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“Governor Alex Otti, A Hardworking, Disciplined, And Innovative Leader, Is Our Man Of The Year”

By Jones Nnanna Ike

President Tinubu had, in an address to a distinguished audience of Igbo Leaders on Saturday, 4th January, 2025, while on an official visit to Enugu State, singled out Governor Alex Otti for praise on account of his hardwork and commitment to improving the lot of the people of his State.

President Tinubu's accolades follow a similar gale of endorsements and support from a wide spectrum of distinguished Nigerian leaders from across the political divide that includes Fmr President Olusegun Obasanjo, Vice President Kashim Shettima, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Fmr First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan, HE Senator Adolf Wabara, Senator Enyinaya Abaribe, Rtd. Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika, Late Ohaneze President, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Deputy Speaker, Fed. House of Rep. Rt. Hon. Ben Kalu, Dr. Greg Ibe, Chief Mark Wabara, Fmr. Deputy Gov. Rt. Hon Ude Oko Chukwu, Chief B.B Apugo, Dr. Uche Ogah, Dr. Dan Okeke, and many others across the country. Indeed, The Gov Otti's administration achievements in Abia State have transformed the State from its pre-May 29th, 2023 Status as one of the least developed States in Nigeria to the fastest developing State



■ “Gov. Alex Otti, Our Man of the Year, has instituted a good governance system in Abia - a System that has transformed the state from its pre-May 29, 2023 status as the least developed State to the fastest developing State in Nigeria, within a period of 1 year and 9 months”.

makes it difficult to accord any other person other than the hardworking Governor, His Excellency Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, the commemorative yearly recognition as the National Ambassador Man of

the Year.

Governor Alex Otti was powered into office with his peculiar electioneering mantra to Abians “Weep No More, Help is on the way”. Since coming into office, he has translated that

mantra into reality by working hard to establish a good governance structure in the state; the aftermath has been the uncommon transformation of the State into what is now regarded as “The New Abia”.

The success of the new good governance structure inevitably warrants closer scrutiny in order to understand its fundamental characteristics.

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"Governor Alex Otti, A Hardworking, Disciplined, And Innovative Leader, Is Our Man Of The Year"

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1. Hard Work As An Essential Character Of The New Governance Structure.

One of the most essential characters of a good governance structure which may not be found in any conventional text book on politics or business is hardwork. Governor Otti's other name may perhaps be regarded as "Mr. Hardwork". Both friends and foes acknowledge this unique attribute of the able Governor.

Gov. Otti hardly catches up to four hours sleep in a day. His boundless energy, good health and hardwork has impacted statecraft positively to such



Gov Otti Signing the 2024 appropriation bill

an extent that all other State officials seek to meet up with his quick pace & boundless energy.

The hardwork which the governor has imbued statecraft with as a most essential ingredient has ensured that projects and policies are achieved within specified timelines.

The numerous projects being churned out regularly are all by-products of this unique character of a good governance structure that Governor Otti has imbued the State with.

2. Restoration Of The Merit-Based Principle In Governance



One of the most significant character trait of the good governance system which

Governor Alex Otti has achieved in Abia State is the restoration of the merit principle as an essential attribute of statecraft.

Right from the beginning of his tenure, Governor Otti has kept faith with this principle. It is this principle

that informed the recruitment of brilliant professionals who had distinguished themselves in diverse fields to manage critical sectors of the Abia MDA's. The religious execution of this principle without regard to ethnicity,

class or gender has helped in the running of a smart and good governance structure in Abia State. The delivery of numerous projects within agreed time lines are all by products of this new good governance structure in Abia State.

3. Accountability, Transparency And Due Process As An Essential Character Of The Good Governance Structure.

There is an aphorism that you cannot eat your cake and have it back. It is the same way in governance. You cannot be stealing public funds meant for development and still have funds to power development.

Governor Otti has been able to power Abia's development to unprecedented new heights because nobody is stealing the funds meant for development. For the first time in several

decades, the governor's approval translates to immediate payment. The governor has given further teeth to this policy by directing the Accountant General to ensure that payments within her table are effected within a 72-hour period. This timeline is quite unprecedented in the country. Such policy is working because there are funds available to power the policy. Nobody is stealing the

public funds. The rats eating into public coffers have been chased away for good.

Additionally, the Due Process Office has been empowered to ensure transparency, openness and fairness in the Public Procurement Process thereby ensuring that public procurement in Abia State are carried at the best possible costs. It is also good to note



Dr. Oluebube Chukwu: The DG, Due Process Office

that strict adherence to budgetary allocations has been the most significant character of the Gov Otti's administration.

4. An All-inclusive Approach To Governance

One other essential attribute of Governor Otti's Good Governance structure that has been established in Abia State is its quality of inclusion. This approach has entailed the even distribution of political positions across all sections and gender to such an extent that allegations of marginalization of sections has now been consigned to the dustbin of history.

It is equally good to note that the good governance structure that has been installed in Abia is gender friendly. For the first time in the history of the State, a lot of women have been empowered to play critical roles in the development of the State.



Prof. Uche Eme Uche: Hon. Commissioner for Tertiary Education



Mrs. Njum Uma-Onyemenam: (Abia State Accountant General)

In fact, such active offices like Accountant-General of the State; Chairman, Civil Service Commission, Chairman, Primary Education Board;

Commissioner, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Ministry of Poverty Alleviation; DG, State; Orientation Agency, Chairman, Hospitals Management Board; CMD,



Prof. (Mrs) Ijeoma Nduka: Chief Medical Director, Abia State University Teaching Hospital Aba

Abia Specialist Hospital Aba; Several Special Advisers/ Assistants Positions are all manned by Women. Women occupy 75% of the Permanent Secretary's

position in Abia State.

It is equally important to note the absolute fidelity to the Weekly meetings of the State Executive Council and the Monthly meetings of the Expanded Executive Council involving all Appointees of the Governor. This all-inclusive approach to governance established by Governor Alex Otti has helped to ensure a participatory system of governance by all its top officials as solutions are collectively proffered to identified problems, as well as setting time lines for delivery of policies and projects.

5. Absolute Fidelity To The Payment Of Workers Salary Before The 28th Day Of Every Month

"A Worker deserves his wage" so says the Holy Book.

This divine injunction was mostly breached in the immediate past years before the coming into power of Gov. Alex Otti.

In those infamous era, the

payment of workers' salaries was characterized by a great deal of arbitrariness. It was to stem the tide, that informed Governor Otti's declaration that workers will be paid on or before the 28th day of every month during his inauguration into office on

May 29th 2023. Since then his administration has kept faith to this declaration by ensuring that workers emoluments are paid on or before the 28th day of every month.

The administration has

stepped up to ensure that all other forms of entitlements and allowances are paid the Abia Workers.

Such absolute fidelity to the payment of workers salary and entitlements has helped to enhance workers morale and enthusiasm for

work. This situation has no doubt contributed significantly to the efficient delivery of government services.

Absolute Fidelity to the payment of workers salary is one of the characteristic of a good government system.

6. Recovery Of Government Assets

One other character of a good government system is a determination to recover stolen government assets and discourage pilfering of government assets.

Governor Otti has shown an uncommon courage and determination to recover stolen government assets and also discouraged pilfering

of public property by setting up a State Panel on The Recovery of Government funds and Assets that was Chaired by Justice Mrs. Duruoha (rtd).

In the same manner, the Gov Otti's administration in 2024 also set up a Visitation Panel on Abia State University.

All these efforts are geared towards the

recovery of stolen public assets as well as discourage corrupt conducts in our public institutions and hence qualify as an attribute of a good governance system which incumbent Governor Alex Otti has labored to establish in the State.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as Nwaogu Georgina Uloaku, now wish to be known and addressed as IKPEAMA GEORGINA ULOAKU. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Ministry of Education, Secondary Education Management Board (SEMB) Umuahia, Abia State and the general public should please take note.
IKPEAMA GEORGINA ULOAKU.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Okezie Ezioma, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. IBEGBULEM EZIOMA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
MRS. IBEGBULEM EZIOMA.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Judith Ego Odoemena, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. JUDITH EGO IMO. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
MRS. JUDITH EGO IMO.

I, formerly known and addressed as Annie Nwefere Onu-Onwuchekwa, now wish to be known and addressed as ANNIE NWEFERE ONU. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
ANNIE NWEFERE ONU.

I, formerly known and addressed Miss Nnamezie Ozioma Glad, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. KELECHI OZIOMA GLAD. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
MRS. KELECHI OZIOMA GLAD.

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

Change of Name/ Correction of Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Favour Enefiok Etim which appeared in my Bank Verification Number (BVN), as Utitofon Enefiok Etim is the same person and now wish to be known and addressed as UTITOFON ENEFIOK ETIM. My date of birth was wrongly captured as 27/09/2000 instead of 27/09/2001. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
UTITOFON ENEFIOK ETIM.

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7. A Repositioned Civil Service.

Gov. Otti has worked very hard to rebuild the State Civil Service as an instrument for the quick and efficient delivery of goods and services. He has tried to achieve this feat through the following ways: (a) A strong emphasis on the merit-based

principle in the recruitment, promotion and disciplinary exercises in the service (b) An aggressive rebuilding and retrofitting of public sector housing infrastructure and (c) A relentless war on Ghost Workers, Absenteeism, truancy and lateness to work in the Public Sector

One notable character of the Abia labour force before the coming into office of Governor Otti was the intolerable level of indiscipline, corruption, and other malfeasances.

Governor Otti, earlier in his tenure, decided to stem

the tide by waging a relentless war against these agents of a bad governance system. Several verification exercises were conducted to fish out ghost workers.

Heads of MDA's were issued directives to ensure that their workers resume on

time and to sanction other various acts of indiscipline.

Today, Abia work force is a smart one. The Abia workers are major contributors to the establishment of a good governance structure in the State.

8. The Institution Of A Direct Labour Mechanism

One other unique structure which Governor Alex Otti established that has enhanced the quick delivery of services at the most cost-effective way is the establishment of direct labour mechanism in some agencies that deal directly with the provision of physical infrastructure. Such unique mechanism has resulted in the efficient, fast and cost-effective delivery of goods

and services in Abia State. The most notable amongst the agencies that have applied this mechanism in the quick delivery of goods and services includes the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Lands and Housing and the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA) amongst others.

The philosophy behind the

institution of the "direct labour mechanism" in Abia State was well captured in a remarkable speech made by one of its chief advocates, Mr. Chaka Chukwumerije, the Commissioner for Lands and Housing during the re-opening of the old secretariat complex on 26th November, 2024, when he alluded to the use of the mechanism in delivering the renovation

and retrofitting of the Secretariat Complex. In his own words "Another valuable aspect of the story is the use of the State in-house resources, its civil servants, via direct labour to actualize this enviable project, thus deepening the capacity of the State's Structural Engineers, Builders, Architects and Quantity Surveyors, while also saving the State

resources, and still delivers quality projects. Mr. Chukwumerije went further in his speech to summarize the philosophical basis of the mechanism by using biblical injunctions thus "As the Holy Bible says in Isaiah 58:12 "You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again".

Physical Manifestations Of The Good Governance System In Abia

Abia State is now regarded as a huge construction site. Most government officials are now known by their busy schedules and haste to deliver quality goods and services. Indeed, numerous projects have been delivered since the coming into power of Dr. Alex Otti on May 29th 2023.

Such goods and services have been delivered at such quick pace and at a most cost-effective manner that leaves many observers quite bewildered.

However, a scientific analysis of the Governor Otti's

A. Sanitation

Sanitation was one of the sectors which Governor Alex Otti declared as emergency when he started his tenure.

Then, the State was overtaken by filth. Most of the urban roads were overrun by filth and refuse. Dr. Otti personally

drove the machine that was used to start the war on filth. Today, the beginning of the year 2025, the war has been won. The cleanliness of the streets of Abia is now taken for

establishment by Governor Alex Otti and his team.

Since there are legions of such projects, we can only select few examples which roughly falls within the sectors that Governor Otti declared an Emergency on, when he assumed office on May 29th 2023.

B. Roads & Bridges

This sector is another one that attracted the immediate attention of Governor Otti when he came to power on May 29th 2023. The reason was simple, Abia roads both intra and intercity were characterized by a great deal of dilapidation.

In fact, Abia State was notorious for its bad roads, just as it was also the butt of jokes by several people both in and outside the State. In fact, by May 29th 2023, Abia had acquired infamy as the state with the worst network of roads in the country.

This was what informed a declaration of an emergency in the sector.

Presently, the song is different. An adroit combination of both the direct labour mechanism and contract system has resulted in the delivery of several quality intra-city,



intercity and rural feeder roads. One other notable character of the roads being constructed by Governor Otti is that they are of very high quality and come with drainage, street lights and beautiful roundabouts.



