

Your Lands Will Not Be Polluted, Governor Otti Assures Oil, Gas Host Communities
▲ Pg. 14

Omenuko Bridge: A Symbol of Hope and Progress in Abia

▲ Pg. 11

5th Anniversary Activities: Diri Flags Off Free Medical Outreaches In Bayelsa
▲ Pg. 13

NATIONAL Ambassador

N250 VOL. 28 NO.002

“Uplift the people, project the nation” February 23, 2025

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GOVERNOR OTTI:



The Man, His Mission And Vision

GOVERNOR OTTI

@60

By Jones Nnanna Ike

A Glimpse Of His Profile

Born – 18th February 1965, place of Birth, Umuru Umehim in Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area of Abia State.

Spouse: Mrs Priscilla Otti

Education: – Ngwa High School Aba. and graduated in 1982 with distinction. He pursued a higher education at the University of Port Harcourt and earned a First-Class Degree in Economics in 1988.

Post-Graduate Studies:

Obtained an MBA from the University of Lagos in 1994 . He furthered his education development programs at Prestigious International Institutions, including Columbia School, Standford Business School, Wharton Business School (University of Pennyslavia) and an Executive Program and INSEAD in Fontainebeau, France.

Banking Career:

Dr. Alex Otti began his banking Career in 1989, with the Nigerian International Bank, a subsidiary of Citibank New York, working in the Operations Department. He subsequently held positions at the Nigerian Intercontinental Bank Merchant Bank Ltd, Societe Bancaire Nigeria Limited (a Subsidiary of Banque SBA Paris and United Bank for Africa UBA, where he oversaw the banks Corporate Banking Sector for the entire South Division, focusing on the Oil and Gas business.

First Bank of Nigeria Experience:

In May 2001, Dr. Alex Otti joined First Bank of Nigeria as Assistant-General Manager, responsible for growing the Energy Sector. He was later promoted to Deputy General Manager, and then Executive Director for the South Directorate, overseeing over 140 branches in the South- South and South-Eastern political zones.

Diamond Bank:

In March 2011, Dr. Alex Otti was appointed the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Diamond Bank, leading the bank through a significant transformation. He retired from this position on October 24, 2014 and joined partisan politics.

Honours and Recognition:

Honorary Degrees:

Dr. Alex Otti was conferred with an Honourary Doctorate from Babcock University in 2009, an Honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc) Degree from the University of Port Harcourt in 2012 and another honorary doctorate from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

He is also an Ugwuaro in Arochukwu Kingdom and the Ekwueme of Abam Onyerubi.

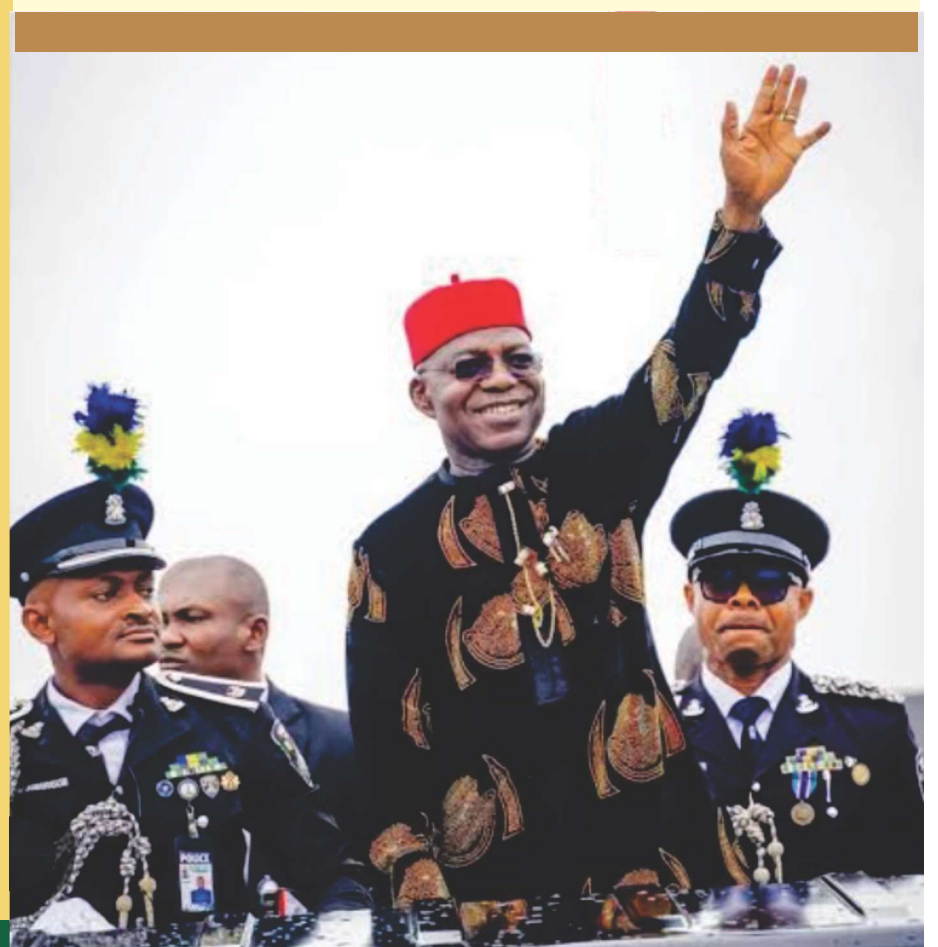
Dr. Otti is married to Mrs Priscilla Chidinma Otti – the First Lady of Abia, and they have three grown-up children

Political Career:

Dr. Otti first contested the governorship election of Abia State in 2015, under the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and was declared the winner by the Court of Appeal on December 31, 2015. However, the Supreme Court reversed the decision on February 3, 2016, affirming the incumbent Okezie Ikpeazu as the Governor.

