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People React As National Assembly Bans Exportation of Maize

By Lovina Oviuke &
Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The National Assembly's decision to ban the exportation of maize in Nigeria, has sparked various reactions.

Speaking with an Umuahia-based agriculturist, Dr. Onyekachi Uwalaka, he disclosed that the decision to ban exportation of maize, may be aimed at ensuring food security and stabilizing domestic prices.

He, however, noted that it may affect the livelihoods of farmers and traders who rely on exportation for income.

Also contributing, a lecturer in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Dr. Peter Jiwuba, urged the Federal Government to provide more incentives to maize farmer, revealing that Nigeria is one of the largest producers of maize in Africa and the crop is a significant contributor to the country's agricultural sector.

yesterday amended the bill intended at banning the export of Maize, by grafting a condition for one year jail term for individuals convicted of exporting unprocessed Maize in large volume.

Following the amended bill, which was initiated from the House of Reps. seeks to ban the Exportation of Maize in substantial commercial quantity.

However, considering the clauses at the Committee altogether, the bill was approved through voice votes by the majority of the senators.

The revised provisions state that any individual who exports, facilitates the export, induces another person to export, or attempts to export unprocessed maize whether in grains, on cobs, fresh, or dry in large commercial quantities of at least one metric ton or more, is guilty of an offence.



■ Wife Of Abia Gov, Mrs. Priscilla Otti Pose With Pupils And Students In Abia State, During The Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) To Distribute Free Exercise Books To Pupils And Students In Abia State, At The Banquet Hall Of Abia State Government House, Umuahia

Abia Govt. Seeks Support From Nsulu Clan Over Proposed Airport Project

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Government has engaged the people of Nsulu Clan in Isiala-Ngwa North Local Government Area and gained the backing for the proposed siting of the Abia Airport in their Community.

Speaking with newsmen after a crucial meeting with representatives of the host communities, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, explained that the

recent protest by a section of the host communities opposing the airport project, stemmed from misinformation about the government's intentions.

Pastor Ajagba further explained that the state government had already engaged the traditional rulers in the clan, but also decided to further engage the people to ensure they fully understand Government's intentions. He emphasised the

importance of dialogue in addressing concerns and expressed optimism that the people will have a clearer understanding of the project's benefits.

"There are people that may not understand the intentions of government, that is why the engagement was initiated.

"I am sure that at the end of the engagement visit, the people will have a clear view of the

intentions of government", the governor's aide stated.

Pastor Ajagba assured that the State Government would continue its community engagement efforts, by visiting every host community, to address concerns and foster unity, stressing that the project aims to benefit the people.

"The people you see here today have come from various communities and

what we have been discussing is how we will continue to intensify the community engagement so that everybody is carried along in making sure that their concerns are addressed and resolved amicably", Ajagba stated.

He said that part of the engagement is to explain to the people of Nsulu that nobody is trying to destroy their source of livelihood.

Continued on Page 2

Reactions Trail FG Sack Of Persons With Degrees From Togo, Benin Republic From Work

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The Federal Government's decision to sack degree holders from Togo and Benin Republic institutions has far-reaching implications for both the affected

individuals and the broader education sector in Nigeria.

This was disclosed by an Abuja-based lawyer, Mr. Azubuike Emmanuel, who opined that it would reduce certificate forgery and mill degree practices,

lauding the Federal Government for taking bold steps to verify the authenticity of the degrees.

The legal luminary, who acknowledged that, the decision may have economic implications, as some individuals may

need to seek alternative education or career path, potentially affecting the job market but insisted that, the decision is apt in sanitizing the educational system.

Contributing, a human right activist, based in

Umuahia, Abia Stat, Mrs. Adaku Chukwuemeka, said that the development would improve education standards and improve the country's image in the comity of academic nations.

Continued on Page 2

News

People React As National Assembly Bans Exportation Of Maize

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A person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) is liable on conviction to a fine in momentary value of the goods exported or sought to be exported or imprisonment for a term of one year or both.

A Customs officer or other person who aids, counsels, procures or conspires with another person to commit an offence under this section is liable, on conviction, to the penalty under subsection (2); and the Federal High Court has jurisdiction over any offence committed under this Bill.

The Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele (APC, Ekiti Central) presented the lead debate on the bill for concurrence.

He maintain, that the Bill intends to prohibit the exportation of maize.

He said the bills also sought to address the ongoing food crisis in Nigeria.

Reactions Trail FG Sack of Persons with Degrees from Togo, Benin Republic From Work

Continued From Pg 1

The social entrepreneur, however, revealed that the most immediate impact is the loss of jobs for those affected, which could lead to financial instability and uncertainty about their future.

She urged the Federal Government to make provisions to absorb those affected in order not to add to the already heightened insecurity occasioned by economic hardship.

Recall that the Federal Government recently fired some civil servants with degrees from private tertiary institutions in Benin Republic and Togo.

The directive affected federal workers who graduated from the institutions from 2017 to date.

The Director of Information and Public Relations in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Segun Imohiosen, confirmed the development to newsmen on recently.

In August, the Federal Government announced that only eight universities had been accredited to award degrees to Nigerians in Togo and Benin Republic.

This followed an undercover investigation report in which a Nigerian journalist acquired a degree from a university in Benin Republic in two months

The Senate Leader said the Bill was straightforward and had gone through the necessary legislative process in the House of Representatives.

However, he appealed to his colleagues to support the Bill.

The Senator representing Kebbi South Senatorial District, Garba Maidoki, however, proposed an amendment to remove derivatives from the provision of the Bill.

"We must be fair to our people. We are the farmers, we grow these things."

Some maize derivatives include corn flour, cornmeal, corn gluten, cornflakes, cornstarch and many others.

The Deputy Senate President, Barau Jibrin, who presided over the session, approved the amendment to the provision to accommodate only the exportation of maize.

and used it to participate in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme.

Following the report, the government banned the accreditation and evaluation of degrees from tertiary institutions in Benin Republic and Togo.

The Federal Government also set up an Inter-Ministerial Investigative Committee on Degree Certificate Milling to probe the activities of certificate racketeers.

The then Minister of Education, Tahir Mamman, revealed that over 22,500 Nigerians obtained fake degree certificates from Benin Republic and Togo and such certificates would be cancelled.

Although the exact number of affected civil servants could not be ascertained, it was gathered that the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (Cabinet Affairs), had issued a memo to all the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (EMDAs) to implement the order.

A source, who pleaded anonymity because she was not authorised to speak on the matter, disclosed that the sacking of the affected workers, was based on the inter-ministerial committee's recommendation.

Port-harcourt Refinery Operating At 70% Installed Capacity-Bayo Onanuga

President Bola Tinubu's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, has said the Port Harcourt Refinery is operating at 70 per cent installed capacity, with plans to increase production shortly.

Onanuga said the refinery receives regular crude oil contrary to claims of lacking the product.

He disclosed this after joining a fact-finding team to the 60,000 barrels per day refinery recently.

The presidential aide noted that the lies and doubts about the refinery has been dismissed by the team's fact-finding mission.

He explained that the team was satisfied with the state of the refinery.

Onanuga disclosed

this in a statement titled, "Putting to Rest Rumours about Port Harcourt Refinery Complex: Our Fact-Finding Mission."

According to Onanuga: "I was part of a fact-finding team that visited the 60,000 barrels daily Port Harcourt Refining Complex on Wednesday. I will now share our findings.

"Our team, guided by the refinery's Managing Director, Ibrahim Onoja, toured the entire complex, from the computerised control room to the loading bay and every section in between. We asked pointed questions and received satisfactory answers, dispelling our doubts and misconceptions.

"Nigerians must ignore naysayers and false information about the refinery's

operations. While it is not currently running at 100%, it is functioning at 70% installed capacity, with plans to increase production shortly.

"Furthermore, the refinery receives regular crude supplies, contrary to claims that it lacks crude to refine."

He commended NNPC for reviving "this dead asset," on the "verge of becoming a museum piece."

In November, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, spokesman, Olufemi Soneye, announced the commencement of Port Harcourt refinery, said the refinery started operation with 60 per cent capacity.

Soneye said the refinery is processing 60,000 barrels per day of crude, adding that

the facility has a combined 250,000 barrels per day capacity. (NAN).

Correction of Name and Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Obasi Rose Angela which was recorded in my Bank Verification Number (BVN), with First Bank Plc. And Obasi Roselin Ogbomma are same person; and my correct date of birth is 01-10-1962.

I, now wish to be known and addressed as OBASI ROSELIN UGBOMMA. All documents bearing my former names remains valid. The general public should please take note.

OBASI ROSELIN UGBOMMA

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known as Miss Ukafor Uzochi Mercy, now wish to be known and addressed as Mrs. Okezie Uzochi Mercy. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. OKEZIE UZOCHI MERCY

Lawmaker Appreciates God Over Successful Burial Of Brother

By Chijioko Chukwuemeka

Abia Lawmaker, Erondu Uchenna Erondu Jnr, has expressed gratitude to God, constituents and others for the successful interment of his late elder brother, Elder Azubuike Ihuoma Erondu.

The Chairman, House Committee on Public Service, Abia State House of Assembly, who disclosed this at the thanksgiving service for the successful interment of his elder brother recently, at Apostolic Church, Azuogwugwu-Umuaro Village, Mgboko Umuanunu

Ancient Kingdom in Obingwa, Obingwa Local Government Area, Abia State, stressed that he values everyone's support during the difficult time.

The former Director, Enyimba FC, who also reiterated his commitment towards sustaining the bond of unity in the entire Erondu's family, thanked the church for its prayers and support at their grieving moment.

Meanwhile, the wife of the deceased, Mrs. Onyinyechi Erondu, also thanked God Almighty, the church, community, friends and well-wishers, for their

support, while they mourn her husband.

They prayed God to reward them for their show of love, noting that their supports are well appreciated.

In his sermon entitled: 'Do not be afraid, I am with you always', the Minister-in-Charge, Apostle R.O. Nwadiole, commiserated with the Erondu's family over the loss of Elder Azubuike Ihuoma Erondu. He urged them to remain in unity for sustainable progress.

The clergy enjoined them to always put their trust in God, praying that affliction will not

arise the second time in their family.

Elder Erondu who died on June 2, 2024 during a protracted illness, was interred on November 29, 2024 in his hometown; Azuogwugwu-Umuaro Village, Mgboko Umuanunu Ancient Kingdom in Obingwa LGA, Abia State.

Rev. Chimaobi Erondu, Mr. Chinedu Ihuoma Erondu, relations, friends and well-wishers among others, were also present at the thanksgiving service.

News

Farmers Urged To Adopt New Farming Techniques

By Tasié Ebere

Farmers in Abia State have been called upon to embrace the new techniques of farming in order to improve and increase the output in their agricultural produce.

The President, Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSEs) in Nigeria, Abia State chapter, Rev. Sis Lilian Ifeoma Chibiko, made this call during a sensitization workshop for potential Cassava Entrepreneurs and admission of new members to CSE in the state, held at Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) conference hall, recently.

According to her, the workshop which involved the Ministry of Agriculture, Women Association Multi Purpose Co-operative Society, and Abia ADP Ladies Farmers Multi Purpose Co-operative Society, is aimed to sensitize farmers that they can make money from cultivating improved Cassava seed if they abide by the rules and regulations guiding it.

Earlier in his address, the Director of Liaison and Extension Services, National Root and Crop Research Institute, (NRCRI), Umuahia, Dr. Mark Tokula, urged farmers to improve their farming practices and not to stick to the old pattern.

Ukomadu Emerges New Coordinator, ANAN In Abia

By Stephanine Adindu

Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) has elected new executives with Mr. Chukwuemeka Ukomadu as the state chairman.

This followed the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the body, held in Umuahia, Abia State.

The new Abia State branch executives are:

Mr. Ukomadu Chukwuemeka, FCNA - Chairman
Mr. Ndubuisi C. Mgbemena FCNA - Vice Chairman
Abuajah C. Hycienth CNA, Ph.D - Secretary
Lolo Onyemah Patience Chioma, FCNA - Asst Secretary
Mrs. Anselm-Ejimoleme

Dr. Tokula, maintained that the project involves building an economically, sustainable Cassava seed system whereby cassava seed can become an object for sales that one can make money from by getting contract to supply it to farmers.

He also disclosed that for a member to qualify in terms of supplying of cassava seed, must keep to the farming rules and regulations guiding the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC), a regulatory body for seed system in Nigeria.

While he noted that the Farmer's farm will be inspected about 3 times to ensure spacing, use of chemicals, application of varieties, among others, maintained that the farm must be one variety of cassava in a farm and disclosed that the training would commence soon.

In his welcome opening remarks, the Programme Manager ADP, Mr Leanya Okoro, stated that the essence of the program is to incorporate women co-operative society and youth co-operatives into farming and give them the right varieties to plant.

He stated that if a farmer should cultivate either Tms 419, Tms 3055 or Tms 8080, should maintain one and should not mix it up.

Mercy FCNA - Treasurer
Mrs. Johnson Obineche Stella CNA - Financial secretary
Mr. John Victor Abajue CNA - PRO
Lady Obi-Okonkwo Helen FCNA - Ex-Officio I and
Sir Iruke Christopher FCNA - Ex-Officio II

In his acceptance speech, the new chapter Chairman, thanked the group for the confidence reposed in him, maintaining that he would not take it for granted.



Mr. Ukomadu Chukwuemeka

Gov Otti Fulfills Promises, Rewards Athletes with Cash Gifts

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, has fulfilled his promises by rewarding athletes with cash gifts.

Speaking at a meeting with the Abia athletes in Umuahia Abia State recently, the Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George described Dr. Otti as a sports-loving Governor, who adding that the Governor understands the crucial role of motivation in driving athletes to push beyond their limits, overcome obstacles and strive of excellence.

He revealed that the essence of the meeting was to distribute cash gifts to athletes who distinguished themselves in the just concluded National Youth

Games (NYG) in Asaba, Delta State and Paris 2024 Paralympic Games in France, as earlier promised by Gov. Otti.

Comrade Obioma who also thanked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Chief Nwaobilor Nwadinma Ananaba for his support to Abia State Sports Council, urged parents to ensure judicious use of the cash gifts for academic development of their children.

In his vote of thanks, a three-gold medalist in weight-lifting, Eze Chiemerie Vitalis, 18, thanked Gov. Otti for fulfilling his cash gift promise, adding that he

would invest the money for his personal development.

Meanwhile, one of the parents, Mrs. Chinyere Okafor whose two children won medals at the last concluded NYG Asaba, expressed happiness over the gesture, adding that she would use the money to support their academics.

