) across institutions of higher learning.

FG directed tertiary institutions in the country to establish Sexual Assault Referral Centres to address cases of students offering lecturers sex in exchange for good grades, harassment and gender-based violence on campuses.

The Minister of Women Affairs, Imaan Suleiman-Ibrahim, affirmed this at the National Summit held in Abuja by Alliances for Africa in collaboration with the Committee on Gender Directors in Nigeria to kick-off the 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against Gender-Based Violence.

The directive comes three days after the Federal University in Oye Ekiti, cleared a female student, Ramota Olanloye, to graduate following the remarking of her final-year examination scripts.

Olanloye had alleged that a lecturer, Dr. Anthony Agbgebung, demanded sexual favours from her, and when she declined, he deliberately failed her in two final-year courses.

But Suleiman-Ibrahim disclosed that for the trend to be curbed, there was a need to introduce timely intervention and survivor support in the centres being recommended.

She said, "I call on university leadership to prioritise the establishment of SARCs to ensure timely intervention and support for survivors within their communities.

"We currently have only 47 Sexual Assault Referral Centres across 22 states and the FCT. This is far from enough."

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Christmas Period: Gov Otti Advises Drivers To Shun Drugs Abuse

From Nwokoma Blessing, Aba

The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti has advised drivers to shun drugs abuse, during the Christmas period, because of its catastrophic outcomes.

The governor made it clear that most of the road

mishaps that had claimed the lives of many Abians and indeed Nigerians, were traceable to abuse of substances by the drivers.

Otti, who made this call in Aba, during a two-day sensitization and free

medical treatment by the COOPERATIVE MOTOR UNION for drivers and Motor Park workers; stressed the pivotal roles the drivers play in the economy of any State.

The Governor gave this

advice through his Senior Special Advisers on Transportation, Dr. Obioma Nwogbe, who stated that the sensitization is apt considering this period, when the drivers will want to cover more

turns, than usual, in the name of Christmas and end up wasting too many human resources.

He enumerated the painstaking efforts by the governor to touch positively the lives and well-being of drivers and Abians.

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Governor Otti Reopens Newly Retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat

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He disclosed that the State Government leveraged the expertise of the State's Civil Service to execute the projects, significantly reducing costs to N900 million, compared to the estimated N2 billion if outsourced to private contractors.

The Governor highlighted that the direct labour approach not only saved funds but also enhanced the technical capacity of Civil Servants, created employment opportunities, and empowered local businesses that supplied materials for the project.

The Governor assured workers of his administration's dedication to their welfare and urged them to reciprocate by demonstrating professionalism, punctuality, and dedication to service.

In his address, the Commissioner for Lands and Housing, Mr Chaka Chukwumerije, stated that the re-opening of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat as part of the present Administration's integrated plan to significantly upgrade the entire Secretariat complex to ensure that Public Buildings are adequately co-located within the same space and in a conducive environment, befitting for its civil servants.

The Commissioner recalled that the Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat, originally constructed in 1993 during the Ibrahim Babangida administration, had deteriorated over the years and eventually abandoned by the previous administration following concerns about its structural integrity.

He lauded Governor Otti's administration for fulfilling its promise to rebuild and modernize Abia's public service infrastructure, noting that the newly retrofitted Secretariat now boasts of restored water

and electricity supply, new furnishings for approximately 150 offices, four newly introduced boardrooms, and a state-of-the-art 240-seater conference hall.

He listed other works in the pipeline as part of the holistic upgrade of the Secretariat to include the building of "a brand new secretariat block to accommodate more MDA's, provision of a creche, opening of the utility area, the completion of the road works, and the provision of alternate energy to serve the complex".

In her remarks on behalf of the Abia Workforce, the Head of Service, Dr Mrs Ngozi Obioma, described the commissioning of the retrofitted Secretariat Complex as a demonstration of the present administration's commitment to rejigging the Abia Civil Service trajectory which was on a "downward spiral prior to the Governor's assumption of office.

She lauded Governor Otti for recognizing that decent and conducive accommodation serves as a motivation for qualitative service delivery and commended the Governor's commitment to transforming the administrative, infrastructural, and social landscape of the State.

The Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Lands and Housing, Tpl. Ukeje U. Ukpabi, during his vote of thanks to His Excellency, Dr Alex C. Otti, OFR, thanked the Governor for not just renovating, retrofitting & modernizing the Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat, but for also rejigging the mindset of the average civil servants by this positive project and assured that there would be enhanced productivity by the almost 1,000 occupants of the enhanced work environment.

Gender Based Violence: FG Orders Varsities To Set-Up Help Centres

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The Minister highlighted government's commitment under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu's administration to champion gender equality, eradication of gender-based violence and promotion of safe academic environments.

According to her, the President has zero tolerance for gender-based violence.

She also announced plans to collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Education, Universities, and other stakeholders to launch nationwide campaigns against sexual harassment.

"It is very heartwarming to see so many of the Directors of the Gender Centres from different universities across

Nigeria join in this effort. In recent years, several high-profile cases have highlighted the pervasive nature of sexual harassment in our tertiary institutions.

"The BBC Africa Eye documentary titled; Sex for Grades' revealed chilling accounts of lecturers demanding sexual favours from students in exchange for academic rewards. This exposé not only brought global attention to the issue but also spurred nationwide outrage and calls for reform.

"These incidents demonstrated the urgent need for robust reporting systems, survivor-centred support mechanisms, and swift disciplinary action against perpetrators," she explained.

Civil Service Commission Chief Pledges To Support Abia Civil Servants

By Ndubueze Ngozi

State Civil Service Commission, Dr. Jerry Eno has said that she will support and assist the civil servants in the State to achieve effective and efficient service delivery.

Dr. Mrs Jerry, who stated this when she received the executive members of Administrative Officers' Association who paid her a courtesy visit in her office, attributed the achievements and landmarks of the Commission since she assumed office to the good governance of Dr Alex Otti, who, according to her, is interested and compassionate to the welfare of the civil servants in the State.

She further commended the Governor for his efforts in bringing sanity to the State Civil Service which she said, will help to bring back the lost glory of the system. She urged all to join in the fight against indiscipline in the system.

The Chairman, who noted that there has been a gap in the competence level of the staff, revealed that professionalism is the answer. She described

professionalism as a key to efficient service delivery which helps in the development of capacity building of the staff to make them more efficient as well as contribute effectively in the discharge of their duties.

She disclosed that plans are on top gear for the training, retraining and conferences for Abia workers next year.

On the digitalization, she urged the Abia workforce, especially, the administrative officers, to embrace digitalization. She pointed out that as Administrative Officers, knowing how to use computer will help them tremendously in the discharge of their duties effectively.

In her contribution, the Permanent Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Deaconess, Dim Ijeoma Clara, appreciated the Governor, Dr. Alex Otti for the provision of the new office complex and commended the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, Dr. Jerry Eno for her efforts in ensuring that issue of the office accommodation becomes a reality.

Earlier in his speech, the President Administrative Officers' Association, Comd. Nmerole D. O. said that the essence of the visit was to congratulate Mrs Jerry Eno on her appointment as chairman, civil service commission as well as intimate her of the Association's programmes.

Nmerole who enumerated some of the objectives and aims to include, enhancing the prestige of the cadre/profession, improving members professional skills and competence through seminar, dialogue, conferences among others, appealed to the commission to work in collaboration with the State Government in ensuring that their request is given attention.

On behalf of other members, the PRO, Administrative Officers' Association, Elder Ulelu Chiemela Adiele, thanked the Chairman for the warm reception and assured her of their commitment and diligence in the discharge of their duties, while praying for God's protection and guidance upon her life.

Assembly Gives Ultimatum To Contractor Handling Umuahia -Ikot Ekpene Road

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka

Abia State House of Assembly has passed a resolution urging the contractor handling the Umuahia - Ikot Ekpene road to within seven (7) days return to site with a view to attend to the deplorable section between Umuana first gate to Ehimiri Police station.

The House further disclosed that failure to comply, the State Ministry of Works should immediately move in and carry out remediation work on the sections to save the road users from the current pains they are passing through.

Announcing the decision, the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa commended the Deputy Speaker and member of the House Committee on Works for living up to expectations and wondered why the contractor handling the road project would not urgently intervene on the said sections to make life bearable to the people especially with the festivities around the Corner.

The motion is sequel to a report to the House following an earlier Matter of Urgent Public Importance brought before it by the Deputy Speaker and member representing Umuahia East State Constituency, Rt. Hon. Augustine Okezie on the deplorable state of some

sections of the road under reconstruction which has brought huge pain and loss to the road users and residents of the area.

The House committed HAB 23: A Bill for a law to provide for the establishment, Development and Administration of the Bill Abia State Electricity Market and the establishment of the State Electricity Regulatory Authority and Electricity Fund and other related purposes to its Committee on Public Utilities and Water Resources has to commended

to conduct a public hearing on it and revert back to the House. Speaking under the personal explanation, member representing Umuahia Central State Constituency, Hon. Anthony Chinasa who was recently announced as the new Deputy Majority Leader of the House, announced his decision to relinquish the position owing to personal reasons.

Hon. Chinasa who appreciated the Speaker and his colleagues for the confidence reposed in him pledged to continue to work with all as always.

Gov Otti Advises Drivers Over Drugs Abuse

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Nwogbe called on them to pay their daily tickets, to enable the government continue to provide infrastructural development across the state.

He also warned drivers to desist from establishing illegal motor parks or loading in unauthorized places.

Responding, the Mayors of Aba South and North, thanked Governor Chioma Otti for trusting the leadership of the motor Union to Mr Azode Chukwuma aka CHINA, to lead Cooperative Motor Union in Abia.

They commended the initiators of the free medical and sensitization for the drivers; insisting that all the gains of the programme be put to use; as Abia would be relatively safe and road mishaps reduced to the barest minimum in Abia and its environs if they do so.

Speaking, the President, Cooperative Motor Union, Abia Chapter, Hon. Chukwu Azode, said his administration is following the footsteps of the people-oriented governor, Dr. Alex Otti, who is passionate in rolling out policies and programmes that are touching the lives of Abians.

He stated that this is the

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Ajuzie Amarachi Favour, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. CHIMA OBI AMARACHI FAVOUR. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. CHIMA OBI AMARACHI FAVOUR.

I, formerly known and addressed as Mrs. Elijah Happiness Ucheoma, now wish to be known and addressed as MISS AMALAMBU HAPPINESS UCHEOMA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MISS AMALAMBU HAPPINESS UCHEOMA

I, formerly known and addressed as Anyaale Ekechukwu Moses, now wish to be known and addressed as EKE ANYAELE-CHUKWU. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

EKE ANYAELE-CHUKWU

Reconciliation of Name and Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Chiekweiro David Kelechi which appeared in my Bank Verification Number, with Zenith Bank, and Chiekweiro Kelechi David are the same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as CHIEKWEIRO KELECHI DAVID and my correct date of birth is 01-02-2002. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public please take note.

CHIEKWEIRO KELECHI DAVID

Correction of Name

This is to affirm that Madukairo-Akabiike Uzoma Forgiveness which appeared in my international certificate and Madukairo Uzoma Forgiveness are the same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as MADUKAIRO UZOMA FORGIVENESS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MADUKAIRO UZOMA FORGIVENESS.

I, formerly known as Ochingwa Israel and Mathias Israel, now wish to be known and addressed as ISRAEL OCHINGWA MATHIAS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ISRAEL OCHINGWA MATHIAS.

first of its kind in not just Abia but in the entire South-East where a motor Union will come together with such a noble idea. Azode called on the drivers to save their lives and that of others, by subscribing to "DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE; stressing that healthy driving is a tool to driving a healthy economy.

News

Rotary Club Chief Advises Govt To Invest Largely In Education

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

President, Rotary Club of Owerri Royals, Rtn. Winifred Chinonye Osuigwe, has urged the government to firmly look inward to improve quality education in the country to enable the future generation have the requisite ability and knowledge to function effectively for the good of the society.

She also requested the government to make education affordable for every child to enable them access qualitative education as enshrined in the law.

Speaking during a one-day enlightenment seminar: Basic Education and Literacy Project, held at Evette Institute, Umuguma, Owerri West, Imo State, recently, Osuigwe advised the participants (numbering over 300 girls) to embrace quality education to be able to assuage hardship, as well as contribute meaningfully to the good of the society.

Osuigwe noted that the Rotary Club of Owerri Royals, in conjunction with Rotaract Club of Imo State University and Evette Institute, organized the seminar to imbue the girl child with the spirit of hard work to enable them major well in life.

"This is new magic Rotary Year (2024-2025). It is our duty as Rotarians to serve humanity and we put service above self - to go to communities to equip them in the seven areas of focus: in either maternal and child health basic education and literacy, disease prevention and other areas of focus. However, this one is basically on basic education and literacy, the areas of focus of Rotary", Osuigwe added.

While advising the government to invest hugely on quality basic education to enable children

have access to qualitative and inclusive education in line with the United Nations Declaration of Quality Basic Education of 1990, the Keynote Speaker of the seminar, Rtn. Nwando Ethel Anyasinti, pointed out that education which is key to success is the right of every child, whether male or female.

Basing her lecture on the theme of the programme, "The Importance of Gender Equality In Education", Anyasinti, Orji who is the Charter President of Rotary Club, reiterated that the "right of the child to quality education is a human right which should be implemented always, and such a right should not be denied the child" counting, she opined that "the girl-child should be spurred and encouraged to acquire basic, quality education etc. Such training will equip them to become more useful and responsible to themselves, families and the society, hence the government should make quality education more affordable to them, ensure conducive learning environment. "Attitude of sending the child to school is a fundamental human right. It lies purely on the government to invest hugely and improve quality education. The society also has a role to play in this aspect".

One of the participants, Deborah Innocent, a student of Evette Institute, Umuguma, thanked the organizers for the seminar, which she said, had enlightened them on their rights to basic and qualitative education.

Highlight of the seminar was the distribution of educational materials to the girls.