Dr. Alex Otti again in 2019, contested the same office and was under the same party, but was declared the second runner-up.

Continued from page 3



Dr. Alex Chioma Otti remained undeterred and continued his political journey. In 2023, he contested the Governorship Election under the Labour Party and had a landslide victory with a total vote of 175,467 against his closest rival, Chief Okey Ahiwe, who came a distant second with 88,529.

He was sworn in as the Executive Governor on May 29, 2023.

Governor Otti: His Vision of Politics And Governance

Governor Alex Otti's vision for Abia State is centered on a comprehensive transformation across key sectors, aiming to position the State as a leading economic and social hub in Nigeria. His strategic focus areas include:

Economic Development: Governor Otti is committed to revitalizing Abia's economy by fostering entrepreneurship and attracting investments. He emphasizes that Abia is an ideal destination for business ventures, highlighting the State's potential for growth and innovation.

Healthcare Improvement: A significant aspect of his agenda is the enhancement of healthcare services. The governor has started to rehabilitate and upgrade 200 Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) within the Next 100-days, with intentions to extend these efforts to all 948 PHCs statewide. This initiative aims to provide accessible and quality healthcare to all residents.

Education Reform: Governor Otti envisions a functional and globally competitive education system in Abia State. His administration has allocated 35% of the 2025 budget to education, focusing on remodeling schools, recruiting qualified teachers, and enforcing compulsory education laws to ensure every child receives quality education.

Infrastructure Development: The Governor is dedicated to reconstructing and transforming Abia's infrastructure. It's initiative includes improving roads, transportation networks, and public facilities to enhance the quality of life for residents and attract investors.

Legal and Justice System Enhancement: Under his leadership, there has been a focus on modernizing the justice system. This initiatives include the construction of modern court halls across all 17 local government areas, the digitization of legal processes, and the provision of electronic recording devices in the courts to strengthen the criminal justice system.

Through these initiatives, Governor Otti aims to create a prosperous, healthy, and educated Abia State, fostering a conducive environment to economic growth and social well-being.

Governor Alex Otti's vision for politics and governance centers on transforming Abia State into a progressive, efficient, and self-sustaining region. He emphasizes transparency, accountability, and the development of critical sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and industrialization. Otti is focused on addressing the State's economic challenges by promoting job creation, leveraging the State's natural resources, and attracting both local and foreign investments.

Key elements of his vision include:

1. Economic Transformation: Otti is dedicated to fostering a business-friendly environment to stimulate economic growth, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing, and the services sector.

2. Infrastructure Development: He aims to improve the State's infrastructure by rehabilitating roads, enhancing power supply, and modernizing healthcare and educational facilities.

3. Human Capital Development: Otti is passionate about investing in education and healthcare, to ensure that the people of Abia State are equipped with the skills and well-being needed for personal and societal growth.

4. Good Governance: Under his leadership, he is focused on fostering an inclusive, transparent, and accountable government that prioritizes the welfare of its people.

5. Security: Otti acknowledges the importance of security as a foundation for sustainable development and aims to strengthen security measures across the State.

Otti has also expressed a commitment to empowering the youth and women, ensuring that they have opportunities for education, employment, and active participation in governance.



Governor Otti And His Charity Works

Governor Alex Otti has made significant contributions to philanthropy throughout his career, using his resources and influence to improve the lives of individuals and communities, particularly in Abia State. His philanthropic efforts focus on education, healthcare, empowerment, and community development.

1. Educational Support: Dr. Otti has been committed to improving education in Abia State and beyond. He has sponsored scholarships for students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, to pursue higher education.

He has also funded educational infrastructure development, including the building of schools and provision of learning materials to enhance access to quality education.

2. Healthcare Initiatives: Otti has worked on improving healthcare services, providing medical assistance, and supporting hospitals with resources, particularly in rural areas.

He has contributed to the funding of medical outreach programs and health campaigns, focusing on preventive healthcare and supporting the sick in need of medical treatment.

3. Empowerment and Job Creation: Through his various ventures, including during his tenure as the Group CEO of Diamond Bank, Otti has supported initiatives aimed at job creation and empowering the youth.

He has provided financial and mentoring support to young entrepreneurs, helping them to start or grow their businesses.

4. Community Development: Dr. Otti has been involved in numerous community development projects, providing funds for infrastructural projects such as the construction of roads, water supply systems, and the development of local markets.

He is also passionate about the welfare of the elderly and has supported various programs aimed at providing for the aged and vulnerable in society.

5. Humanitarian Projects: As a philanthropist, Otti has been a donor to various humanitarian causes, including supporting disaster victims and people affected by socio-economic challenges.

These efforts reflect his deep commitment to improving the living conditions of his fellow citizens and his beliefs in the power of collective prosperity.