Recall that Gov. Otti had announced a cash reward of N20 million for two Paralympic Powerlifting international Champions from Abia, Onyinyechi Gift Mark and Esther Nworgu, as well as other cash gifts to athletes made Abia proud at national and international level.

In addition to the cash rewards, Governor Otti also offered employment to 15 athletes from Abia who won gold and silver medals in international and national sporting competitions.

This move, he said a way to encourage and support athletes from the state.

Governor Otti's administration has also abolished the non-indigene distinction, considering anyone residing in Abia State as an Abian.

Team Abia won a total of 31 medals at the recently concluded NYG Asaba; an improvement to the last year's event which they won only 10 medals.

Abia Govt. Commends Stand Up For Women Society

By Lovina Onwuka

The Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Aghukwa has extolled Stand Up For Women Society for their commitment and resilient in advocating for women empowerment through education, skills development and gender equality.

Mrs Aghukwa who stated this in Umuahia during the official Inauguration Ceremony of Stand Up for Women Society, Abia State Chapter described women as agents of transformation and called for more inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making to further enhance the development of the society.

The Commissioner represented by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Mrs Ogechi Oguama acknowledge that

over the years, the increasing recognition of gender equality as a crucial component of sustainable development has led to the emergence of organizations dedicated to empowering women and enjoined the Association to support in the fight against gender based violence and other societal ills bedeviling the girl child in society to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

Dr. Mrs Aghukwa, while Congratulating the newly Inaugurated Stand Up for Women Society Abia State Chapter, also enjoined them to protect, preserve the fundamental constitution of the Association as well as not to allow their personal interest influence their conducts or decisions.

In her keynote address,

the CEO Abia State Signage And Advertisement Agency, Mrs. Victoria Onwubiko, said Women has continued to demonstrate remarkable leadership and resilience across all spheres of life and stressed the need for women to be given a chance to take charge of their space.

In her address, the National President, Stand Up for Women Society, Mrs. Deborah Adetona said the Non-Governmental Organization promotes gender inclusive development and advocates for the protection of the rights and dignity of every women in society and advised the newly Inaugurated members of the Association to work as a team to achieve the vision of the Association.

In her Acceptance Speech, the State

Chairperson, Stand UP for Women Society, Mrs. Helen Agharanya, said the Association is committed to partner with Government and other relevant bodies to create ecosystem where their values, rights and dignity are protected and assured that they will justify the confidence reposed in them.

The Inauguration which featured taking of oaths of allegiance, decoration of the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Ogechi Oguama, and Project, Coordinator Nigeria For Women Project, Mrs Chinyere Amos-Ughegwu as State Matrons of the Association as well as award presentations to the Chairman, Civil Service Commission, Pastor Mrs Eno Jerry and other notable personalities.

Eme-Igwe Emerges PROWAN Coordinator In Abia

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Professional Women Accountants in Nigeria (PROWAN) has elected Mrs. Peace Eme-Igwe as their new Coordinator in Abia State.

The development followed the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held in Umuahia, the Abia State capital.

Mrs. Eme-Igwe was unanimously elected to lead the group, while Mrs Grace Ekwoyone and Mrs. Chigbu Ngozi Justina emerged Vice Coordinator and State Secretary respectively.

Mrs Ezechi Ihuoma emerged the Assistant Secretary, with Mrs Happiness Kalu as the new Public Relations Officer (PRO), Mrs Henry Ikoro is the new Welfare Officer while the new Treasurer is Mrs Okorie Ifeoma.

In her acceptance speech, the new PROWAN Coordinator, Mrs Eme-Igwe, maintained that her team would remain proactive in carrying out their duties.

She also promised to advance the women wing of the Accounting Profession to an enviable height.

Meanwhile, the outgoing Coordinator, Mrs. Patience Chioma Onyema urged the body to support the new executives, praying God to enable them achieve their set goals.



Mrs. Peace Eme-Igwe



MINISTRY OF POWER AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

P.M.B 7226, UMUAHIA, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

Our Ref: MPU/AD/O.13/II/

2nd December 2024

The Government of Abia State through the Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, Umuahia, invites qualified companies that conducted site inspection of the CKC water scheme to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) tender for revamping and reticulation of CKC Water Scheme at Aba Abia State as per the following listed scope and conditions of supply.

SCOPE OF THE RFQ

PHASE 1

(i) Civil & Ancillary Work

- a. Renovation of Chemical building and generator house
- b. Revamping of Elevated Tank

(ii) Mechanical, process and Ancillary Work

- a. Revamping or Rehabilitation of Boreholes
- b. Supply and Revamping of all Pumps
- c. Reactivation of Water Treatment Plant
- d. Rehabilitation of pipeline

(iii) Electrical and Ancillary Work

- a. Restoration of Grid Power supply
- b. Restoration of backup power supply
- C. Renewable power supply (optional)

(iv) Commissioning

- a. Commissioning of water scheme and reticulation to fetching points
- b. Operation and maintenance (within period)
- c. Training of staff of Abia State Water and Sewage corporation.

PHASE 2

- (1) Reticulation of water pipeline from CKC Aba Aba-Owerri Road with a spur to Ariara station
 - a. Supply and installation of water supply pipeline accessories for 13km distance.
 - b. Connections of water supply to household estimated 500- 600 Units.
 - C. Installation of smart meter to the respective household connection.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS/EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

All interested companies must submit their proposal in soft and hard copies. All expressions of interest must be made by any company on payment of non-refundable fee and submit evidence of payment to the Planning, Research and Statistics Department of Ministry of Power and Public Utilities Umuahia Abia State.

All hard copies of the proposal must be received by the office of the head of planning Ministry of Power and Public Utilities not later than 2pm on or before 14h December 2024.

All interested companies must as well submit a soft copy of their proposals/ expression of interest to this email: otum.nwanyieze@abiastate.gov.ng

PREQUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

1. Full contact information and the company profile in Nigeria
2. Evidence of payment of tax for 3 years or tax clearance certificate.
3. Evidence of registration with CAC and registration with Abia State Ministry of Power and Public Utilities.
4. Valid ISO-9001 certificate or equivalent
5. Evidence or Reference of experience on similar jobs.
6. Pro forma invoice indicating cost, quantity of materials etc.
7. Bill of quantity.
8. Evidence of tender fee.

MODE OF TENDERING

- All applications must be addressed to the Honorable Commissioner, Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, PMB 7226, Umuahia, Abia State.
- The application should bear the reference number of this publication and be submitted under seal to reach the Ministry's Planning, Research and Statistics Department within fourteen (14) days from the date of this letter.

Engr, Ikechukwu Monday.
 Hon. Commissioner,
 Power and Public Utilities.

Editorial

The Leadership Example Of Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic Aba Management

From inception, the Dr. Alex Otti-led administration in Abia State prioritized improvements in the education sector as one of its score mandates. To give teeth to the policy, it went ahead to allocate 20 per cent of its budgetary provisions to the sector. Since then the administration has worked hard to ensure that its self-assigned mandate of transforming the educational sector into a veritable tool for human resource development is actualized. One of the instruments that the administration deplored towards realizing this objective was its recruitment of very capable personnel to manage the various institutions in the sub-sector.

Such policy seems to have paid off in the choice of the top management of the Dr. Ogbonna Onu Polytechnic, Aba as they have driven the school to unprecedented height of excellence since their inception into office. The Hon. Stanley Egege and Dr. Christopher K. Okoro leadership has ensured that the Gov. Otti's intended transformation of the education sector is self-evident in the school.

Prior to Dr. Otti-led administration, the Polytechnic symbolized the decadence that permeated the entire gamut of the State Public Service in Abia. Infrastructural decay characterized the School's physical landscape, Staff morale was at its lowest ebb as the Staff were owed over 32 months salary arrears, a lot of courses lost its accreditation, exam racketeering, cultism were some other features of social life in the school etc. It was not surprising that the school witnessed a continuous decline in its enrolment figures. It is against this background that the complete turnaround which the school has witnessed under the Dr Alex Otti led government will be appreciated

A glimpse of such rejuvenation in the school was given by the hard-working Rector of the school Dr. Chris Okoro during their recent combined convocation ceremony (2019 - 2021) when he reeled out a harvest of projects that included the completion of an abandoned TETFUND sponsored Four-Story Science Block that has a total of 36 classrooms and laboratories, the construction of a 350-Capacity lecture theatre, the building of a brand-new Gate House, the renovation of the Rectors' Lodge that was abandoned for 14 years, the renovation and equipment of 19 laboratories, the refurbishment of a Sports Complex that includes a section for indoor games as well as a well-equipped gym facilities, renovation of several classroom blocks, the flag-off of the Perimeter Fencing of the Main Campus, the regaining of the lost accreditation of lost courses, introduction of new relevant courses including Artificial Intelligence, the clearance of 32 months' salary arrears owed by previous administration through the intervention of the State Governor, the prompt payment of Staff enrollment in line with the state government policy of paying on the 28th day of the month, the

restoration of moral and academic excellence in the school environment etc.

All these achievements are all helping to restore the Polytechnic as a foremost centre of technical learning which is in line with Dr. Alex Otti's vision of re-inventing Tertiary Institutions in the State as foremost centre's of excellence and innovation. It is against all this background that we commend the leadership role of the top management of the school led by Hon. Stanley Egege and Dr. Chris Okoro who have queued behind Dr. Otti's support to make such tremendous transformation of the school possible.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Curbing The Rising Cases Of Child Abuse In Nigeria

Dear Editor,

The rising cases of child abuse in Nigeria are alarming. According to the Paediatric Association of Nigeria (PAN), six out of 10 Nigerian children are abused or maltreated before they reach the age of 18. This is a staggering statistic that highlights the need for urgent action.

This requires a collaborative effort from government at all levels, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) among other stakeholders to restructure and curb the ugly menace.

Research also suggests that the rise in child abuse in Nigeria can be linked to various factors, including poverty, lack of education, and cultural practices. Additionally, the adoption of the structural adjustment programme in the late 1980s by the Nigerian Government has also been cited as a contributing factor.

Interestingly, Nigeria has laws and policies in place to protect children from abuse, including the Child Rights Act 2003, the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, and the Criminal Code ³. However, despite these laws, child abuse persists, and more needs to be done to ensure effective implementation and enforcement.

To address the rising cases of child abuse in Nigeria, we need a multi-faceted approach that involves government, civil society, communities, and individuals. This includes:

- Strengthening laws and policies: Reviewing and strengthening existing laws and policies to ensure they are effective in preventing and responding to child abuse.
- Raising awareness: Organizing awareness campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of child abuse and the importance of reporting cases.
- Supporting victims: Providing support and counseling to victims of child abuse and their families.
- Community engagement: Engaging with communities to promote positive attitudes towards child protection and to encourage reporting of suspected cases of child abuse.

We should take these approaches and more very seriously as more unsuspecting victims suffer and die unreported due to this menace while their culprits go scot free.

George, Chukwuebuka Blessing
Writes From Aba, Abia State.

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Focus

With *By Dickson Paul*

Christmas And Its Attendant Exploitation

Christmas, a global Annual Christian Religious Celebration is around the corner. We purposely celebrate Christmas on the 25th December to reminisce on the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is also a season of the year, when love is believed to be in the air, fun fare as kids visit Father "Christmas," churches line up programmes, media establishments through seasonal programs ensure full scale enjoyment for both children and adults during the celebration. Some of the media houses say it is part of their social responsibilities to their customers and the society where they operate. In the cities and towns, streets are decorated/beautify with Christmas colours, lights, trees, Flowers, playing of Christmas jingles, sales of Christmas items such as cap, season's greetings cards, hampers, etc.

Apart from streets, churches, shops, media houses, companies among others decorate and appreciate customers, for their patronage as well as a show of togetherness and love which the season brings.

Also, the celebration symbolises love as gifts are given out. Naturally, the celebration and its weather climate brings joy.

But uninterestingly, unscrupulous Nigerians exploit Christmas fever in the country to hike the prices of their goods and services.

Traders and motorists are exploiting the season to increase prices of their goods and services. Sometimes, food stuff and wears, bags and other items get out of the reach of the common man, which may mar the joy of the celebration.

The situation is compounded by the activities in the country including wedding ceremonies, launchings, burials, traditional events and others

But uninterestingly, unscrupulous Nigerians exploit Christmas fever in the country to hike the prices of their goods and services.

which trigger high inflation. It is believed as revealed by investigation that as the December month progresses, prices get higher especially if the workers get the December salaries and the thirteenth month, popularly known as Christmas bonus.

This situation affects every Nigerian both children and adults especially the poor. The soaring prices during the yuletide both in goods and services are disheartening and the government does not really look into the economy rather it shows concern in matters less important than the economy and welfare of the people.

Looking at what is visible, the present government under president Bola Tinubu pays much attention to political and foreign related issues than the poor state of the economy.

In this season, transporters attribute the hike in

price to bad roads, high cost of Premium Motor Spirit (fuel), spare parts and other logistics.

The economic hardship in the country may crush the joyful disposition of Nigerians in this season and replace it with tearful despair, causing an emotional toll but unfortunately, Our leaders who ought to care so deeply about us, are not bordered.

Nigerians exploiting fellow Nigerians during the Christmas as if they are in a competition, is what we don't understand. "The mentality of we are in the season", triggers the cost of some things to spiral out of the reach of the common man.

This is the period we all wish to celebrate in Our homes with loved ones but the state of things in the nation is limiting it to some extent, to the rich who enjoy a cuisine, having enough food and wines to pair.

It is not a good idea feeding fat from exploitation. Although, the traders and other service providers may console themselves that they are into decent, honourable and dignified means of creating wealth.

Christmas is not celebrated to reflect personality, looking stunning and beautiful rather, to reflect the essence (the birth of Jesus Christ).

As we celebrate, let the charitable spirit be seen, giving succour to the less privileged, not the stereotypical thinking that it is for the class.

Hardship among other challenges compel Nigerians to call for good governance with economic stability where the citizens can be afloat.

Our leaders should have a rethink, an intuitive sense that will enable them to perceive what should be done, that is to say perhaps, compulsive personalities that demand so much from themselves.

Wisdom for Living

with

Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

Many situations in life are mere distractions, absolute mirage to cause discouragement, bringing about delay or making success impossible, therefore, wisdom must be applied in distinguishing between which truly deserves your reaction, resources and time; otherwise you would have wasted irreplaceable, valuable amount of your life wrestling in dirty with pigs. Never wrestle with a pig. You'll both get dirty, but

the pig will enjoy it, while you will become a shadow of yourself, avoid distraction. Yes....

Sometimes, life presents us with situations that can best be described as wrestling with a pig - frustrating, messy, and exhausting.