New constructed high quality roads: symbol of the emerging "New Abia"

As at last count, more than 400 of such roads have been delivered, many more are still in various stages of construction.

One other notable character of the Otti roads is that the most problematic of such roads have been contracted out to the best



contractors in the country. Both foreign and indigenous contractors as well as the technical team of the State Ministry of Works are all very active in the construction of roads in the state.

C. The Health Sector

Governor Otti appreciates the overriding importance of health-care in the human development index, hence its inclusion in the list of emergencies when he was inaugurated into office. It will be recalled that the health sector in Abia prior to May 29th, May 2023, was in a deplorable state.

There was no functional State owned tertiary health institution in Abia.

The Abia State Teaching Hospital lost its accreditation during that inglorious era. Most residents of the state trooped outside the State to access quality health care services.

Governor Otti had vowed a reversal of

the trend.

Currently, the reversal is being achieved at a very fast pace due to the attention and investment being expended on the health sector. Currently, the State Government has up to 35% of its budgetary provision devoted to the Health Sector.

There is an ongoing comprehensive renovation of over 200 health centres across the three senatorial zones of the State. The health initiative, code named "Project Ekwueme" which was launched by Gov. Otti in Uzuakoli, Bende Local Government Area on Monday January 20th, 2025, is a very robust and comprehensive health care package aimed at rebuilding and

functionalizing of 200 PHC's across the State's 184 wards within 100 days as well as significantly improving access to quality healthcare, particularly in rural communities.

Earlier in his tenure, Governor Alex Otti had enabled the Abia Teaching Hospital to regain its accreditation thereby restoring the teaching of medical officers by the institution. This is in addition to a massive investment in its infrastructure which is aimed at transforming it into a first-class health facility. The same gesture was extended to the Abia State Specialist Hospital, Umuahia and Amachara General Hospital, all of which were renovated and

retrofitted. The same was the case of the Aba General Hospital as well as the General Hospital Umuahia.

The renovations included the equipping of various department such as the Eye Clinic, now comparable to the best facilities anywhere in the country, General Outpatient Department, Accident and Emergency Departments etc.

The equipment of these tertiary, secondary and Primary health facilities continue to be an ongoing concern enabling them in the process to perform complex tasks like Bone Marrow transplant as well as other complex surgeries.

Correction of Name

This is to affirm that Chinecherem Kelvin Ogbonna which was wrongly written on my (BVN) Bank Verification Number and Chinecherem Onyinyechi Ogbonna are same person, I now wish to be known and addressed as C H I N E C H E R E M ONYINYECHI OGBONNA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CHINECHEREM ONYINYECHI OGBONNA.

Change of Name of Institution

The Institution which was formerly known and addressed as BORN TWICE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY, located at No 1, Alaocha Avenue Elugwu Isieke Ibeku, now wish to be known and addressed as MIRAWIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS. All documents bearing the former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MIRAWIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Maduforo Nwamaka Gloria now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. CHIMA GLORIA NWAMAKA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS. CHIMA GLORIA NWAMAKA

granted, as a normal way of life. It has taken a lot of efforts to achieve this status as a very clean State and perhaps a lot more effort to keep it that way.

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One other notable achievement in the health sector is the attraction and commissioning of a State of the art multipurpose hospital in Ugunagbo Local Government Area of the State. The facility was built through the office of The Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on Sustainable Development Goals (OSSAP-SDGs). The 100-bed facility is equipped with World-class Medical equipment and Services aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality. Governor Otti's commitment to revitalizing

the state's Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Health Care facilities is aimed at not only reducing the burden of disease prevalence in



Gov Otti Inspecting Facilities At The Abia Specialist Teaching Hospital, Aba

the State but also ensuring that the citizens have unhindered access to quality healthcare in their various communities



which would in turn considerably eliminate the need for residents to travel outside the State for Medicare. There have also been free medical missions carried out by several International charity organisation in conjunction with the State Ministry of Health, all of which have helped to improve access to medicare for several citizens.

Governor Otti's achievement in the health sector is no doubt a major contributor to enhanced standard of living which the citizens of the State now enjoy.

D. Education Sector

The Education Sector was one of such sectors that benefitted from an emergency declaration when Governor Alex Otti assumed office. Since then, a lot of efforts have gone into rebuilding the sector, the latest being the free, compulsory education for all children of school age now operational in the State. The free and compulsory primary and secondary education policy makes it a punishable offence for any parent of a school age child not to enroll the child in school.

Currently, Abia State

E. Security

Pre-May 29th 2023, Abia State was also renowned for its high crime rate. Violent crimes like kidnapping, armed robbery, theft and other crimes were common.

The Cattle Market at Umunneochi, served as the logistics headquarters for criminals who operated freely in the Umunneochi/Isiukwuato axis of the State as well as the fringe areas of Imo, Anambra, Enugu

Government has 25% of its budgetary provisions devoted to education. Such provision is one of the highest in the country. Since assumption of office, Governor Alex Otti has devoted considerable effort and resources towards improving the education sector. It is also worthy to note that it is the reform in the sector that informed the separation of the Education Ministry into The Basic and Tertiary Ministries in other to enhance their effectiveness.

Governor Otti's administration has over the past 19 months

and Ebonyi State, making life very difficult in those areas.



New vehicles purchased by Gov. Otti for "Operation Crush Project"



Mrs Lydia Ezihe Onuoha:
Chairman, Abia State Universal Basic Education Board, (ASUBEB)

It was this sad state of affairs that informed the inclusion of Security as one of the sectors that benefitted from an emergency declaration. Governor Otti vowed to make Abia one of the safest states in the country. The Governor has since walked his talk.

The Governor achieved the feat of securing the state

devoted considerable energy and resources to the sector in other to enable it play its role as the engine room of Human Capital Development. The reforms of the sector have also led to the appointment of very top



A Functional Modern Classroom In The "New-Abia"

through two main Policy Actions.

The first was the establishment of the "Operation Crush" while the second was the demolition and re-organization of the Umunneochi Cattle Market.

These two policy actions plus a steady and bold determination to stem crime in the state has led to a drastic drop in crime rate as it affects Abia.

Today, while crime is a major problem in several states of the

professionals to man the various tertiary education institutions in the State namely: The Abia State University, Uturu, the Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic Aba, the Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukuwu and the College of Health Sciences and Management Technology, Aba.

The above tertiary educational facilities are doing well just as other institutions in the State that has witnessed Governor Alex Otti's "Midas Touch"

Federation, the rate keeps getting lower in Abia thereby making it, one of the safest in the country.

An efficient security system has been put in place in Abia and this has in turn guaranteed a safer environment for both people and businesses to thrive.

The achievement of a much more secured environment ranks as one of the physical manifestation of a good governance system that is in place in Abia State.

F. Lands And Housing

The activities of the Ministry of Lands and Housing, places it as one of the best examples of the physical manifestations of the good governance system in Abia State.

The Ministry has ensured a seamless acquisition of large hectares of Land for the numerous projects that is scattered in different parts of the State. Examples of such acquisitions includes the ones for the Abia Innovative and Industrial Park Owaza; the Abia Medical City, Mbawsi, the Airport Project at

Ubaha Nsulu, Isiala Ngwa North, and numerous other lands for Housing Developments.

Additionally, the reform in the Ministry has led to the policy of issuance of C of O within a 30 days period thus ensuring ease of land acquisition in the State.

The Ministry also spearheaded the aggressive rehabilitation and reconstruction of numerous public-sector buildings as well as their retrofitting. Most of such public-sector buildings were hitherto in

various stages of dilapidation.

Some of such renovated and retrofitted buildings includes the State Secretariat Complex; the Old State Secretariat Complex; the Commissioners Quarters, Michael Okpara Auditorium, several buildings inside the Government House Complex, the Ministry of



Mr. Chaka Chukwumerije:
Hon. Commissioner for Lands & Housing



The Renovated and Retrofitted Old State Secretariat Complex

Agriculture Complex; Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation Complex, the Law Reform Commission Building, and several others.

G. The Uncommon Transformation Of Aba Metropolis

The deplorable condition of Enyimba City compelled its listing as one of the sectors that deserved special attention. Dr. Alex Otti vowed severally in the past to rebuild the city into a modern centre of Trade, Industry and Tourism.

The Governor has within his short period in office devoted considerable time and energy towards rebuilding the once famed city into a modern one.

The administration has executed numerous road projects in the city that has once again made both intra and inter-city navigation within the city a less stressful experience. It is particularly worthy to note that such roads include very important inter-

city connecting roads that had been abandoned for more than 30 years like Port Harcourt Road, Ohanku Road, Omuma Road, Ekeapara-Owerrinta Road, Ndoki Road, and Ehi Road. It is also important to note the engagement of such construction giants like Julius Berger in the construction of these roads.

The Otti's Roads are of high quality and comes along with drainage, street lights and beautiful roundabouts.

Otti's "Midas Touch" in Aba is increasingly transforming the city into a modern centre of trade, industry and tourism.

The transformation that is being witnessed in Aba is not restricted to

the building of roads, drainage, street lights and round-about. It cuts across different sectors like, health, education, electricity supply, markets remodeling etc. It is also expected that the 5-Star Hotel that is being proposed at the Enyimba Hotel site will greatly transform the tourism landscape of the City.

This is just as it is good to note that the commercial, industrial and tourism activities of the city will get immense boost from the Ongoing Airport Project at Ubaha Nsulu Ngwa.

It is also good to acknowledge the contributions of the Governor Otti

administration towards the completion of the Geometric Power Plant as well as the Federal Government owned Alaoji Power Plant. Both plants have been built to supply and sustain an uninterrupted power supply to Aba and Abia State respectively.

Perennial electricity challenges had over decades hampered sustainable growth of small and medium-scale enterprises.

The successful operation of the two generating plants is expected to address the challenges of power supply.

It is also important to note that one of Governor Otti's most important structural plans towards

the rebuilding of the Enyimba City was the establishment and enactment into Law of the Greater Aba Development Authority (GADA) as a Permanent Institution to guide the ordered development and growth of Aba into a Mega City.

GADA has since been making robust contributions towards the rebuilding of Aba.

Indeed, a modern Enyimba City is gradually sprouting out of the ruined city. Such gradual emergence of a modern City out of the old dilapidated one, is one of the physical manifestation of a good governance system that has been erected in Abia State by Governor Otti's administration.

H. Greater Ohafia Development Authority (GODA)

Ohafia, the capital of Abia North Senatorial Zone has been penciled down for a complete transformation through the establishment of Greater Ohafia Development Authority. The Agency which is headed by a very brilliant and established professional

Engr Obinna Odum is expected to provide a guided development of the fast-growing town into a smart and modern city in line with Governor Otti's vision for Abia State.

In a nutshell, brilliant and innovative Governor Alex Otti has driven Abia State

from its once reckoning as one of the least developed States to the fastest developing one in Nigeria under a period of less than two years. This is quite an uncommon feat. He has in the process wiped away the age long tears of a once beleaguered people.

The able Governor by so doing also restored their pride and hope for the future. It is this feat that informs the commemorative conferment on him as the National Ambassador Man of the Year.

Concluded

Editorial

Benson Ojeikere – A Symbol Of The Merit-Based Principle Now Operational In Abia

The elevation of the Edo State-born Mr. Benson Ojeikere, as the new Abia State Head of Service (HOS) has continued to attract nationwide applause on account of its salutary effect on the thorny issue of the national question.

The appointment of Mr. Ojeikere is the by-product of a systematic approach by Governor Alex Otti to restore the merit-based principle in the recruitment, promotion and discipline in the Civil Service.

Prior to May 29, 2023 when Dr. Alex Otti came into the saddle, the Service was characterized by a great deal of indiscipline and arbitrariness. The net effect was a largely ineffective Civil Service which Governor Otti's regime inherited on assumption of office.

Since coming into power, Governor Otti has waged a relentless war to reposition the Civil Service.

The war on Ghost Workers, absenteeism and truancy are all parts of the efforts to build an effective and efficient civil service for the state.

The re-establishment of an open, competitive and merit-based system as the basis for recruitment into different cadres of the Civil Service, ranks as one of the most important actions of the Gov. Otti's administration towards bequeathing the State with an efficient and effective Public Service.

An efficient and effective Civil Service

plays a pivotal role in the efficient delivery of government policies.

In the written and oral interview set by the Governor and his team, Mr. Benson Ojeikere emerged as the best candidate for the job of the Head of Service. He was accordingly elevated as such.

We at the Editorial Desk of National Ambassador Newspapers, congratulates Mr. Benson Ojeikere. We also wish to applaud the Executive Governor of Abia State, His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti for instituting a merit-based system in the State which has made it possible for the most qualified candidate to emerge as the HOS in the State.