Governor Otti's Christian Lifestyle

Governor Alex Otti, a member of Seventh-day Adventist Church, is known for his Christian faith, and his lifestyle reflects strong Christian principles. His Christian beliefs have been an integral part of his personal and professional life, shaping his decisions, values, and approach to leadership.

Otti has often emphasized the importance of integrity, honesty, and transparency in his life and governance. These values align with Christian teachings on righteousness and the importance of leading by example. His philanthropic work, which focuses on helping the less-privileged, the sick, and vulnerable members of society, is inspired by Christian teachings on love, compassion, and service to others. In his various charitable initiatives, he has demonstrated a commitment to living out the Christian principle of helping those in need.

a. Church Involvement:

Otti is known to be an active member of the Christian community. He has supported Christian organizations and initiatives aimed at spreading the Gospel and improving lives through faith-based programs.

b. Moral Leadership:

As a leader, Otti has consistently advocated for moral leadership, which reflects the teachings of Christ. His commitment to good governance, accountability, and service to the people can be seen as an extension of his Christian duty to serve others selflessly.

Family And Faith:

His strong family values are also influenced by his Christian faith. Otti is a devoted husband and father, prioritizing family life and faith as the foundation of his personal and public life. His values reflect Christian teachings on the importance of love, respect, and care for one's family.

Otti's Christian lifestyle is evident in the way he approaches leadership, his philanthropic efforts, and his commitment to justice and service to others. His faith plays a significant role in guiding his decisions and actions as both a public figure and a private individual.



Editorial

Otti @ 60: Kudos To A Life Of Excellence

Hurray, our Action Governor is now sixty years. Born Alex Chioma Otti into the family of Pastor & Mrs Lazarus Otti, Otti's life symbolizes the triumph of hard work, diligence, excellence and a persistent pursuit of perfection.

Right from an early age, this gifted first son of a clergy man worked his way to the pinnacle of the society.

However, his inner strength manifested when he resigned from his plum job as the Managing Director of the Diamond Bank to join the murky terrain of partisan politics.

After two trials both in 2015 and 2019, his effort was crowned with victory when he was declared the winner of the 2023 governorship election in Abia State.

Since he mounted the saddle of leadership on May 29th, 2023, the Governor has practically leapfrogged the State from its pre - May 2023 status as the least developed State to its present status as the fastest developing State in Nigeria.

He has by so doing wiped away the

tears of a once beleaguered people as well as restored their pride and hope in governance.

In a nutshell, Dr. Alex Otti and his lieutenants are nudging Abia away from its old form into what is now generally regarded as a "New Abia".

A new Abia where the Government works for the people.

Being the initiator and pioneer of this New Abia, Governor Otti has, by so doing, etched his name in Gold as its father.

At 60, His life has indeed been an impactful one

It is against this background that we join millions of his numerous admirers to wish him a happy 60th Birthday.

We pray for his continued good health and God's grace in all his undertakings.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Nwokenna Florence Udodirim, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS NWAGBARA FLORENCE UDODIRIM**. All documents bearing my former names remain valid.

Ministry of Education and the general public should please take note.

MRS NWAGBARA FLORENCE UDODIRIM.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Igbokwe Jennifer Chinaza, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS OKORONZE JENNIFER CHINAZA**. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MRS OKORONZE JENNIFER CHINAZA.

I, formerly known and addressed as Eluwa Adaeze Confidence, now wish to be known and addressed as **IKENNA ADAEZE CONFIDENCE**. 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.

IKENNA ADAEZE CONFIDENCE.

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Ihekwereme Lucy Okwulua, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS ONYEBUCHI LUCY OKWUCHI**. All documents bearing my former names, remain valid. Bureau of Common Services and Service monitoring, office of the Head of Service Abia State and the general public should please take note.

ONYEBUCHI LUCY OKWUCHI (MRS).

Correction of Name

This is to affirm that Mr. Kevin Ezikpe Agbara which was correctly written on my National Identification Number (NIN) and **MR. KEVIN EZEKPE AGBARA** which was wrongly written on my Bank Verification Number are same person.

I now wish to be known, and addressed as Mr. Kevin Ezikpe Agbara. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Access bank and the general public should please take note.

MR. KEVIN EZEKPE AGBARA.

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Passionate Letter To Dr Alex Otti At 60.

Dear Dr Alex Otti,

I hope this letter finds you well sir as you celebrate a remarkable milestone in your life - your 60th birthday. On this special occasion, I want to take a moment to not only extend my heartfelt congratulations but to express my deep admiration and appreciation for all that you have achieved as Abia State governor.

Reaching the age of 60 is not just a number, but a reflection of a life well-lived, filled with dedication, service, and unparalleled excellence. Your achievements have transcended the boundaries of your profession, and your legacy extends far beyond the notable positions you have held and the accolades you've garnered. You have been a beacon of hope, a trailblazer, and a mentor to countless individuals.

Throughout your life and career, you have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to making a positive difference which is showing as you continue to display quality leadership as Abia State Governor. Your passion for progress, leadership, and the empowerment of others has created a lasting impact, inspiring people from all walks of life to strive for excellence and to believe in the power of change.

Your legacy is one of courage, vision, and selfless dedication to the common good.