ADP Staff Welfare Association Elects Officers

By Ebere Tasie

The newly elected executive members of Staff Welfare Association of Abia State Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), have been charged to be more responsible to the needs of their members.

A member of the Monitoring Team from Office of the Head of the Service, Boniface Kalu, who gave the admonition, while addressing the contestants, also advised them to maintain transparency in their dealings with their members.

The election which was conducted by Mrs. Iheanacho Chioma-led Electoral Committee, saw the emergence of Mr. Ndubuisi Okorie as the Chairman for a tenure of three years.

It also elected Ebi Effia - Vice Chairman, Ithemere

Paul - Secretary, Abraham Samuel - Vice Secretary, Mercy Iroadighiogu - Financial Secretary, Nkwachukwu Daniel - Ijeoma -Treasurer, Njoku Catherine - PRO, Glory Uzoma Eziakor - Welfare Office, Igbanny Blessing - Internal Auditor, Iroegbu Ijeoma - Provost I, Anosike Chidiebere- Provost II, Ebisike Ethel - Umuhia Zonal Representative Oti Doris and Kalu Uma Kalu, also Aba Zonal Representative.

In his acceptance speech, the newly elected Chairman, pledged to carry every member along in taking critical decisions that would reposition the association.

Okorie pledged of his preparedness to improve on the transparency and equity which were the hallmarks of their first tenure.



Gov. Sheriff Oborewori interacting with one of the beneficiaries during the WESAP, recently Delta Governor Presents Start-Up Packs To 311 Wesap Beneficiaries

From Okere Ugochinyere, Asaba

Governor Sheriff Oborewori of Delta State, has presented start up packs to 311 beneficiaries of the Women Economic Skill Acquisition Programme, WESAP, of the State Government, in his determination to expand the frontiers of entrepreneurial development in the State.

The beneficiaries were made up of 220 women trained in fashion and design, hair dressing, catering, decoration and event management and make up/gele tying as well as 91 persons with disabilities who were trained in ICT, confectionaries, fashion and design, leather work and industrial production.

Speaking at the ceremony held in Asaba, Governor Oborewori said his administration was fully committed to empowering citizens of the State to overcome life's challenges and achieve their full potentials and happiness.

"It is evident from the joy and excitement on the faces of our beneficiaries today that this intervention by the State Government serves as a much-needed relief and a beacon of hope.

"We all understand how painful and frustrating it can be to possess a vision but lack the means to actualize it. Many of these men and women have acquired essential skills in their chosen fields of enterprise but, unfortunately, have not had the capital to launch their dreams.

"Through a rigorous process of interviews and selection conducted by the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Social

Development, these individuals have been recommended for support by the State government.

"Today's event marks another significant milestone in our administration's journey to provide opportunities for all, in line with our MORE Agenda. As a government, we are fully committed to empowering our citizens to overcome life's challenges and achieve their full potential and happiness.

"Today, we are proud to empower 311 individuals, providing them with tools to transform their lives. Economic inclusion is the key to social cohesion in any society.

He disclosed that significant progress has been made in empowering Deltans within this year alone, adding that over 203,204 persons have benefitted from various empowerment platforms of the State Government.

The Governor said 426 artisans, petty traders, and female entrepreneurs have been supported, pointing out that 6,000 farmers have received empowerment, with fertilizers distributed across the 25 local government areas of the State.

"Let me, also mention the focus on agriculture under the Result Area II of the Fadama Food Security of the D-CARES Scheme, as well as the release of ₦1 billion counterpart funding from the African Union Development Agency, New Partnership for Africa Development, to empower 2,000

farmers for food production in the state.

"To our esteemed beneficiaries, I have a few words of advice. As you begin your entrepreneurial journey, I urge you to make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Earlier in her welcome address, the Commissioner for Women Affairs, Community and Social Development, Hon. Princess Pat Ajudua, said that the event marked another milestone in the State Government's commitment to ensure empowerment and inclusivity in building a more prosperous Delta State.

She disclosed that the ceremony was a significant step in fulfilling the ministry's mandate to mainstream gender and human rights perspectives across all levels and to ensure that women and the vulnerable groups were empowered to guarantee peace and sustainable development. She applauded the Governor for his passionate and patriotic commitment to the socio-economic welfare of Deltans.

In separate goodwill messages, the Secretary to State Government (SSG), Dr. Kingsley Emu, and the Chief Job Creation Officer, Mr. Ifeanyi Egwunyenga, said the empowerment programmes of the present administration were aimed at wiping poverty out of the State. They advised beneficiaries not to allow anyone deceive them to sell their start up packs.

Gov Otti Vows To Claim Accumulated, Unclaimed TETFUND Approvals

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti has vowed that his administration will do everything possible to claim accumulated and unclaimed funds earmarked for the State Owned by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND).

He disclosed this when he received in audience a delegation of the House of Representatives Committee on TETFUND and Other Services led by its Chairman, Hon. Princess Miriam Odinakachi Onuoha at the Government House Umuahia.

The Abia Governor who also revealed that there is enormous work required to bring the education sector to an acceptable standard in the State, said that there is no better time to look for the TETFUND interventions than now.

He decried the level of dilapidation in public schools in the State and the level of ruins its structures were subjected to, noting however that he would take immediate action to salvage the situation as bemoaning a problem alone does not solve it.

The Governor said: "There is no way we can make progress without these funds. So, whatever it takes, I'm going to do it. I will outsource my Commissioner for Tertiary Education to you so that we can get the unclaimed funds and use it. If you get to our schools and see the level of dilapidation, you will

understand the level of ruins and how much we need this funds; In fact, sometime you will be wondering how people actually manage to graduate from these schools.

"One thing that we know is that the problem doesn't get solved by bemoaning the problem. We don't believe in that. We take actions, we believe that actions solve problems".

"Thank you for calling our attention to this. For us, it is a wakeup call for a State that has declared a state of emergency on Education, a State that dedicated 20% of her budget allocation to education, and has recently declared free and compulsory education from primary to junior secondary school," the Governor declared.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation and Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on TETFUND and Other Services, Hon. Princess Miriam Odinakachukwu Onuoha said that they were in the State as part of its oversight functions having discovered that Abia is among the States with an accumulation of unclaimed TETFUND funds to find out the cause and impediment as well proffer solutions.

Princess Onuoha disclosed

that the House has created a separate Standing Committee on TETFUND to ensure better accountability and show for judicious utilization of the amounts released for TETFUND.

She said that the House has relaxed some of the stringent conditions causing the delay, providing an opportunity for the committee to speak with beneficiaries, stakeholders on areas of challenges as well assist them in ensuring that the backlogs are cleared.

"Hitherto, years back, before now, the House had run a committee on territory institutions and TETFUND but upon realizing that there is a need for better oversight to ensure better accountability and show for judicious utilization of the amounts released for TETFUND, the leadership thought it wise to create this house committee on TETFUND particularly and specially dedicated and saddled with the issues on TETFUND and education tax collection, remittances and utilization".

"The committee paid a courtesy call and oversight visit to TETFUND on the 30/5/2024 and discovered that the funds yet to be utilized was over 500 billion that had been allocated to beneficiary Tertiary institutions and we probed further and

found out that there were divergent reasons for this stalemate and accumulation of funds. The committee rose from a meeting with a resolution of the house to set up this technical committee comprising members of the committee, members of TETFUND itself, consultants to come to the affected states and institutions and find out the reason for the accumulation, the impediments and look for a way to proffer solutions and cure it on the spot".

She noted that her committee will work with Abia State government and the Tertiary Institutions in the State to ensure that the State gets their right slice of the TETFUND intervention.

"Your Excellency, we want to pledge our commitment and our resolve as a committee of the house, a standing committee to work with your government and Tertiary institutions in Abia State to ensure that they get their right slice of the TETFUND Intervention. So, being your sister and one of your very close supporters and admirers and seeing how you have set Abia on the part of growth and development in such a short time, this committee will work with you and your heads of institutions to ensure that the essence and intention of the tertiary intervention will be attained with you as Governor of this state."

News

Army Reopens Umuokpara, Onuimo Road

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru and Stephanie Adindu

The Nigerian Army has reopened the Umuokpara-Onuimo Road for public use after days of restriction, following the attack on three of its personnel recently by yet-to-be-identified gunmen.

Addressing newsmen after conducting the General Officer Commanding, GOC, 82 Division, Enugu, Major General H.T. Dada and his team, comprising the Brigade-Commander, 14 Brigade, Ohafia, Brigadier-General Olusola Diya and other senior military officers round the scene of incident, the Special Adviser to Governor Alex Otti on Security Matters, Navy Commander MacDonald Ubah (rtd), said the team also resolved to relocate the military checkpoint closer to the Onuimo River for a clearer view.

Ubah noted that the location where the military personnel mounted the checkpoint initially was a built-up area, which made it difficult for the military to exercise freedom of movement to repel the attack, adding that the traditional ruler of Ezeleke Autonomous Community, Eze Ibeakanma and other community leaders had shown co-operation with the military to enable them to relocate because of the inconvenience the road closure has caused them.

According to Ubah, the communities in the area had volunteered to start clearing the new location, as well as volunteer information, as security is everybody's business.

The Commanding Officer, 145 Battalion, Umuahia, Major Martin Domkat and other senior military officers were part of the GOC's entourage.



The GOC Divisions, Maj. Gen. H. T. Dada

Health Commissioner Urges Parents To Join In Campaign Against Cancer

By Favour Okorie

Cancer has been described as a silent threat and enemy to human existence, hence the need for parents to join in the campaign against it.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof. Enoch Ogbonna Uche, who made this call while delivering an address on the occasion of Cancer Awareness Day Celebration 2024 in

Umuahia, with a lined-up activities which included Health Walk from Government House to the new JAAC Building, Health Talk, Free Cancer Screening and a lot of other activities, with the theme- The changing face of the enemy, reducing the rising prevalence of cancer in Abia State. He said there is an urgent need for parents to ensure that their daughters, wives, sisters, mothers and female relatives within

the ages of 15-49 to embrace the preventive initiative by going for screening and receiving HPV vaccination, which he described as a sure way of reducing the rising risk of all forms of cancer.

Prof. Uche said "Globally an estimated 1 in 5 people will develop cancer in their lifetime. Also 1 in 8 men and 1 in 11 women will die from cancer. In 2020, there were over 19

million new reported cases worldwide with over 10 million deaths. In Nigeria, cancer is a major health issue. In 2020, over 124,000 new cases of cancer were reported and over 78,000 died. Every year, over 70,000 cancer deaths are recorded in Nigeria. These estimates are projected to increase by 85% in the next 15 years. The most common cancer types in Nigeria are breast, cervical, prostate, colorectal, and nonHodgkin lymphoma".

The Commissioner expressed sadness over losing his many relative to cancer, and assured that his ministry in collaboration with other stakeholder will work assiduously to stem the prevalence of various incidences of cancer in the State.

Additionally, he applauded the First Lady of Abia State for her resilience and go-getter spirit in championing the sensitization and awareness programme in the State and pledged unalloyed support.

In their lectures, Dr. Oluchi Izuka and Prof. Rosemary Ogu, advised people to stop lifestyle that can lead to the disease, such as intake of excessive alcohol, exposure to hydration, avoiding highly processed food and the likes.

According to them, Abia State is not immune to cancer and despite all the positive strides in the health sector, we are faced with the rising cases of cancer patients. They said early detection and prevention remains the only approach to eliminating this unfortunate life threatening disease. If detected early, at least 5% cure will be achieved.

A cancer survivor, Mrs Ruth Okeyi, from Nsulu Isiala Ngwa, while sharing her ordeal on how she broke through this deadly disease, she went through six successful sections of chemotherapy, after which she embraced natural ways of eating both vegetables and herbs.

Meanwhile 50 participants received free mammograms courtesy of the office of the Wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla C. Otti, while she presented a donation of N10million Naria bank cheque to compliment the good work of the Governor in the health sector.



Wife of Abia State Gov, Mrs Priscilla Otti (4th L), Anti-Cancer Warrior ©, Hon. Comm. For Health, Abia State, Prof Enoch Ogbonna (9th R) and others, during the Cancer Awareness Day in Abia State

Delta Government Donates 31 Operational Vehicles To Police, Others

From Okere Ugochinyere, Asaba

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori, has donated 31 operational vehicles to the Police and other security agencies in the state to strengthen their operations.

Governor Oborevwori while presenting the vehicles, to the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Ekpokun, recently in Asaba said the presentation was to enhance the joint security operations in the State, code named "Operation Delta Sweep".

He said the donation was informed by the general insecurity being experienced in the country and urged the security agencies to work together and share intelligence to ensure effective security in the state.

He said: "In my MORE Agenda, I promised Deltans that we would enhance peace and security and as part of this commitment, we are rebranding the operation formerly known as 'Delta Hawk' to 'Operation Delta Sweep' and this rebranding underscores our renewed focus and strategy.

"Without security, meaningful development cannot take place. We aim to create a secure environment where investors feel confident to come in and invest, ultimately improving the quality of life for our citizens and fostering harmony across the State.

"This joint security task force, established on December 10, 2020, as a policy response to rising violent crimes, comprises the Nigerian Army, Police Force, Air Force, Navy, DSS, and Civil Defense Corps.

"Since its inception, this

initiative has recorded significant successes in combating crimes such as illegal oil bunkering, kidnapping, armed robbery, cultism, and drug-related offenses.

"The rebranding reflects our administration's resolve to reduce crime to its barest minimum. To support this effort, the State Government has donated 31 vehicles, including 23 pickups and eight Sienna wagons, in addition to four Hilux vehicles previously delivered. This brings the fleet to 66 vehicles, aimed at enhancing daily patrols, especially during the Yuletide season.

"I trust this will boost the morale of task force members and motivate them to redouble their efforts to keep our State safe.

"We remain committed to providing the necessary support to ensure peace and security in Delta State. With these measures, I am confident that our people will enjoy a secure and peaceful season".