But, remember, some battles aren't worth fighting.

"Choose your struggles wisely, and don't engage with those that will only leave you drained and dirty.

Instead, focus on the battles that uplift and empower you, the ones

that make you stronger and wiser". Olaleye Olawuyi Peter

Note that, you can't control the pig, but you can control your own actions.

So, let go of the worry of winning every fight, rather embrace peace within you and seek wisdom to know when to WALK AWAY.

Keep your dignity, your

energy, and your sanity intact. Move ahead and see the mirage fade away.

Be always joyful, it is in so doing that, you have your desires and dreams come through. "A joyful heart doth good like medicine, sorrow weakens the soul and body"

Believe me, no one owes you happiness, I mean nobody is indebted to

making you always joyful. Infact, every human has issues he/she is dealing with and craving for succour just as you.

You must of a necessity therefore ensure your happiness. Be in a serene environment, around people who will not infect you with sorrow, engage in things that make you laugh often and distance yourself from joy-killers.

Expect less from people around you, this will help you withstand disappointment like you will term it when their reactions/responses fall short of your

expectations.

You can't avoid to build your life on peoples reactions towards you. How can you allow your day (I mean a whole 24-hours) get ruined because of how someone responded to your greetings?

Howbeit that you want to quit a study or job because of the attitude of a lecturer or a fellow employee's? Common you can do better.

Give positivity to every negativity thrown at you. They should rather learn and become positive owing to your disposition not the other way round.

"Choose your struggles wisely, and don't engage with those that will only leave you drained and dirty."

News

Okoro Appreciate God Over Appointment As Rector, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Poly

By Kanu Kelechi and Onyema Chinaza

The Rector Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic former Abia State Polytechnic, Aba, Dr. Christopher Kalu Okoro, has thanked God for His mercies towards him and the institution.

Dr. Okoro stated this during a press conference recently, at the conference Hall of the Polytechnic.

The Rector expressed gratitude to Governor Alex Otti, for appointing him as the Rector of Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba.

He expressed gratitude to the Governing Council of the institution for ensuring that a healthy work environment is put in place.

"Today marks the first press conference this great institution is having since its inception 32 years ago. Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba was established as a place to train and develop middle level man power. Since my assumption of office on the 20th of March 2024, we are poised to develop a first-class hands-on training to showcase students who are experts in their chosen field".

Okoro highlighted the numerous monumental achievement he has achieved within his eight months in office, ranging from good working condition for his staff (whose backlog of salary have been paid off), massive renovations and refitting in the institution, first of its kind lecture theatre, prompt issuance of certificate with QR Scan code (to ascertain its authenticity), state-of-art photo Studio and Gymnastic centre, ensuring unity among staff and students on campus, establishing a space institute to promote IGR, Introduction of AI as a core course for all the departments, Introduction of practical examinations (where students design and implement in practice), renovation of Rector's Lodge.

Speaking further, he announced that 120 HND students will be graduating with Distinction, while 91 ND students will be graduating with Distinction in their various fields of learning.

He assured students and the public that though the institution has changed its nomenclature to Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, it does not in any way invalidate the certificates which bore the former name.

Dr. Okoro made special thanks to the Government of Abia State for funding, the timely intervention from TETFUND, and for partnering greatly with the institution.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Uche Iwuagwu, a member of the Governing Board of the Institution, expressed gratitude thus far, the Rector has transformed the institution, and prayed that wisdom and understanding never lack in the Rector's administration.

Dignitaries at the event were Dr. Chizaram Ogbuji- Deputy Rector (Administrative), Dr. Ejionye Kalu - Deputy Rector (Academics), Mr. Chinyere Oriaku-Registrar, Mrs. Stella Nwakanma- Public Relations Officer, Dr. Ann Ikechi-Ag. Dean Students Affairs, heads of department, and members of the press.

Highlights of the events was the tour round the Institution from the Administrative complex to the lecture theatre which is under construction with a 300 sitting capacity, sports complex, state-of-the-art photo studio, gymnastic hall, Science and Engineering Laboratories, ICT centre (with 90 persons sitting capacity), Library, Gate, etc.



Dr. Okoro



Gov. Otti Flagging Off Recently in Umuahia The Reconstruction Expansion Of Abia Express Tower To Onu-imo Bridge.

Gov Otti Flags-off Reconstruction Expansion Of Abia Express Tower To Onu-Imo Bridge

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, has Flagged-off the reconstruction and Expansion of the 5.95km Abia Express Tower to Onu-Imo Bridge, in fulfilment of his promise to make every entry point into Abia State an epitome and face of the New Abia.

The project which is part of the Abia City Gate Initiative is expected to be completed in 18 Months time.

Governor Otti also flagged-off the construction of the long abandoned 6.92km Umuopara Ring Road, which cuts across the entire Umuokpara axis and covers the recovery of parts of the road ravaged by erosion.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Governor emphasized that the reconstruction and expansion of the Abia Tower to Onu-Imo Bridge Federal Road, marks a major milestone in the State's Infrastructural Renewal Programme.

He noted that the project aligns with his administration's commitment to revamping the state's road network and improving its aesthetics and reaffirmed his administration's pledge to reshape the narrative of Abia.

"At the beginning of this administration, we made a commitment that we shall rebuild, remodel and improve the aesthetics of all entrance points to Abia from our neighboring States.

"Our goal is to change the old unpleasant narrative which gave the State a certain notoriety as a destination that announces

itself through bad roads, heaps of garbage, foul air, and other fatal signs of governance failure.

"We are resolutely committed to right the wrong of the past and justify the confidence of the Abia public, who believed in the reality of our promises and partnered actively with us to institute a new governance philosophy one that places the people and social status of the State at the core of its undertakings", the Governor stated.

He said that the project, which is being executed by Craneburg Nigeria Limited, will transform the single-lane road into a dual-carriageway to accommodate heavy traffic adding that the expansion is also expected to reduce road accidents, enhance safety, and boost economic activities in the area among others.

Governor Otti expressed gratitude to the Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, for granting the State the necessary approvals to fix the road and assured that in the next few days, all genuine landlords whose property have been marked for demolition would receive their full compensation.

He urged residents to fulfill their civic obligations by paying taxes and statutory fees, noting that it would enable the State Government to fund further development projects.

The Governor, who announced that his administration had concluded plans to retrofit and rebuild the General Hospital, Amachara, equally directed his Special Adviser on Education, Mr Kenechukwu Nwosu, to immediately start the comprehensive retrofitting of the Community School 1&2 in accordance with the State government's template.

In their remarks, the member representing Ikwuano Umuahia Federal Constituency, Sir Obi Aguocha and the Special Adviser to the Governor on Political Matters, Chief Iheanacho Obioma, noted that Governor Otti had redefined leadership within a short while in office and thanked him for his efforts towards opening Umuahia for greater opportunities.

The Commissioner for Works, Mr Otumchere Otti said that the Onuimo-Tower road will complete the journey that began in September 2023, which saw the completion and commissioning of the expansion of Aguiyi Ironsi Boulevard, adding that the project when completed will redefine the gateway of Umuahia, the capital city.

He noted that the project will also boost trade and commerce as well as increase the value of properties around the stretch of the Onuimo-Abia Tower Axis, and expressed optimism that the contractor would deliver

quality job according to specification.

The Commissioner announced that the Umuopara Ring Road, spanning Umuwanwa, Ogbodi na Ibe, and Ehume communities, is expected to revitalize Communities along the corridor, feature solar-powered street lights, create job opportunities, and would be completed within 12 months.

At the flag off of the construction of the Umuopara Ring Road, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Policies and Interventions Fr Christian Anokwuru, former House Member, Umuahia South State Constituency, Sir Jerry Uzosike and the Chief Protocol Officer to the Governor, Mr Uche Nwosu, thanked Governor Otti for the gesture, noted that all efforts to construct the road for years had proved abortive, adding that the road has been used as a political tool by many politicians during electioneering period.

The Executive Chairman, Umuahia South LGA, Mr Chiwendu Enwereuzo, the Member Representing Umuahia South State Constituency, Mr Tommy Obioma and President General, Umuopara Development Union, Sir Emenike Onuoha, thanked Governor Otti for proving that he is on a rescue mission, adding that in the years ahead, Abia will be the first in all parameter.

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News



President Bola Tinubu

Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills not withdrawn - Senate President

By Sophina Ovuike, Abuja

The President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio, has dismissed reports that President Tinubu Tax Reform Bill have been withdrawn.

He stated this during its plenary recently, insisting that the Tax Reform Bills are alive and in progress.

Akpabio said the Tax Reform Bills have not been withdrawn by the Senate because it is an Executive Bill.

He spoke against the backdrop of a point of order raised by the Senate Leader, Michael Bamidele Opeyemi, that the proceedings of the Chamber were misrepresented, particularly on the controversial Tax Reform Bills.

Expressing his discontent over reports in the media, he said: "I watched Arise Television news and what was reported was that this hallowed Chamber had suspended further consideration of the Tax Reform Bills before the Senate.

"The reporter even invited the Governor of Nasarawa State and pointedly told the Governor that now that the Senate had withdrawn, he used the word withdrawn."

Opeyemi said the report suggested that Senators were confused and the only option was the suspension of the Bills. Quoting the conversation between the reporter and the Governor of Nasarawa State, he said: "Arise News described them as pony drums, suggesting that they were confusing.

They were problematic. What would you say Mr Governor? Are you happy that these Bills have been withdrawn, the Governor said I am not just happy."

Opeyemi said, Senators do not move from one television station to another trying to correct misinformation, but could only deliberate on issues on the floor of the Senate, urging the Senate to be clear on the Tax Reform Bill now that the public has been misinformed.

"They understand the legislative process that we have

to follow. They understand our role in the Constitution. Any attempt from any quarter, to intimidate the Parliament, will be undemocratic, and will not allow ourselves to be distracted.

"But we will encourage consensus. We will encourage discussions and engagement at all levels. But we will not, we cannot be bullied into adopting a certain procedure.

"As far as we are concerned, the Tax Reform Bills are alive in this hallowed Chamber. They are receiving consideration at various levels and we are open to discussions, negotiations to interface.

"Let it not be said anywhere that we suspended further consideration of these bills and also it will be laughable

for anybody to also think or say or report that the Bills were withdrawn.

"Like I said there are Executive Bills that can only be withdrawn by the executive and there's no reason to do so because these Bills we believe are in overriding public interest.

"We will do everything possible to ensure that across geopolitical interests, I mean political parties, across religious interests, everybody that has concern is given a chance to contribute to the passage of these laws."

Reacting, the Senate President thanked the Committee Chairman, Senator Abba Moro, for having started sitting as soon as the Committee was announced.

"And I want to almost thank the senior senator, Abba Moro, the Chairman of

the Committee, because as soon as that announcement was made, immediately started consultations.

"In fact, he has a meeting today that he has set up to enable him to abstract the process so that the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance and members of the Committee can commence public hearings either next week or as soon as practicable.

"Therefore, your point of order clearly demonstrates that this is a very important issue.

"And the item to be explained is that the Bills are a live, have not been suspended, the actions have not been suspended, the bills have not been withdrawn and the Bills have passed second reading in the Senate and further legislative actions are taking place. All those points are hereby sustained."

RIVERS GOVT SEALS OIL GAS SERVICE FIRMS

From Nzeuzor Jane & Bestman Orji. PH

The Rivers State Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development has sealed up some oil and gas service companies and training firm at the Trans-Amadi Industrial Layout of Port Harcourt, over non-compliance with the Physical Planning Law and Regulations of the State.

The Commissioner, Rt. Hon. Evans Bipi, who led the enforcement team on the action accused the companies of flagrant violation of standards and procedures of the Nigerian building codes and Regulations of the Ministry, while carrying out development projects in their premises.

He said the companies failed to comply with the requirements on the monitoring, verification and compliance exercise carried out by officials of the Ministry.

The Commissioner also

frowned at the companies for failing to honour invitations extended to them by the Ministry over the issues.

Evans Bipi said the sealing of premises of the defaulting companies was done with human face and within the ambit of the law. He clarified that it was not meant to disrupt the operations of the companies but a necessary action to compel them to comply with safety, quality and other regulatory standards of the building industry. The Commissioner assured that the affected companies will be unsealed as soon as they send their representatives to the Ministry to resolve the outstanding issues.

On his part, the Chairman of the Special Committee on Development Control of the Ministry, David Ogbanga explained that the companies failed to provide relevant documents required of them which include previous and current plans with elevations and setbacks, previous and

current development permits and approval on fencing and renovation as well as Urban Infrastructure Support Plans. He said others include Demand Notices and evidence of original receipts of payment, Reports of relevant professionals on subject plans as well as Location Map and Survey Plan. Ogbanga also said the companies were duly served with notices of enforcement which include that of contravention, stop work and seal-up, in accordance with relevant sections of the Physical Planning and Development Law of the State before the execution of the action. Noting that the affected companies will remain sealed until their Managements demonstrate seriousness and willingness to resolve the outstanding issues.

The Chairman of the Special Committee on Development Control further stated that this will serve as a deterrent to non-compliant companies and corporate organizations in the State.

Association Advocates Innovative Approaches To Transform Medical Laboratory Services

By Okereke Kate

The Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria (AMLSN), has risen from its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Abia, calling for Innovative approaches to overcome the challenges in the Medical Laboratory Services.

The AGM which was the 60th in its series, was captioned, "Current Innovations and Challenges in Medical Laboratory Services: Navigating Global Regional and Local Health Care Realities".

Giving his remarks at the opening ceremony, the Chairman of the 2024 AGM, Prof Dennis Agbonlahor, welcomed the participants to the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the association, eulogizing all efforts put together for the advancement of the Medical Laboratory Science, which according to him, has metamorphosed into a large pool of academicians, researchers, medical Laboratory Directors, among others.

Prof. Agbonlahor noted that while the association is celebrating its 60th year, he is displeased with the current leadership crisis bedeviling it, appealing to all Medical Lab Scientists to stop fueling the crisis through their write-ups and actions, adding that the association cannot be suing for peace and at the same time, engaging in actions that deepen the conflict.

In his address, the National President of the association, Dr. Uche Odionyenma, said innovations and advances in science and technology in the face of daunting challenges, have opened new possibilities in healthcare service delivery and human well-being, that were not imagined in human existence. This, he said, formed the conference theme, which he described as apt.

Dr. Odionyenma appreciated the efforts of President, Bola Tinubu and the co-ordinating Minister of Health, for their passion and enthusiasm in changing the sour narrative of the Medical Laboratory Science, for better in the Nigeria health systems.