As you mark this significant milestone, I want to thank you for being a true source of inspiration. Your values - integrity, compassion, and relentless determination - continue to serve as a guiding light for many. The journey you have walked is one of great personal and professional growth, and I have no doubt that you will continue to influence the world and Abian's in ways that will resonate for generations to come.

Sir, at 60, you stand not only as a leader but as a testament to the power of hard work, perseverance, and unwavering conviction. Your story is one that gives hope to those who seek to make a difference and shows that no matter the obstacles, success is not just achievable but inevitable when driven by passion and purpose.

On this monumental occasion, I celebrate you, your achievements, and the incredible impact you have made on so many lives. May this new chapter be filled with even more growth, fulfillment, and blessings.

I look forward to seeing all the amazing things you will continue to accomplish as Abia State Governor. Happy 60th Birthday, Dr. Otti! You are a true inspirator.

By Okechukwu Ubani



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News

Nkwonta holds Maiden Ukwa Town Hall Meeting, Set To Build Skill Acquisition Centre

By Stephane Adindu

The Chairman, House Committee on South-East Development Commission (SEDC), Federal House of Representatives Abuja, Hon. Chris Nkwonta, has held his maiden non-partisan stakeholders meeting with his constituents to address their peculiar challenges in the area.

Speaking at his country home, Akwete Ndoki, Ukwa-East Local Government Area, Abia State recently, the lawmaker representing Ukwa-East and Ukwa-West Federal Constituency at the National Assembly, decried the high level of underdevelopment in his constituency in spite being an oil-rich area, insisting that state governments from 1999 till date have failed to fix critical infrastructure for their people.

He said, "I am not a politician but in politics to intervene in the affairs of our people. We have not fared well in Ukwa-East and Ukwa-West in terms of politics, from 1999 till 2023. We are not getting our fair share in Abia project. The people of Ukwa-East and Ukwa-West have become endangered species in Abia project from one administration to another".

These and more other reasons informed his decision to unite their people, through nonpartisan stakeholders meeting, maintaining that their survival lies in their unity of purpose.

The Ndoki-born Federal Legislator, also proposed to build an ultra-modern skill acquisition centre in Ukwa-West to train teeming unemployed youths and women from the constituency on vocational skills before empowering them economically.

This, he said, would take away the attention of youths from crime and other social vices, promising to always embark on projects that would directly touch the lives of the Ukwa people.

According to Hon Nkwonta, the ultra-modern skill acquisition centre, which would require about 50 plots of land, will train interested Ukwa Youths in such skills as: Masonry, Carpentry, Plaster of Paris (PoP), Tiling, Painting, Electricals, Plumbing, Welding, Fishery, Piggery, Poultry, Information and Communication Technology and Footballing among others.

Contributing, the President-General, Ndoki Union, Rev. Felix Akara, commended the Federal lawmaker for the proposed ultra-modern skill acquisition centre, urging for the revival of existing ones.

The cleric disclosed that Ukwa people have a comparative advantage also in agriculture, calling for more investment in the sector, to boost food security and socio-economic development.

In his remark, the former Commissioner for Information and Strategy in Abia State, Chief Don Ubani, explained that unemployment is a major factor that militates against development, with chains of negative multiplier effects on any society.

He applauded Nkwonta, adding that the project, when completed, would curb youth restiveness and looming insecurity in the State and country at large.

Ubani said: "It will be necessary to note that even in the midst of unemployment in Nigeria, youths that have skills are never out of lucrative engagements. They are always sought for by individuals or corporate bodies that require their services."

He promised to support the lawmaker in his determination to address, holistically, the challenges of unemployment and development in his constituency.

Meanwhile, the member representing Ukwa-East State Constituency in Abia State House of Assembly, Hon. Lewis Obianyi and his Ukwa-West counterpart, Hon. Godwin Adiele, lauded Nkwonta for the proposed project, adding that they would continue to collaborate his efforts in their capacities in order to attract democracy dividends to their constituents.

In a motion moved by Chief Ubani, seconded by a former Deputy Leader in Abia State House of Assembly, Chief Paul Taribo, and adopted by the House through a voice vote, the meeting resolved thus;

- That Hon Chris Nkwonta should be commended for inviting traditional rulers and stakeholders to discuss issue(s) of development of Ukwa people,

- That Hon Chris Nkwonta should go ahead and make sure that the Comprehensive Skill Acquisition Centre becomes a reality, and

- That Traditional Rulers in Ukwa-East and Ukwa-West need to go home and consult with their People in order to prioritise their needs and send them across to Representative Nkwonta for inclusion in the budget.

The event attracted former Chairmen of Abia State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ASOPADEC), Rt. Hon. Emeka Stanley, Mr. Henry Chilaka, former member that represented Ukwa-West State Constituency in Abia Assembly, Hon. Tony Mezie Nwaubani, Chairmen Ukwa-East and Ukwa-West Traditional Rulers Council, Eze Obinna Nwagbara and Eze Chinyere Dike respectively, the traditional ruler of Igubeachara Autonomous Community, Akirika-Uku Ndoki, Ukwa-East, Eze Ikechi Nwosu, the wife of the President-General, Ndoki Union, Mrs. Akara, Chief S.P. Ogbonna, Lady Cecilia Okere, Chief Ossy Nwamuo, Chief Geoffrey Akara, Dr. Thomas Otuka, Chief Okechi Nwaohu, clergies, youth presidents from the two LGAs, among others.