Speaking earlier during a courtesy call by the IGP, Governor Oborevwori lauded the exceptional, inspiring, and reassuring leadership of the Nigeria Police Force "Safe School Program", designed to protect schools and educational institutions from terrorist attacks and violent crimes.

"Thanks to this initiative, parents and guardians can now be rest assured that their children are under the watchful eyes of the School Protection Squad. Mr. IGP, I applaud your exemplary leadership and your willingness to go the extra mile to ensure a safe, secure, and prosperous society.

"Permit me to appreciate the Commissioner of Police, Delta State, Olufemi Abaniwonda, along with his counterparts in the military and

paramilitary, who form the security architecture of our state.

"I am confident that under their capable leadership, Delta State is becoming safer and more secure. Their efforts have been commendable, marked by unity and cooperation", Oborevwori said.

In his remarks, the IGP, commended Governor Oborevwori for the support to the State Police Command and other security agencies in the State and lauded him for the way he managed the recent nationwide protests in the State.

Egbetokun said: "I am truly delighted to be here today and to witness the remarkable strides being made for Delta State. It is evident that your commitment to the safety and security of the people is unwavering.

"For the visit of the Inspector - General of Police, you have provided 31 brand-new operational vehicles for the State. This act speaks volumes, about your dedication.

"Indeed, your unwavering support to the Police Command and other security agencies in the State is commendable. With a governor like you, we don't need to ask for more because you always deliver beyond expectations.

"I want to assure His Excellency and the public that these new vehicles will be immediately deployed to enhance the operational effectiveness of the police and other security agencies under Operation Delta Sweep".

The governor who was also at the opening ceremony of Police Public Relations Officers/Police Communication Experts Conference in Asaba, noted that more often, misconceptions and unverified information about Delta State spread through social media, creating false impressions.

He said as Police Public Relations

Officers, their role was vital in countering misinformation and fostering transparency, adding that the relationship between the police and the public is critical.

He pointed out that public engagement and effective communication were essential to bridging the gap and showcasing the incredible work the police are doing.

Declaring the conference open, the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, said the Nigerian Police Force was steadfastly committed to promoting amicable settlements, upholding fairness, and ensuring accountability.

The IGP pointed out that the Police recognized the immense influence of the media in shaping public perception and consider it a vital ally in their advocacy and accountability efforts.

Editorial

We Say No! No!! NO!!! To Killing Of Our Security Agents

We are terribly worried and disturbed by what can be described as "a new wave of escalated attacks and killing" of security agents in various locations of Abia State.

These killings which have claimed the lives of Soldiers, Policemen, Civil Defence Officers and Others, have become rampant and very disturbing.

Abia State, since the mounting on the saddle of leadership by Governor Alex Otti on May 29, 2023, has been more peaceful than most States in the South-East Zone - due, principally to the determination, dexterity and positive policies of the Governor.

Regrettably, what the State has witnessed from the last six months to May 30 2024, when five soldiers were killed in cold blood near Aba - till now is very nauseating and hard to believe, that such things are happening in Abia - God's Own State.

Many reasons have been adduced as the cause of these unprovoked attacks and killings of security agents.

A number of respondents to a Public Opinion Poll (Vox POP) have named anger over security agents extortion of the citizens at the uncountable number of check-points on almost all major roads in the South-East and Abia in

particular; the continued detention of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by DSS; the devastating, dehumanizing and exasperating hardship and hunger ravaging the citizens. It has also been alleged that political opponents are fueling and sponsoring these attacks in order to discredit Dr. Otti's administration.

Whatever the causes or reasons are, we make bold to state here that the security agents being mauled down on regular basis by the so-called Unknown Gun Men (UGM), are not primarily responsible for the harsh conditions Nigerians are passing through now. They are also not responsible for the continued incarceration of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu.

We say NO! NO!! NO!!!. Such killing of soldiers, policemen and other security agents should please stop now!

On the other hand, if political opponents or former political allies who feel neglected/abandoned, are responsible for these demonically inspired dastardly killings, with the aim of discrediting the government of Dr. Alex Otti, we plead that, they make a U-turn and abandon their nefarious activities.

If they can think about the usual reprisal attacks, wide-spread indiscriminate arrests and detentions of innocent citizens and destruction of civilian property and materials by the affected security agents, they will not be told to look for other methods of painting the government black.

The soldiers, policemen, DSS officers and civil defence officers are citizens of Nigeria (maybe Abia). Breadwinners of their families and they are responsible members of the society and their lives should not be cut short.

The so-called Unknown Gun Men (UGM) are equally supposed to be Nigerians who are bound by the Nigerian law which forbids a citizen from taking away the life of a fellow citizen.

Once again, we plead that the dastardly killings of our security agents should stop! Let the helpless and innocent citizens of Abia State breathe peace.

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

Curtail The Rate Of Insecurity In The Country

Dear Editor,

I humbly wish to use your widely read paper to address the issue of insecurity being faced in our Country .

We are approaching that great festive period once again and the rate of robbery, assault, kidnaping, among all has yet increased again in our Country.

For one who had a delay in trip and happened to get to his/her destination late will either have to sleep at the park or lodge in a hotel around the park because taking risks to head to your house at night could result to loss of lives and property.

This period is usually unsafe for business people at night because those who are desperately in need to make money which they will use and show off this season have prepared themselves, fully armed and ready to reap where they did not sow.

I wish to urge the State to tighten up the securities around the various States so that there will be ease in traveling without fear of the unknown.

Those abroad have so much fear in them because in as much as they would really love to visit their loved ones in their hometowns, the fear of the unknown is giving them double thoughts.

No one will like to take the huge risk of coming into the Country, despite the high cost of living recently, only to loose everything they brought for their loved ones or even get kidnapped or maybe killed at the end of everything.

The security agencies should also brace up in their respective duties so that they can win the trust of the people back.

I wish to beckon on the Federal Government and the State Government to please tighten the security in the Country so that Nigeria will be a safe heaven for all.

Thank you.

*Peace Onyebuchi
I.C.E, Asaba, Delta State.*

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Focus With Mrs. Josephine Ogwo

Towards Giving Abia Civil Service A Pride Of Place

History was made on Tuesday 26th November 2024 with the reopening of the renovated and retrofitted Nnamdi Azikwe Secretariat complex that was built by the Federal Government during the Administration of General Ibrahim Babaginda and commissioned on the 20th of August, 1993 by Engr. Barnabas A. I. Gemade (FNTSE) the then Hon. Secretary for Works and Housing.

The event marks a major advancement in the State's efforts to modernise and enhance its Public Service Infrastructure which is designed to provide a conducive working environment for Public Servants with the overall aim of enhancing their efficiency and productivity.

This is historic because the seat of the Civil Service of any arm of Government anywhere in the World is usually one of the major monuments enshrining not just the power but also the splendor and authority of Government. It is this fact that informed the decision of the State Government to renovate and retrofit the complex.

His Excellency Dr. Alex Chioma Otti OFR having recognized the fact that public servants require environment that will bring out the best in them decided to renovate and retrofit the abandoned secretariat complex and provide it with advanced facilities and

amenities designed to enhance the working conditions of Abia Civil Servants. The ingenuity of the entire reconstruction effort is the fact that the Governor

case if it was contracted out. Today the complex stands out as a symbol of progress and beacon of hope for efficient governance in the State.

Furthermore, the Secretariat will house several Ministries and over one thousand Civil Servants. It is against this background that we commend Governor Alex Otti for his unwavering towards building infrastructure that supports the Public Servants by renovating, retrofitting and furnishing of public building in different parts of the State, which include the Nnamdi Azikwe Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture Administrative Block and Fishery Block, Law Reform Office, Abia Newspapers & Publishing Corporation Headquarters and other numerous public building projects that are being renovated and retrofitted.

Governor Otti's unwavering commitment to the welfare of workers in the state has clearly established him as the most workers friendly Governor the state has had since its creation as well as being a most visionary one.

Mrs Josephine Ogwo is the Director of Information, Ministry of Lands and Housing, Abia State



Newly Retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat Complex

empowered the technical team of the Ministry under the able leadership of Mr Chaka Chukwumerije, the Hon. Commissioner for Lands and Housing to perform the feat at a much cheaper cost than would have been the

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

Do you know it is possible to smile with a sense of fulfilment, during your sixtieth wedding anniversary because you know you have gotten it right in marriage? Your marriage can be steady and strong. It can be an example for others to follow, if you know the secret of making it work. Marriage can be likened to gold and like most precious ornaments, one must invest time and resources to secure it and fashion it into a jewel of inestimable value. Today, many in the family of God have found the key to a fulfilled marital life; you too can join the league by applying God's principle of marriage. That is why, this month, I will be sharing with you some Success Secrets for a Fulfilled Marriage. Family vacation packages

To derive joy in marriage, you must accept that you are the major player in your home; hence, you must strive to be diligent and work at it. The Bible says: By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through (Ecclesiastes 10:18). There is no prize for the slothful! Part of the diligent work required in marriage involves taking particular care of some specifics that serves as "grease" to a blissful home. Just as grease is to an engine or a nut, there are some seemingly little things that lubricate the home, thereby creating an environment of love, peace and joy. However, these things may be very minor yet are mostly ignored. For instance, the words: "I'm sorry", "Thank you" and "I love you" are very short and simple words, but are powerful in our everyday life and they must not be forgotten. Instead, they must be said every time they are needed. Forgetting these simple and very important words can cause a lot of disorder in your relationship.

Also, you must learn to say "Sorry" every time you make a mistake and "Thank you" for simple things done for you by your spouse. The best words that must be said every day is "I love you". These words when often used at home, could make the relationship grow stronger and deeper. To further

Success Secrets For A Fulfilled Marriage

understand success secrets for a fulfilled marriage, this week, I will be looking at the word, "I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry" are two short words that can make big improvements in any marriage. By these short powerful words, our marriages and homes will be more pleasant and peaceful. Offences are bound to occur between a man and his wife, but it is not wise for any partner to just overlook things whenever one is hurt by the other person. Always admit when you make mistakes. The Bible says: For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again... (Proverbs 24:16). We understand that because we are human, we might offend one another from time to time. However, the moment the husband or wife, sincerely say the words, "I'm sorry," it brings healing and begins to soothe the emotional wounds.

The word "I'm sorry" is a powerful healing balm that can be placed over hurt and wounded feelings. It works like fire! So, don't be hesitant or too proud to ask for forgiveness from your spouse or family members any time you are wrong. The Bible says, if you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, He will lift you (1 Peter 5:6).

Some people find it difficult to apologise to their wives, children or family members whom

Some people find it difficult to apologize to their wives, children or family members whom they had offended. God's Word says: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. (Proverbs 28:13).

they had offended. God's Word says: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy (Proverbs 28:13).

Whenever you go wrong, admit it to the person and refuse to do it again, then God's mercy and favour will be made available to you. It is pride that brought the devil from such a high place with God to the lowest pit of hell. Remember, pride goes before a fall, so don't let pride make you refuse to apologise any time you are wrong. Failure to admit your mistakes before your spouse is an obstacle to intimacy in marriage. You must cultivate the habit of apologising from your heart when you are wrong. Say, "I'm sorry", and mean it. When apologising, you should avoid the word "but" because it can kill your apology. To your spouse's ears, "I'm sorry but..." translates to "I'm not really sorry, and I am just saying I'm sorry for the sake of saying it." Stop shifting blames; accept your fault each time you are wrong!

God has given you this vital secret to create an atmosphere of peace in your home, go forth and enjoy it, in Jesus' name! If you are not born again, you are not entitled to the peaceful married life God has reserved for His children. However, God's grace of salvation is extended to you right now. You become born again by confessing your sins and accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of your life. If you are ready for this new birth experience, please say this prayer in faith: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins and cleanse me with Your Blood. I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Make me a child of God today. Thank You for delivering me from sin and satan to serve the living God and thank You for accepting me into Your Kingdom.

Congratulations! If you prayed this simple prayer of faith with me, you are now born again and a child of God. He loves you and will never leave you. Read your Bible daily, obey God's Word and seek Christian fellowship (John 14:21).

With this, you are guaranteed all-round rest and peace in Jesus' name!

News

Col. Ufodike Goes Home

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Col. Leonard Ginikaezindu Ufodike (retd), has been buried amidst tears and encomium in his hometown, Umudim, Nnewi in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The military officer died at the age of 82 years and was buried recently in Ufodike's family of Okpuno-Egbu in Nnewi.

In his sermon, Archbishop Emeritus of Diocese of Nnewi, Anglican Communion, Rt. Rev'd Godwin Okpala, urged Christians to emulate the Ufodike's legacies, adding that the late military officer, lived a life that is worthy of emulation.

In her tribute, his wife, Ebere, said her husband lived an exemplary life.

"You were a darling husband, and a friend to everyone, irrespective of tribe or nationality. You cracked jokes and helped people no matter how large theirs were.

"You were a role model to our children, grandchildren, and those around you. "You lived an exemplary life. I never failed to remind our grandchildren how industrious you were.

"During winter, you would clear the snow from the walkway and didn't have to wait for anybody to assist you with the task. Our safety and provision were your priority. I will miss you, my darling, and I pray that the Almighty God will grant your soul eternal peace, she said.

In his own tribute, his immediate younger brother, Prof E.B.C Ufodike, said when he was phoned around midday of June

9, 2024, to break the sad news of Leo's (as he fondly called him) passing, that there was total eclipse in his eyes, for a couple of minutes.

"Being my immediate elder sibling, giving me four years and four months, I was a copy cat of his. I joined him in the same secondary school, Boy's High School, Oron, joined him in the same university, University of Nigeria Nsukka, and in the same Zoology Department.

"My not equally joining the Nigerian Army is probably because he kept his plans to join a secret from me", he further stated.

Col. Ufodike, who was accorded full military respect at the burial is survived by his wife, children and many grandchildren, among whom are professionals in diverse areas of human endeavors.

The late Ufodike who was given the title, Onuo-Onaa in his community because of his gallantry in the Army received his funeral rites at St. Stephen's Anglican Church, Okpuno-egbu-Umudim, Nnewi.