More importantly, we wish to acknowledge Governor Otti's push to build a society where the operative norms will be based on the merit-based principle.

The abolishment of the non-indigene dichotomy and other such discriminatory policies are part of his effort to push the merit-based principle forward.

It is within this context that we call on every well-meaning persons to join this crusade to make the merit-based principle an overriding one in our society.

Once again, a very big congratulations to Mr. Benson Ojeikere for his elevation as the HOS, Abia State.

We wish him well as he undertake the onerous task of building up an efficient Abia State Civil Service.

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

Ending The Baby Factory Menace In Nigeria

Dear Editor,

What has now become a public issue is the sale of babies – a menace which has been on for some time – as teenage girls become victims of unwanted pregnancies and the children produced are sold out for adoption to couples who want babies at all cost.

At the baby making factory, young girls are encouraged or forced to become pregnant and after delivery, the newborn babies are sold out, usually between N500,000 or more, depending on the sex of the child. The main concern of this piece is how to eliminate or reduce to the barest minimum, the continued demand and supply of these babies under the guise of lucrative 'business'. Who patronize the baby factory?

The answer is simple – it is either couples who badly need children, which they cannot get biologically or mischievous persons who require human parts for other reasons. There is no where that selling of human beings both adult and children not a concern, world over. Nowhere is selling of adult human beings or children not a concerned the world over.

For instance, Article 3 of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially women and children, Section 50 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act, 2003 of Nigeria defines trafficking as including "all acts and attempted acts involved in the recruitment, transportation within or across Nigerian borders, purchase, sale, transfer, receipt or harbouring of a person involving the use of deception, coercion or debt bondage for the purpose of placing or holding the person whether for or not involving servitude in force or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions" while the Childs Rights Act (Cap 198) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria also criminalises exploitative child labour and other forms of child abuse hitherto left unpunished by the Criminal Codes.

In many African countries, a couple's inability to give birth to children few years after marriage is often frowned at by family members and even the extended family members, culminating into family members trading blames and pointing accusing fingers at wives for the inability to bear children.

This social problem will continue to fester unless drastic steps are taken to address the contending issues surrounding the spread of baby factories. To begin with, our adoption laws should be reviewed without further delay as this will give those who seek after having children -when they cannot produce biologically, the clean option.

Apart from the fact that married people still contend with the challenge of covering up the tracks of the origin of the children who should necessarily be integrated into the family, some establishments and government institutions reel-out age limits for the needy couples and for those who are more than 50 years, their applications may not be treated at all.

Another obstacle is that the adopting couples are usually inundated with rigorous demands by child-adoption agencies. Again, official adoption procedure that is managed by state governments, are excessively bureaucratic such that the adoptive parents are expected to meet and fulfil the basic rights and duties of the adopted child. And in the process of disbursing of wills and settlements, the adopted child must be treated as a lawful child of the adoptive parents, the same way as the biological child and not as a stranger.

Usually, when a couple wants to adopt a child, they are first expected to have obtained a temporary custody of the child. The child would then have to live with them for a couple of months on a trial basis to ascertain if they are fit to take care of the prospective adopted child.

Next, if the couple meets with the requirements, then the court allows adoption to take place, although it reserves the right to revoke any adoption process if it receives reports of any foul play along the line. A single parent too is not permitted to adopt a child of opposite sex, except in an extreme circumstance. Genuine adoptions should, therefore, be simplified to curb buying of babies.

Another factor that still encourages the booming trade, is the huge cost required in seeking medical assistance to have children. Whereas there is great advancement in medical sciences for barren couples to be assisted through the InVitro Fertilization, IVF, the process is usually out of reach of the ordinary. Going by the prevailing economic situation, it is a reality that only a few couple can afford the cost, which is not less than N1million for each attempt. Government should provide the leeway by coming in and seek ways of helping needy couples.

Another point of concern is the need for effective monitoring of several organisations that engage in nefarious activities that are largely unknown to the government. It is surprising that virtually all the organizations involved in the baby factory saga claimed to be duly registered.

These 'factories' were found to have been registered as non-governmental organizations, which allows them to carry out their unofficial activities through the back door. A suspected operator of one of the factories was reported to have taken the police to court for daring to challenge him. Unfortunately, he later obtained a court judgment by restraining the police from prosecuting him. In the light of this, government should tighten its registration and monitoring of the NGOs.

More importantly, not many culprits have been caught and punished. We only get to read about what transpired without any mention of what sanctions were meted-out to the offenders. What resultant effect of such double standards is that some of these suspects will continue to compromise the system and escape punishment.

Mr. Adewale Kupoluyi,
Writes from Federal University of Agric.
Abeokuta, Ogun State.

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News

Onyema Ugochukwu Hails Johnbull Nwosu Over Contributions To Community

By Chike Emelike

The former Chairman of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Chief Onyema Ugochukwu, has lauded High Chief Johnbull Okechukwu Nwosu, over his contributions to the development of Ekeokwuru Community and Ohuhu Clan.

Chief Ugochukwu, who was a former Editor of the Daily Times, commended High Chief Nwosu, who was given a chieftaincy title recently (Dike Oha Ohuhu Gburugburu), by the Royal Father of Okaiuga Alike Autonomous Community, Eze Innocent Adiele Nwaigwe and all the traditional rulers in Ohuhu, Umuahia North, Abia State.

The former NDDC Chief, who spoke during the ceremony in the Palace of Eze Nwaigwe at Umule, advised others to emulate High Chief Nwosu, for the goodness of the community and all.

High Chief Nwosu is from Okpuala-Umule Village, Ohuhu, Umuahia North, Abia State.

Speaking during the event, Eze Nwaigwe, who is the Chairman, Umuahia North Council of Traditional Rulers, said this title to Johnbull Nwosu, who is a legal practitioner in Atlanta, USA, was because of his viable contributions to the community and other places.

According to the royal father, High Chief Nwosu has constructed a bridge at Nwangele Stream, connecting Okpuala Village to Ekeokwuru Market; refurbished the Okpuala Village Town Hall; brought medical teams to the community, who attended to and gave medicines to people free-of-charge.

"He has also provided Physical Education (PE) uniforms, books, writing materials and school uniforms, to the pupils at Community Primary School, Umule", Eze Nwaigwe further stated.

Also speaking, the former President-General of Okpuala Village, Chikezie O. Emelike, said High Chief Nwosu, is indeed very helpful to the village, Ekeokwuru Community, St. Charles Methodist Church, Umulenso, Ohuhu Clan and many individuals.

The wife of High Chief Nwosu, Diana Ugochinyere, was also crowned as Ugwudiya, by the wife of Eze Nwaigwe, Ugoeze (Lady) Edwina Ugonna E. Nwaigwe.

High Chief Nwosu, who is a member of the People's Club of Nigeria International, Atlanta, USA, also belong to many vital organizations, such as: Ohuhu Progressive Union, Atlanta; Ikwuano/Umuahia Progressive Union, Atlanta and Ohuhu Development Union International (ODU). Others are Abia State National Association of North America (ASNA) and Igbo Union of Georgia.

Speaking about the chieftaincy title and the recognition given to him by his people, as regards his help to them, High Chief Nwosu pledged that he will continuously be assisting.



High Chief Johnbull Nwosu



Hon. Jones Ike, GM Abia Newspapers and staff of the Corporation during their recent general meeting at their Corporate Headquarters, Umuahia

ANPC Set To Upgrade Publishing Section, Open Regional Offices

By Kelechi Eme Ogidi

The General Manager of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation (ANPC), Publishers of the National Ambassador Newspaper and National Ambassador Magazine, Hon. Jones Nnanna Ike, has disclosed that plans are in top gear to upgrade the publishing section of the Corporation as well as open and properly equip regional offices of Abia Newspapers across the nation, to widen its coverage and improve its revenue-generating potentials.

According to the General Manager, the Agency is not only about newspaper production but also has a publishing section that will be improved upon to increase its internally generated revenue (IGR) as a Revenue-Generating Agency.

The ANPC boss disclosed this recently at the first general meeting of the year (2025) held with all staff of the Corporation, at the News Room of ANPC Headquarters in Umuahia.

Hon. Ike, who appreciated the Executive Governor of the State, Dr. Alex Otti, for transforming the Corporation into a modern Office complex, recounted that prior to the administration of Gov. Otti, the ANPC office premises was in a sorry state, characterized by dilapidated infrastructure, lack of electricity and water.

The General Manager, who gave an overview of the journey so far and tagged it "From Retrogression to Progress", since assumption of office in July 2023, affirmed that through the intervention of Gov. Otti, the ugly narrative he met on ground has changed.

The Corporation headquarters can now boast of a

completely renovated modern office building, equipped with modern working tools, provision of a functional borehole, and most importantly, the restoration of power supply.

Speaking on the progress recorded in 2024, he disclosed that several security challenges has been addressed, the office spaces are now comprehensively equipped with modern tables and chairs. There is now constant water and electricity in the office premises, production quality has improved, the Corporation has successfully migrated to TSA (Treasury Single Account), expanded the IGR window, and improved its online platforms etc.

He, therefore, challenged "the staff that the records of last year must be surpassed, as part of the mandate for 2025, since most of the challenges have been met".

Hon. Ike, who was impressed by the high turnout of staff at the meeting, charged them on the need to get involved in building up the Corporation. He disclosed that the task is for everyone and should not be left in the hands of the General Manager alone.

He stated that all hands must be on deck to drive the IGR of the Agency. He further announced the institution of a monthly/yearly award of recognition for outstanding Staff.

On his part, the Director/Head of

Administration, ANPC, Comrade Nmereole D.O, encouraged the staff to be their brother's keeper and ensure that love and unity exist among them.

He noted that there has been improvement in discipline, and that he will enforce the relevant Public Service Rules (PSR), for absenteeism, truancy, lateness to work, and other misconducts whenever there is an infraction by any staff.

The Head of the

Commercial Department, Mrs. Mary Ndubuka, and the ICT Head, Mr. Michael Iheadindu, in their reports, encouraged all staff to engage in marketing for more advertisements to sustain production and growth.

They emphasized engaging on all National Ambassador's online platforms to increase their visibility, and sustain the posting of quality stories, videos in other to improve visibility of the National Ambassador's online rating.

Abia LP Members Pass Vote Of Confidence On Party Executive

By Okereke Kate

In a show of unity and support, members of the Labour Party in Abia State, have passed a vote of confidence on the State Executive Committee of the Party, affirming their commitment to the leadership and direction of the party.

In a meeting held at the Party Secretariat in Umuahia, leaders of the Party from across the 17 Local Government Areas of the State affirmed their strong backing for the current leadership of the Party, ably led by Sir Emmanuel Nweze Otti.

Members praised the efforts of the State Executive Committee in fostering unity, increasing membership, pushing the collective vision for the Party's future, and advancing its goals in the State.

The State Chairman of the Party, Sir Emmanuel Nweze Otti, in an interview, attributed the endorsement from Party members to the Governor's outstanding performance, which has significantly transformed the State's narrative.

According to him, Governor Alex Otti has made significant strides in revitalizing various sectors of Abia State and investing heavily in infrastructural development across the 17 LGAs of the State

He praised Governor Otti's exceptional performance, saying it has simplified their political tasks, assuring the Governor of the Party members' ongoing support, acknowledging that his outstanding achievements have made their jobs easier.

MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE

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OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

VACANCIES

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the underlisted positions in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

1. Director of Physical Planning

Job Description

The Director of Physical Planning is the Head of the Department of Physical Planning and responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the conceptualization, design, supervisions and management of the University Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Projects.

Qualification for the Post of Director of Physical Planning

Candidates for the Post of Director of Physical Planning must have degree in Engineering, Building, Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Estate Management, Urban and Regional Planning, plus at least 15 (fifteen) years of relevant experience especially on Campus Planning and Development. Candidates must not below the rank of a Deputy Director of Physical Planning in a University or similar Institution. Possession of a Post graduate Degree will be added advantage. In addition, candidate must be registered member of relevant Professional bodies such as Council for the Society of Engineers (NSE) and the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), ARCON (for Architects, QSRBN (for Quantity Surveyors), NIOB (for Builders), NIESV (for Estate Surveyors and Valuers), etc.

2. Director of Works and Maintenance

Job Description

The Director of Works and Maintenance is the Chief Technical Officer of the University and responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day running and maintenance of University buildings, Roads, Water boles, Electrical Installations, Equipment and other properties, including provision of services and utilities for the well-being of the University.

Qualification for the Post of Director of Works and Maintenance

Candidates for the Post of Director of Works and Maintenance (same as for Director Physical Planning above) Experience on Campus Planning and Services will be an added advantage.

3. Director of Health Services

Job Description

The Director of Health Services is the Administrative Head of University Health Services and responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day to day running of Medical Services of the University.