■ A Cross Section Of Members Of OWSD, Umudike Chapter, Led By Their Coordinator, Prof. Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka, And Students Of Awom Na Ebo Senior Secondary Technical, Amawom Oboro, Ikwano LGA, Abia State, During The 2025 Int'l Day Of Women And Girls In Science Recently.

OWSD Umudike Marks 2025 Int'l Day Of Women, Girls In Science

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) has lamented that despite significant strides in higher education, women remain underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields worldwide.

The Coordinator, OWSD Umudike branch, Prof. Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka who stated this recently during the 2025 International Day of Women, Girls In Science at Awom na Ebo Secondary School, Amawom Oboro, Ikwano Local Government Area (LGA), Abia State, identified societal stereotypes, limited access to education, and lack of mentorship opportunities among others as factors contributing to the negative trend.

The Professor of Soil Science, also congratulated women and girls in science, adding that despite these challenges, they have continued to break boundaries; paving the way for future generations.

Speaking on the theme: "Unpacking STEM Careers: Her Voice in Science", she emphasized the importance

of amplifying the voices of women in STEM.

She highlighted the achievements of women and girls in scientific fields while advocating for gender equality in STEM education and careers.

In her remark, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), Administration, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU), Prof. Ursula Akanwa, urged the girls to shun distractions and remain focused on the chosen field of science, adding that nothing can stop them if they make up their minds.

Prof. Akanwa also encouraged them to take up challenges, revealing that the problem with this generation is that they want easy life.

She called on government at all levels to prioritize girl-child science education, noting that it will close the gender gap in STEM careers.

Contributing, the Financial Secretary of the group, Dr. Ngozi Achi, explained that OWSD exists to empower women and

girls to excel in their chosen STEM careers.

Dr. Achi said that the gap is more pronounced in engineering, computer science, and physics, where female representation remains critically low, insisting that the inclusion of women in STEM is not just about equity; it's about progress.

She maintained that women's contributions in STEM have led to groundbreaking discoveries, especially in designing AI systems, leading space missions, and developing sustainable technologies. Meanwhile, a member of the group, Dr. Blessing Offia-Olua, has called for more resilience among the girls, explaining that there is no cheap success anywhere.

She said that empowering young girls and women through mentorship, education, and career development opportunities is essential to breaking the barrier gap.

Another member of the group, Dr. Jane Nwaekpe, shared her life story with students, encouraging them to remain resolute in the

chosen field of science.

She narrated the challenges she faced while growing up as a young girl, navigated and emerged a proud woman in science.

In her vote of thanks, the Principal, Awom Na Ebo Senior Secondary Technical, Amawom Oboro, Mrs. Ann Anyaku Oti, thanked OWSD Umudike chapter for availing such opportunity to them, assuring them that they would use everything at their disposal to encourage the STEM careers among girls in the institution.

Highpoints of the event was presentation of books to the girls/school and the grouping of the girls to enhance interactions and mentorship.

Other speakers include: Dr. Patricia Ukegbu, Dr. Florence Nse-Nelson, Dr. Ann Kanu, Dr. Edith Nzem, and Mrs. Obigaeri Chimaraoke, Dr. Uchechi Bliss Onyedikachi, Dr. Pearl Amadi, Mrs. Kolawole Oyekunbi, Dr. Sussan Ijeoma Ezech, Mrs. Chinyere Mgbeahuru, Dr. Flora Murka, and Dr. Mary Sandas.

Special Report

Hon Ibe Okwara Osonwa Flags Off The Construction Of Mgbaga-Ebem-Otulu Road

By Igu Omai Igu

Construction work on the 3-kilometer Mgbaga to Otulu Ebem Ohaifia road by the Federal Government of Nigeria has consistently progressed since after its flag-off some weeks ago.

Attracted by the law maker representing Arochukwu/Ohaifia Federal House of Representatives, Hon. Ibe Okwara Osonwa, the 3-km road starts at Ebem motor park and passes through Mgbaga community to Otulu.

Performing the flag-off ceremony on February 1st, 2025, on behalf of the Ebem-born Federal Lawmaker, the paramount Ruler of Ebem Ujuruezie, HRM, Ezie Ukoha Kalu Ukoha (JP), expressed the gratitude of Ebem people to God for answering the people's prayers over the years for that road to be constructed, and to Hon. Osonwa for attracting the

project, describing the road as "very dear" to Ebem Ohaifia Community.

Ezie Ukoha urged the Supervising Engineer to the Construction Company handling the job to avoid anything that will delay the timely completion of the work, stressing that the community will frown seriously at any such delay. He stressed that the road, when completed, will certainly decongest Ohaifia-Arochukwu Federal Road that traverses Ebem community - which is usually rendered impassable due to traffic congestion, especially during festive periods - hence the need for its timely completion.

The traditional Ruler highlighted some benefits of the road, when realized, to include: promoting interconnectivity, economic and commercial boost and openings for more developments in the area. He

assured the contractor of the community's support and co-operation in terms of security, hospitality and general operation.

In his brief remarks, the Deputy Mayor, Ohaifia Local Government Area, Dr. Eme Iro Eme, described the flag-off of the road construction by the Federal Government through the efforts of Representative Ibe Okwara Osonwa, as the answer to the people's long-time prayers and desires.