The burial attracted the ranks and files in the military personnel, people from all walks of life to bid him farewell.

Highlights of the event was soldiers' demonstration of their tradition to accord their colleague their last respects.

Col. Ufodike retired honourably from the Nigerian Army as one of the highest-ranking Igbo officers at the date of his retirement on July 17, 1996.



Prof. Emeka Paschal Etusim delivering the 78th Inaugural lecture of Abia State University Uturu recently

Varsity Don Decries Increase In Tropical Parasite

By Ebere Tasie

A Professor of Parasitology in Abia State University Uturu, ABSU, Prof. Emeka Pascal Etusim has decried the high increase in tropical parasite in the Tropical Regions. Professor Etusim, who disclosed this while delivering the 78th Inaugural Lecture of the Institution on the topic "Elimination of preventable bio-terrorism: Putting asunder an unholy matrimony", held at the University Auditorium, called for comprehensive

healthcare that integrate community-based education and awareness to effectively eradicate tropical parasites.

While he stressed the need for healthy environmental practices to prevent the invasion of parasites, he revealed that tropical parasites are winning the war because people living in the tropics have increasingly continued to devalue their local diets and advocated prioritizing good tropical diets rich in herbs.

Declaring the

lecture open, the chairman of the occasion and Vice-Chancellor, ABSU Professor Ndukwe Okeudor, reiterated that ABSU will continue to produce professors of high academic repute. He commended Professor Etusim for demystifying preventative measures against parasites.

Professor Okeudor, represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Professor Godwin Emezue, welcomed the

inaugural lecturer into the College of Distinguished Professors and thanked the Governor and Visitor to the University, Dr Alex Otti, for his continued support to the University.

In a vote of thanks, the Director, Research and Publications of the University, Professor Victor Nwaugo, thanked Professor Okeudor for sustaining the inaugural lecture series, as well as Professor Etusim for his knowledge-filled lecture and all who graced the occasion.

Abia Govt Warns Against Unapproved Healthcare Outreaches

By Amarachi Uzonkwu

Abia State Government has warned the general public against patronizing unauthorized healthcare outreach.

This was contained in a Press Release signed by the Commissioner for Health, Prof Enoch Ogbonnaya Uche and made available to newsmen, encouraging the public to report any unauthorized or illegal healthcare activity near them to the Ministry of Health.

The release further reads:

"The attention of the Ministry of Health Abia State has been drawn to unauthorized delivery of healthcare services and distribution of drugs to the public by uncertified persons under the guise of free medical mission in Abiriba, Ohafia Local Government Area. Those conducting this medical outreach did not seek or obtain approval from the Abia State Ministry of Health.

"Preliminary reports indicate that medications distributed during this outreach may have caused adverse drug reactions among

unsuspecting recipients. Identified victims of these untoward medical events are currently receiving medical attention at designated public health facilities within the state. Our dedicated healthcare personnel are working assiduously to stabilize and treat affected people.

"The Abia State Ministry of Health is deeply concerned by the dire consequences and high risk posed by unauthorized healthcare activities.

"We wish to hereby warn the public to be cautious of individuals

and groups organizing unapproved healthcare events.

"The Ministry of Health wishes to announce that medical missions without authorization from the office of the Commissioner for Health Abia State are unlawful and those who conduct such illegal activities that put the Health of Abia citizens and residents in jeopardy shall be made to face the full wrath of the law.

"The State Government prioritizes the healthcare and safety of Abians.

Public spirited individuals, philanthropists and intending sponsors of healthcare wallets and free health services in Abia State who wish to partner with the state are hereby encouraged to approach and obtain approval through written permission from the office of the Commissioner, Abia State Ministry of Health before conducting such services. This is to ensure that such activities meet established safety standards and protocols that safeguard and promote the health of our

citizens. "All intended medical missions without official approval from the Ministry of Health are hereby declared illegal and prohibited by the Government of Abia State.

"Members of the public are by this announcement, encouraged to report any unauthorized or illegal healthcare activity near them to the Ministry of Health through this number. 08188520261

"Ndi Abia, beware of Medical Quacks. To be fore warned is to be forearmed."

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News

We'll Continue To Empower Smallholder Farmers

- Soil Scientist

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

It was all joy for the women group of the Redeemed Christian Church of God Amafor Isingwu, Umuahia North, Abia State when Prof Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka fulfilled her promise of donating a pyrolysis drum for the production of biochar to them.

In her lecture, she explained that:

"Biochar is an organic and eco-friendly fertilizer produced from waste materials known as feedstocks. These waste materials include agricultural waste such as crop residues, animal wastes, shells, rice husk and saw dust etc. that are nuisances to our environment, if not recycled. They are converted into healthy nutrient for crops growth and yield. Apart from increasing the crop growth, biochar has been found to reduce soil acidity, increase soil nutrients such as phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, potassium and organic carbon, a good remediate of heavy metals and increase soil microorganism.

"Applying biochar to the degraded soils of the Southeast Nigeria, which are mostly acidic have resulted to increase crop yields and management of the soil. Prof Onwuka stated this while demonstrating to the women how to produce biochar using the pyrolysis drum. The drum according to her works on the principle of charring the waste materials under intense heat and limited oxygen.

"The limited oxygen eliminates the production of carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas), which is not one of the gaseous products of the pyrolysis unit.

Mabel Onwuka who is

founder of Hope for Farmer, Women and Girls Initiative (HOFWGI) and the Director, Center for Gender, Youth and Child Development (CGYCD), emphasized that the smallholder women farmers play significant roles in crop production in Nigeria and Africa, hence they must be encouraged especially now that mineral or inorganic fertilizers are very costly and out of the reach of the resource-poor farmers.

Commenting on the effectiveness of the biochar fertilizer, Mrs. Ijeoma Ehiogu of Amafor Isingwu said that the biochar that was freely given to them by Prof Mabel, during the 2023 International Day of Rural Women, was utilized by her to plant ginger. She testified that the yield, she got was about 300 per cent more than the previous years' yields, she normally get. She further stated that after taking the much ginger her family needed for the year, she sold the surplus and made a profit of N15,000.00k which she has never made from ginger ever since she started growing ginger years ago.

In her remarks, the leader of the group Mrs. Sarah Ndubuisi-Nmerifo thanked Prof. Onwuka and her team for visiting their group. She praised her for keeping to her promise of donating a pyrolysis drum to them after she won the 2023 Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life by Women's World Summit Foundation, Geneva, Switzerland. She urged the women to avail themselves the opportunity of producing their own organic fertilizer, utilizing and making them to get more income to improve their families' finances.

Ukwa-East Council Boss, Akara, Lauds Akwete Fabrics Weaving Initiative

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The Executive Chairman, Ukwa-East Local Government Area (LGA), Hon. Chibunna Akara has lauded the Akwete fabrics weaving initiative, pledging his government support to the traditional craft.

The Executive Chairman who disclosed this recently when he received in audience the Management of Akwete fabrics weaving initiative in his office in Akwete, Ukwa-East LGA, thanked them for their unwavering dedication to preserve the age-long culture.

Hon. Akara called on Ndoki people and Abians as well, to promote this cultural heritage of Ndoki people, maintaining that it also contributes to the economic empowerment of women and youths in the area, Abia State and Nigeria at large.

Earlier in her remark, the

Administrator of Akwete Fabrics Acquisition Centre, Mrs Ezinne Akparanta congratulated Hon. Akara for his victory as the Executive Chairman of Ukwa-East, pledging their unalloyed support.

She revealed that they came to familiarize with the Council boss and to seek areas of collaborations, especially in the training and retraining of some unemployed youths in the traditional Akwete weaving craft.

She described Akwete fabrics as unique and iconic textile, calling on the Council boss, well-meaning Ndoki people, Abians and Nigerians at large to help in preserving this trans-generational trade.

The Vice Chairman of the Council, Dr. Thelma A. Inglis-Ekeke and other top council officials were present at the visit.



Abia State Speaker, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa .

Abia Assembly Commiserates with Nigerian Army Over Loss Of Soldiers

By Chukwuemeka Chijioko

The Abia State House of Assembly has expressed its condolences to the Nigerian Army, following a recent attack that resulted in the loss of soldiers in the state.

Speaker Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa condemned the violent act, labeling it uncivilized and unnecessary.

This statement came after Hon. Emeka Obioma, representing Umuahia South State Constituency, raised the matter under Urgent Public Importance.

Emeruwa extended sympathies to the military leadership and the families affected by the tragedy, assuring them that the Assembly would work closely with the Executive to address the security challenges faced by the community. He praised security agencies for maintaining professionalism despite the unfortunate circumstances and urged them to refrain from retaliatory actions against the local community.

Hon. Obioma highlighted the concerns of residents in light of increased military presence and operations in response to the attack, calling for a more balanced

approach that considers the well-being of the host community.

In another significant decision, the House of Assembly passed a vote of confidence no Governor Alex Otti and his Deputy, Ikechukwu

Emetu, in recognition of their governance efforts.

This endorsement followed Hon. Kalu Nwoke's motion, which cited the signing and inauguration of the Greater Ohaforia Development Agency (GODA), as a positive

development for the State. Nwoke also publicly reconciled with the Deputy Governor, emphasizing the need for peace and unity within the political community following tensions that arose during the council polls.

Media Practitioners Advocate For Greater Inclusion In Human Capital Development Initiatives

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Media practitioners in Abia State, have called on the State Government to prioritize greater inclusion of the media in its Human Capital Development (HCD) initiatives.

The call is contained in a communique issued at the end of a two-day HCD training workshop, organized by the Abia Civil Service Commission in Umuahia for Media Professionals and State Information Officers.

The communique which was signed by the Communique Committee Coordinator, Mr Ijendu Iheaka and the Secretary, Mr Divine Nwankwo, stated that the training focused on four thematic areas, including; Education, Health and Nutrition, Labour Force Participation and Agriculture.

It also described the State Government's efforts, through the

commission, to empower journalists in the State via HCD training as commendable.

The communique stated that the media had resolved to support the government's efforts to meet its HCD commitments, as it concerned the thematic areas by developing and publishing impactful stories.

It emphasised the media's readiness to collaborate with the government to facilitate the achievement of Abia HCD target.

The communique also recommended that journalists should be appointed as members of relevant committees and to service positions for expanded public enlightenment on government's progress.

It advocated that financial provisions should be made for the media in the 2025 Abia Budget to drive the State Government's HCD research and reporting

activities.

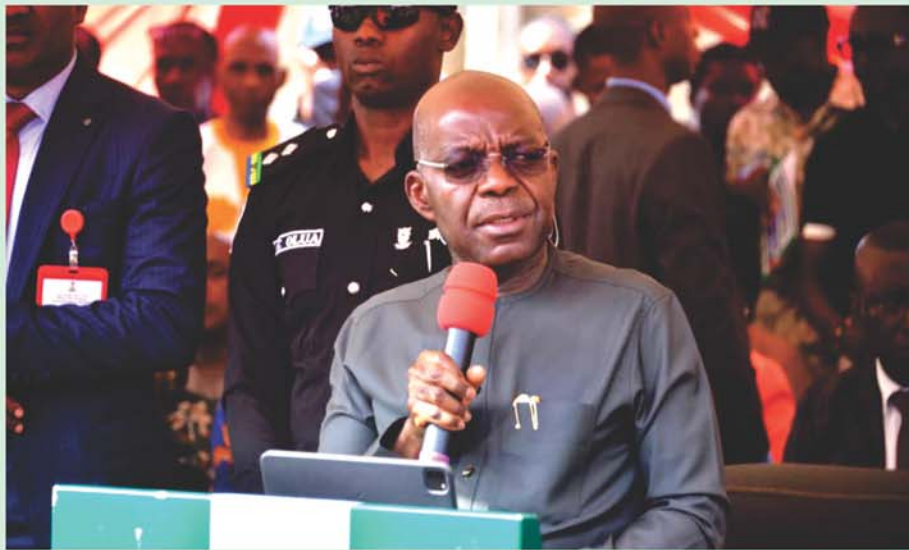
The communique further recommended that "The media should be integrated into the state's information and data gathering mechanism, with regular interface and press briefings on updates in HCD activities in Abia.

"The Abia State Government should ensure sustained trainings and workshops at a pace convenient to it, to enhance efficient participation of journalists in the operations of HCD coverage areas.

"The Abia State Government should develop a communication strategy to enhance the HCD initiative as well as put in place mechanism for regular HCD briefings.

"The Abia State Government should encourage Public-Private Partnerships for Human Capital Development in the state", the participants stated.

Photos Speak



Commissioning of the Newly Retrofitted Nnamdi Azikiwe State Secretariat



Abia State Deputy Gov. Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, As A Special Guest At Clifford University Ihie Campus , Isiala Ngwa, On The Occasion Of The University's 5th Agricultural Exhibition



Photos Speak



The Wife Of The Gov. Mrs. Priscilla Otti making donation during The Cancer Awareness Programme In Umuahia, Abia State, recently.



Abia State Gov. Dr. Alex Otti Flagging-off the construction of Ntigha-Nbawusi-Umuahia Road at Isialangwa North LGA Recently



News

163 Graduands Bag First-Class, As MOUUAU VC Unveils Milestones

By Okereke Kate

The Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, has unveiled the university's academic excellence, as 163 graduands bagged first-class honours at the institution's 12th convocation ceremony.

This, he said, highlighted the university's unrelenting pursuit of excellence, solidifying its reputation as a hub for exceptional academic achievement.

Prof. Iwe who disclosed this at the Pre-Convocation Press briefing, held at the institution recently, expressed pride in the students' achievements, emphasizing that the record number of first-class graduates is a proof of the institution's dedication to academic rigor and quality education.

Iwe said the feat reflects the unwavering commitment of the students, faculty, and administration to excellence, adding that the institution is proud to celebrate the efforts of these outstanding individuals who have demonstrated exceptional discipline and resilience in their academic journey.