Candidates for the Post of Director of Health Services
Candidates for the post of Director of Health Services must exhibit considerable degree of competence, responsiveness and demonstrable integrity for the administration of the Health Services of a University.

Applicants must be in good health and able to endure the rigours of the duties of the office. Prospective candidates must be proficient in ICT with demonstrable competence in medical practice. The ability to effectively advise the Vice-Chancellor on health matters shall be required.

Qualification for the Post of Director of Health Services

Candidates for the post of Director of Health Services must have MBBS plus at least fifteen (15) years of relevant experience. Such candidate must not be below the rank of a Deputy Director of Health

Services in a University or similar institutions. Possession of Postgraduate Fellowship of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria or the West African Medical College or its equivalent will be an added advantage. The candidate must be registrable with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) and must have a current practicing license.

4. Director of University Farm

Job Description

The Director of University Farm is the Head of the Farm Management Centre of the University and responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the administration and planning of the farming activities of the University as well as the co-ordination of different Units of the Centre.

Qualification for the Post of Director of University Farms

Candidates for the post of Director of University Farms should possess a degree in Agriculture or related field plus at least fifteen (15) years cognate experience.

Candidates must be a member of relevant professional body and on CONTISS 14 in a University, Research Institute or similar institution. Possession of a postgraduate degree in Marketing or Management will be an added advantage.

Candidates for the post of Director of University Farms must exhibit considerable degree of competence, responsiveness and integrity for the administration of the University Farms. Prospective candidates must be proficient in ICT, have good knowledge of the latest farming techniques, marketing of farm products and general Management.

5. Chief Security Officer

Job Description

The Chief Security Officer is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the Security of the University Campus and shall ensure on a day to day basis proper surveillance over life and property on campus and other designated places.

He shall provide professional advice to ensure the strategies adopted to meet all internal and external services delivery requirement.

He shall be proactive in relation to identifying, managing crises, resolving complex risk issues and mitigating activities in response to security related emergency situations.

Shall strengthen security initiatives by creating and maintaining good channel of communications amongst various Departments and Units in the University.

The Person

Applicants for the post must have in the past, exhibited considerable degree of competence, responsiveness and demonstrable integrity in security matters in a University or similar organization.

Applicants must be in good health to be able to endure the rigours of the duties of a Chief Security Officer. The ability to advise the Vice-Chancellor in Planning and executing strategies for maintaining effective security on campus must be in evidence.

Qualification for the Post of Chief Security Officer

Applicants must have five (5) O' level credit passes including



MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE

English Language at not more than two sittings and a good honours degree. Applicants must be an Ex-Police or Ex-Military Officer not below the rank of Assistant Inspector of Police or Captain respectively. In addition, must have at least ten (10) years cognate experience in recognized Tertiary Institutions or National Security Establishments. Candidates above fifty-five (55) years of age need not apply.

Conditions of Service

The appointment is pensionable on such terms and conditions as applicable to Federal Universities in Nigeria and as may be determined by appropriate University laws and the Governing Council.

Conditions of Service/Tenure of Directors

The successful candidates shall hold office for a period of five (5) years from the effective date of appointment and may not be re-appointed on such terms and conditions applicable to Federal Universities in Nigeria and as may be determined by appropriate University Law and the Governing Council of the University.

Method of Application

Candidates are required to submit twenty-five (25) sets of their applications giving the information in the following order in the CV.

- (i). Full Name
- (ii). Post Desired
- (iii). Date of Birth
- (iv). Place of Birth and State of Origin
- (v). Nationality
- (vi). Permanent Home Address (Not P. O. Box or PMB)
- (vii). Current Postal Address (add telephone, GSM, and e-mail contact)
- (viii). Marital Status

- (ix). Number of Children with Names and Ages
- (x). Institutions Attended (with dates)
- (xi). Academic Qualification with dates (where applicable)
- (xii). Working Experience (General and Specific with dates)
- (xiii). Details of administrative experience and Service to the Community (with status and dates)
- (xiv). Present Employment, Status, Salary and Employer
- (xv). Extra Curricular Activities
- (xvi). Publications (if any)
- (xvii). Candidates should also indicate in their curriculum vitae any capacity enhancing training they have undergone in their career and any publications relevant in engineering practice and maintenance they have authored or presented to professional conference.
- (xviii). Names and addresses of three referees (two of whom must be professionals or authorities in relevant fields) who must be requested by the applicants to forward their confidential reports to the Vice-Chancellor, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and marked CONFIDENTIAL.

Candidates for the post must be such that they would not exceed the gazetted retirement age before the end of the five years tenure.

Applicants should forward their correspondence to "**The Vice-Chancellor, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, P. M. B. 7267, Umuahia, Abia State**", and position applied for written boldly at the top left corner of the envelope to reach him before the closing date.

Closing Date

Six weeks from the date of publication.

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Dr. Mrs. Nkeiruka Charity Mbanasor
Registrar and Secretary to Council

Focus

Nigerians React As Donald Trump Becomes The 47th President Of America

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru



Donald Trump
47th US President

Experts have continued to react to Donald Trump's victory as the 47th US President, with some congratulating him and others expressing concern. President Bola Tinubu was among the first to congratulate Trump, expressing hopes for continued

strong US-Nigeria relations and economic cooperation. Some have also continued to share their thoughts, with opinions divided between support for Trump and his opponent, Kamala Harris. While some Nigerians see Trump's

victory as a positive development, others are worried about the potential implications of his presidency.

It's worth noting that Trump's presidency has been a subject of interest globally, as his policies will have far-reaching impacts. As the second President in U.S. history to serve non-consecutive terms, Trump's second Presidency is expected to be significant.

Mr. Christian Isaac Anyalisi, a Chartered Stockbroker/Securities and Investment Analyst, noted that there are palpable fears about cuts in US grants and supports to protégé countries.

According to the expert: "Where this happens, it is expected to affect the flow of funds into the Nigerian economic system and consequently the capital market.

"However, such withdrawals could compel countries to develop resistance by adopting initiatives to fill funding gaps.

"We expect that policy makers at the center, particularly in the financial system will make necessary adjustments to attract investments from the USA, rather than shy away from capitalizing

on the existing relationship with."

He also said: "Donald Trump, from experience is an advocate of low interest rate. During his first tenure, the Federal Reserve Bank reduced interest rate to 2.5% and further down. Where this becomes the situation under the new regime, it will result in the outflow of investible funds from the US economy. In this vein, the Nigerian capital market, both the debt and equity segment is expected to benefit from this policy shift.

Low rates in the US economy will also lead to an increase in the flow of foreign exchange into Nigeria and as result, an increase in the value of the domestic currency.

Anyalisi opined that the "America First" stance of President Donald Trump, if carried through, may lead to a reduction in diaspora remittances.

However, he maintained that it is reasonable to expect that, the US economy has so much in connection with foreign nationals, that the idea of mass deportation could prove difficult. "Data from Nairametrics and other sources has confirmed that diaspora remittances into Nigeria

has contributed over \$20 billion annually, thereby mitigating foreign exchange shortfalls.

"A negative shift in the immigration trend could hurt diaspora remittance", he further stated.

The energy sector.

"With a focus on the reduction of energy prices by increasing domestic oil output, there could be global low oil prices which is likely to impact the oil revenue for budget financing in Nigeria, with a resultant increase in deficit budget financing through increased domestic borrowing. "This development, when combined with elevated interest rates, (High Monetary Policy Rate), will create a crowding-out effect on the equities segment of the Nigerian capital market", he noted.

Another aspect of Donald Trump's policy which could affect the Nigerian economy and the capital market, according to the expert is the anticipated trade restriction through the imposition of high tariffs on imported goods, with China having to pay 60% on goods imported into the US.

HANDBAG ESSENTIALS FOR THE HARMATTAN SEASON

Fashion tips
with
Sandra Chibuike
sandychybyke1@gmail.com

A handbag is one of the necessary items in every woman's fashion accessories. It is, as a matter of importance, the top most in the list of accessories to have in everyday fashion.

A handbag houses many items, including toiletries and cosmetics. Nevertheless, the content could vary, depending on the weather, occasion or the personality of the one carrying it.

In this edition, we shall be looking at the core items that every elegant lady's bag should contain, especially during the harmattan season.

In this part of the world where the weather is usually dry and windy by this period of the year, there are some items every lady should have in their bags. I call them, the handbag essentials for the harmattan.



BREATH FRESHENERS:

This could come in form of chewing gums or mints. They help to keep one's breath fresh. Some people have the opinion that chewing gum in public makes one look like a goat. But that's not absolutely right. If you must

chew gum, please learn how to do so elegantly. Don't wind your mouth vigorously, don't chew with your mouth open and don't let the next person beside you hear the sound. These are the things that are irritating about chewing gum.



POCKET TISSUE:

This is very important and helpful especially in this dry season. It comes in handy when you want to dab your face of some sweats, clean the surface of something before sitting/ resting your hands on it, when you want to use a

public restroom, it can also be used to clean off dust from your shoes - you definitely do not want to be seen wearing a dusty pair of shoes. And nobody will care to know how long a distance you walked. So pocket tissue is an essential item to be in your handbag.

LIPGLOSS:

This is another essential item that should make it to your handbag in this season of dry weather. It helps to keep your lips moist and glossy. It is not a good sight to go about with dried or cracked lips. It demeans your personality as an elegant woman.



A SMALL MAKE-UP PURSE:

This will contain some touchup essentials like powder, lipstick etc. These are things that will help you maintain your glow all through the day. So you put them in a small purse to keep your handbag well organized, and it also makes it easier for you to locate and use them. You don't want to be seen scattering or turning your handbag upside down in search of one tiny makeup.



HANDCREAM:



For the times when you'll wash your hands, you definitely need to moisturize with a good handcream to avoid having a dried chapped hands. And it helps to keep your hands soft and smooth.

HAND SANITIZER:

Always ensure you have a small bottle of hand sanitizer in your bag. It comes in handy when you find yourself in a place where you can't wash your hands. Or when you feel you have done a lot of handshakes and need to keep your hands clean and fresh. Again, remember it is always dusty everywhere due to the harmattan. So as a matter of importance, keep your hands sanitized.



A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES:

This is absolutely essential, especially in this dry season when the sun is so harsh and scorching. You need to wear it to protect your eyes from the sunrays. And if you are the kind of person who doesn't wear make-up regularly, you can use sunshades to elevate your looks.



WALLET:

This item might look ignoble, but it is essential. Especially for handbags that don't have compartments, wallet can be used. You need it for your ID card, ATM card and also for your cash. It is wise to always have some cash with you. You can never tell when you'll need it to tip a waiter, be kind to a traffic warden or even pay for something quickly if there's bad network for transfers. Always have physical cash handy.



AIRPODS:

Every lady should have an airpod, especially when you want to take calls or listen to music without disturbing and interrupting the peace of those around you. Did you know that always putting your phone on your ear while answering calls, especially when you're wearing makeup, makes your phone dirty and of course wipes off the makeup on the side of your face where you take calls? So now you know, you have to add an air pod as an important item in your handbag. Feel free to add any other items to your handbag, as occasion warrants. Like I said earlier, these essentials may vary, depending on the individual, occasion or weather condition.

Photos Speak



Gov of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, inspecting Guard, during the Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration and Parade in Umuahia, Abia State.



Gov of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, Laying wreaths during the Armed Forces Remembrance Day Celebration and Parade in Umuahia, Abia State.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (4th right), Chief Executive Officer, US Market Access Centre (USMAC), Mr. Chris Burry (3rd right), The Commissioner, for Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr. David Kalu (4th left), Chief of Staff to the Gov, Pastor Calab Ajagba (2nd left) and others, as US Market Access Centre visits Abia Gov in his Nvosi home, Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (right) with the newly-elected President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Sen. John Mbata (left), during a courtesy visit by the new Ohanaeze President to Abia Gov at Gov's country home, Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



L-R: DG, Abia State Agency for the Control of AIDS (ABSACA), Dr. Uloaku Emma, Wife of Abia State Gov, Mrs. Priscilla Otti and Wife of the Deputy Gov of Abia State, Mrs. Adaeze Emetu, during their engagement with people living with HIV in Abia Gov's Wife Home, Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



Abia State Gov, Dr. Alex Otti (right) and the newly appointed Head of Service of Abia State, Mr. Benson Ojeikere (left), during the swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed Head of Service, at Gov's home, Nvosi Isiala Ngwa South LGA of Abia State.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, during his inspection of the on-going reconstruction and expansion of Bank Road Umuahia, Abia State.