Reeling out the major challenges facing the association, the National President stated that more than 50 per cent of Medical Laboratory Scientists and Technicians are unemployed or under-employed, which makes the doubling of admission quota for lab workforce inappropriate. He called for a reversal in the ministerial directive on doubling of training institutions admission quota by the Medical Laboratory Scientists of Nigeria.

The national president further advocated for a ministerial memo on employment of Medical Laboratory Scientists to run functional Primary Health centres' Laboratories in all the 774 Local Government Areas, to allow for increased access to quality, diagnostic services and effective public health outreach.

Prof. Iwe emphasised the need for the association to be innovative, which allows them to transform creative concepts into outcomes, thereby addressing the challenges of poor infrastructure, shortage of skill personnel, high cost of services, inadequate and up-to-date equipment, among others.

He said the issue of inaccurate results, could be handled by the introduction of Point-of-Care Testing (POCT), which he said, is designed to provide rapid and accurate test results, allowing healthcare professionals to make timely decisions about patient care.

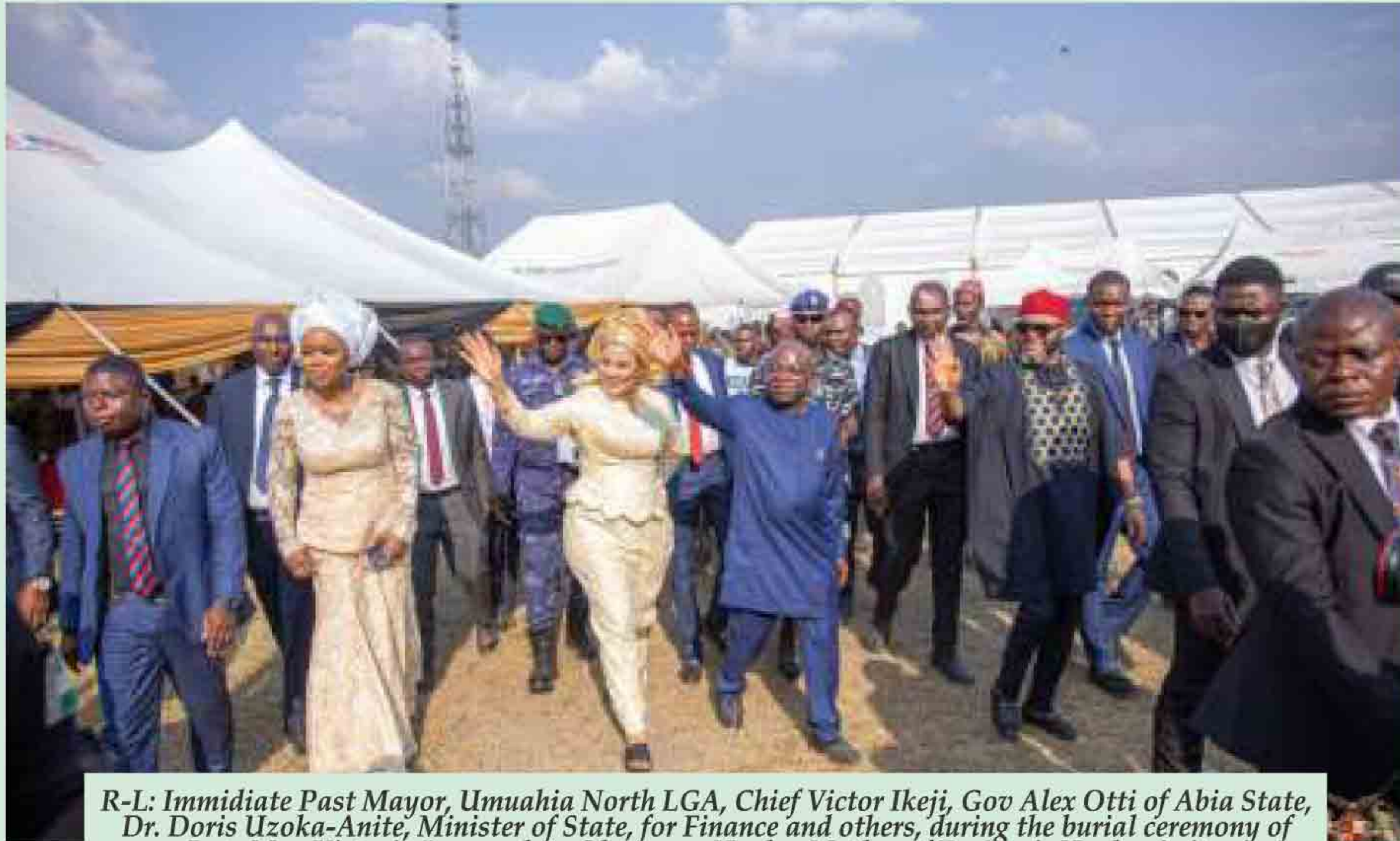
In his goodwill message, the Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, who was represented by the Federal Commissioner Representing Abia State at the National Population Commission, Hon. Trumps Eke, commended the organizers of the AGM, while calling for renovation and policy reforms to enhance adequate delivery of medical laboratories nationwide.

Earlier, Governor Alex Otti, in his speech, congratulated the association for its resilience and dedication in advancing medical laboratory sciences in Nigeria.

Governor Otti, who was represented by the Commissioner for Health, said the theme for the 2024 AGM was timely, as it resonates deeply with the collective experiences of healthcare practitioners worldwide, even as they continue to grapple with the dynamic health care realities, including emerging infectious diseases, evolving technologies and complex regional challenges.

Meanwhile, the Chairman, Local Organizing Committee, Prof. Lawrence Chigbu, disclosed that the conference opened the window for them to reposition themselves, as an effective brand in the fore front of the medical sector in Nigeria, while commending the National/Local Organizing Committees, for a successful conference.

Photos Speak



L-R: Immediate Past Mayor, Umuahia North LGA, Chief Victor Ikeji, Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, Minister of State, for Finance and others, during the burial ceremony of Late Mrs. Victoria Immaculate Okwunwa Uzoka, Mother of Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, Minister of State for Finance at Orsu-Obodo Oguta LGA, Imo State



L-R: Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Finance, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite and Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, during the burial of Late Mrs. Victoria Immaculate Okwunwa Uzoka, Mother of Minister of State for Finance, at Orsu-Obodo, Oguta LGA, Imo State



L-R: Deputy Speaker, Abia State House of Assembly, Rt Hon. Austin Okezie Meregini, Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, Member Repr. Ikwuano/Umuahia at the House of Reprs, Hon Obi Aguocha, SA to Abia Gov on Political Affairs, Hon Iheanacho Obioma, Engr Dr Humphrey Benson, Executive Chairman, Umuahia South LGA and CEO, Immoson Motors, Chief Innocent Chukwuma, during the flag off of Onuimo and Umuokpara Ring Road



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (R) and Hon Jerry Uzosike, Newly appointed Commissioner, Local Govt Service Commission (L), during the flag off of Onuimo and Umuokpara Ring Road



Gov Alex Otti of Abia pose with School Children, during the Commissioning of Obiora and Abak Road in Aba, Abia State



Gov Alex Otti of Abia waving at the Crowd, during the Commissioning of Obiora and Abak Road in Aba, Abia State



Chief of Staff to Abia Gov, Pastor Caleb Ajagba (c), Airport Project Coordinator, Pastor Okorougo Aji (1st L) and others, during the Abia Govt engagement with the people of Nsulu Clan in Isialangwa North LGA, due to the Proposed Abia Airport Project that will be sited in Nsulu.



A cross section of Nsulu Youths, during the Abia Govt engagement with the people of Nsulu Clan in Isialangwa North LGA, due to the Proposed Abia Airport Project that will be sited in Nsulu.

Photos Speak



DG, PenCom, Ms. Omolola Bridget-Oloworaran (c), Gov Alex Otti of Abia (2nd L), his Deputy, Engr Ikechukwu Emetu (1st R) and others, during the Commissioning of Obiora and Abak Road in Aba, Abia State



L-R: DG, PenCom, Ms. Omolola Bridget-Oloworaran and Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, during the PenCom working visit to the Gov of Abia State in Dr Otti's Nvosi Village in Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (c), DG, PenCom, Ms. Omolola Bridget-Oloworaran (9th L), Abia Deputy Gov, Engr Ikechukwu Emetu (8th L) and PenCom DG's Team, during the PenCom DG's working visit to the Gov of Abia State in his Nvosi village, Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (4th L), Founder, President, and CEO of COSCHARIS Group, Dr. Cosmas Maduka and COSCHARIS Group Team, during the Abia State Govt business meeting at Dr. Alex Otti's Nvosi Village in Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State



L-R: Gov Alex Otti of Abia State and Founder, President, and CEO of COSCHARIS Group, Dr. Cosmas Maduka, during Abia State Govt business meeting at Dr. Alex Otti's Nvosi Village in Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State



Gov Alex Otti of Abia, Gov of Imo State, Sen. Hope Uzodinma and National Chairman APC, Abdullahi Ganduje, during the 36th Convocation Ceremony of University of Technology Owerri (FUTO)



Gov of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti (L), Wife of the President Bola Tinubu, Sen (Mrs.) Oluremi Tinubu and Wife of Imo State Gov, Mrs Chioma Ikeaka, during the 36th Convocation Ceremony of University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Imo State

News

Bayelsa Gov. Inaugurates Anti-vandalization Committee

From Owunna Goodness, Bayelsa

The Bayelsa State Government has charged the new taskforce to fish out those who sponsor and are involved in this ugly act of vandalism. It also warned, that the community leaders who fail to secure transformers and other electrical installations in their community would be sanctioned.

The Acting Governor of the State, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, gave the warning while inaugurating a 10 anti-vandalization committee members at the First Lady's Conference Hall in Government House, Yenagoa recently.

He disclosed that most of the paramount rulers, CDC Chairmen, and youth presidents of various communities were not living up to expectations, by allowing criminals vandalized electrical facilities, which resulted in blackout for months in the State/Communities.

He maintained that, government will not hesitate to deal with community leaders who fail to secure or report criminals involved in the ugly act of vandalizing community electrical facilities.

"Government has been working closely with the Transmission Company of Nigerian ((TCN) and has spent over N800 million to ensure the restoration of power supply in the State, and out of a total of 590 installed transformers in the State, 253 were vandalized within the last five months, putting the cost of their rehabilitation at N675 million.

He charged the new inaugurated members to be vigilant by taking every necessary step to stop further vandalization of power infrastructure in the State. Because for about five months now, Bayelsa has been in blackout, and rumours are everywhere, that the State Government is not taking any step to restore light in the State.

"And, information reaching us, is

that some community leaders collaborated, and encouraged vandalism to take place in their communities. And at the end of the day, they blame it on government. Henceforth, government will no longer bear the bad name, while the hoodlums are not been punish", he said.

"If you are seen selling anything second hand, be it air conditioner, electric conductor or armoured cable, any scrap at all, you are selling as second hand, you will tell us where you got them from. If you cannot defend the items you want to sell, the law will take full actions on you. And for those who have formed the criminal habit of stealing our electrical installations, it will no longer beso", he added.

He disclosed that, Governor Douye Diri has spent over N800 million to ensure that the TCN restored power to the State, because of the love he has for his people.

"Community leaders, will be held responsible for any assets vandalized in their communities.

"And youth presidents will also be well interrogated and investigated for every act of vandalism onwards. Government is now making it the traditional rulers responsibilities to secure and protect electronic facilities in their domain", he stated.

Responding, the Committee Chairman, who is a retired Commissioner of Police, Mary George, thanked Governor Diri, for giving them the opportunity to serve, and assured that they would not compromise with anybody to betray the State for their good deeds.

The anti-vandalization inaugurated committee members are, Mr. Tonbra Allen Diegbeha, Mr. Timothy Inatimi, Mr. Perediseghabofa Orufa, Mr. Ebitari Egba, Mr. Fafi Elvis, Mr. John Adumo Azibataram, Mr. Desmond Amaebi Oti, and DSP Enema Effiong Okon, among others.

Rivers To Produce Next Ohanaeze Ndigbo President-General

The Alaigbo Development Foundation has issued a stern warning against any attempt to deny Rivers State its constitutional right to produce the next President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo in the January 2025 elections.

In a statement recently, signed by its President, Nze Coleman Chukwudelunzu, the ADF described those seeking to undermine the Ohanaeze Constitution as the "number one enemies of the Igbo nation."

Chukwudelunzu stressed the importance of adhering to constitutional principles and maintaining fairness in

Ohanaeze Ndigbo's leadership.

"Whoever wants to deny our brothers in Rivers State their right to produce the President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo is an enemy of Ndigbo and the Igbo nation. We must resist them," he said.

The ADF leader identified two major challenges undermining Ohanaeze Ndigbo: external forces attempting to control Igbo affairs and internal actors seeking federal appointments at the expense of Igbo unity.

Chukwudelunzu alleged that powerful individuals from other ethnic groups had, in the past, influenced the selection of Ohanaeze President-

Generals and criticised some Igbo governors for prioritising personal gains over regional interests.

"Tragically, some so-called Ohanaeze chieftains act as errand boys to governors and ministers instead of speaking truth to power as great leaders like Akanu Ibiam and Z.C. Obi once did," he lamented.

Despite these challenges, Chukwudelunzu expressed gratitude for the resilience of patriotic Igbo leaders within the ADF, emphasising the need for Ohanaeze Ndigbo to remain a vital socio-cultural institution for Igbo unity and progress.

Reflecting on historical moments of Igbo unity,

Chukwudelunzu recalled the efforts of Igbo delegates during the 1994-1995 Abuja National Constitutional Conference.

Leaders such as Okogbule Wanodi, Peter Odili, and Emeka Ojukwu stood together to defend Igbo interests against divisive agendas like the Justice Mamman Nasir Committee's State creation plans.

"At that conference, Igbo delegates showcased an unbreakable bond of unity that Justice Mamman Nasir himself could not ignore," Chukwudelunzu reminisced, calling for similar unity as the January elections approach.

Source (NAN)



Ohanaeze Ndigbo

Emetu Charges Cocoa Farmers, Stakeholders

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Deputy Governor of Abia State, Chief Ikechukwu Emetu, has stressed the need for cocoa farmers and all stakeholders in the industry to work in synergy with the State government, to harness the benefits in sector to the development of the state.

The Deputy

Governor, said this during a meeting in his office with members of Cocoa Association of Nigeria, Abia State Chapter

Emetu, expressed the preparedness of the present administration in the State to implement policies that will benefit people who have the capacity to invest in cocoa in the State.