According to him, the convocation ceremony which would witness the graduation of 4,743 Bachelor Degree graduands, 49 Postgraduate Diploma, 252 Master's Degree and 164 Doctorate Degree as well, with a breakdown of 163 first Class graduation in first degree, 1,710 second class upper, 2,114 second class lower and 734 graduands with third class, while nine, recorded a pass.

The Vice-Chancellor, however, reiterated the university's commitment to fostering an environment that nurtures academic brilliance and innovation, producing high caliber graduates.

According to the University Don, the Convocation ceremony would begin with an inter-Denominational Convocation thanksgiving service, followed by a novelty football match, and Juma'at prayer at the MOUUAU central mosque.

He stated that the 12th Convocation lecture entitled, "From Ivory Tower To Innovation Hubs: The Renewed Hope Agenda for Economic Transformation and Sustainable Development, would be taken by the Imo state Governor, Senator Hope Uzodinma and chaired by the Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin, adding that the event would be climaxed on Saturday, November 30th, 2024, with the convocation proper, featuring, Academic Procession, award of certificates, first degrees and prizes, as well as, the conferment of higher degrees.

Prof Iwe further re-emphasized that the school has cumulatively made giant strides in academics, human capital development, infrastructure, community service and administration in the last three decades, stressing that in line with the vision of the founding fathers, many of their graduates have become established farmers, employers of labour and major contributors towards ensuring food security in Nigeria.

The VC, however, lamented the myriad of challenges confronting the institution, which included, poor funding, inadequate physical facilities, non-release of take-off grant from government, high demand on provision of amenities and Public utilities, especially electricity, water, bad roads among others.

Prof Iwe equally reeled out some remarkable headway the institution has recorded in spite of the intriguing situation.

"We are succeeding in making MOUUAU an entrepreneurial university in line with our dream of ensuring that it attains a level of enterprise that would enhance its resources. Our bread and biscuit factory, water production and guest house outfits are steadily growing and giving name to our university.

"All our colleagues are also thriving. Our college of Animal Science and Animal Production (CASAP), and the College of Crop and Soil Science (CCSS), are vigorously driving a level of animal and crop production that is consistent with our vision.

"We are equipping our Laboratories with the state of the art equipment and we will continue to do so for agriculture, sciences, engineering and technology. In ICT, we are increasing the University's bandwidth and almost achieving full coverage by the end of the year", he said.

The Vice Chancellor further concluded with a call for the graduates to be ambassadors of the university, upholding its values in their various endeavors, while urging the management and staff of the university to remain resilient in their pursuit, fostering academic excellence and nurturing exceptional talent.



Gov. Otti Approves Health Insurance Scheme For Civil Servants

Stories By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has announced a groundbreaking initiative with the approval of ₦500 million as counterpart funding for the launch of the Abia State Health Insurance Scheme, specifically for civil servants. This significant development is aimed at enhancing the healthcare services available to state employees.

Under the new health insurance scheme, civil servants are required to contribute 5% of their basic monthly salaries to access a range of medical services from approved health service providers. To encourage enrollment, the governor has graciously subsidized 2.5% of the

workers' contributions for the first three months.

During a briefing at Government House, Umuahia, on the outcome of the recent Executive Council meeting, the Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, emphasised the importance of civil servants participating in the scheme.

He stated, "By this development, all State Civil Servants are encouraged to enroll in the scheme." The arrangement will enable workers to enjoy medical services that would otherwise be unaffordable if accessed directly".

In addition to the health insurance scheme, Governor Otti has approved comprehensive upgrades and renovations of the Abia State University Teaching

Hospital (ABSUTH) in Aba, to meet world-class standards. This initiative aligns with the administration's broader healthcare transformation agenda.

Furthermore, the Abia Specialist Hospital, has regained its accreditation from the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria, for the training of medical interns, increasing its annual training quota from 24 to 36 interns.

The Commissioner described this accomplishment as a major milestone, with the Federal Minister of Health commending Governor Otti for his forward-thinking initiatives in the healthcare sector.

In response to questions

Gov. Otti Commissions N750m Dozie Way, Pledges Massive Road Projects In Umuahia

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has commissioned the newly rehabilitated 1.3-kilometer Dozie Way, a key infrastructure project designed to enhance the economic development of Umuahia and its environs.

Speaking at the Commissioning Ceremony, he disclosed that the N750 Million Project was executed through direct labor by the Abia State Ministry of Works, thereby saving the State Government significant costs compared to the N2.2 billion quoted by external contractors.

The Governor, Dr. Otti described the road as a symbol of his administration's commitment to transforming Umuahia into a modern urban hub and added that the project demonstrates his dedication to enhancing economic activities and decongesting traffic in the State Capital.

This road also serves to decongest traffic on the Ikot

Ekpene Road when there is gridlock. It is also very useful in supporting the economic activities in several communities markets within Lodu, Ahiaeke, Umuahia all in Umuahia corridor.

"This road will not just boost economic progress beyond the immediate precinct of the area but will also lead to new investments in real estate, agriculture, hospitality and retail trading.

"This project ultimately will spur up economic activities and improve the value of property holdings around here".

Governor Otti disclosed that the State Government plans to embark on expansive road development projects over the next 12 months, including ongoing works along IBB Way and the Ahiaeke-Lodu corridor.

"As you may be aware, preliminary stages of extensive Civil Engineering works are already ongoing along the IBB Way and on the stretch of road leading to Ahiaeke and Lodu.

"My promise to you is that

there would be multiple reconstruction activity along this corridor over the entire length of the present dry season window", he said.

In his speech, the Deputy Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, Mr. Austin Mmeregini, described the project as evidence of the administration's commitment to improving the welfare of Abians and urged residents to support the Government's rebuilding agenda and fulfill their civic duties, including paying their taxes.

In his address earlier, the Commissioner for Works, Mr. Otumchere Oti, noted that Dozie Way was initially intended as a strategic bypass to ease traffic congestion from Ikot Ekpene Road to the Timber Market.

He however noted that years of neglect by previous administrations left the road in a deplorable state, necessitated the comprehensive rehabilitation of the road.

Oti while highlighting that the road would enhance

regarding the Health Insurance Scheme, the Commissioner for Health, Professor Enoch Ogbonnaya, stated that Civil Servants, once they begin contributing, will have access to the services within three months.

Employees can include four dependents plus their spouses in the scheme, and efforts are being made to extend coverage to individuals in the informal sector.

Governor Otti's initiatives reflect a strong commitment to improving healthcare access and quality for Abia State's Civil Servants and the broader community, especially for vulnerable populations, he stated.

social and economic activities in the area, urged residents to desist from any act that would jeopardise the efforts of government in reconstructing the road.

Also, the Chairman of Umuahia North Local Government Area, Chief Smart Iheoma, expressed gratitude to the Governor for alleviating the suffering of residents through the road rehabilitation and appealed for similar interventions in other parts of the Local Government.

In their separate remarks, Leaders of Umuahia-Ndume Community, including Mr. Friday Ohaeri and Chief John Onyiro, commended the Governor for completing the project and called for the rehabilitation of connecting roads to further enhance the movement of goods and people.

They urged residents to protect the newly constructed road and desist from activities that could undermine the State Government's efforts.

Religion/Opinion

Engaging The Unlimited Power Of Faith

By Bishop David Oyedepo

We understand from Scriptures that our settlement as believers is crucial to God. That's why the Bible says: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you (1 Peter 5:10). Every prophetic word from God is designed for fulfilment. As it is written: And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord (Luke 1:45). This is because prophecies are not psychological predictions, but the unveiling of divine plans. We must understand that God speaks according to His resources and not our scarcity. He speaks according to His integrity and not our fallibility. He also speaks according to His size and His unlimited capacity to make it happen (Isaiah 55:11; Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 18:22; Haggai 2:8; Psalm 50:9-11). In addition, it is important to know that only God's hand can perform whatever He says. However, without our faith, we cannot take delivery. It is written: The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand (Isaiah 14:24).

What, Then, is Faith?

Faith is a Spiritual Engraftment of Humanity into Divinity Thereby Commanding Supernatural Feats: For instance, when the woman with the issue of blood grafted herself to Jesus Christ through her faith, she tapped into His virtue and the flow of blood ceased. Similarly, when we engage our faith, we are grafted into God and become partakers of His divine nature, thereby commanding divine authority over the issues of life (Romans 11:19-23).

We must recognise that the Bible is a book of covenants and God's covenant with man in Scriptures is binding as long as the earth remains (Jeremiah 33:20-22; Psalm 89:34). However, we must understand that it is our faith in the settled Word of God that guarantees our settlement in life (1 Peter 5:8-10; Psalm 119:89).

Having established that faith is the covenant force that guarantees our settlement, we must also know that God's covenant is based on well defined terms and sealed with an oath to deliver. As such, we must believe and engage these terms to commit God's integrity to perform (Isaiah 34:16).

What are the Terms of the Covenant of Settlement?

We Must Fully Return to God: Until we return to our covenant walk with God, it is not our turn to be settled

For Settlement!

(Malachi 3:7). For instance, life was a miserable adventure for the prodigal son until he returned. When he did, he was settled and his dignity was restored. Also, until Judah returned in the days of King Asa, she was not settled. However, upon return, God gave Judah all-round rest (Luke 15:17-24; 2 Chronicles 15:3-6; 11-15). In addition, we must

Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 30:19; Exodus 23:25-26; Job 36:11). Remember, only workers are entitled to wages. Therefore, we should not just watch others serve God but engage wholeheartedly and excitedly in Kingdom service, and watch God deliver our settlement testimonies (Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18).

10:46-52; Matthew 15:13-28).

Raise an Altar of Sacrifice: We can also enforce our settlement by rearing an altar of sacrifice as prompted by the Spirit of God. For instance, when Noah offered a sacrifice to God after the flood, God averted the curse and settled humanity. Again, when David reared an altar of sacrifice as instructed by God, the plague ceased (Psalm 126:1-6; Genesis 8:20-22; 2 Samuel 24:18-25). Therefore, whenever we receive a prompting of the Holy Spirit to rear an altar of sacrifice, we should dive into it in faith, because therein lies our settlement.

In conclusion, God has an agenda of settlement for us but without our faith, we can never access it; and faith cannot be exercised unless we are born again. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You Jesus for saving me! Now, I know I am born again!



Bishop David Oyedepo

understand that being away from God is a curse (Psalm 16:4). This is because we serve a jealous God, Who cannot stand double dealings (Exodus 34:13; James 1:6-8).

We Must be Planted in the House of the Lord: Zion is the Church of Christ and our covenant place of settlement (Obadiah 1:17; Hebrews

Deuteronomy 12:13-14).

We Must Make a Covenant to Serve God: Serving God indeed and in truth commits Him to our settlement. It is when we serve God and the interest of His Kingdom that He adds to us what others are dying to get (Matthew 6:33; 2 Chronicles 15:1-4/12-15;

Wisdom for Living

with Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

“He who keeps his mouth save his life but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.” Proverbs 13:3

Not everyone deserves to know everything about you. "Don't let people know too much about you". Be discreet with information especially as it pertains to your life and destiny.

One should not underestimate the importance of maintaining a level of privacy and discretion in one's personal and professional life.

Allow time and

happenings speak to people about you not your words everytime.

Expectation is the mother of manifestation - do not tell people result of their expectation, let them see it.

Every human likes surprises, so let your life be full with much surprises. It is not bad that people get surprised knowing you own a bakery when they actually were thinking you can't even avoid a loaf of bread.

Keep your tongue and save your life.

Here's a deeper interpretation:

Be Discreet With Information

Value of Privacy:

Protect yourself by keeping certain aspects of your life private, this protects yourself from potential manipulation, judgment, or unwanted interference from others. Not everyone needs to know everything about you, especially those who might not have your best interests at heart.

Maintaining Control:

Yes, have control over Information, the lesser information people know about you, the lesser they can war against you. This allows you to maintain control over how others perceive you and how much influence they can have over your decisions.

Strategic Disclosure:

Selective Sharing: It's important to be strategic about what you share and

with whom. This ensures that you only reveal information to those who have earned your trust and will respect your privacy.

Protecting Relationships:

Guarding Personal Boundaries: Not letting people know too much about you helps maintain personal boundaries. This is crucial in both personal and professional relationships, where oversharing can sometimes lead to complications or misunderstandings.

Mystery and Intrigue:

Building Mystery: There is also an element

of mystery that can be beneficial. By not revealing too much, you keep people intrigued and interested, which can be a powerful tool in both social and professional settings.

Conclusion:

This quote advocates for the careful management of personal information as a way to protect one's privacy, maintain control over your life, and preserve important relationships. It's a reminder to be mindful of what you share and with whom, as not everyone needs or deserves to know all the details about you.

... you only reveal information to those who have earned your trust and who will respect your privacy.

Sports Xtra

Ugo Ugochukwu Makes History, win 2024 Fia Formula Regional World Cup

By Okechukwu Ubani

Ugo Ugochukwu the Nigeria America boy has etched his name in the annals of motorsport history by winning the 2024 FIA Formula Regional World Cup at the prestigious Macau Grand Prix. At just 17 years old, the Nigerian-American driver has become the first driver of Nigerian descent to clinch this coveted title in over 40 years, showcasing his exceptional talent and determination.

Representing R-ace GP, Ugochukwu's commanding performance saw him lead from the start, successfully fending off fierce competition primarily from Olivier Goethe of MP Motorsport. His victory not only highlights his skill behind the wheel but also marks a significant milestone for American representation in motorsport, as he is the first American driver to win the Macau Grand Prix in more than four decades.

Born in New York to Nigerian fashion model Oluchi and Italian designer Luca Orlandi, Ugochukwu has rapidly ascended the ranks of motorsport due to his remarkable prowess and dedication. His recent success adds to a burgeoning career that signifies the potential for future achievements.

In reflecting on his extraordinary win, Ugochukwu emphasized the roles of resilience and confidence in his journey. "I can't describe the feeling; of course, I'm super happy. It was quite a tricky race. I was pushing the whole way, but I was confident in the pace - ever since Q2, we've been really quick," he expressed. This testimonial reveals his mental fortitude and preparedness, elements crucial for excelling in the high-stakes environment of competitive racing.