News

Belgium, ABSUTH Offer Free Medical Outreach In Abia



■ The Team Of 23 Medical Experts From Belgium With Volunteers From ABSUTH Attending To Patients During Their Recent Medical Outreach

By Nwokoma Blessing

Abia State University Teaching Hospital (ABSUTH) Aba was agog recently with human and vehicular traffic as Belgium-based medical experts, commenced a free medical outreach for various degrees of health challenges.

The team of 23 medical experts from Belgium with volunteers from ABSUTH community are currently attending to indigents with various health conditions at no financial cost.

The exercise which is billed to last for two weeks is a follow up to the similar exercise which took place last year at Federal Medical Centre (FMC) Umuahia that was solely sponsored by an Abian, Mr. Smith Oriaku.

Speaking with our

correspondent, at ABSUTH Aba, one of the experts, Dr. Carl said that the Revive International free medicals is majorly for surgical operation on issues like Tyroxin, Hynea, among other health challenges that the patients could not afford to take care of.

He explained that from the clinical examination, the drugs, treatment and even surgical operations are absolutely free.

The medical expert, said that each of the team member paid their way through but the financial donations came from individuals and cooperate bodies in Belgium other than the government of Belgium.

He appreciates the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, the Ministry Of Health, ABSUTH community and Abians for their hospitality and enabling working

environment, provided for the team to work and deliver on their mandate.

Dr Carl also commended Nigerians for their happy dispositions, adding that they are not aggressive, despite the health challenges some of them are going through.

Contributing, Dr. Hartword, also said that the team of 23 Medical experts is made up of surgeons, physiologists, Nurses, from Belgium and volunteers from ABSUTH community.

He eulogized the institutions and people of Abia on their peaceful depositions and orderly conducts in the cause of receiving their treatments.

Prof. Mrs. Ijeoma Nduka, the Chief Medical Director (CMD), ABSUTH Aba, thanked the Governor, Dr. Otti, OFR for

requesting that the mission came back again to Abia and providing all the enabling environment for a 14-day long Free medical in ABSUTH.

She thanked the team for the humanitarian service they are rendering, pledging total support of the institution.

She implored Abians and residents to make judicious use of the opportunity while it lasts.

One of the beneficiaries, an Aba-based tailor, Mr. Nathaniel Onyebuanyi Ajuzieogu, expressed excitement with the process and thanked the free medical outreach meant for the less privileged ones.

He said he came because of the issue of hernia which has been previously operated upon by two different doctors at different times.



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News

Age Grades, Catalysts For Community Development In Igboland - Okafor

By Ifeanyi Chukwu Faith

A renowned philanthropist and "Nna" (Patron) of the newly inaugurated Ifesinachi Age Grade, Mr. Isaac Okafor, and his wife, Mrs. Ngozi Nnenna Okafor, who serves as the matron, has called on the Igbo people to embrace age grades as vital instruments for fostering community development and societal upliftment.

Speaking during the commissioning of a pipe-borne water project constructed by the Ifesinachi Age Grade in Egbuoma, Oguta Local Government Area, Imo State, Mr. Okafor emphasizes the transformative role of age grades in promoting communal progress.

Welcoming members of the age grade, locally known as Ikporu Ulo, to his country home in Umuezikegbu, Egbuoma, Okafor lauded the group's dedication to community service. He noted that active participation in age grade requires individuals who are deeply committed to the welfare and development of their communities.

Age grades have historically played a significant role in driving development within Igbo communities. "They provide opportunities to directly or indirectly impact the lives of community members. Many have benefited from the selfless initiatives spearheaded by these groups, and the Ifesinachi Age Grade is no exception." He stated.

Okafor disclosed that the Ifesinachi Age Grade had initiated several projects designed to enhance the quality of life for the people of Egbuoma.

He further explained the concept of age grades, describing them as groups of individuals born within a specified time frame, often spanning three years, with the primary objective of contributing to the community's development.

Highlighting the social and emotional support age grades offer their members, Okafor remarked, "Age grades serve as a strong bond of unity, providing support in times of joy and adversity. The benefits of belonging to an age grade extend beyond personal growth to include the collective advancement of the community."

Addressing misconceptions, he clarified that age grades, commonly referred to as Ndi Ebiri in various dialects, are not secret societies.

"There is no element of secrecy or diabolical practices in age grade meetings. Rather, they are associations dedicated to deliberating and addressing the developmental needs and welfare of the community," he further stated.

The commissioning of the pipe-borne water project marked a significant milestone for the Ifesinachi Age Grade, underscoring the enduring importance of collective effort in driving progress across Igboland.

Okafor, and his wife jointly called on other communities to emulate such initiatives, fostering a spirit of unity and shared responsibility for communal growth.

New Head Of Service Charges Civil, Public Servants In Abia State

By Ndubueze Ngozi

Abia State Head of Service, Mr. Benson Ojeikere, has charged civil and public servants in the State to adopt a positive mindset in changing the narrative of the service.

Ojeikere, who gave the charge during a meeting with the Permanent Secretaries and senior management staff of the Office of the Head of Service, stressed on the importance of their role in redeeming the image of the service and restoring its dignity.

The Head of Service who disclosed that the present administration, led by Dr. Alex Otti, has zero-tolerance policy for corruption, and urged them to eliminate all forms of fraud in the discharge of their duties.

He assured the workforce that their welfare is a top priority, adding that the present administration is committed in providing regular training and retraining for effective service delivery.

Ojeikere, while stressing the need for collaboration with stakeholders to achieve the desired goals, noted that the transformation agenda will help to reposition the service to deliver on its mandate and a model for other States and countries, enjoined the staff to be pacesetters in the transformation agenda.

Present at the session were Permanent Secretaries, Lady Meg Kalu Onwu and Ada Ukandu.

Abia Govt Unveils Plans To Boost STEM Education

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has announced plans to launch an online platform aimed at promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, among secondary school students in the state.

The Commissioner for Science and Technology, Mr. David Kalu, disclosed this during a press briefing on the outcome of the recent State Executive Council meeting presided over by Governor Alex Otti.

According to Kalu, the initiative is designed to enhance the teaching and learning of STEM subjects in secondary schools, with the aim of

preparing students for careers in science, engineering, technology and mathematics.

"We are investing in the future to produce more Scientists, Engineers, Technicians and Technologists in Abia.

"So with this online platform we would be able to reach out to students across the State. It would be accessible on personal computers, smart phones and all technologies", he said.

In addition to the STEM initiative, the Commissioner revealed plans by the State government to domesticate the Federal Start-Up Act to

support technology-based start-ups in the State.

He said that the move would provide training on business processes, branding, online content creation, and other critical areas for entrepreneurs.

"If it (the start-up) is a very lucrative business, we may be able to offer hosting them to some extent and also where possible, funding would be made available.

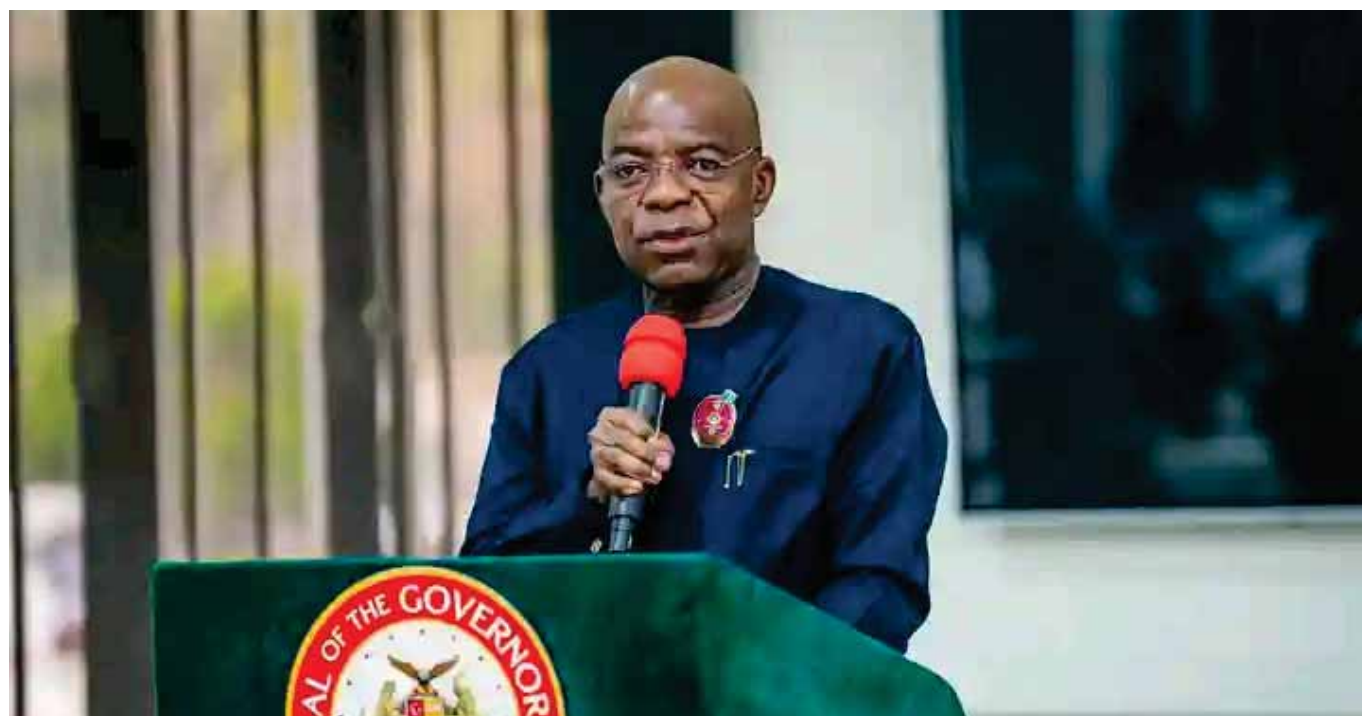
"All sort of areas are being explored and with this, we are producing a draft act, which we will be reviewing with stakeholders and eventually passing to the House of Assembly for approval", Kalu explained.

The Commissioner also highlighted the government's readiness to roll out broadband infrastructure to foster technological growth in Abia, adding that a regulation known as the "Right of Way Policy", would be introduced to facilitate the policy.

He said that the regulation would establish guidelines for laying telecommunication cables necessary for broadband deployment.

"For instance, if you dig up a road, you have to restore the road to the exact condition you met it.

"This regulation will make anyone coming to lay cables to do it in a fashion that would be convenient for Abia citizens", he said.



Gov Otti of Abia State

Governor Otti Commissions Constituency Project In Umunneochi, Hails Hon. Mathias Umeh

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka

As part of his 2024 Constituency projects, Member representing Umunneochi State Constituency in the Abia State House of Assembly, Hon. Mathias Umeh, has delivered a five classroom block to the people of Nneato in his Umunneochi State Constituency to enhance learning in the area.

Speaking during the Commissioning of the project championed by Hon. Mathias Umeh, the State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, commended the lawmaker for his commitments in Education and being articulate in acknowledging the desires of his constituents.

The Governor who was represented by his Deputy, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, described Hon. Umeh as a lawmaker who has written his names in gold prints in the minds of his

constituents, adding that the project reflects the educational policies of Governor Alex Otti in revitalizing Educational infrastructure in the State and encouraged him to do more.

Governor Otti, however, warned against vandalization and encroaching on government school property by unscrupulous elements noting that such actions will not be tolerated by his administration.

He emphasized on the importance of securing educational facilities, addressing school-aged attendance and implementing safety measures like prohibiting bush burning to protect school properties.

The Governor, further reiterated his

administration's dedication in tackling insecurity in Umunneochi Local Government with emphasis on banditry and kidnapping highlighting that impressive progress had been achieved in the process.

Earlier in his speech, the member representing Umunneochi State Constituency who is equally the Deputy Majority Leader in the State House of Assembly, expressed gratitude to Governor Otti for his continued support and timely release of funds to bankroll the project.

He, however, aligned the project to his campaign promises to his constituents and the administration's value for prudence, transparency and accountability.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after the

commissioning, the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Due Process and Public Procurement Bureau, Dr. Oluebube Chukwu, described the project executed by Hon. Umeh as key and one that would have a positive impact on human capital development.

Also speaking, the Principal of the benefitting school, Nneato Secondary School, Mr. Ihionu J.I, appreciated the lawmaker for the project and Gov Otti, for prioritizing Education in his administration, citing recent laudable advancements such as regular payment of teachers' salaries and the introduction of free and compulsory education among others.

The event attracted many dignitaries in the State, Labour Party stalwarts and stakeholders in Umunneochi Local Government Area.

News



■ Prince Okey Kanu

Abia State Government Reaches Agreement With Jusun, Signs Mou

By Okey Ubani

The Abia State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu has stated that A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between Abia State Government and the Abia State branch of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN). The

information boss stated this in a recent release to the press.