He said that the

meeting with members of Cocoa Association of Nigeria Abia State Chapter was designed to reach the grassroots and bring people out of poverty.

In his speech, the Chairman Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria, Sir John K. Kalu, while noting price differential as one of the factors contributing to the smuggling of cocoa seeds from the State to

other neighbouring States, pleaded with the government to help cocoa farmers by checkmating the activities of all the actors in the industry.

The event attracted the presence of the Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, officials of the Nigerian Produce Inspection Services as well as members of Cocoa Association of Nigeria, CAN.



Vanderlize Pipeline

News

Delta Not Among States Owing New Minimum Wage Workers-Commissioner

From Okere Ugochinyere, Asaba

The Delta State Commissioner for Works (Rural and Riverine Roads), Mr. Charles Aniagwu, has said that the State is among the first to pay workers the new minimum wage.

Speaking on a live Television Programme monitored in Asaba with theme, "Developments within the sub-nationals Year 2024 in retrospect", Aniagwu said Delta was among the first State in the country to pay the new minimum wage from October 2024.

He said: "When the Federal Government agreed with Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) on the need to implement a N70,000 minimum wage, our government made it very clear that as soon as that was settled, that we were going to proceed to begin implementation.

"So, we are not among those that are still procrastinating. We are not even implementing just N70,000. We are implementing far above that.

"We are not saying we are going to implement because as for the salaries that were paid last month, our people have already received the minimum wage right from October. So we have started implementing.

"So we are not among those that are having challenges with their workforce. We always have the co-operation of our workforce in Delta.

"Governor Oborewori who is very labour-friendly, has even before the argument announced wage increase, because of the hardship that was triggered by certain pronouncements at the federal level".

On health care delivery, Aniagwu said the Oborewori administration was working on over 150 health centres, even as the 64 general hospitals in the State are receiving a facelift. This is in addition to the establishment of a new teaching hospital in Ozoro.

"We have been able to get the National Universities Commission (NUC), to accredit a number of programmes, including the introduction of Medicine at the Delta State University of Science and Technology in Ozoro.

"So we are now building a College of Medicine that will be able to cater to the needs of the medical students that will have to attend that institution in Ozoro.

"We have also taken a look at some of the other health needs such as

increased medical personnel, the shortage of medical personnel no thanks to the japa syndrome.

"So much has been done in the health sector, I had the privilege of laying the foundation stone on behalf of my governor for the College of Health Technology at Ovrode in Isoko North Local Government Area.

"This is to address the issue of medical personnel shortage so that we're able to also train more in addition to those that will graduate from our university and those who also come in from outside the shores of our State for the purpose of advancing our healthcare."

Speaking on empowerment of Deltans, Aniagwu said over 220,000 had been trained and empowered through D-CARES and other MDAs.

"In terms of empowerment being anchored by Ministry of Economic Planning, over 220,000 persons that are already empowered through the D-CARES programme, where we advance some form of grants to these persons, to be able to enhance their businesses.

"In other instances, some persons are trained like what we had with the Ministry of Women Affairs two weeks ago, where the governor had the opportunity to present starter packs to individuals that have been trained".

On enhancing peace and security, Aniagwu said Governor Oborewori hosted the Inspector-General of Police who was in the State on a working visit.

"Governor Oborewori donated over 33 Hilux vehicles to the Police and other security agencies to enhance security in the state.

"One thing that is working for us here in Delta by the grace of God is that our people are also seeing that the governor means well and is putting their money to where they expect it to be.

"Hence, we're getting a whole lot of support from them that is the reason for the peace we enjoy today. You need to go to Warri, you need to come to Asaba and see the amount of development that is taking place.

"This can only be possible on the atmosphere of peace and tranquility, because peace and tranquility exists in Delta. We have nightlife and many other persons are coming in because they believe that in Delta, their investments are safe and so the return on investment in Delta today is something that will quadruple in a very short while".



Abia Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (3rd Left), the MD/CEO Coscharis Group, Mr. Cosmas Maduka (Middle), and others during a visit to the Abia Governor recently.

Gov. Otti Advises Nigerian Youths To Embrace Integrity, Hard Work

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, has called on Nigerian youths to embrace integrity, hard work, and innovation, as key drivers of personal and societal development. Governor Otti stated this during a courtesy visit made by the leadership of the Nigerian Youth Organization (NYO), at Government House, Umuahia.

Represented by his Deputy, Ikechukwu Emetu, Otti urged them to always display a positive attitude in addressing issues and to remain focused on their goals despite challenges, highlighting that success comes through persistence

and effort.

While describing the youths as agents of national development, the Governor encouraged them to actively engage in politics and leadership roles to contribute positively to nation-building.

Earlier in his speech, the President of Nigerian Youth Organization (NYO), Comrade Okorie C. Okorie, described the Organization as a national youth body founded in December 1980 as a trustee-based youth Organization, with a shared belief that the youth as a class, has a common destiny and obligation to society, the nation and humanity at large.

"The Organization's desire is to serve as a catalyst for the promotion of peace and unity in Nigeria and to serve as a facilitator for inter-element/system dialogue, all to foster ideal and harmonious living among Nigerians," Comrade Okorie.

He commended the leadership ingenuity of Dr. Otti, and pledged their support to his administration as progressive stakeholders in the Nigerian project.

The highlight of the visit was the conferment of a distinguished national merit award of excellence on the Governor as THE MOST DEDICATED NIGERIAN

GOVERNOR, in recognition of his administration's commitment towards the overall development of Abia State and Nigeria at large. The Governor was also decorated as the National Executive Patron of the Nigeria Youth Organization.

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Sir Ananaba Nwadinma Nwaobilor, Special Assistant to the Governor on Youth Development, Comrade Onyebuchi Chukwu, Special Assistant to the Governor on Entertainment, Dr. Jay Martin, and other top government functionaries, witnessed the event.

My Administration Never Borrowed To Deliver Projects - Fubara

From Nzeuzor Jane, PH.

Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State, has declared that his administration has continued to achieve great feat in project delivery despite plots by his political foes to starve the State of funds.

The Governor who spoke recently during the commissioning of the reconstructed 11.8km Okehi-Umuola-Eberi Road, linking Etche and Omuma Local Government areas of the State, said his administration had exhibited prudence in the management of available resources for the delivery of projects without borrowing.

He said the only money they borrowed was the one we used for the ring road and people are aware of it.

The Governor also proved his relentless critics and detractors wrong, stating that the Okehi-Umuola-Eberi Road was among several projects delivered by his administration within a short period without noise

making.

"I stand to be corrected, Omuma for more than eight years has not witnessed any project, it was our administration that awarded the Omuakali-Mbiri Road, and the road is almost completed.

"When we came, I said how can we be going to commission a project and the access road is bad. I said no matter the cost, we must ensure that the access road to Omuma is properly fixed so that when we are going to Omuma to commission the project, it will be an easy and smooth drive. Therefore what we are doing today is a prelude to the occasion, the main occasion will be at Omuma," he further stated.

Gov. Fubara commended the contractors for quick and quality delivery of the project, and the beneficiary communities for their support while assuring that more projects will be delivered in the area.

He charged his

supporters in Etche and Omuma councils to keep faith with the ideals of his administration, as he will not betray the trust of the people.

"Let me thank everyone, especially our wonderful supporters. Let me assure you that this is just the beginning. We did not forget the issue of the General Hospital. Not just General Hospital, but the completion of the zonal hospital, we are going to do it", he said.

Governor Fubara dissociated himself from vindictive politics, stating that his administration is concerned about how to render services to Rivers State in its entirety, without recourse to political interests or partisan affiliation.

He noted that what is important is that the little his administration is earning is being applied rightly for the benefit of the people, stressing, "You are aware of

the situation that while we were having difficulties with money, we paid salary, not just paying, but we implemented above N70,000 minimum wage. It shows commitment and love for our people".

While thanking the people, Gov. Fubara assured that he is focused on delivering good governance, promised, that they will not fail the people because the people have taken too many risks for the government.

The governor added that they must ensure that they make the people proud. He charged security agencies to ensure that they provide adequate security to enable the commuters enjoy the road.

In his remarks, the Commissioner for Works, Elloka Tasie-amadi, explained that the road was deplorable before the governor awarded the project for its construction.



ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
ABIA NEWS PAPER PUBLISHING
AND CORPORATION
"Uplifting the People, Projecting the Nation"

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Date: 3rd December, 2024

INVITATION TO TENDER

The Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation invites Competent and qualified Companies/Vendors to submit their Proposal/Expression of Interest for the comprehensive equipment of its Headquarters Office.

(A) Scope of the Tender:

LOT1:

- Modern Printing Press Machine.
- 1 No. MOZ Core Machine.
- 4 Unit Speed Master
- 1 No. Cutting and Trimming Machine.
- 1 No. Lithographic Lab Machine (Plate), marker, Colour Separator and DI Machine.

LOT2:

- (a) Procurement, Supply and Installation of 10 Nos. Office Computers complete set (HP all in one system core - 15.8 Generation 1TB HDD, 8 - 16 GB RAM 2.5 Ghz Wireless Webcam)
- (b) Executive Conference tables.
- (c) 20 Nos. Tables and Chairs.

LOT3:

Procurement of Project Vehicle (Bus)
1 No. Hilux Vehicle

Lot4:

Procurement of Newsprint Materials.

B PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT:

1. All interested procurement Companies must submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) in both Hard and Soft copies with the full contact information of the Company Profile in Nigeria.
2. Evidence of payment of Income Clearance Certificate for the past 3 years
3. Evidence of registration with CAC and including forms CAC2 and CAC7.1.
4. Registration with Abia States Government (Due process).
5. Proforma Invoice indicating Cost and Quantity.
6. Bill of Quantity.
7. Evidence of Pension clearance certificate valid till

December 2024 (for companies that have up to 15 staff.

8. Evidence of Registration with the Abia State Due Process and Public Procurement Bureau.
9. Company's Audited Account for the past 3 years.
10. Company's Profile with the curriculum of key staff including professional qualifications for the Job.
11. Collection of Tender Document Bid documents will only be given to companies that has been pre-qualified for bidding.

(B) SUBMISSION OF EXPRESION OF INTEREST:

All expression of interest must be made by any procurement company on payments of non- refundable fee and submission of evidence of payment to the Secretary Tender Board, Abia State Newspaper and Publishing Corporation, Umuahia, Abia State.

(E) Shortlisting of Bidders

Only qualified bidders will be contacted.

General Information:

- (a) Bids must be in English Language and signed by an official, authorized by the bidder.
- (b) Bids submitted after deadlines for submission would be returned un-opened.
- (c) All costs will be borne by the bidders
- (d) Closing date for the publication will be two weeks from the date of this publication and the opening of the tender will follow immediately at the Conference Room Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, Umuahia.

All Proposals must be received by the Director of Administration, Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia, Abia State not later than 2 weeks from the date of this publication.

Signed:

Elder Comr. Nmereole D. O. (JP, FCIA, TFG)
 Director of Administration
 Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation
 Umuahia
 Abia State.

Foreign News

California Shooting Suspect Used Fake Story To Gain Access To School

A gunman in the US State of California who shot and injured two children aged six and five at a school before fatally shooting himself used a "guise" to gain access to the school.

The children are in critical but stable condition and were being treated at a trauma centre, officials said on Thursday.

The attack happened on Wednesday at a school affiliated with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church near Oroville, California, about 55 miles (89km) from Sacramento.

Investigators said they believe the gunman targeted the school because of its affiliation with the church and was motivated as a response to the war in Gaza.

The sheriff on Thursday said a note was found detailing the gunman's motive. The note said he sought to carry out the "child executions" as a "response to America's involvement with Genocide and Oppression of Palestinians along with the attacks towards Yemen".

Authorities said the gunman had a lengthy mental health and criminal history, which included charges of theft, fraud and forgery over the years.

The shooting occurred shortly after 13:00 local time (21:00 GMT) at the Feather River School of Seventh-Day Adventists.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea said the gunman, Glenn Litton, 56, had scheduled a meeting with a school administrator to discuss enrolling a student - the ruse police say he used to

get into the school.

The meeting was seemingly cordial and Litton went on a tour, Sheriff Honea said, but things took a turn when the gunman walked towards a bathroom and started opening fire. The gunfire hit students outside a classroom, striking two kindergarten-aged children.

The gunman then turned the handgun on himself, police said. He was found dead by first responders with the firearm near his body.

The school's remaining 35 children were later transferred to a church, where they were reunited with their families.

Sheriff Honea said on Wednesday that the young victims had "very, very serious" injuries.

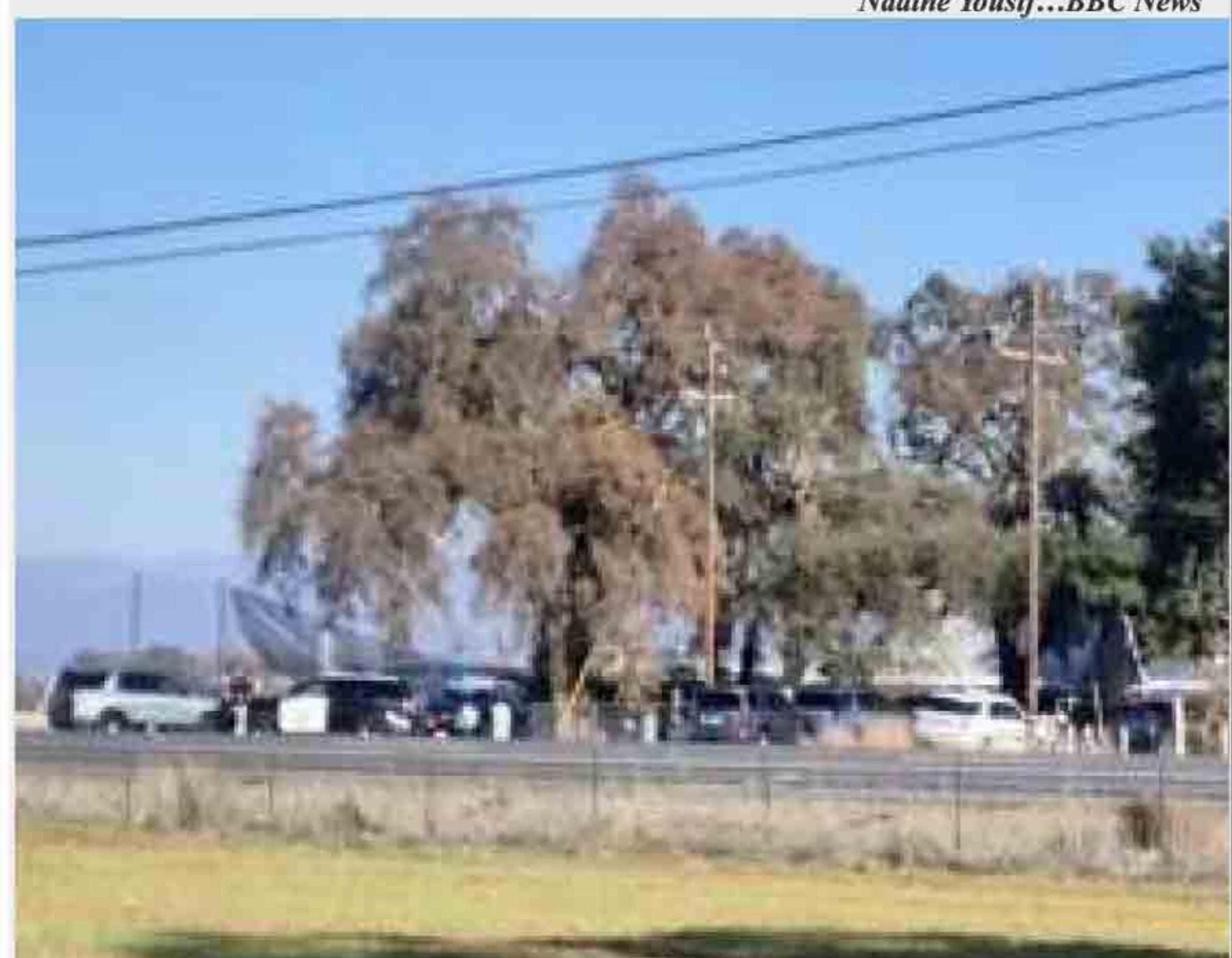
"I'm thankful that they are still alive but they have a long road ahead of them."