Ugochukwu's achievement serves not only as a personal triumph but also as a powerful message about the importance of perseverance and self-belief. His experience underscores how a capable mindset can shape performance, particularly in high-pressure scenarios. As he continues to carve out his career, Ugochukwu stands as an inspiring figure for aspiring athletes, symbolizing the potential that arises from hard work and dedication in the pursuit of excellence.

Again, Ugo Ugochukwu victory is a reflections on his historic achievement, it highlight the importance of resilience and confidence on a young man in the face of challenges. His feelings of happiness and satisfaction after the victory are palpable as he recounts the intensity of the race including the challenges he faces. The acknowledgment of a "tricky" race indicates the obstacles he faced, yet his determination to push through speaks volumes about his mental strength as a young man

His confidence in the race, particularly since Q2, suggests that he and his team had a solid strategy and were prepared to compete at a high level. This combination of preparation, perseverance, and self-belief ultimately led to his success, serving as an inspiring reminder of how mindset can influence performance in high-pressure situations. Ugochukwu's achievement is not just a personal victory, but a testament to the hard work and dedication that underpin elite athletic performance.



South East Zonal Chess Championship Kicks Off In Abia

Stories By
 Chukwuemeka Egejuru

South East Zonal Chess Championship has Kicked off in Umuahia, Abia State.

Declaring the event open at Umuahia Township stadium, the Abia State Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Sir Nwadinma Nwaobilor Ananaba, urged Nigerians to embrace the game of Chess, adding that it improves cognitive skills.

Represented by Mr. Eric Iheanacho Asomuagha, welcomed National Chess Federation delegates to Abia, commending them for identifying with Abia State

Government.

He added that Gov Alex Otti-led administration is committed towards developing sports in the State especially Chess for the benefits of the society.

He assured them of a conducive environment while the championship lasts.

Speaking earlier, the Director of Sports, Abia State, Comrade Obioma George, lauded the body, assuring them of Abia State Council of Sports cooperation towards a memorable competition.

Represented by the Secretary to the Council, Comrade Jerry Basil

Udeh, he noted that the game of Chess has come to stay in Abia, maintaining that Council would deploy everything at their disposal to develop the Game of Chess.

Contributing, the Chess, Abia State Coach, Mr. Okezie Ihejirika, said that Chess is a game that cut across all age categories, disclosing that it develop critical thinking and creativity.

Other management Staff present includes; the Technical Director Mary Nwachukwu Chima, Head of Department (HOD), Organizing, Victoria Umunna, HOD Combatant Games, Edith Anyanwu, among others.

Abia State Sports Council Partners RSF On Sports Devt

Abia State Sports Council has expressed its readiness towards partnering with relevant bodies for sports development.

The Director of Sports Abia State, Comrade Obioma George, who disclosed this during the commissioning of Roland Stanley Foundation (RSF) in Akwete Ndoki Ukwa-East Local Government Area (LGA), lauded the NGOs for their interest in developing sports at the grassroots.

This, he said, is key towards curbing youth restiveness and creating massive jobs for the unemployed, urging critical stakeholders to invest in youths through sports.

He lamented that Ukwa-East LGA has not been getting it right in sports compared to other LGAs in Abia State, emphasizing that benefits from sports will help young ones to be economically relevant.

Comrade Obioma assured them of government support, calling on well-meaning Nigerians who are good in sports to reach out to the council.

In his words: "It is time to embrace sports. If you can't play football, you can run but by all means be a part of the sports community in Abia to improve your worth", Obioma implores youths.

Meanwhile, a Non Governmental Organization, RSF, has offered scholarships to indigent students, free fertilizers, improved cassava stems, farm land portion and Cash to rural farmers among others.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Foundation in Akwete Ndoki, Ukwa-East Local Government Area (LGA), Abia State, the founder of the NGO, Chief Azuakolam Roland Stanley, Akú ruo Ulo 1 of Umuihueze

Akwete, disclosed that the organization is committed to empowering individuals and transforming communities through strategic initiatives in education, workforce career development, agriculture and sports.

Represented by RSF Operating Officer, Mr. Charles Elekanachi, he underscored the importance of agriculture in sustaining communities and food security, hence, the need to support local farmers through resource provision, training and funding.

Mr. Stanley said that the foundation is disturbed by the number 20 million out-of-school children in Nigeria, revealing the foundation's decision to make quality education accessible to indigent students from secondary to tertiary levels.

The philanthropist who had also donated N10m recently to assist in the re-electrification of Ndoki, decried the harsh economy in Nigeria, noting that the gesture is a way of giving back to the society.

He added that their football academy is also open to nurture young talented ones to stardom.

In his remark, the Chairman of the occasion and the former member that represented Ukwa Federal Constituency at House of Representatives Abuja, Rt. Hon. Emeka Stanley, described the founder as a rare gift to Ndoki, Ukwa-East, Abia state and Nigeria at large.

The former Deputy Speaker, Abia State House of Assembly also enjoined beneficiaries to make utmost use of what they received from the foundation, adding that it takes a benevolent heart to give to the downtrodden.

He called on Nigerians to emulate

Abia Sports Council Trains Sports Administrators, Athletes

Abia State Sports Council has trained Sports Administrators and athletes in the state, reiterating their commitment towards sports development.

The Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George who disclosed this during the opening ceremony of Sports Administrators and Athletes by the Nigerian Olympic Committee.

He described training and retraining as key towards effective sports development in Nigeria, maintaining that the exercise would be continuous to achieve sports goals in the state.

Comrade Obioma thanked Gov. Alex Otti for his support towards developing sports at grassroots, explaining that keeping fit physically and mentally in sports is not negotiable.

On the forthcoming National Sports Festival in Ogun State, the Sports Veteran, said that Team Abia is preparing earnestly for the event with the view of performing better than the previous events.

Declaring the event open, the Abia State Commissioner for Sports, Mr. Nwadioha Ananaba lauded the training initiative, adding that Gov. Otti-led administration is committed to sports development in the state.

The Sports Commissioner, who also confirmed that Governor Alex Otti-led administration is set to build a 35,000-seater capacity in the State, noted that it is one of the campaign promises of Gov. Otti to Abians.

He commended the Director of Sports Abia State, Comrade George Obioma for the training of Sports Administrators and athletes by the Nigerian Olympic Committee, adding that it is part of the State vision to develop and advance sports in the state.

He added that it would boost sports development and attract international competitions to the State.

Contributing, the National Course Director, Nigerian Olympic Committee, Dr. Esther Oluwatoyin, said that she is impressed with the recent improvement in sports administration in Abia, adding that the importance of regular training of Sports Administrators in sports cannot be overemphasized.

In her words: "Sport is dynamic, continuum and requires regular training to remain relevant in sports development. The training of 10-15 years ago may not be relevant in the sports business of today".

She applauded the training programme organized by the Abia State Sports Council, insisting that it would improve sports development in the state.

Dr. Oluwatoyin who expressed concern that Abia that used to produce finest athletes in handball, basket ball and volley ball among others are now lagging behind.

She called for a new approach from the present administration towards sports development at the grassroots.

The veteran National sports administrator maintained that Abia is due for an Olympic-sized stadium to give room for international standard sports halls to attract international sports events to Abia.



Mr. Nwadioha Ananaba

Foreign News

US Recognizes Venezuelan Opposition Leader Edmundo Gonzalez As President-elect



The United States has formally recognized Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez as the country's president-elect following the disputed July 28 presidential election, Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced on X.

The Venezuelan people spoke resoundingly on July 28 and made Edmundo Gonzalez the president-elect. Democracy demands respect for the will of the voters," the top US diplomat posted while participating in the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The announcement marks a significant change

in US policy towards Venezuela: up until now, the US and other countries said Gonzalez had won more votes than incumbent leader Nicolas Maduro in July but stopped short of recognizing him as "president-elect."

"It is clear to the United States, to democratic nations around the world, and to independent international organizations that observed the July 28 elections that opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia won the most votes. That makes him the president-elect," a State Department spokesperson told CNN.

Death Penalty For Thai Woman Accused Of Murdering 14 Friends



A woman in Thailand has been sentenced to death in the first of a string of cases in which she is accused of murdering 14 friends with cyanide.

The court in Bangkok found Sararat Rangsivuthaporn, 36, guilty of putting poison in a wealthy friend's food and drink while they were on a trip last year.

Relatives of the friend refused to accept she died of natural causes and an autopsy found traces of cyanide in her body. Police arrested Sararat and uncovered other similar deaths going back to 2015. One person she allegedly targeted survived.

Police say Sararat,

dubbed Am Cyanide by Thai media, had a gambling addiction and targeted friends she owed money to, then stole their jewellery and valuables.

Sararat travelled with her friend Siriporn Khanwong, 32, to Ratchaburi province, west of Bangkok in April 2023, where they took part in a Buddhist protection ritual at a river, police said.

Siriporn collapsed and died after a meal with Sararat, who made no effort to help her, investigators said.

Traces of cyanide were found in Siriporn's body and her phone, money and bags were missing when she was found, police said.

Ford To Cut 4,000 Jobs In Europe

Ford plans to cut almost 4,000 jobs in Europe over the next three years, about 14% of its workforce in the region, as the carmaker faces slowing demand for electric vehicles and rising competition from China.

The US company said that the cuts would be completed by the end of 2027, pending consultations with labor unions, and would be concentrated in Germany and the United Kingdom.

"The global auto



industry continues to be in a period of disruption, especially in Europe, where the industry faces

unprecedented competitive, regulatory and economic headwinds," Ford said in a statement.

Dave Johnston, Ford's European vice-president for transformation and partnerships, added: "It is critical to take difficult decisive action to ensure Ford's future competitiveness in Europe."

Global automakers are under pressure from lackluster sales and intense competition from China, where EV makers are stealing market share from Western rivals, which have traditionally dominated the world's largest passenger car market.

Global Plastics Summit Starts As Cop29 Ends

The United Nations-sponsored COP29 climate talks ended in Baku, Azerbaijan, Sunday with approval of a deal to provide \$300 billion a year to fight climate change, focused on helping poorer countries manage the rise in global temperatures. Negotiators gather Monday in Busan, South Korea, to work on hammering out a landmark deal to manage the world's plastics crisis.

Delegates from 175 countries are in Busan for the "fifth and ostensibly final" meeting to

curb plastic pollution, but "lingering divisions cast doubts on whether a final agreement is in sight," Reuters said. The European Union and 66 countries are

looking for a treaty to cap and reduce the amount of plastic produced, and the U.S. "raised eyebrows in August" when it agreed to back those caps."



"Then came the election of Donald J. Trump," The New York Times said. Now "few expect the United States to sign on to an eventual treaty at all," with Trump siding with the petrochemical companies and other plastic-producing nations that oppose reducing output. Microplastics are already in drinking water, fish and animals, and even human organs, but plastics companies at the summit argue that the goal should be reducing waste through reuse and recycling.

Source CNN

Australia Approves Social Media Ban On Under-16s

Australia will ban children under 16 from using social media, after its parliament approved the world's strictest laws.

The ban, which will not take effect for at least 12 months, could see tech companies fined up to A\$50m (\$32.5m; £25.7m) if they don't comply.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese says the legislation is needed to protect young people from the "harms" of social media, something many parent groups have echoed.

But critics say questions over how the ban will work - and its impact on privacy and social connection - have been left unanswered.

This is not the first attempt globally to restrict children's social media use, but the minimum age of 16 is the highest set by any country. Unlike other attempts, it also does not include exemptions for existing users or those with parental consent.

Having passed the Senate by 34 votes to 19 late on Thursday, the bill returned to the House of Representatives where it passed early on Friday.

"We want our kids to have a childhood and parents to know we have their backs," Albanese told reporters afterwards.

Meanwhile, the legislation does not specify which platforms will be banned. Those decisions will be made later by Australia's communications minister, who will seek advice from the eSafety Commissioner - an internet regulator that will enforce the rules.

However, the minister, Michelle Rowland, has said

the ban will include Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and X. Gaming and messaging platforms are exempt, as are sites that can be accessed without an account, meaning YouTube, for instance, is likely to be spared.

The government says will it rely on some form of age-verification technology to implement the restrictions, and options will be tested in the coming months. The onus will be on the social media platforms to add these processes themselves.

However digital researchers have warned there are no guarantees the unspecified technology - which could rely on biometrics or identity information - will work. Critics have also sought assurances that privacy will be protected.

They have also warned that restrictions could easily be circumvented through tools like a VPN - which can disguise a user's location and make them appear to be logging on from another country.

Children who find ways to flout the rules will not face penalties, however.

Polling on the reforms, though limited, suggests it is supported by a majority of

Australian parents and caregivers.

"For too long parents have had this impossible choice between giving in and getting their child an addictive device or seeing their child isolated and feeling left out," Amy Friedlander, who was among those lobbying for the ban, recently told the BBC.

"We've been trapped in a norm that no one wants to be a part of."

But many experts say the ban is "too blunt an instrument" to effectively address the risks associated with social media use and have warned it could end up pushing children into less regulated corners of the internet.

During a short consultation period before the bill passed, Google and Snap criticised the legislation for not providing more detail, and Meta said the bill would be "ineffective" and not meet its stated aim of making kids safer.

In its submission, TikTok said the government's definition of a social media platform was so "broad and unclear" that "almost every online service could fall within [it]".

X questioned the "lawfulness" of the bill -

saying it may not be compatible with international regulations and human rights treaties which Australia has signed.

Some youth advocates also accused the government of not fully understanding the role social media plays in their lives and locking them out of the debate.

"We understand we are vulnerable to the risks and negative impacts of social media... but we need to be involved in developing solutions," wrote the eSafety Youth Council, which advises the regulator.

Albanese has acknowledged the debate is complex but steadfastly defended the bill.

"We don't argue that its implementation will be perfect, just like the alcohol ban for [children] under 18 doesn't mean that someone under 18 never has access - but we know that it's the right thing to do," he said on Friday.