He said this followed the conclusion of negotiations between the Abia State Government and the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN). He also stated that JUSUN will convene a Congress as soon as possible to officially call

off the strike.

He stated that it was consequent upon this that enabled the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between both parties in which all differences in the implementation of the Consolidated Judicial Salary Structure (CONJUSS) was resolved.

He also stated that the agreed additional amount to be paid to JUSUN is being processed for remittance.

Prince Kanu also expressed Government's expectation that the ongoing strike action will be called off immediately to pave the way for the reopening of our courts system.

Abia Community Appeals To Gov Otti

By Emeka Egejuru

People of Umulelu village in Mgboko Amaisie Autonomous Community, Obingwa LGA have appealed to Governor Alex Otti to use the 700 plots of land acquired in their community by the previous administration to build the Abia State University of Science and Technology which it was meant for.

Speaking at the palace of Eze Eberechi Dick, the Village Head of Umulelu Anyanwu, DSP Anyanwu Sunday (retired), Chief Chibuike Anyanwu and the Eldest man in the community Chief Sunday



A Cross Section Of The Community

Evoh said the foundation for the University has been laid and was abandoned by the past government.

They noted it will bring

development to the area when realized and called on the state government to act fast to put the land to proper use.

Reacting, a Former Chairman, Abia State Council of Traditional Rulers Traditional Ruler of Mgboko Amaisie Autonomous Community Obingwa LGA Eze Eberechi Dick described Governor Alex Otti as a listening Governor and expressed optimism that he will use the land to build the proposed Abia State University of Science and Technology which is still lacking in the state to help to further bring out and encourage the ingenuity of Abians.

Eze Dick assured that they will give hundred percent support to the project and commended him for the ongoing construction of Itungwa - Omobaroad.

The Royal Father prayed God to continue to give the Governor the strength and wisdom to pilot the affairs of the State.

Umudike-Ikot-Ekpene Road Users Lament Over Hike In Transport Fare

By Dickson Paul

Users of Umudike-Ikot-Ekpene Road have lamented over what they described as exploitative hike in transport fare by transporters who ply the route. The passengers registered their grievances while speaking with our reporter.

According to them, the hike in transport fare is fast becoming unbearable as people from Ikwuano Local Government Area can no longer come to Umuahia, the state capital and other places, without incurring financial difficulties.

The passengers further stated that, it is normal for

Nigerians to increase prices during festive period, but wondered why the fares refused to come down even after Christmax and New Year celebrations.

They revealed that before the yuletide, from Isigate, Umuahia to Umudike was N600 for keke (tricycle) while bus was N500.

The road users disclosed that the fares increased to N800, N1000 during the celebrations and had remained like that even with the reduction in price of fuel.

The commuters stressed the financial challenges they face coming to Umuahia, especially those in remote areas of

Ikwuano Local Government Council.

They viewed the act of exploitation by transporters as inhuman, insisting that no amount of fraudulent income can make one comfortable.

The commuters however, called on government to look into some matters involving transportation in the state, as this, according to them, will help avert breach of public peace in the new year.

They further requested that the State Ministry of Transport and its Agencies, should step up in their efforts to ensure that right things be done.

Perm Sec. Advises Workers Over Digital Transformation

By Ifeanyi Chukwu Faith

The newly appointed Permanent Secretary of the Abia State Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Mr. Emmanuel Ejike Ekwueme, has charged the staff of the ministry to key into the ongoing digital transformation in the State.

Ekwueme made this Statement during the maiden meeting of the Ministry held at the ministry's Conference Hall.

He emphasised that the present administration, led by Governor Alex Otti, is transitioning the civil service system from analogue to digital.

According to him, "Very soon, no staff will be carrying files around as every office work will be done with the computer system, and it is those staff who are computer literates that will benefit from this change."

He encouraged the staff to utilize their leisure time to upgrade their computer skills, noting that "opportunities, they say, come but once."

Ekwueme further declared that the era of truancy and absenteeism in the Ministry is over, adding that a new directive is in place to stop the salaries of workers who fail to report to work. He urged all staff to take their duties seriously, pledging to work efficiently and effectively with them as the newly appointed permanent secretary.

In his address, the Director of Administration in the Ministry, Mr. Kingsley Ibelegbu, also encouraged the staff to use the privileged information shared by the permanent secretary, to enhance their computer literacy skills and remain relevant in the civil service system.

According to Ibelegbu, "Most examinations set by the present administration are done with the computer, and if you are not computer literate, you won't pass the examinations," citing the recently concluded Permanent Secretary examinations as an example.

In his vote of thanks, the Chairman of Staff Welfare, Mr. Nkwacha Vincent, appreciated the Permanent Secretary for providing valuable information about the digitalization of the Civil Service.

He urged the staff to take advantage of the information shared and improve their skills to align with the evolving demands of the civil service system.

NAPTIP Arrests One Suspected Organ Harvester In Akwa Ibom

From Lovina Emole

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, NAPTIP, said it has arrested one suspect in connection with organ harvesting in Akwa Ibom State and alleged that many hospitals in the state are involved in the act.

The State Zonal Coordinator of NAPTIP, Mr. Emmanuel Awhen, disclosed this recently during a press briefing in Uyo, to mark the 2025 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, themed, "Strengthening Communities by Connecting the Dots."

Awhen, who was represented by the Head of Public Enlightenment of the agency, Eme Ukpabio, said the suspect though arrested in Akwa Ibom wasn't from the State, adding that the suspect has been referred to the mother State.

The zonal coordinator who noted that organ harvesting has become a booming trade in the State, disclosed that some clinics and hospitals in Akwa Ibom, are engaged in organ harvesting business.

He said, "Organ harvesting is one thing that is very high now. You may not notice it, some clinics in this town, with due apologies to doctors who are carrying out legitimate businesses, there are hospitals in this town that are involved in organ harvesting."

"The arrest we had on organ harvesting, the person involved is not an Akwa Ibomite. So when we have such a case, we refer such to the mother State, where the suspect comes from. Our own is just do the job and do a referral to the command that covers the person's State, where justice will take its course," Awhen stated.

In his remarks, the State Co-ordinator of the Network Against Child Trafficking, Abuse and Labour, Ambassador Peace Edem, who highlighted the emotional and psychological dangers of human trafficking, called on continuous sensitization of communities against the dangers

He said, "Different forms of human trafficking have been mentioned, sex trafficking, labour trafficking and organ trafficking and others. The dangers associated with these dangers, first, is the physical danger, violence and abuse, force labour and the rest of them, then the emotional and psychological dangers."

"So, we need to also sensitize our communities against these dangers because some of them innocently go into it without knowing"

The Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Mrs. Eno Ime Akpan, had, in her remarks, lauded the collaborative efforts of NAPTIP and NACTAL in the fight against human trafficking in the State, and commended Governor Umo Eno, for establishing the ministry which she noted is saddled with the responsibility of improving the dignity of humans.

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Reporter's Diary

Impact of Age Grade System In Community Development, A Look Into Abiriba Community

By Okereke Kate

The age-grade system has long been a cornerstone of community development, playing a vital role in sustaining progress within societies. In ancient times, age grades served as the community's law enforcement, warriors, and the institution responsible for maintaining order and peace.

In the Abiriba community, located in Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State, the traditional age-grade system has been an influential force in driving communal development, with its members taking active roles in various aspects of social and economic growth.

Recently, a significant milestone was achieved as the apex stage of the age-grade system in Abiriba officially retired from its mandatory service. The retirement ceremony, known as "Ime Uche," marked the departure of several esteemed Abiriba sons and daughters from this critical level of service, symbolizing both the honor and the end of their active participation in the age-grade's responsibilities.

In a recent visit to the ancient Abiriba kingdom to explore some of its unique cultural heritage by the Abia Tours, a tourism body in Abia State, highlighted the significant role of the age-grade system, an institution as old as mankind, in driving community development. Reports indicated that no age grade is allowed to advance to the next stage without first initiating and completing a project that benefits the community. This practice has contributed to the rapid development seen in Abiriba and the wider Ohafia region.

Mrs Onyekachi Loveday, the CEO of Abia Tours, shared that the organization's mission is to promote the cultural and tourism potential of Abia State. She explained that the Abia Tours explorers travel to communities across the State to showcase its rich cultural heritage to the world and the team found the Ime Uche ceremony particularly intriguing, due to its unique background and significance.

In Abiriba, the 2024 festive season witnessed a beehive of activities, with the retirement ceremony, which is held every four years, taking center stage throughout the period. Barr Jackson Abba Agbai, one of the retirees, expressed his happiness in participating in the Ime Uche ceremony, describing it as a proud moment, having served the community for over thirty years.

Barr Agbai who provided insight into the Ime Uche ceremony and what it entails, explained that between ages of 18 and 20, an individual is admitted into the age grade system, where you stay and contribute your quota to community development.

He said before the coming of the Europeans, Abiriba was

governed by the age grade system, where the grades involved themselves in clearing foot paths to streams, farmlands and also protecting laws and orders in the land. "When criminals are caught, the age grade serves as police, parading the criminals at the village square or compound before they would be executed.

"Abiriba remains the only community in Africa that still maintains the unique characteristics of the age grade system. Till date, the grades still govern. When there is an issue, it is being settled through the age grade, this is why we have a very peaceful community", Barr Jackson Agbai explained.

With how impactful the age grade system is, one would literally wonder, if it has any disadvantages. However, as Barr Agbai pointed out, the benefits far outweigh any drawbacks. He further hinted that the age

grade system plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth functioning of the community. Just like every other society that is being ruled by the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, the Abiriba age grade system serves as a law making body, enforcing laws and also acting as adjudicator in disputes.

Barr Jackson Abba Agbai, a successful businessman and legal luminary, shared that through the Okezie age grade, he has dedicated the past thirty years to serving the Abiriba community. He emphasized that his

ranging from traditional retirement to celebration of successful completion of a particular stage in the age grade system.

As you may know, once an individual is admitted into an age grade, they remain in that grade for a period of four years, serving the community before advancing to the next stage. The Abiriba community has a total of 13 age grade levels, with members serving in each grade until they reach the retirement stage.

On December 19th, 2024, Abiriba Community

witnessed another celebration of monumental significance. Those who had reached the warrior stage were honored for their courage in going to war and returning unharmed. The phrase "IGWA MANG" holds great weight in the heart of every Abiriba man. It symbolizes strength and manhood, as the warrior stage is reserved for



Celebrants at the Igwa Mang festival in Abiriba Recently

retirement would not hinder his commitment to continuing in serving his people.

According to the system, retirement from the age grade means stepping down from mandatory community service, where individuals are no longer compelled to serve under the threat of a fine or sanction. As Barr Agbai puts it, "From now on, no one will mandate me to serve. Whatever I choose to do, will be entirely at my discretion".

those who are not faint-hearted, it positioned between the lower ranks and the apex stage. Successfully returning from war marks the transition into the apex stage, where individuals take on roles focused on community decision-making.

Reports gathered during the Igwa Mang ceremony, revealed that prior to the colonial era, those in the apex age grade were forbidden from marrying until they returned alive from war. However, with the advent of modernization, the focus has shifted to community development rather than traditional customs.

The Igwa Mang festival is an ancient tradition that showcases the history of bravery. The event is basically to celebrate the victory of the warriors at the war front and members at this level were usually happy to return home victorious from the war.

Celebrants of the Igwa Mang ceremony equally shared their moods, expressing joy to return unhurt as warriors of Abiriba land, pledging their commitment to offer more selfless services to the community.

The Ime Uche ceremony of Barr Jackson Abba Agbai, held in his White House residence in Abiriba, was one that would remain etched in the memories of its sons and daughters for a long time. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and a sense of pride as the community came together to celebrate a grand occasion. Lavishly treated, the guests were welcomed with open arms and pampered in the most sumptuous manner. The setting was nothing short of spectacular, with an array of exquisite food and drinks, including fine wines that flowed generously throughout the event.

As the ceremony progressed, the music became an essential part of the celebration, providing entertainment that lifted the spirits of the attendees. Traditional and contemporary tunes harmonized perfectly, creating an energetic yet harmonious environment. It was a night where laughter, dancing and singing filled the air as friends and family reunited to share in the joy of the event.

The host ensured that every detail was perfect, from the decorations to the hospitality, leaving the guests thoroughly impressed. The love and unity of the community were palpable and the event exemplified the strong bonds that tie the people of Abiriba together. It was a celebration not just of the occasion but of the rich cultural heritage and vibrant traditions of the town, making it a festival to remember.



Cross section of some members of Age grades Celebrating the successful return of Abiriba warriors

In his parting word, Barr Agbai urged members of other age grades still in active service to dedicate themselves fully, emphasizing the importance of working hard and giving their time to the development of the Abiriba community.