Sheriff Honea previously said investigators "have received some information that leads us to believe that the subject responsible for the shooting targeted this school because of its affiliation with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church".

He previously noted authorities believed the shooting was an isolated incident, but a state-wide alert was sent to other schools affiliated with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church out of an abundance of caution.

The church is a Protestant Christian denomination with over 21 million members worldwide. There are one million members of the church in North America, according to the North American Division of Seventh-Day Adventists.

Nadine Yousif...BBC News



The World Is At The Dawn Of A Third Nuclear Age, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin has warned.

The world is at the brink of a third nuclear age, the head of the United Kingdom's armed forces warned.

"The world has changed," Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said in a lecture on Wednesday at the UK's Royal United Services Institute. "Global power is shifting, and a third nuclear age is upon us."

This age, he warned, is "altogether more complex" than those that came before it. The first of these ages was the Cold War, Radakin said, while the second was defined by disarmament efforts.

This third nuclear age, which, according to Radakin, the world is "at the dawn of," is "defined by multiple and concurrent dilemmas, proliferating nuclear and disruptive technologies, and the almost total absence of the security architectures that went before."

Russia's war in Ukraine and multiple conflicts in the Middle East have upended global stability, he suggested.



Admiral Sir Tony Radakin

The deployment of North Korean troops on Russia's border with Ukraine was the year's "most extraordinary development," he said, as well as Moscow's use of Iranian-supplied drones and its threats to arm Yemen's Houthi rebels in retaliation to the West's support of Ukraine.

In November, Russia updated its nuclear doctrine, two days after US President Joe Biden granted Ukraine permission to strike targets deep inside Russia with American-made weapons.

Despite this, Radakin believes that there is only a "remote chance" that Russia will attack or invade NATO, as it knows that the "response would be overwhelming, whether conventional or nuclear."

"The strategy of deterrence by NATO works and is working," the armed forces chief said. "But it has to be kept strong and strengthened against a more dangerous Russia."

Global unease is dividing the world into three groups, Radakin said. In one group is authoritarian states "seeking to

challenge the global rules," including Russia, China, North Korea and Iran.

In the second are "responsible nations," mostly including democracies, but also Gulf monarchies and others who are "committed to partnership and to the maintenance of stability and security in the world," he continued.

The third group is made up of countries "hedging and ducking between the two for maximum advantage," Radakin said.

NATO countries must maintain an advantage over their adversaries in order to defeat them, he added.

In October, an Israeli strike on Iran destroyed Tehran's ability to produce ballistic missiles for a year, and "took down nearly the entirety of Iran's air defense system," he said.

"In this sense, Russia is showing us how not to fight. And Israel, in its response to Iran, has shown us the disproportionate advantage of modern ways of fighting," Radakin said. *Culled from CNN*

'Her Fans Are Making Pilgrimages': How Taylor Swift's Eras Tour Became A Near-religious Experience

Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, a "cultural juggernaut" remarkable for both its scale and intimacy, comes to an end this week. Along the way, it has become the most extraordinary live event of our time - and for many, it's meant even more.

This weekend, after 20 months, 149 shows, a blockbuster concert film and millions of friendship bracelet swaps, Taylor Swift's Eras Tour finally comes to an end in Vancouver, Canada.

Less a live show than a cultural juggernaut steamrolling into 53 cities across five continents, the Eras Tour has dominated headlines, boosted national economies (and craft sales), caused mini-earthquakes and broken countless records - including becoming the highest-grossing tour of all time (experts believe it will top \$2bn (£1.6bn) - and that doesn't include merchandise). Since she kicked off the live shows in March 2023, Swift has released three albums (re-recordings of Speak Now and 1989, and The Tortured Poets Department), snagged her fourth album of the year Grammy - the first artist to do so - and embarked on a high-profile relationship with NFL star Travis Kelce (who made a cameo on the Eras Tour). She has called the end of the tour "the closing of the most extraordinary chapter of my life so far".

I think her fans are going to church, or the closest they can get to church - Simon Critchley

The sheer scale and cultural dominance of the Eras Tour, from the record attendances to the 3.5-hour setlist, is undeniable. In the almost two years it's been going, it has become its own news cycle - even if you didn't attend, you've probably seen the videos of Prince William or Tom Cruise dancing at the show, or heard about world leaders begging Swift to give their country an economy-boosting visit. We live in an era of blockbuster live shows, but there's never been anything quite as colossal as this. It's hard to see how anyone, including Swift herself, will top it anytime soon.



Taylor Swift

And yet, if Swift's shows were remarkable for their size, they were also striking for their against-the-odds sense of intimacy. Attending the Eras Tour felt less like bowing down to a global megastar, and more like a mass, sequinned meet-up. Earlier this year Variety magazine dubbed her "the world's greatest community organiser".

Being relatable has long been Swift's calling card. Even as her fame and wealth has soared (she joined the Forbes World's Billionaires List earlier this year), she's continued to keep fans believing that she's not really all that different from them. This starts with her songs: universal experiences - heartache, betrayal, loss, revenge, regret - written about with remarkable specificity. But she's also carefully cultivated that feeling of inclusivity at her live shows.

From the stage, which extends two-thirds of the way into the stadium so that Swift spends most of the show in the middle of the crowd, to her use of "we" and "us" ("We're about to go on a little adventure together...") to the LED wristbands that turn the crowd into part of the show (Coldplay pioneered this at their gigs), the whole thing is designed to feel like a collective experience. Swift first emerges from a puff of pastel parachutes to ecstatic, ear-piercing screams. For a few minutes, up on a raised platform, she seems celestial. Then she smiles, utters "Oh hi!" as if she's

greeting old friends, and the untouchable suddenly becomes attainable.

The show runs like clockwork, but Swift changes just enough to make each night feel unique for the audience. In her short acoustic set she's never repeated the same combination of surprise songs and deep-cut mash-ups. She has greeted the crowds in languages including Welsh, Portuguese, Spanish, and French. In every city, one of her backing dancers, Kameron Saunders, utters a locally-tailored put down during We Are Never Getting Back Together (in Ireland: "the neck of ye", London: "up yours...", Edinburgh: "bolt ya rocket"). In May, Swift added a new segment to the setlist, featuring songs from this year's The Tortured Poets Department, including the single I Can Do It with a Broken Heart, a track written about performing on the Eras Tour with a broken heart.

A 'communal belonging'

The tour has been a rolling stone, gathering not moss, but new traditions and meaning along the way. Fans have created their own rituals that have become baked into the show - an ecstatic, extended applause after the song Champagne Problems (which Swift dutifully pretends to be surprised by every time), chanting Kendrick Lamar's lines from his remix to Bad Blood, and, of course, the friendship bracelets - a tradition sparked by a lyric in her song You're On Your Own

Kid. In every stadium thousands of forearms are weighed down by stacks of hand-crafted bracelets that are traded with strangers, security guards and even, at one London show, Sir Paul McCartney. For fans, taking part in these moments are as much a part of the experience as the music.

Another custom for fans to scream "take us to church" as Swift hits the high notes of Reputation-era track Don't Blame Me. Philosopher Simon Critchley, whose recent book On Mysticism explores the transcendent power of music and art, argues that they might already be there. "I think her fans are going to church, or the closest they can get to church," he tells the BBC. Critchley, who sees music as "maybe the last bastion of something like religious transcendence" thinks Swift is scratching a metaphysical itch for fans. "They don't think she's God, but to them she's someone very special, and she mediates a form of communal belonging that is lacking in other areas of their lives."

People have clamoured to experience the Eras Tour - not just hardcore Swifties, but those not wanting to miss out on an era-defining cultural event. Tickets were famously hard to snag, with some fans paying thousands on resale sites. Many fans travelled across the world to attend shows. Those that couldn't make it converged outside stadiums - in Munich, 40,000 ticketless fans gathered on a nearby hill, not just to be nearer to their idol, but to each other. Every night of the Eras Tour, hundreds of thousands of people have watched grainy fan-filmed livestreams of the shows online. When Swift's Vienna shows were cancelled due to a terrorist threat, fans gathered in the streets to sing her songs and swap bracelets. "This is devotional practice and the fans are making pilgrimages," says Critchley. "It's almost as if the difficulty is part of the experience. If you think about medieval pilgrimages, they were really hard." *Culled from BBC.*



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Entertainment

Rihanna Is My Idol, Greatest Of All Time - Billie Eilish

Published on December 6, 2024

American singer, Billie Eilish, has described Rihanna as her idol.

According to her, the Barbadian singer is "the greatest of all time."

Eilish stated this in a recent interview with Complex while reacting to Rihanna naming her as her dream collaboration.

She said she wondered why Rihanna would refer to her as her dream collaboration when she has been longing to work with her.

She said, "I have never met Rihanna. She is literally my idol. She is the greatest of all time. She's my complete dream collaboration. Then she said, 'If only I could work with Billie.' I was like, 'Well, bitch, I've been sitting here this whole time!' What the fuck is she even talking about? [Laughs.] 'Honestly. What do you mean, 'If only'?! It's, like, as if I've been saying, 'No.' Rihanna! Riri!? I'll literally do anything you want. That's insane."



Nigeria Lacks Right Leadership- Davido

Published on December 6, 2024



Afrobeats star, David Adeleke, aka Davido, has stated that effective leadership is the key missing ingredient for Nigeria to reach its full potential.

Featuring on the 'Elevate Africa Convos' podcast, Davido said Nigeria has the potential to prosper but suffers from ineffective governance that hinders progress.

"I tell people, if you can survive in Nigeria, you can survive anywhere," Davido stated.

"I just feel the only thing missing is the right leaders to guide us. Once we get that right, I believe there's nothing that can stop us."

Recalls that Davido recently sparked controversy after warning Americans against contemplating relocation to Africa, especially Nigeria, saying the country's economy is in "shambles" in a podcast interview.

In another interview with The Morning Hustle podcast, Davido also said Nigeria lacks true democracy.

By Sunny Green Itodo

Wizkid Equals Burna Boy's Billboard 200 Record

Singer Wizkid has equalled his colleague Burna Boy's record as the Nigerian artist with the most charting albums in Billboard 200 history. The Starboy boss achieved the feat after his new album 'Morayo' debuted at number 98 with 13,000 units sold in its 1st week.

Consequently, Wizkid tied Burna Boy as the Nigerian artist with the most charting albums in Billboard 200 history (4 each).

"Wizkid ties Burna Boy as the Nigerian artist with the most charting albums in Billboard 200 history (4 each)," music monitoring platform Chart Data wrote via X on Friday.

'Morayo' also debuted at number 4 on the Billboard World Albums chart.

With the recent announcement of his fifth studio album '5IVE' scheduled to be released next year, Davido could also join the tie as he has already debuted three albums on the chart.



Netflix Speaks Over Alleged Plans To Exit Nigeria

Published On December 5, 2024

Netflix has finally broken its silence over its alleged exit from Nigeria.

Reports that there are speculations that Netflix has exited the Nigeria market due to the country's economic challenges, as well as regulatory pressures.

Reacting to the viral reports, Netflix in a statement sent to TechCabal, stated that it remains firmly committed

to its operations in Nigeria. While dismissing the rumors, the firm said it will continue to invest in Nigerian stories to delight its audience.

"We are not exiting Nigeria. We will continue to invest in the country's stories to delight our members."

reports that Netflix which entered the Nigerian market in 2016, has elevated many local content to a global audience.



Actress Yewande Adekoya Breaks Silence On Crashed Marriage

Actress Yewande Adekoya breaks silence on crashed marriage. Published on December 6, 2024 By Racheal Ayodele

Nollywood actress, Yewande Adekoya has finally broken her silence on her divorce.

reports that in 2022, Yewande announced a separation from her husband, filmmaker Abiodun Ishola, after eight years of marriage. Speaking in an interview with colleague, actor Kunle Afod, the actress confirmed that she and her husband "only experienced a fallout". When asked about their divorce rumors, Yewande described the incident as "trial experience".

She further emphasized that "there's no marriage without its moments of trial, but the strength to rebuild is what truly defines its



Actress Yewande Adekoya

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (11)

By Joseph Jacob

The State Governor had repeatedly said in many social gatherings and State-wide broadcasts that the state workforce was over bloated and that downsizing was the only option.

Before long a circular was sent to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies asking for a list of redundant, often sick and indisciplined staff, to the Civil Service Commission.

Chief Anthony Anuka held a meeting with his directors the following day.

"Ladies and Gentlemen" Chief Anuka started in his opening remark, "You all know why we are here. We must send hundred names to the Civil Service Commission for dismissal. We must be fair, firm and free to say our observation and objections."

Those words set the ball rolling; the Directors started bringing out their own lists of those that should be fired.

One of the Directors, Mrs Juliet Okiri included Chioma Eze in her list. Other Directors protested loudly. Most of them had a lot of respect for Chioma not just because of her efficiency at work, but her kindness and friendliness towards all.