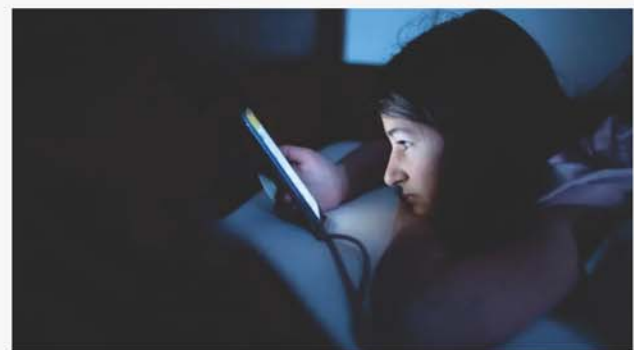
Last year, France introduced legislation to block social media access for children under 15 without parental consent, though research indicates almost half of users were able to avoid the ban using a VPN.

A law in the US state of Utah - which was similar to Australia's - was overturned by a federal judge who found it unconstitutional.

Australia's laws are being watched with great interest by global leaders.

Norway has recently pledged to follow in the country's footsteps, and last week the UK's technology secretary said a similar ban was "on the table" - though he later added "not... at the moment".

Culled from BBC.





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Entertainment

I Am Wife Material' - DJ Cuppy

By Ubani Okechukwu



Nigerian disk jockey, Florence Otedola, popularly known as DJ Cuppy, has declared herself a "wife material."

Sharing a picture of herself doing laundry, DJ Cuppy praised herself, saying she's hardworking and loving.

In the X caption, she wrote, "Wifey material: doing laundry and trying not to break hearts at the same time."

The 32-year-old music star recently shared online that any man who intends to marry her must seek God first.

"God may I be so deep in you that my husband has to seek you first before he may find me," she wrote.

DJ Cuppy is publicly known to be single at the moment.

Her most recent relationship was her failed engagement to British boxer, Ryan Taylor.

The duo parted ways in July 2023, barely seven months after their shocking engagement in November 2022.

I'm Done With Beauty Pageants - Chidimma Adetshina Reveals

After finishing second place in the Miss Universe beauty pageant, making her the highest-ranked African contestant in the history of the competition, Chidimma Adetshina has revealed that she is no longer interested in pageantry.

During her recent interview with Silverbird Television, the Miss Universe Africa and Oceania stated that she has no interest in competing in any more beauty pageants

"Honestly, I am done with pageantry. It was really a traumatic experience for me," she said, in response to being asked about her intentions.

"People don't really get to understand how I felt; I was really down and I didn't want to do miss Universe. But I'm really done with pageantry and I want to focus on myself and who I am and to further my education as well. Hopefully, there is something in store for me, but I'm really glad I left on a really great note," she added

Recall that before her win came adversity at the hands of South Africans. Adetshina, who has a Nigerian father, stepped into the spotlight when she withdrew from the Miss South Africa beauty pageant in August 2024 due to the backlash she received from South Africans over claims she was not South African. They claimed that her mother had stolen the identification of somebody else and scorned the model, even though she was born and raised in South Africa.



Source Daily Post

I Wasn't Feeling Him - Tiwa Savage

Nigerian singer, Tiwa Savage has revealed that a Range Rover is the most expensive gift she has ever got but she returned it.

According to her, a man gave her the car as a birthday gift but she returned it because she wasn't interested in him.

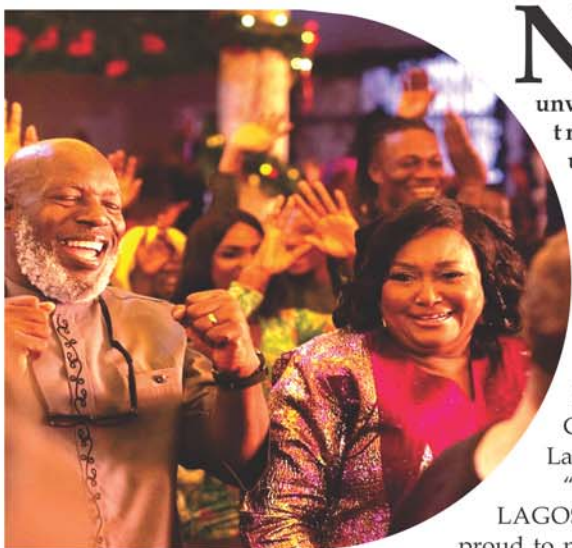
She disclosed this in a recent interview with The Beat 99.9 FM, Lagos.

"I once got a Range Rover for my birthday but I returned it cos I wasn't feeling the guy. I also didn't want to keep it because he might decide to retrieve the car if I kept snubbing his calls," she said.

Savage also revealed during the interview that Nicki Minaj is the most famous person in her contact list.



See Trailer For Jade Osiberu's Christmas In Lagos



Nollywood director, Jade Osiberu has unveiled the official trailer for her upcoming movie, 'Christmas In Lagos.'

In an Instagram post, Jade Osebiru revealed the official trailer of her latest project, Christmas in Lagos.

"CHRISTMAS IN LAGOS IS HERE!!! So proud to present to you the trailer for my new film. Grateful to

everyone who worked on this film, our amazing cast and super talented crew. We set out to make a film that shows Lagos (and Naija) off in its full Dettu December glory and when the film is out in exactly a month from today, I think you guys will be really proud of the film," the post said.

Christmas in Lagos follows the story of Fiyin, who is heartbroken and convinced that her best friend, Elo is her true love. However, Elo returns from New York with plans to propose to his secret girlfriend, Yagazie. Meanwhile, Gbemi faces a tough choice between her current boyfriend and an old flame. Additionally, Ivie, a Londoner who comes back to Lagos for an unforgettable December, unexpectedly finds love.

The film follows a diverse array of characters as they navigate love, relationships, and fresh starts during the bustling holiday season in Lagos. Directed by the acclaimed Jade Osiberu, Christmas in Lagos features a stellar cast including Teniola Aladese, Shalom C. Obiagio, Rayxia Ojo, Shaffy Bello, Richard Mofe Damijo, Wale Ojo, Ladipo, Ayra Starr, and Adekunle Gold.

SUDOKU

Puzzly By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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All you have to do is fill the grid in such away that every 3X3 box and row and column, contains the numbers 1-9.

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (10)

By Joseph Jacob and
Mercy Emeh

It took three hours before Uche could get out of the grip of Franziska. He quickly took his bath, dressed up and hit the streets in search of Eze.

Uche was about giving up after two hours of fruitless search when he remembered Frankfurt Central Station. It was a place many immigrants, especially, illegal ones hang out in search of means of survival. Uche found Eze huddled at a corner clutching his hold all bag.

Uche heaved a sigh of relieve when he saw Eze, who smiled hopefully. Uche held Eze's shoulders with both hands and said, "I am sorry bro, but there is nothing I could do."

"You don't need to apologize Uche, you forewarned me that she might not welcome me."

"So, what will you do now? You can't stay here, this cold can send someone to his early grave."

"Uche, you can't believe that I am sweating despite the cold. I don't know that snow can be hot. Honestly, I'm feeling hot." He wiped his face with the sleeve of his shirt, "This few hours of homelessness have given me an opportunity to think deeply about my options. I have decided to go for the gigolo business."

Uche smiled as he felt relief, "Eze, I sincerely meant what I'm about to say, if I had known that you would have found it difficult to join in any of these businesses we do here, I wouldn't have agreed to bring you here..."

"It's ok," Eze said.

Uche brought out his phone and started browsing while Eze sat quietly thinking about his darling wife and lovely kids. Five minutes later, Uche found four women, who were looking for men to spend the night with. Eze looked at their pictures and sighed as none of them appealed to him.

"Eze, this is not your wife," Uche said, "it is a one night thing. Give her what she wants. The next morning you collect your money and move on. You're doing this strictly for money, nothing else."

"Ok, let me manage the youngest," Eze looked at the 49 year old Hedda, a business woman.

"I'll call her," Uche said, "And you'll tell her you are willing to spend the night with her."

Eze cleared his throat, "Ok, I'm ready."

When the phone started ringing Uche handed Eze the phone.

"Hello, Hedda on the line," a melodious female voice said.

"Yeah, I'm Eze, I learnt you need a man tonight."

"Yeah, I'm lonely, will you come over, I pay very well?"

Uche whispered to Eze, "Like how much?"

"You said, you pay well," Eze asked.

"Yeah."

"How much are we looking at?"

"200 Euros."

"No, tell her 500." Uche whispered.

"Hedda, that is too small, you can have me for five hundred euros."

"No, no. it's just for tonight."

"Tell her four hundred euros no less." Uche whispered.

Hedda refused after Eze told her four hundred euros. Uche collected the phone and terminated the call. "Don't worry Eze we'll get someone that will make a better offer." Before Eze could respond, Uche's phone started ringing. "It's her," Uche announced.

Eze quickly answered the call, "Ok, come over, I will give you 400 Euros." Hedda said and gave Eze her home address.

"Mind what you tell her." Uche advised.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't tell her that you're here to make money for your family at home."

"I'll tell her nothing about my family," Eze promised.

Uche took Eze's bag and walked towards the main road while Eze followed behind. They boarded a taxi to Hedda's home. It was a fenced and gated building with beautiful garden and well-kempt lawns.

"Good luck, Eze" Uche said as the taxi stopped in front of the house.

He went in. The compound was larger than he thought. Though he could not see everything because it was already dark he felt the compound was tastefully decorated.

He turned and looked at Hedda as she locked the gate, she was donning a black bra and a little nicker. There was sagged flesh and wrinkles all over her body.

She crossed her heavy arm on Eze's shoulder as they walk to her house. Eze attempted to hold her waist but his hand could not go as far as he had wanted. So he settled with just placing his hand on her hip.

"You leave alone here?" Eze asked.

"Yeah. You're from Africa, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm from Ghana."

"Which part of Ghana?"

"Have you been to Ghana?"

"Yeah, I did some job for the UN in Accra."

Eze became scared as he wondered how well Hedda

"What is it?" she asked, "It's only 5 am." She yawned, dragged Eze closer and cuddled him possessively.

Eze woke up around 10 am. Hedda had left the bed. He could hear her hum a song in her kitchen. Eze got up, dressed and waited for Hedda to come out and give him his pay.

Ten minutes later, Hedda invited Eze to the dining table for breakfast. Eze was flattered by the invitation, but he grabbed the opportunity with both hands at least he would save the money he would have spent on breakfast.

They ate spaghetti, fried egg and coffee. After few minutes, Hedda broke the silence. "I just packed into this house newly."

Eze looked around the room, "It's nice. How much did it cost?" Eze asked with a mouthful.

"Twenty five thousand euros. The original owner died, so his children decided to sell it."

"The house is very impressive."

"I have problem with the garden."

"What is that?" Eze asked expectantly.

"It has not been well kempt for a while, so I need someone to take care of it until it gets to the point where I can take care of it myself."

"I worked for a horticulture firm back home in Ghana. I will be happy to do the job for you."

"Really? Where do you work currently?"

"I am still searching."

"What's your address?"

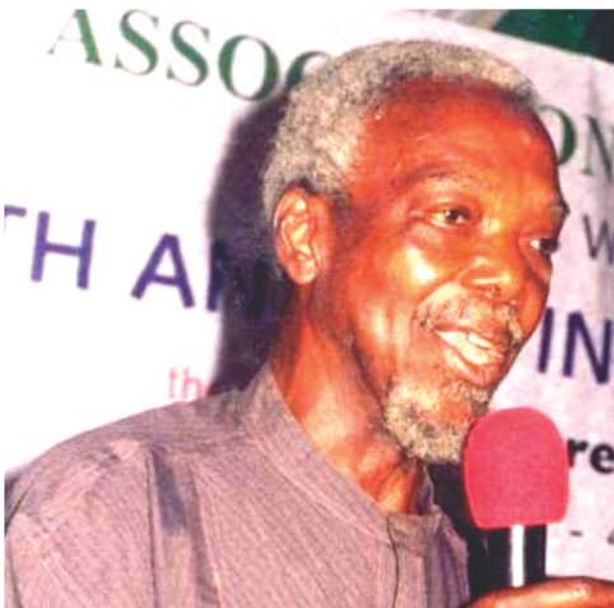
Eze was choked. He did not know what to say. He decided to say the truth. "I have no home at the moment."

"Then, you're not going to walk out of my gate. I enjoyed every bit of it last night. You've got all I need."

"Eze felt filthy and cheap inside. But, forced a smile, "I'm at your service."

"That's alright, I'm waiting in the bedroom", she pushed the dining chair back, stood up and headed for the bed room. Eze emptied his coffee cup and followed her.

Now that Eze has gotten a home and a work, will he be able to salvage his house and his family? Don't miss our next publication.



"You've done your part Uche. Should in case anything bad happen to me don't fail to tell my family how sorry I am for abandoning them. Tell them that I love them all."

They embraced as tears rolled down Eze's cheeks. Eze alighted and waved Uche goodbye as the taxi drove off.

As he walked to the gate Eze felt dizzy as he contemplated what might happen. He had never cheated on his wife and he was confident that Chioma would rather die than engage in extra marital affair. Eze knew he was about to do something that would torment him for the rest of his life but he had no choice as he was between the devil and the deep blue sea.

He raised his hand to press the bell, stopped, looked back, turned to the gate again, closed his eyes and pressed the bell. As if Hedda have been waiting, the peep hole opened followed by the gate.

Eze was jolted and repulsed when he saw her. She was not as beautiful as she was in the picture. She saw fat and flabby. She smiled at him as invitingly as she could and asked him to come in.

Eze smiled back at her and

knew Ghana, "I am from Secondi"

"Really? I couldn't visit there."

Eze took a long breath of relieve. But he gnashed his teeth as he thought of making love to another woman.

Eze woke up around 5 am. Not knowing where he was. He felt his legs and back are under something heavy. He tried to move, Hedda removed her hand and leg from his back and legs, Eze recognized where he was as Hedda put on the bed light.