Interacting with some guests at the event, the former Commissioner for Information in Abia State, Chief John Okiyi Kalu, the President, Aba Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ACCIMA), Chief Jerry O. Kalu (Oshimiri Ndigbo), and Dr Okorafor Ukiwe, congratulated Barr Agbai, wishing him well as he progresses in life, praying for good health upon him and as well, the strength to render more service to his family and community.

Recall, that the festive season usually heralds a lot of traditional activities in Abiriba ancient kingdom,



PUBLIC NOTICE

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER FOR THE REVIEW OF RATES AND TARIFFS OF REVENUE COLLECTION BY THE ABIA STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCIES

Instrument (NO 3)

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 2 of Abia State Tax codification and Consolidation (Amendment) Law of 2024 and all other Constitutional powers enabling me in that behalf, I Dr Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, the Governor of Abia State of Nigeria, hereby make the following orders:

1. Commencement: The rates and tariffs shall become effective on the 1st of January 2025.
2. Citation: This Executive Order may be Cited as the ASEPA rate and tariffs review of 2024.
3. I hereby approve the review of the rates and tariffs as follows:

S/N	PROPERTY TYPE	SMALL SIZE	MEDIUM SIZE	LARGE SIZE
1	A Room	N300	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
2	Self-contained apartment	N500	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
3	2 or 3 room flat	N 1000	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
4	Semi-detached Duplexes	N1500	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
5	Stand-alone Duplex	N2000	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
6	Mansions	N3000	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
7	Shop	N500	N750	N1000
8	Single owner compound	N4000 [1-2 houses]	N5000 [3-4 houses]	N6000 [More than 4 houses]
9	Shops/Stalls in the Market	N 1000	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
10	Hotel	N25,000 [1-20 rooms]	N40,000 [21-50 rooms]	N60,000 [more than 50 rooms]
11	Lounges/ Bars	N15,000 [1-20 tables]	N25,000 [Above 20 tables]	Not Applicable
12	Departmental Stores/Malls e.g [Shoprite, Market Square]	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	N100,000
13	Eateries	N15,000 e.g [Chicken Republic]	N30,000 e.g [Crunchies, Platter Grillz]	Not Applicable
14	Restaurants	N5,000 [1-5 tables]	N7,000 [6 to 15 tables]	N10,000 [Above 15 tables]
15	Supermarkets	N 15,000 [Below 25 square meters space]	N25,000 [Between 25 and 50 square meters]	N50,000 [Above 50 square meters]
16	Health Facilities/Pharmacies	N15,000 [Below 25 square meters space]	N25,000 [Between 25 and 50 square meters]	N50,000 [Above 50 square meters]
17	Hospitals/ Maternities/Morgues	N25,000 [Below 15 beds or 50 square meters space]	N50,000 [below 30 beds or 100 square meters Space]	N100,000 [Above 30 beds or 100 square meters space]
18	Petrol/Gas Stations	N10,000 [Between 1 and 4 pumps]	N15,000 [Between 4 and 9 pumps]	N30,000 [Above 9 pumps/Mega Stations]
19	SMEs	N5,000 [consisting of 1-5 staff]	N10,000 [consisting of 6-15 staff]	N15,000 [consisting of above 15 staff]
20	Factories/ Manufacturing Companies	N50,000 [consisting of below 50 staff]	N100,000 [consisting of between 50 and 100 staff]	N150,000 [Above 100 staff]
21	Mechanic/Auto Repair Workshop	N5,000 [same as SME]	N10,000 [same as SME]	N30,000
22	Schools	N5,000 [1-100 students]	N15,000 [101 - 300 students]	N30,000 [above 300 Student]

23	Higher Institution	Not Applicable	N50,000 [Below 1000 students]	N100,000 [Above 1000 students]
24	Bank/Financial Institution	Not Applicable	N15,000 [Micro-finance banks]	N30,000 [commercial banks]
25	Churches/Religious Institution	N5,000 [1-100 members]	N10,000 [100-500 members]	N25,000 [Above 500 members]
26	Offices	N 1,000 (Single room)	N2,000 [with 2-3 rooms]	N10,000 [with more than 3 rooms]
27	Government/Military/ Paramilitary offices and residences	N15,000 [less than 10 offices/rooms]	N25,000 between 11 and 30 offices/rooms]	N50,000 [more than 31 offices/rooms]

NOTE:

1. The above is not exhaustive, structures not included above would be treated based on nature and type of structures usage, volume of human traffic, business type and volume etc.
2. Half of the rates above would apply for locations outside the two major towns of Umuhia and Aba

Find below the payment codes applicable for different property types. Residents/Businesses are enjoined to make their 2024 ASEPA sanitation fees payment with the appropriate category and code which applies to them

ABIA STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REVENUE NAME/CODE

AGENCY NAME	CAIEGORY NUMZER	REVENUE NAME	REVENUE CODE
ASEPA	35016001	Market Stalls /Shops & Artisans Workshop Sanitation Fees	12040131
ASEPA	35016001	Industrial & Manufacturing Sanitation Fees	12040374
ASEPA	35016001	Tenement Sanitation Fees	12040497
ASEPA	35016001	Commercial Establishment Sanitation Fees	12040499
ASEPA	35016001	Hospital Establishment Sanitation	12040500
ASEPA	35016001	Hospitality	12040501
ASEPA	35016001	Professional & Business Offices Sanitation Fees	12040502
ASEPA	35016001	Hospital & Maternities Sanitation Fees	12040503
ASEPA	35016001	Educational Institution Sanitation Fees	12040528
ASEPA	35016001	Bakery Houses Sanitation Fees	12040529
ASEPA	35016001	Poultry/Piggery Establishment Sanitation Fees	12040530
ASEPA	35016001	Ministry/Parastatals Sanitation Fees	12040531

Dated at Umuhia, Abia State this 31st day of Dec 2024

DR. ALEX CHIOMA OTTI, OFR
Executive Governor
Abia State of Nigeria

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (13)

By Joseph Jacob

Chioma started selling fruits as she searched for another job. Despite doing very well in various interviews, her prospective employers would not give her the job after they check her record with her previous employer.

She has gone to her family for financial help, but, her parents sent her away and threatened to disown any of their child, who helps her. Their annoyance was that Chioma married Eze instead of an honorable member of the State House of Assembly. They had wanted Chioma to marry the politician so that they would become very wealthy through him.

Chioma knew what she wanted and went for it. She did not want a man that would lavish on her everything that money can buy on her, but, would not be around to listen to her worries and give her tender loving care.

So, she went for Eze, though he had little means, Eze had no political meetings to attend, that would last into the mid-nights. He would not be travelling often to Abuja and beyond on political engagements. He would certainly have enough time for her. True to her expectations, Eze was an excellent husband until he travelled.

Chioma turned to her husband's family for help. They were not happy with her as well. They had wanted her to give birth to more children. When they realized that she would not get pregnant again, they pressured Eze to take another wife. When Eze refused, his family concluded that Chioma had bewitched their son.

It was after Chioma visited Eze's younger brother, Emeka, that she realized that she was off the creek without a pedal. She and Eze had collectively catered for Emeka's university education. So she was very optimistic that Emeka would help her.

"You're a witch", Emeka started after Chioma had made her request, "You charmed my brother, sent him abroad so you can carry out your prostitution without hindrance. Let me tell you, I'm a born again Christian. If you have come here to seduce me, I reject you with the blood of Jesus."

"Emmy, did I not come here to beg you to persuade your brother not to travel abroad?" Chioma wept.

"And so what? Is it my fault?"

"I'm not saying it's your

fault. But, I need your help, even if you have to lend me the money, I assure you that I'll pay back as soon as I secure a new job"

Emeka sniggered, "when your husband was here in Nigeria and you people were enjoying yourselves did you care to check whether I'm alive?"

Chioma shook her head in agony.

"Don't shake your head, I'm a born again, you know that I can't lie against you..."

"Emmy", Chioma interrupted, "can you remember how many times I borrowed money from my office' welfare association to care for you without my husband's knowledge?"

"Get out from my house!" Emeka shouted as he jumped to his feet and pointed to the door. Chioma left with tears.

When she got home, Ada welcomed her with the good news that she had pointed passed her Junior Certificate Examination with nine Distinctions and two Credits. Chioma congratulated her, but, told her that there was no money for her Senior School education.

Obi could not proceed beyond JSS 1 as well. While their mates were in school, Ada and Obi helped their mum in selling fruits so they could be sure of at least two meals a day.

Early one Monday morning, two months after she was retrenched, Chioma was brainstorming on the way forward when she heard a heavy knock on the door.

She opened the door and found a tall, dark complexioned man on royal blue suit standing at the door.

"Good morning sir", she greeted.

"Good morning madam, I'm here on behalf of my client. We want to take over the house", the man said politely.

"Why?" Chioma asked spreading her palms, "It's our house", she protested.

"I don't know what you mean, but, my client bought the house last month from Chief Ochemba." She looked at her face to see whether the name sound familiar. But, when he saw the surprise on Chioma's face, he said, "Come let me show you."

Chioma followed him to his ash coloured 505 Peugeot car. He opened the driver's door went in and collected a file on the passenger's seat. He came out shut the door and opened the file on the bonnet. Chioma came closer and stood beside him.

The man showed her all the documents, "I know the circumstance under which Chief Ochemba usually acquires property", the man started, "that is why I came to notify whoever is living here."

Chioma was dumbfounded, her eyes fixed on the closed file. She could no longer feel her legs.

The man suddenly realized that he had been speaking to the wrong person, "What about your husband?"

Chioma wiped her face with the edge of her wrapper, "he travelled to Germany about seven months ago, and since then, we've not heard from him."

"It's a pity madam, but, I've done the best any good spirited person would have done, so that area boys will not come and throw your belongings out of the house."

"Please sir, give me only one week..."

"I'm sorry madam, the area boys will be coming tomorrow and I'll not be here. For your own good, please, pack out today." He got into the car with the file and drove off.

CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

"The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid." - Jane Austen.

JANE AUSTEN



Jane Austen was an English novelist, famous for her six novels: Sense and Sensibility(1811), Pride and Prejudice(1813), Mansfield Park(1814), Emma (1816), Northanger Abbey (1818), Persuasion (1818) and Lady Susan (1871) The last three were posthumously published.

She was born in Steventon, Hampshire on Decemaber 16, 1775. It was not until April 5 that she was baptized at the local church and christened Jane.

Her father, Geoge Austen, served as the rector of the Anglican parishes of Steventon and Deane. Her mother was Cassandra Leigh.

In 1783 Austen and her sister Cassandra were sent to Oxford to be educated by Ann Cawley who took them to Southampton later that year. Later, both girls were sent home after catching typhus, of which Jane nearly died. She was from then home-educated, until she attended boarding school with her sister from early in 1785 at the Reading Abbey Girls' School, ruled by Mrs La Tournelle.

The curriculum included French, spelling, needlework, dancing, music and drama. The sisters returned home before December 1786 because the school fees for both girls were too high for the Austen family.

From the time

she was 11, Austen wrote poems and stories to amuse herself and her family. She exaggerated mundane details of daily life and parodied common plot devices in stories full of anarchic fantasies of female power, licence, illicit behavior and general high spirits.

When Austen was 17 in August 1792, she started Catharine or the Bower which presaged her mature work, especially Northanger Abbey, but was left unfinished until picked up in Lady Susan.

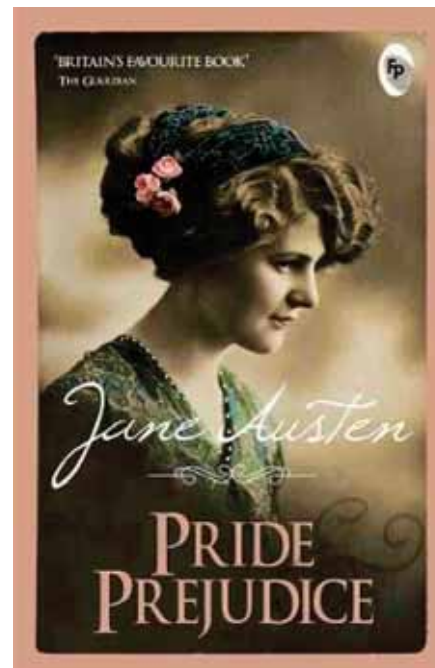
In the months after Austen's death in July 1817, Cassandra, Henry Austen and Murray arranged for the publication of Persuasion and Northanger Abbey as a set. Henry Austen contributed a Biographical Note dated December 1817, which for the first time identified his sister as the author of the novels.

In 2013, Austen's works featured on a series of UK postage stamps issued by the Royal Mail to mark the

bicentenary of the publication of Pride and Prejudice. Austen is on the £10 note issued by the Bank of England which was introduced in 2017, replacing Charles Darwin.