Unknown to most of the Directors, it was Chief Anuka that asked Juliet Okiri, who was one of his concubines to include the name of Chioma Eze.

"I am not happy with your reactions," Chief Anuka started after tranquility returned nearly after thirty minutes. "Chioma works hard, but the Director, who included her on this list has her reasons."

Most of the Directors were women and most of them have been slaughtered by Chief Anuka, so they were not bold enough to challenge the Permanent Secretary. But, Mr. Nnam Obiku, one of the Directors, who could not swallow that injustice he stood up, "Sir, I don't see any reason why Chioma should be included in this list. In fact, going by her efficiency, many of us here would be sacked many times over before she would be sacked."

Chief Anuka expected opposition, especially from Mr. Obiku. He smiled ruefully, "Mr. Obiku, the secular was clear about those to be sacked."

"Yes sir", Obiku replied as he flipped through the papers before him to find the secular, "Sir, here is the secular all of us know that Chioma is neither redundant, sick nor indisciplined."

"Mr. Obiku sit down." Chief Anuka shouted angrily, "Chioma's record is filled with queries and complaints of indisciplined."

"Can we see Chioma's file?" Obiku asked.

"That's ok, records don't lie." Chief Anuka said and turned to Mrs. Juliet, Director of Administration, "Get the files for us."

The meeting was going according to Chief Anuka's plan as he had already smuggled fake queries into Chioma's file.

Obiku and few other Directors, who have known

Chioma for many years could not believe the number of queries and warnings they saw in Chioma's file. Mr. Obiku knew something was wrong but could not say anything further as records are sacrosanct.

Ironically, while this meeting was going on, Chioma was busy in her office trying to make sure she completed her duties for today.

Back home, she was always exhausted, yet, she did all she could to maintain her family routines. She would ask her children how their day went and only told them positive things about her day.

Though Chioma and her children still play cards and watch the English Premier League and the UEFA Champions League, Chioma ensured that the Chelsea and Manchester United arguments stopped as it reminded her of Eze. She was concerned that Eze had not called since after his first call months ago. She had tried to call the number with which Eze made the call but it was not connecting.

Consequently, Chioma was determined to avoid anything that will let thoughts of Eze consume her.

One Friday morning, Chioma came to her office and started working very hard as usual. While many workers were loitering and shouting 'Thank God it's Friday', Chioma was working hard to ensure that her table would be cleared before she leaves for the weekend.

Around noon, Chioma came out to stretch her legs after four hours of hard work. Chioma noticed that there was commotion. Workers were discussing in clusters as anxiety hung in the air.

The retrenchment story has been circulating for weeks. Chioma was tired of listening to rumors, so she decided not to talk about it until government does what it had in mind. She returned to her office and continued her work. Before long she started hearing wailings along the corridor. She came out.

"Ah! Chioma, you're inside your office while everywhere is on fire", one of her colleagues, who was jubilating that her name was missing on the list posted on the notice board. "Go quickly to the information board and see whether you are among those to be retrenched."

Chioma locked her office and headed to the staircase under which the information board hung. As she took each step closer, what she saw shook a nerve in her spine. A middle aged man was sitting on the floor with his legs sprawled out and both hands on his head, "What will I do, Chineke?" the man wailed, "my wife gave birth to twins last week, my two daughters have just passed the Common Entrance Examination. What will I do, God?"

Chioma saw Ngozi sitting on the staircase leaning on the banister. With the way her body shook, she concluded that Ngozi was sobbing.

Ngozi's husband was

buried the previous week. The 35-year-old man died of bullet wounds he sustained when a trigger-happy police man opened fire on the bus he was travelling in because the driver refused to give him fifty naira.

Ngozi's pregnancy was in advanced stage. Without a husband and a job, Chioma shivered as she imagined what life would be for Ngozi.

When she got to the notice board, many people where there checking the list. Some were crying, many others were rejoicing as their names were not on the list. Just a glance, Chioma saw her name, Chioma Eze on number five. She let out an involuntary laughter and left for her office.

The smile on her face took people's attention away from her. As she was unlocking her door, a messenger came and gave her a brown envelop. She turned it and saw her name boldly written on it. She signed the mail register and collected the letter.

After bolting her door, Chioma sat down and opened the envelope, brought out the letter inside and read it. She was told that she had been dismissed from service because of indiscipline and that no severance benefit will be given to her.

She lolled into her seat and closed her eyes. It was then that the message in the letter dawned on her. "How will I survive with two kids without a job?" she soliloquized. She started weeping until she dosed off.

When she woke up, the secretariat was deserted. The time was 5:30 pm. She parked all her belongings in the office and bid it goodbye.

At home, Chioma tried as much as she could to look cheerful. She succeeded until during dinner, she could not coordinate the family discussion as she used to. After the prayers, her children started attacking the jollof rice and fried fish voraciously. Chioma was caught up in her thoughts that she did not even raise her spoon.

It was ten minutes later, after Obi ha waited for his mother to initiate the usual table conversations that he looked at her, tears were rolling down her cheeks.

Obi was shocked that his mother's food remained untouched. "What is it, mummy?" Obi asked with tears laden voice.

Chioma shuddered, sighed and wiped her eyes with the back of her hands. Just a glance, Ada was convinced that something is terribly wrong. She put down her spoon, pushed back her seat and went to her mum. Ada placed her arm across her mother's shoulder looked directly into her eyes and asked with a shaky voice, "What is it, mummy?"

Chioma was caught flat footed. She did not know what to say. At the same time she did not want to weigh down the young minds with issues for adults. "I am ok, kids."

"Mummy, you were crying", Obi said as if to remind her if she had forgotten.

"Mummy, you've never looked this worried before", Ada started, "What is wrong? Did you hear any bad report about us?"

"It's ok. I'm feeling a slight headache." Chioma lied.

"It must be very severe, let me get you Paracetamol." Obi left and came back with a sachet of Paracetamol.

Chioma took two tablets and forced a smile, "I'll be fine kids. Let's eat." She started eating the jollof rice as fast as she could, hoping that would make her kids to start eating again. She surreptitiously looked at Ada. She was just turning her food with her spoon. Obi had dropped his spoon and was looking at his mother worriedly.

"The person that finishes his food first will receive a special prize from me."

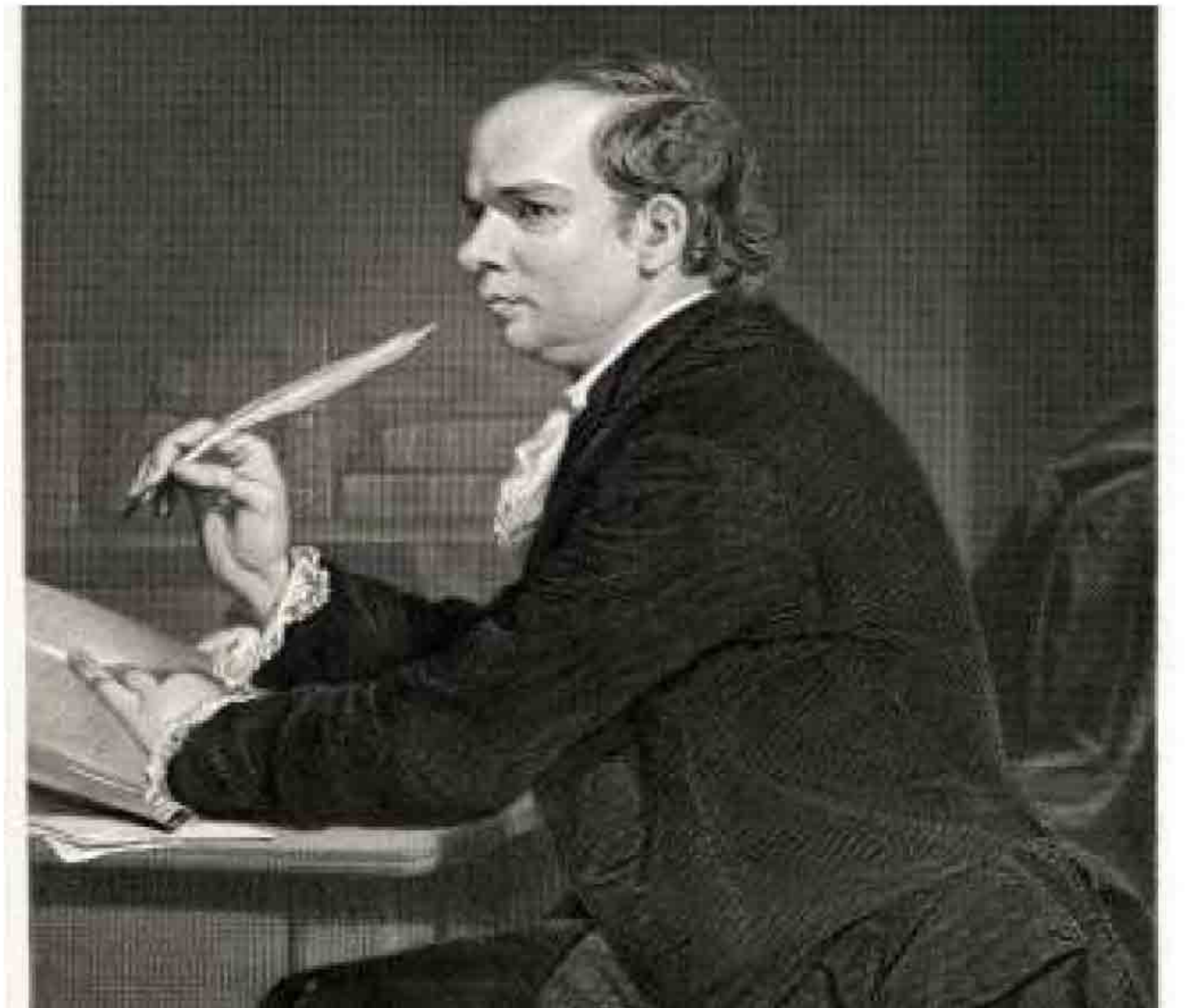
Ada and Obi made no effort to eat their food. Instead, Ada stood up, "Mummy, I am ok. Thank you", she said and left for her room.

Chioma turned to Obi and nodded. Obi shook his head, "Thanks mum, I'm satisfied."

Chioma did not take a single spoon again.

The die is cast. How will Chioma and her children survive the difficult times ahead. Will Eze return on time to save his family? Don't miss our next publication.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH



Oliver Goldsmith was an Anglo-Irish writer born on November 10, 1728 either in the townland of Pallas, near Ballymahon, County Longford, Ireland, where his father served as the Anglican curate of the parish of Forgney, or at the residence of his maternal grandparents, at the Smith Hill House near Elphin in County Roscommon, where his grand-father Oliver Jones was a clergyman and master of the Elphin diocesan school, and where Oliver studied.

In 1744, Goldsmith went up to Trinity College, Dublin. He neglected his studies in theology and law and paid dearly for it as he fell to the bottom of his class.

Three years later, along with four other undergraduates, he was expelled for a riot in which they attempted to storm the Marshalsea Prison. However, he was graduated in 1749 as a Bachelor of Arts, but without the discipline or distinction that might have gained him entry to a profession in the church or the law. His education seemed to have given him mainly a taste for fine clothes, playing cards, singing Irish airs, and playing the flute.

He lived for a short time with his mother, tried various professions without success, studied medicine desultorily at the University of Edinburgh from 1752 to 1755, and set out on a walking tour of Flanders, France, Switzerland, and Northern Italy.

He settled in London in 1756, where he briefly held various jobs, including an apothecary's assistant and an usher of a school. Perennially in debt and addicted to gambling, Goldsmith produced a massive output as a hack writer on Grub Street, for the publishers of London, but his few painstaking works earned him the company of Samuel Johnson, with whom he was a founding member of "The Club".

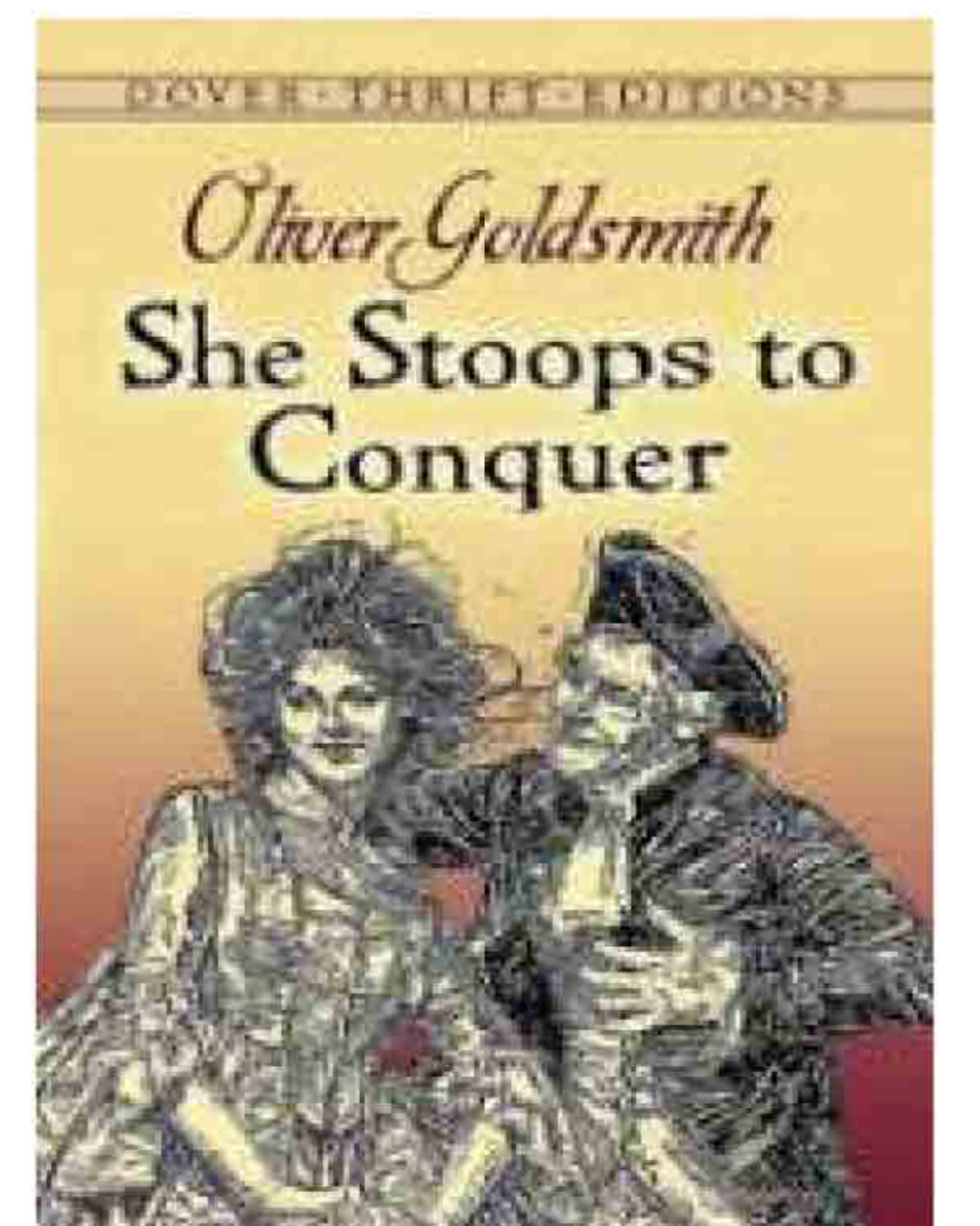
The money that he sporadically earned was often frittered away or happily given away to the next good cause that presented itself so that any financial security tended to be fleeting and short-lived. Goldsmith's talents were unreservedly recognised by Samuel Johnson, whose patronage aided his eventual recognition in the literary world and the world of drama.