CITATIONS INSPIRANTES
A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit - Richard Bach, an American writer.

Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike

Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike was a Nigerian monarch, academic and writer known for a mixture of lampoon, humour and satire.

Ike was born into a royal family in Ndikelionwu in Anambra State, in the southeastern region of Nigeria. He attended Government College Umuahia.

He started writing at Umuahia for the school magazine, *The Umuahian* and he was also influenced by teachers that included Saburi Biobaku, who had honours in English from Cambridge. After completing his secondary education, he studied at the University of Ibadan. While at the college, he was invited by Chinua Achebe to join the magazine club. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History, English, and Religious Studies from the University of Ibadan in 1955 and got married in 1959 to Adebimpe Olurinsola Abimbolu. In 1965, he published his first novel, *Toads for Supper*. He earned a master's degree from Stamford University in 1966.

In 1971, became chief executive of West African Examinations Council.

In 2008, he became king of Ndikelionwu. He was an Igwe, Eze Ndikelionwu of the Ndikelionwu in Eastern Nigeria, with the title "Ikeliowu XI" in his hometown of Ndikelionwu in Anambra State.

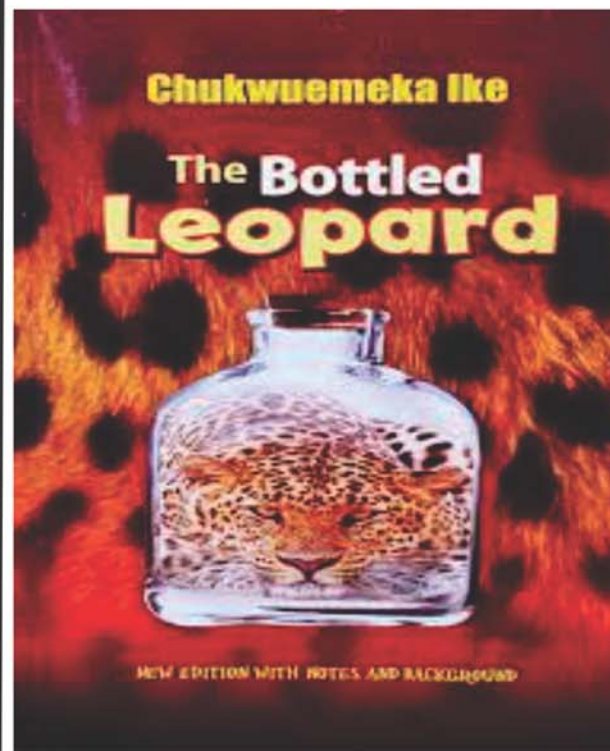
Ike served as a teacher in a primary school at Amichi from 1950 to 1951 and in a secondary school at Nkwerre from 1955 to 1956. Between 1957 and 1960, he worked as an administrative assistant at University College, Ibadan.

He joined the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he worked as the Deputy Registrar from 1960 to 1963 and Registrar and Secretary to the Council from 1963 to 1971.

Ike had served in Biafra as the Provincial Refugee Officer in charge of Umuahia Province from 1968 to 1969 and Headquarters Scout Commander in Nsukka Province from 1970 to 1971. After the Nigerian Civil War, he was appointed Chairman, Planning and Management Committee of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He was responsible for reopening and managing the institution as the interim Chief Executive immediately after the war. He served as the Registrar of West African Examination Council from 1971 to 1979 as the first Nigerian Chief Executive of the organization.

He had also worked with Daily Times and University Press Plc as a Director in both organizations. He retired from public service in 1979 and became a visiting professor of English Language and Literature at University of Jos from 1983 to 1985. Between 1990 and 1991, he was the Pro-Chancellor And Chairman Of Council, University of Benin, Benin-City. He was the President of the Nigerian Book Foundation from 1991 until his death in 2020. Here are some of his works:

Toads for Supper, 1965; *The Naked Gods*, 1970; *The Potter's Wheel*, 1973; *Sunset at Dawn*, 1976; *Expo '77*, 1980; *The Chicken Chasers*, 1980; *The Bottled Leopard* 1985; *Our Children Are Coming*, 1990; and *Conspiracy of Silence*, 2001.



Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph



MOROCCO 2025 AFCON: 24 Gladiators Emerge

The 24 gladiators that will battle for glory in the 2025 AFCON slated for Morocco have emerged following the conclusion of the qualifiers. It was tears of joy for some teams and tears of heart break for others.

In Group A, the Coelacanths of Comoros shocked the continent by qualifying ahead of the Carthage Eagles of Tunisia. They topped the group with 12 points after winning three and drawing three of their matches. Their greatest performance in the qualifiers came on match day three when they went, saw and conquered the 2004 champions, Tunisia, 1-0 in Tunis.

Tunisia joined the Islanders in qualifying for next year's AFCON after finishing second with 10 points. They were able to win only three matches and got a draw against the group winners.

Ironically, the best team of the qualifiers was the Atlas Lions of Morocco, who had already qualified as host before the commencement of the qualifiers. They have emerged favourites to win the AFCON as they garnered the maximum 18 points after winning all their matches. They are the only team to achieve this feat.

The Panthers of Gabon took the second ticket with 10 points, eight behind Morocco. The most successful side of the AFCON, the Pharaohs of Egypt and the Zebras of Botswana took Group C's tickets.

Seven time AFCON champions, Egypt won the group with 14 points as they did not lose any match after winning four and drawing two matches. Botswana pulled through



The Atlas Lions are the only team that won all their six matches.

with eight points.

In Group D, the Super Eagles of Nigeria won the group with 11 points despite putting up a woeful performance during the qualifiers which saw them lose to Rwanda at home and failed to win any away match. Their qualification was boosted by the three points and three goals they were awarded against Libya.

Squirrels of Benin Republic coached by former Super Eagles coach, Gernot Rohr, took the second ticket on goal difference as they were tied on eight points with the

Amavubi of Rwanda.

The 1990 and 2019 champions the Desert Warriors of Algeria will be in Morocco after winning Group E with 16 points. They won all their matches except their 0-0 draw with Equatorial Guinea, who clinched the second ticket with only eight points.

It was tears of heartbreak for four-time champions, the Black Stars of Ghana as they surprisingly finished last in Group F which comprises of Angola, Sudan and Niger. They failed to win any match, drawing three and losing as much.

While tears of heartbreak rain in Accra, it was tears of joy in Luanda and Khartoum as Angola and Sudan booked their tickets to the AFCON. Angola won the group without losing any match, winning four and drawing two while Sudan won, drew and lost two matches respectively to garner eight points. The 2012 champions, the Copper Bullets of Zambia and the AFCON reigning champions, the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire qualified from Group G. Zambia garnered 13 points, one more than Cote d'Ivoire as both sides secure a place in Morocco 2025.

In Group H, The Leopards of Congo qualified for next year's AFCON with 12 points after winning four and losing two matches. Similarly, Taifa Stars of Tanzania will be in Morocco as they came second in the group after winning three, drawing one and losing two matches to garner 10 points.

Eagles of Mali qualified for their 14th AFCON with 14 points after winning four and drawing two of their matches in Group I. the Mambas of Mozambique also qualified with eleven points.

Five time champions, the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon won Group J with 14 points after winning four and drawing two matches. The 2021 AFCON hosts will be in Morocco to fight for their sixth title.

The Warriors of Zimbabwe qualified for their sixth AFCON after finishing second in the group despite winning only two and drawing three matches. They have

never gone beyond the group stage of the AFCON and will be vying to break the jinx in Morocco.

1996 champions, the Bafana Bafana of South Africa will be in Morocco as they continue their search for a second African title. They qualified from Group K without losing any match. They garnered 14 points after winning four and drawing two matches.

Cranes of Uganda will also be in Morocco after coming second in the group with one point adrift of South Africa. Their 2-0 home loss to South Africa was the only match they lost in the qualifiers. They will hope to repeat their 1978 AFCON performance, in Morocco, where they got to the final.

The two West African countries in Group L subdued the Swallows of Burundi and the Flames of Malawi as the Teranga Lions of Senegal and the Stallions of Burkina Faso booked their places in next year's AFCON.

The 2021 champions, Senegal won the group without losing a match. They won five and drew one match to garner 16 points, while Burkina Faso got 10 points.

Meanwhile, Brahim Diaz led the qualifiers scorers' chart with seven goals.

The 2025 AFCON will take place in Morocco between December 21, 2025 and January 18, 2026.



The Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire are the reigning AFCON champions.

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2024 CAF AWARDS: African Player Of The Year Nominees

The Confederation of African Football CAF has released the final shortlist of its annual awards billed for Marrakech, Morocco on December 16, 2024.

For CAF African Player of the Year, the 10 shortlisted players are Amine Gouiri of Renne and Algeria; Edmund Tapsoba of Bayer Leverkusen and Burkina Faso; Simon Adingra of Brighton and Cote d'Ivoire; Chancel Mbemba of Olympique de Marseille and Democratic Republic of Congo; Serhou Guirassy of Borussia Dortmund and Guinea; Achraf Hakimi of PSG and Morocco; Soufiane Rahimi of Al Ain and Morocco; Ademola Lookman of Atalanta and Nigeria; William Troost-Ekong of Al Kholood

and Nigeria; and Ronwen Williams of Mamelodi Sundowns and South Africa.

Nigerian forward, Victor Osimhen was named the CAF African Player of the Year in 2023.

For the women category we have Sandrine Niyonkuru of FC Masar and Burundi; Tabitha Chawinga of Olympique Lyonnais and Malawi; Tenwa Chawinga Kansas City and Malawi; Sanaa Mssoudy AS FAR and Morocco; Chiamaka Nnadozie of Paris FC and Nigeria; Rasheedat Ajibade of Atletico Madrid and Nigeria; Jermaine Seoposenwe of Monterrey and South Africa; Thembi Kgatlana of Tigress UANL and South Africa; Barbara Banda or Orlando Pride and Zambia;

Racheal Kundananji of Bay FC and Zambia were all nominated.

Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala won this award last year.

There are also nominations for the Coach of the Year, CAF National Team of the Year, Club of the Year, CAF Young Player of the Year and CAF African Goalkeeper of the Year, in the men and women categories.

The winner of each category will be determined through votes from diverse panels, including the CAF Technical Committee, media professionals and the Head Coaches and Captains of member associations as well as clubs participating in the group stages of interclub competitions.

Blast From The Past: Nwankwo Kanu Destroy Chelsea

Kanu Nwankwo came to Highbury after signing a contract worth around £4.15million in February 1999. He hit the ground running almost immediately scoring seven goals in 17 games.

On October 23, 1999 Arsenal took on Chelsea in a fierce London Derby. One player stood out. Guess who? Papilo.

Chelsea started the game like a house on fire. On the hour mark, they were already two goals up courtesy of headers from Tore Andre Flo and Dan Petrescu. There was no hope for Chelsea to bounce back as Chelsea were at the top of their game and their goalkeeper Ed De Goey had not conceded a Premier League goal at Stamford Bridge at that time.

Nigerian striker Kanu, the current chairman of Enyimba International Football Club of Aba, had other ideas, though.

With 15 minutes left Kanu Nwankwo as a goal predator, who knows where to be at the right time intercepted a Marc Overmars shot and toe poked it into the bottom corner to make it 2-1. Goey's record was broken, but can Arsenal restore parity?

Overmars was instrumental again as the Gunners equalized. He fired a cross into the box Kanu Nwankwo controlled the ball into space with remarkable aplomb and fired into the net with seven minutes left.

Chelsea have restored parity, can they snatch victory from the jaws of defeat? Kanu Nwankwo had the answer. Kanu won the ball back on the touchline and for some inexplicable reason, Chelsea goalkeeper, De Goey came racing out to try and tackle the Arsenal man. Papilo calmly rounded the goalkeeper but was faced with an impossible angle and four Chelsea defenders between himself and the goal.

Undeterred, he smashed the ball into the top corner over the heads of Frank Leboeuf and Marcel Desailly to seal the 3-2 win.

It was not surprising that he was named African Footballer of the Year for the second time in 1999 and he went ahead to score 16 goals in all competitions that season.

Chelsea fans have never forgotten that painful defeat as Arsenal fans still tastes the sweetness of that victory in their mouths.



Victor Osimhen (R) and Asisat Oshoala(L) flanking the CAF Present, Patrice Motsepe.

EPL: Arsenal Battle Amorim's United

Arsenal will continue their bid to win the English Premier League title for the first time in two decades when they welcome Ruben Amorim's Manchester United to the Emirate Stadium this Wednesday.

Under Erik ten Hag, the Gunners have mastered the act of disuniting Manchester United, evidently, it will be a different outing this mid-week with the arrival of Ruben Amorim.

Last season, Arsenal thrashed United 3-1 at the Emirate Stadium with Martin Odegaard, Declan Rice and Gabriel Jesus scoring after Marcus Rashford had given the Red Devils the lead. In the reverse fixture played on

May 12, 2024 Leandro Trossard's 20th minute strike turned the Theatre of Dreams into Theatre of Nightmares and gave Arsenal three consecutive league victory over Manchester United for the first time since September 1998. United must fight to stop the Gunners from recording a fourth successive victory.

Arsenal are a stable side, so Ruben Amorim and his United players will be expected to make the difference in this game or crumble as they have been doing in recent times.

In other fixtures, Ipswich Town will lurk horns with Crystal Palace as Leicester City welcome West Ham to

the King Power Stadium.

Goodison Park will come alive when Everton welcome Wolves as Manchester City take on Nottingham Forest at Etihad Stadium.

Newcastle United will be at their best as they host table toppers, Liverpool while Southampton tread tackles with Chelsea.

Aston Villa will lurk horns with Brentford as Alex Iwobi and his Fulham teammates confront Brighton.

Bournemouth will need all the vitality they can get from the Vitality Stadium if they will take all three points when they host Tottenham Hotspur.



Papilo celebrating a goal for Arsenal.