He commended the administration of Dr. Alex Otti in Abia State for creating a conducive and peaceful environment that has attracted developments in all parts of Abia State, including Ohaifia, and assured the road contractor of the cooperation and support of Ohaifia Local Government Administration.

Earlier, while introducing the programme, the Councilor

representing Ebem-Oha ward in the Ohaifia local government legislative Council, Hon. Ukariwe Uduma, said Hon. Ibe Osonwa had worked very tirelessly to convince the Federal Government to approve and fund the road construction - as a part of his electioneering promises.

Hon. Ukariwe appealed to citizens of Ebem and residents whose properties may be partly or wholly affected by imminent demolition exercises, to cooperate with the construction company, Ebem community and the Federal Government by showing understanding.

Speaking on behalf of Ebem Ohaifia Development Union (E.O.D.U), the first Vice President-General, Hon. Lochi Ngam, disclosed that the Mgbaga-Otulu road issue has, for a long time, been a matter of great concern to the union and eulogized the Ebem son, Hon.

Ibe Okwara Osonwa, for being the first to break the jinx.

He announced that E.O.D.U will give every needed support to the construction company - including not allowing any person or group of persons in Ebem, to obstruct the company's operations.

Hon. Ngam warned that henceforth EODU will no longer tolerate any illegal structure or building that blocks any road or street in the community.

Assuring Ezie Ebem, the Eze-in-Council and the people of Ebem of the company's preparedness to deliver quality work on the road, the Supervising Engineer to the construction company, Mr. Osita Mbaka, said the 3-km interlock Mgbaga-Otulu, Ebem road will be completed in 16-weeks and called for Cooperation and understanding from the people of Ebem. He reiterated the fact that the road project was very dear to Representative Ibe Okwara Osonwa and that the company cannot disappoint the law maker and Ebem community.

Focus

2027: Why Nigerians Must Take Rotimi Amaechi Serious

By Ikechukwu Amaechi

Former Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi, has once again stirred up the proverbial hornet's nest by choosing to be politically incorrect in a clime where doublespeak not only walks on all fours but is also seen as an exemplar of political astuteness. But not for the man who was Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, former Governor of Rivers State and former Minister of Transport.

Speaking in Abuja on January 30, at a national conference on strengthening democracy in Nigeria, organized by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development, Amaechi, as he is wont to do, bucked the hypocritical trend when he reminded his audience that included former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir el-Rufai, and Senator Aminu Tambuwal, former Governor of Sokoto State, that the average Nigerian politician will not relinquish power unless compelled by the superior will of the people.

Nobody has power and will give it to you - not even me... The politician in Nigeria is there to steal, maim and kill to remain in power. If you think Tinubu will give it to you, you are wasting your time," Amaechi said, stressing the need for vigilance and sacrifice.

To be sure, this is not the first time he would task Nigerians to take their political destiny in their own hands.

Speaking at the 2023 TheNiche Annual Lecture in Lagos on

October 28, 2023, Amaechi blamed the docility of Nigerians and their inability to react to the egregious dishonesty of their leaders for the rascality of politicians.

"Nigerians don't react to anything. Has any politician told you he is not a thief? Which politician told you he went to university, which politician told you he/she served in NYSC, and which politician told you he has his certificate? Nigerians know and still vote for them... Even if you come to a Nigerian's house and kill his mother, the father will continue with his life. So, why should I waste my time," he asked.

But even long before The Niche lecture, he had always taken umbrage at the atrocious conducts of Nigerian politicians and seeming acquiescence of the people. Speaking on December 15, 2013 at an event organised in Lagos to pay tribute to former South African President Nelson Mandela, he challenged Nigerians to hold their leaders to account, insisting that political office holders steal State funds because Nigerians do not stone them.

So, Amaechi, in a sense didn't say anything new last Thursday. If anything, he has been consistent on his advocacy that the pathway to good governance and political integrity in Nigeria is for the younger generation to wake up from their slumber and fight for the soul of the country. The fact that he is a major player in the Fourth Republic politics also makes it imperative that Nigerians should listen to him. He knows where the bodies are buried.

That also explains why officials of the Tinubu administration reacted so angrily and called him out

forcefully. After all, he was not the only person who spoke at the Abuja event. But they know that he was telling the truth, knowing exactly how elections are won and lost in Nigeria. So, their pretentious indignation is an attempt to scare him away from his self-imposed task of conscientizing the youths.

Berating Amaechi for making 'reckless, dangerous and inflammatory remarks' unbecoming of a former 'public office holder,' Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, told him that power is earned through democracy, not intimidation, violence or lawlessness, as if Amaechi was in doubt. His claim that the Tinubu administration was committed to upholding peace, democratic values and security for all Nigerians flies in the face of reality.

Of course, Nigerians know who is lying between the two. Suffice it to say that Amaechi simply amplified Tinubu's very Machiavellian idea of power and how it is acquired. Shortly before the 2023 elections, Tinubu, the then presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), was seen in a video admonishing top campaign operatives to 'fight, grab and run (away) with' political power.

Political power is not going to be served in a restaurant. They don't serve it a la carte. At all cost, fight for it, grab it and run with it," he said. And that was exactly what he did, which is also what will happen in 2027 unless Nigerians say enough is enough, the very direction that Amaechi is pointing them to. The very idea of fighting, grabbing and running away with political power is antithetical to democracy. In a democracy, power is given by the people in a free, fair

and credible election.