Some of his works are: The Vicar of Wakefield, The Deserted Village, The Good Natur'd Man, and She Stoops to Conquer.

Researchers have speculated that Goldsmith may have suffered from colour blindness, a condition which was not described until years after Goldsmith's death. Munro MacLennan described several instances from Goldsmith's life which suggest that he had an inability to distinguish between certain colors.

Goldsmith's premature death in 1774 may have been partly due to his own misdiagnosis of a kidney infection. He was buried in Temple Church in London. The inscription reads: "HERE LIES OLIVER GOLDSMITH". A monument was originally raised for him at the site of his burial, but it was destroyed in an air raid in 1941. A monument to him survives in the centre of Ballymahon, also in Westminster Abbey with an epitaph written by Samuel Johnson.

By Mercy Emeh



INSPIRATION CITATION

I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in.

— Robert Louis Stevenson.

Sporting Ambassador



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: *Former Champions Running Out of Time*



Carlo Ancelotti and his Real Madrid side are working a tight rope

Action returns this mid-week across Europe as the League Phase of the UEFA Champions League enters the sixth round of matches with some former winners running out of time to get automatic ticket for the next round.

Recall that only teams

that finished between first and eighth will automatically qualify for the round of 16 while those that finish between ninth and 24th will engage in a play-off.

As at today, the eight teams occupying the automatic qualification places are Liverpool,

Inter Milan, Barcelona, Borussia Dortmund, Atalanta, Bayer Leverkusen. Arsenal and Monaco.

Other teams including some former champions have only three matches to turn their fortune around or will have to pass through the crucible of a play-off before they would eventually reach the last 16.

The defending champions and most successful side of the competition with 15 titles, Real Madrid, are currently 24th with only six points. This mid-week they will take on Ademola Lookman's Atalanta at the Gewiss Stadium in a must-win encounter.

Juventus has only eight points and are 19th on the log. The two-time champions will host fellow strugglers Manchester City, who are 17th on the table. The 2023 champions of England are working a tight rope with only eight points after five matches.

Seven-time champions, AC Milan of Italy have only nine points. They will confront Red Star Belgrade, who were champions in 1991, at the San Siro. Red Star are the lowest placed former champions on 31st and they have gotten only three points.

Bayern Munich have won the Champions League six times, but with only nine points after five matches they are on the brink of missing an automatic ticket as they are placed 13th. They will take on

Shakhtar Donetsk as they battle to return to reckoning.

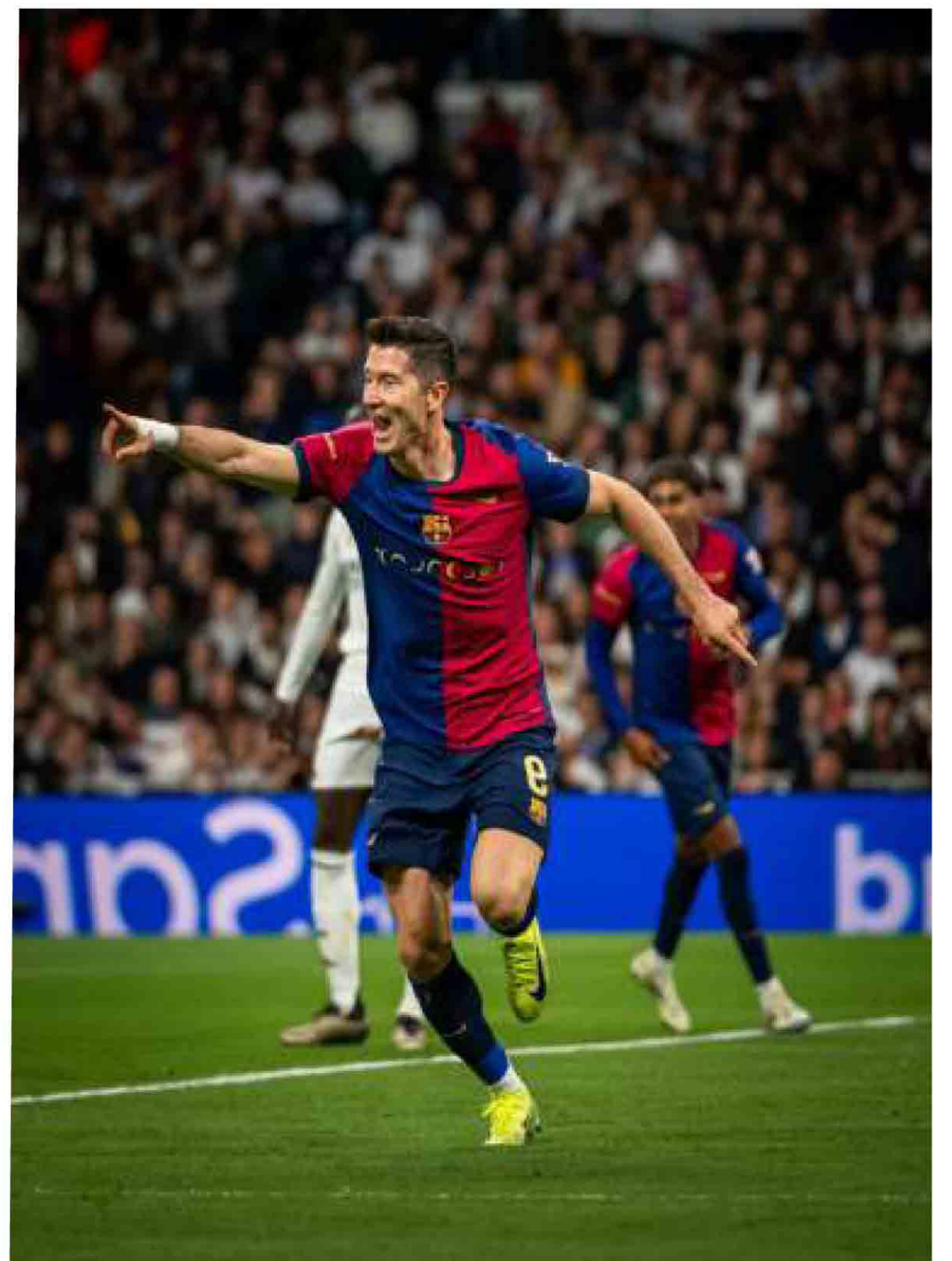
1967 Champions, Celtic of Scotland are 20th having garnered only eight points. This mid-week will see them travel to Croatia to confront Dinamo Zagreb.

PSV are 18th with eight points and will travel to France to take on

RB Salzburg will have their hands full against PSG as Atletico Madrid take on Slovan.

Lille of France will confront Sturm Graz while Arsenal will welcome Monaco to the Emirate Stadium.

Benfica and Bologna will lurk horns as Borussia Dortmund and Barcelona fight to finish at the Signal Iduna Park.



MAN ON FIRE: Robert Lewandowski is the top scorer so far with seven goals.

Brest. The 1988 champions from Netherlands have secured only eight points.

Other fixtures will see Girona host leaders Liverpool while Victor Boniface' Bayer Leverkusen will confront second placed Inter Milan.

Club Brugge will tread tackles with Sporting as Leipzig welcome Aston Villa.

Feyenoord will confront Sparta Prague as Stuttgart tread tackles with Young Boys.

Meanwhile, Robert Lewandowski of Barcelona is leading the scorers chart with seven goals followed by Gyokeres of Sporting, Erling Haaland of Manchester City, Harry Kane of Bayern Munich, Raphinha of Barcelona and Wirtz of Bayer Leverkusen.



YOU WILL NEVER WALK ALONE: Liverpool are top of the table.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation" December 8, 2024

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BLAST FROM THE PAST Yemi Tella's Parting Gift By Joseph Jacob

On October 20, 2007, there was an eclipse across Nigeria. Not an eclipse of the sun, but a loss of a shining star in Nigerian football. At 56 years, coach Yemi Tella died of lung cancer after spending two weeks at the Lagos State Teaching Hospital. But before he died, he gave Nigeria a parting gift.

Coach Yemi Tella was in charge of the Golden Eaglets as they strived to qualify for the FIFA U-17 World Cup. However, they will have to qualify for the CAF U-17 AFCON first.

Nigeria defeated Rwanda 6-2 on aggregate in the first round of qualifiers before they crushed Morocco 5-1 to qualify for the 2007 U-17 AFCON in Lome, Togo

The Golden Eaglets were drawn in Group B against Ghana, Burkina Faso and Eritrea.

The Nigerian boys thrashed Eritrea 8-0 in their opening match before defeating Burkina Faso 2-1 in their second match. Nigeria ended the group stage on a high, defeating West African brothers Ghana 2-0.

After a 2-0 victory over Tunisia in the semi-finals, Nigeria took on hosts Togo in the final and defeated them by a lone goal to clinch their second title.

Having conquered Africa, Yemi Tella focused on conquering the world.

The FIFA U-17 World Cup took place in South Korea with Nigeria placed in Group D against France, Japan and Haiti. They opened their campaign against the Europeans, who defeated Nigeria in the final of the 2001 edition. But this time, Nigeria took all three

points with a 2-1 victory.

Nigeria hammered Japan 3-0 and crushed Haiti 4-1 to win the group with maximum nine points.

In the round of 16, Nigeria eliminated Colombia 2-1 to book a quarter-final place against South America giants, Argentina. The Golden Eaglets defeated Argentina 2-0.

The semi-finals pitched Nigeria against Germany, a very lethal European side. But, the Tella coached side was on a mission and had no fear for any opponent as they defeated Germany 3-1.

The final took place on September 9, 2007 at the Seoul World Cup Stadium that had 36,125 spectators. FIFA appointed Yuichi Nishimura from Japan the centre referee.

The match lived up to its billing as it had drama, intensity, controversy and tension. It left soccer fans across the globe sitting on the edge of their seats for 120 minutes. The match went into penalties after both sides failed to score in full and extra time.

Nigerian goalkeeper Oladele Ajiboye became the hero. Asier Illarramendi missed his kick while Ajiboye saved Fran Merida and Iago's penalty kicks. On the other hand, Matthew Edile, Daniel Joshua and Ganiyu Oseni found the back of the net to give Nigeria a 3-0 victory.

A month before his death, Yemi Tella was awarded the Member of the Order of the Federal Republic medal by President Umar Yar'Adua.

Though Yemi Tella is no more, Nigerian soccer fans still appreciate his parting gift.



Yemi Tella with his boys.

MANCHESTER DERBY: Guardiola Seek Vengeance Against Amorim

By Joseph Jacob



Ruben Amorim (L) and Pep Guardiola.

The first Manchester Derby of the season holds this weekend at the Etihad Stadium with the Premier League in the park for Guardiola and his players.

Seven minutes before the break Viktor Gyokeres equalized.



Manchester United's Varane (L) battling against City's Erling Haaland.

After the break the home side took over and Araujo gave them the lead just a minute into the second half. Three minutes later, Gyokeres converted a penalty to give Ruben Amorim's side a 3-1 lead. Another penalty was awarded to Sporting and Viktor Gyokeres converted to become the first Sporting CP player to score a European Cup hat trick since Antonio Oliveira scored three goals against Dinamo Zagreb in 1982.

It was only the third time a team managed by Guardiola conceded four goals. The first was in April 2014

title, bragging right and revenge at stake. Manchester United's new manager, Ruben Amorim will be confronting Manchester City manager, Pep Guardiola for the first time since his appointment at Old Trafford.

The Premier League title is at stake as both clubs are trailing and are therefore seeking for every point to improve their standings on the table. Secondly, this encounter will temporarily settle the argument whether the city of Manchester is red or blue, the colours of Manchester United and Manchester City respectively.

Lastly, Pep Guardiola will seek to avenge his 4-1 defeat to Ruben Amorim in the Champions League when Amorim was the gaffer of Sporting CP. The match, which was Guardiola's 175th UEFA Champions League match was played at the Estadio Jose Alvalade. The Citizens took the lead in the 4th minute through Phil Foden and it seemed the match was going to be another stroll

when his side, Bayern Munich suffered a 4-0 demolition by Real Madrid. The second was Manchester City's 4-0 loss to Barcelona in 2016.

Guardiola will not want to lose to Amorim this time and Manchester United will not want to crumble before another big team after losing 2-0 to Arsenal. It will be a cracker.

Their last match was an FA Community Shield Final, which City won 7-6 on penalties after full time had ended 1-1.

Manchester United can draw strength from their 2-1 FA Cup final win over their city rivals at the Wembley Stadium on May 24, 2024

In other fixtures for this weekend, Arsenal will attempt to gun down Everton at the Emirate Stadium as Liverpool will hope to sustain their top place on the league table when they host Fulham, who are parading Alex Iwobi and Calvin Bassey.

Newcastle United will lurk horns with Leicester City as Wolves seek to devour Ipswich. Nottingham Forest will confront Aston Villa as Brighton attempt to outshine Crystal Palace.

Chelsea will hope to resist the stings of the Bees when they welcome Brentford to the Stamford Bridge while Southampton tread tackles with Tottenham Hotspur.

Playing at the Vitality Stadium, Bournemouth will be hoping to have enough vitality with which to disunite West Ham United.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

		6		4				1
5	4	2	1		7		8	6
	3		8		5		9	4
6	5		7	1		4		
2		7	9					5
		3		5	6	1	7	8
1	7		6		8			
8			4		1	5	6	7
3	6		5			8	1	

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