In July 2017, a statue of Austen was erected in Basingstoke, Hampshire on the 200th anniversary of her death.

Emeh Mercy



Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Battle for Survival

By Joseph Jacob

The League Phase of the UEFA Champions League enters matchday 7 with many teams battling for survival. Sporting Ambassador's Joseph Jacob takes a look at this mid-week fixtures and the battle for survival. Ademola Lookman and his Atalanta teammates welcome Swiss side Sturm Graz to Bergamo. Atalanta did not lose any match in the group phase until their 3-2 home defeat to defending champions, Real Madrid on match day 6. However, the last season's Europa League winners are focused, and still recall their 1-0 home win over their opponents in a Group D encounter last season. Sturm Graz have won only a single match in the League phase. In their last 14 encounters with Italian opponents, they have won only once, losing seven and drawing six. Gian Piero Gasperini's Atalanta will avoid play-offs if they take all three points. Sixteenth placed Monaco will be looking for their 12th win over English opponent when they host Aston Villa who are still basking in the euphoria of their victory over Leipzig courtesy of Ross Barkley's 85th minute winner. This victory helped the English side moved to fifth, a position they will be hoping to consolidate with a win over their French opponents. Slovan Bratislava will be searching for their first win against Stuttgart of Germany as they meet in a UEFA competition for the third time. However, the pressure is on the 26th placed German side as their opponents are already eliminated. Stuttgart will be hoping to reinact their 5-1 demolition of Young Boys of Switzerland on match day six.

Juventus of Italy will storm Belgium to take on Club Brugge knowing that they have not lost to a Belgian side for 33 years. But, Club Brugge will be hoping to repeat their 1978 performance which saw them advance to the final of the European Cup at the expense of Juventus. Both clubs are poised to qualify for the play-offs and will not want to jeopardize that position by losing this encounter. Atletico Madrid will welcome Bayer Leverkusen to the Estadio Metropolitano as they battle for an automatic qualification place. The Spaniards have been in blistering form both in Spain and in Europe and have recorded victories in their last three League Phase matches. However, Xabi Alonso and his Leverkusen side have shown repeatedly that they can hold their own against big clubs. No wonder they are fourth on the table and they will fight to ensure that nothing derail them from getting an automatic qualification for the knockout stage. In their previous 11 meetings they have won three matches apiece and settled for a draw in four occasions. Portuguese side, Benfica will have their hands full when Barcelona storm the Estadio do SLBenfica in Lisbon. Benfica could not score against Bologna on match day 6 and they will want to correct that when they host Barcelona. The Spaniards are already through to the round of 16, but will definitely not leave anything for granted against a Benfica side that will take full advantage of any lapses. Already qualified Liverpool will welcome Lille to Anfield. Both



Liverpool Have Never Walked Alone As They Are Top Of The Table

sides met in the 2010 Europa League round of 16 with Liverpool progressing after winning 3-0 at home and losing to Lille by a lone goal. Lille are another standout team so far, recording victories over two Madrid clubs, Atletico and Real. Italian side, Bologna will welcome Borussia Dortmund to the Stadio Renato Dall'Ara. Despite occupying 33rd position, Bologna still stand a mathematical chance of reaching the play-off stage. However, their opponents are desperate to win to ensure they grab an automatic ticket for the round of 16. Bologna have never lost to a German side settling for a draw in their two previous encounters with German sides. Crvena Zvezda will be taking on

PSV in their third meeting in UEFA competition. Both previous encounters saw both sides winning at their respective homes. The home side are hopeful that winning this encounter and their last against Young Boys will see them through to the play-offs. Therefore, 23rd placed PSV will be expecting a difficult match in Belgrade. Eliminated German side, Leipzig will welcome Portuguese side Sporting CP to the RB Arena. The German side are playing for nothing but pride as they have not gotten any point so far. Marco Rose's side will hope to at least give their home fans something to smile about on Wednesday. In contrast Sporting CP with 10 points are still in contention, though they have lost their last two matches to Arsenal and Club Brugge, they will be hoping to out-score Leipzig as they have scored in each of their last 17 UEFA competition matches. Shakhtar Donetsk still have a mountain to climb with only four points from six matches. However, against high flying Brest will be an uphill task. Brest are occupying the seventh place and are aware that a victory for them will further strengthen their chances of automatic qualification. Los Blancos did themselves a lot of good when they defeated Atalanta on match day six. Prior to that encounter they lost to Liverpool and Milan and were in the verge of failing to reach the round of 16. But as they host Salzburg, they should be able to take all the three points to push for qualification for the next round. The biggest match this mid-week will take place in Paris where Paris

Saint Germain will host Manchester City. PSG are 25th, while their opponent are 22nd, both sides are fighting to qualify for the play-offs. Sparta started the League Phase like a house on fire thrashing Salzburg 3-0. But they have now lost their last four matches. Their opponents Inter Milan are a very formidable opponent that will want to take all three points. The Gunners will be armed to the teeth when they welcome GNK Dinamo to the Emirate Stadium. Mikel Arteta's side have conceded only two goals this season and have garnered 13 points from possible 18. However, their opponents still have the chance of a play-off and will therefore give Arsenal a run for their money. Celtic will take on Young Boys in a clash of teams with contrasting fortunes. Young Boys are bottom of the table with no points, while their opponent are 21st and are still in a position to qualify for the play-off. Feyenoord will take on Bayern Munich in a clash that will definitely be entertaining. Feyenoord have been scoring a lot of goals this season and will have their hands full against Bayern Munich, who are also a free scoring side. The Rossoneri overcame their poor start to the League Phase, where they lost their first two matches to bounce back to reckoning after winning their last four matches. As they host debutants Girona, they will be hoping to continue in the winning streak as their opponent have lost five of their last six matches.



Ademola Lookman Is Making Nigeria And Atalanta Proud.

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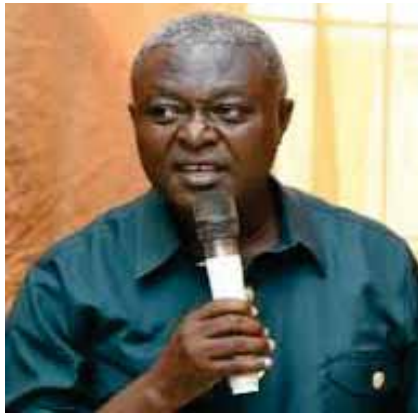
Ex-Athlete Donates Volleyball Equipment To Abia Sports Council

By Joseph Jacob

Abia State Volleyball is set for greater heights this year following the donation of vital Volleyball equipment by former Abia State athlete, Ms. Joy Eziaku Ogba in December 2024.

Ms. Ogba, in who was a member of the gold winning Abia State Volleyball team at the 2006 National Sports Festival, Gateway Games in Ogun State, was a former player of Abia Queens Volleyball Club, a former National Institute of Sports player and a former National team player. In recognition of her exploits in the game of volleyball, she was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Louisiana Tech University of the United States.

The American based athlete donated six Mikasa Volleyballs with



Comrade Obioma George Director of Sport Abia State Sports Council.

net, souvenirs for upcoming volleyball players and new modern whistles for referees, which are blown by just pressing a button.

The Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George while presenting the

equipment to the press, emphasized the need for individuals to support government in sports development and thanked Dr. Alex Otti for his unprecedented effort in sports development, which has motivated well-meaning individuals like Ms. Joy Eziaku Ogba to support the Sports Council through various means.

In her contribution, Abia Volleyball coach who doubles as the secretary of Abia State Volleyball Association and a teammate of the donor, Udeaku Nwaogazi, recalled that Abia players used to dominate the national team and assured that with the support of the Dr. Alex Otti led government and other individual like Ms. Joy Eziaku Ogba, as well as corporate organizations, Abia Volleyball will regain its glory days.

Blast From The Past: How Dream Team 2 Qualified for Sidney Olympics

Nigeria made history when the Dream Team won gold in the football event of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The likes of Kanu Nwankwo, Austin Okocha, Emmanuel Amunike, Daniel Amokachi, among others, gave the world joy with their soccer artistry.

Nigeria did not participate in the preliminary round of the qualifiers as world champions. So they joined the qualifiers in the first round and they were drawn against Namibia.. The Dream Team 2 did all the work in the first leg, the Namibians 4-0. So when they lost the second leg 3-2, it did not prevent Nigeria from qualifying for the next round on a 6-3 aggregate.

The second round saw Nigeria drawn in Group 1 against Angola, Zimbabwe and Uganda. For a team that won gold in the previous Olympics, this group did not look difficult at all. But, it turned out to be very difficult for the Dream Team 2.

On October 16, 1999, Nigeria defeated Angola 2-0 and were placed second in the group after Zimbabwe thrashed Uganda 3-0. The Zimbabweans maintained their lead after defeating Nigeria 2-1 on match day two while Angola took the third position after defeating Uganda 3-1.

On February 13, 2000, Nigeria bounced back to winning ways by defeating Uganda 3-2 in Kampala, yet Zimbabwe maintained the top spot after defeating Angola 3-2. Match day four took place in February 26, 2000 and Nigeria defeated Uganda by a lone goal, but Zimbabwe lost 4-2 to Angola.

Match day five was crucial, Nigeria needed to win to leapfrog Zimbabwe ahead of the last round of matches, but the opposite happened. Angola defeated Nigeria 3-1 and Zimbabwe defeated Uganda by a lone goal. At this point, reality dawned on the team and their fans across the country, participating in the 2000 Sidney Olympics could be a mirage.

Zimbabwe were leading the group with 12 points, Angola were second with nine points same as Nigeria but the East Africans had superior goal difference of +3 while Nigeria had +1.

Uganda were already out of contention having lost all their five matches.

The situation was very dicey for Nigeria, though they would host Zimbabwe while Uganda host Angola in the last qualifying matches. It was obvious that Angola would defeat Uganda and move to 12 points. So Nigeria must not only defeat Zimbabwe but must do so, with as much as two goals to have a superior goal difference.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe's coach was a man who knew Nigerian football like the back of his hand-Clemens Westerhof. At the end of the first 45 minutes of the tension soaked encounter, Nigeria were 2-0 up courtesy of Emmanuel Ebiode's brace. At this point, Nigeria was top of the group, but only a goal by the Zimbabweans will turn everything upside down. So the tension was palpable down to the rooms of Nigerians who were watching the match.

Meanwhile, in Kampala, the score was still goalless, the Angolans needed just a lone goal to leapfrog Nigeria and they were confident that they would do just that in the second 45 minutes. They did that in the 83rd minute through De Almeida Joao Santos. The Angolans can feel Sidney and it was heartbreak for Nigeria.

Nigeria must score twice to leapfrog the Angolans, while Zimbabwe needed just a draw to get unassailable 13 points.

Ticking of every second of the clock was the Sidney Olympics crawling away from Nigeria. But just a minute to full time, Yakubu Aiyegbeni scored a third goal. At this point, Zimbabwe were out because they could not equalise, but another goal is needed to overcome Angola. It was the last action of the match; the referee was ready to blow the final whistle. Pius Ikedia took the ball and ran into the opponents vital area, he needed to cross the ball but the opponents were poised to clear the ball, then he decided to hit the ball hard with the hope of a deflection and indeed the ball deflected off a Zimbabwean player into the back of the net. At the blast of the final whistle, Nigeria booked their ticket for Sidney, while Angola and Zimbabwe booked their tickets for Luanda and Harare, respectively.

English Premier League: Manchester City, Chelsea Renew Rivalry

Defending Champions Manchester City will welcome Chelsea to the Etihad Stadium in the biggest match of this weekend's week 23 matches of the English Premier League.

Both teams have had their ups and downs this season which impeded their challenge for the title. While Manchester City went through a period of five matches without a win, Chelsea have been inconsistent losing matches they ought to have won and drawing games they should have won with ease.

In the reverse fixture played on the opening weekend of this season on August 18, 2024 at the Stamford Bridge, a goal in each half by Erling Haaland and Kovacic gave the

Citizens a 2-0 victory.

The outcome of this encounter may not decide who will eventually win the league, it will have a big ramification on who will make the top four at the end of the season.

In other matches, the Vitality Stadium will host the clash between Bournemouth and Nottingham Forest as Brighton welcome Everton

to the Amex Stadium.

Liverpool will seek not to walk alone when they host Ipswich as Southampton will seek to crawl out from the bottom of the table when they host Newcastle United.

Wolves will attempt to devour Arsenal while Crystal Palace lurk horns with Brentford.

Tottenham Hotspur and Leicester City will go head to head as Aston Villa tread tackles with West Ham United.

Fulham will attempt to do a double over Manchester United when they welcome the Red Devils

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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



Chelsea's Cole Palmer @ takes on Bernardo Silva