Of course, in a system that has normalized the idea of power not being given by the electorate but taken forcefully by the strong, in a system where might has always been seen as being right and democracy is a 'do or die affair' (apologies to former President Olusegun Obasanjo), Amaechi's advocacy can only be deemed as treasonable, which explains Matawalle's angst and threat on behalf of his principal.

"Let me make it clear: the security agencies are on high alert. Any individual or group found inciting violence or attempting to destabilize this nation will face the full force of the law. We will not tolerate any form of subversive rhetoric that seeks to undermine national unity or incite lawlessness. This government will not fold its arms and allow any individual to disrupt the peace and stability of Nigeria," he warned.

But pray, how does Amaechi's charge to Nigerians to vote and ensure that their votes are not only counted but count in the outcome of elections be deemed an attempt to undermine national unity? Those who disrupt national unity are those who ensure that votes do not count in elections, people whose democracy worldwide undermine the very principle of democracy.

In a democracy, power is given by the people, not taken willy-nilly by the powerful. Yes, every contest for power is a serious business. But the seriousness lies in the intense battle to win the support of the people who hold the supreme power. As I have always argued, democracy does not guarantee that the best candidate will win. No! But the

irreducible precondition for any democratic adventure is that power must be freely given by the people.

It may be tempting to dismiss Matawalle's threat as sheer bluster, an attempt to cow the people to submit to the Tinubu government's anti-democratic whims and caprices, but Nigerians must take it serious. As at today, nothing suggests that the government is planning for a free and fair poll in 2027 where the choices of the majority of the electorate will prevail.

But knowing the character of successive Nigerian governments since 1999, the messenger may well be endangered. It will, therefore, not be a surprise if the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) starts hounding the arrowheads of the emerging opposition to the prevailing political status-quo, with Amaechi as the principal target.

The former minister is aware of the risk he faces. At the TheNiche lecture, he told the audience that: "The worst thing about Nigerians is that even when you have not committed any crime and they pick you up tomorrow, they will chorus 'we said it, he is a thief,' and you will go to prison for nothing. The greatest fear I have is being found in prison for nothing and you can be found in prison for doing nothing."

The fact that Amaechi knows the risks involved and yet is determined to bite the bullet makes his cause altruistic. And he is right. Nigerian politicians are unconscionable. They steal, maim and kill for power and will continue to do so for as long as there are no consequences for their atrocious behaviours. For democracy to thrive, Nigerians must fight for it with all they have, a reason well-meaning people must rally round Rotimi Amaechi rather than join the band of government apologists in vilifying him.

Religion

Understanding Covenant Dimension Of Prosperity

By Bishop David Oyedepo

From scriptures, we understand that prosperity in the Kingdom doesn't answer to fasting nor does it answer to prayer or prayer of agreement. It only answers to our understanding and practice of covenant details. What we are selling or the business we are involved in is not what determines our prosperity. No! It is the light under which we are operating that determines the results we get. As it is written, But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day (Deuteronomy 8:18). Thus, the platform for wealth is released based on the covenant. When we step out into the covenant, we encounter the power to get wealth. Prosperity is not a promise we claim in prayers or with fasting and confession. No! It's a covenant we practice. That means, God has set a stage for us, but we must understand our part of it and then the power to realize the

promise will be delivered to us. Christian books

A covenant as it were is like a contract. So, it involves two or more people. In this case, it involves just you and God. God is the covenantor and we are the covenantee; that is, we are the beneficiary of the deal. All we need is a good understanding of what the covenant entails and we will be up in abundance. The Bible says, My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips (Psalm 89:34). God is a covenant keeper. His side of every covenant is forever secured; it is our side that is variable. But when we lay hold on the terms that relate to us and apply ourselves to it, God is committed. And once we locate the covenant and we enter into it, our struggles will come to an end. Since that day in March 1981 when I saw the covenant of prosperity, I entered into my rest. We don't pray or fast for a covenant, we just enter into it. As it is written, And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; And all Judah rejoiced at the oath:

for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about (2 Chronicles 15:12, 15). Christian books

What Then, Is The Covenant Dimension Of Prosperity?

The Covenant will Always Prevail: When God

and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2). He moved as he was commanded yet he met famine there (Genesis 12:9-10). But in spite of that famine Abraham prevailed! As it is written, And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold (Genesis 13:2). Also,

Philistines unto Gerar. Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possessions of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him (Genesis 26:1, 12-14). Christian books

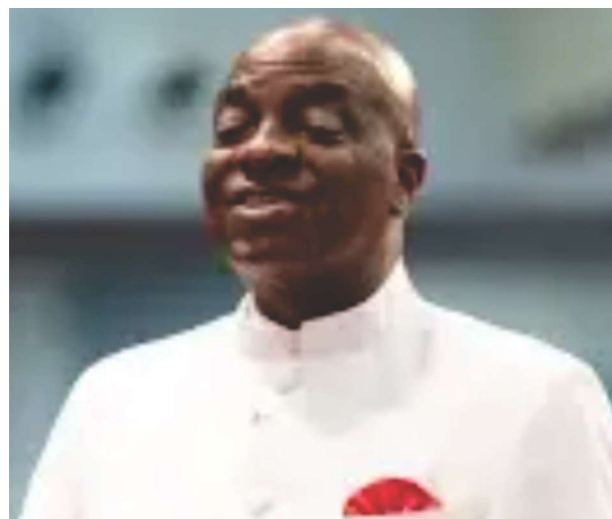
Note that the covenant is stronger than any climate! There is no economic dearth or crisis that can break the efficacy of the covenant. Furthermore, in Jacob's time, ... the famine was sore in the land (Genesis 43:1). But in spite of this, Jacob still had more than enough. So, famine is not our problem, ignorance of the covenant is the problem. God said in Hosea 4:6, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge... not for famine or for economic crisis of money failure.

In summary, if famine could not stop our covenant fathers, famine cannot stop us because the economy of our nation has no bearing on our covenant walk with God. I see the covenant

prevail for you in your time! May everything that is against you bow to the power of this covenant! However, the only way to prove the reality of new birth is to genuinely repent and accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me of my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You, Jesus, for saving me! Now, I know I am born again!

For further reading, please get my books: *Understanding Financial Prosperity*, *Breaking Financial Hardship*, *Winning the War against Poverty*, *Hidden Covenants of Blessing and Covenant Wealth*.

Bishop David O. Oyedepo is a Nigerian Christian author, architect, preacher, and the founder and presiding bishop of the mega church, Living Faith Church Worldwide, also known as Winners' Chapel.



By Bishop David O. Oyedepo

said to Abraham, ... Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee,

the Bible records that Isaac prevailed in famine, And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

Right from creation, God demonstrated His interest in and the value placed on the marriage and family, by being practically involved in its institution. He carefully put it together step by step. He put man into sleep, made a woman and presented her to man. Therefore, giving the impression that marriage is divine. That is why, this month, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, I will be looking at God's Perspective of Marriage.

Whether you are married or intending to get married soon, as you follow this teaching with concentration, God will open your eyes to the truth that will exempt you from the heartaches and sorrows that others experience in marriage.

God's view of marriage is different from that of man. God's Word says: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord (Isaiah 55:8).

God instituted marriage after He finished His work. God's Word says: He... saw everything that He had made, and, behold it was very good (Genesis 1:31). God is good and nothing less than good proceeds from Him. If marriage is evil, God would not have initiated it. This week, I will be sharing with you on one of the ways God views marriage.

Marriage is Good

God's view about marriage is that it is GOOD and it is to be enjoyed. God's view is contrary to man's view on marriage. Some people say, "Marriage is a necessary evil." Others introduce a state of irony into this holy institution. They contend that the married are looking for a way of escape, while the unmarried are eager to get into it. This assertion is borne out of man's philosophy and the experience of those who have not found fulfilment in marriage. But neither philosophy nor experience is the truth; God's Word is.

A woman once came to my husband for counselling one day and she began by making a sweeping statement that every home has its own peculiar problem. My husband had to cut in to correct her and pointed out that there are exceptions. Having problems in the home is not the rule. That you are sick, for

God's Perspective Of Marriage

instance, does not mean that everybody else is sick. The fact that some people experience problems, defeat and failure in marriage does not mean that everybody else is having similar experiences. No experience is as strong as the Word of God; rather, all experiences should be judged in the light of the Word. Any experience that is contrary to the Word of God should be thrown away. Marriage is what the Word says it is. It is good!

God intends that believers' homes be a heaven-on-earth, where they can enjoy the kingdom of God and the abundance it has to offer.

There are always two concepts or views on every issue of life - God's and man's. The two are always ever contrary to each other. The individual is expected to choose whether to accept God's concept or man's concept. God's concept will always bring fulfilment when followed, while man's concept will lead to a disastrous end.

This assertion is true of marriage, too. God's ways and thoughts are higher than man's, and His perceptions are perfect. It is by accepting and walking by God's own concept that one can find fulfilment in life.

Buttressing the fact that marriage is good, Paul says: Marriage is honourable in all... (Hebrews 13:4). If marriage is evil, it cannot at the same time be honourable. Since it is honourable, it cannot be evil. James also says that: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from

the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).

Scripturally, marriage is good! It is the use to which some put it that paints a deceptive picture of evil. Whatever man's concept you have heard about marriage put it aside and believe what the Bible says about marriage because this is the only authentic view. Ever before I got married, I already discovered and accepted God's concept of marriage, at the expense of man's concept, which has captured many men and it is working for me. To the glory of God, I am not only enjoying the goodness in marriage, I am also moving towards perfection in it. You can enjoy it also because the same God is rich unto all and He is no respecter of persons!

Marriage is good and not what your unbeliever friend said it is. Many people believe the ideas of men more than the Word of God, and it is a spiritual law that what you believe affects what you experience. It is a spiritual law that it shall be unto you, according to your faith.

God's grace is the carrier of salvation. If you respond to it today, you will escape the distress, which most couples are facing. If you desire to be born-again, say this prayer of faith: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins and cleanse me with Your Blood. I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Make me a child of God today. Thank You for delivering me from sin and Satan to serve the living God and thank You for accepting me into Your Kingdom.

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

For more insight, these books authored by me are available at the Dominion Bookstores in all Living Faith Churches and other leading Christian bookstores: Marriage Covenant, Making Marriage Work, Building A Successful Home and Success in Marriage (Co-Authored).

Pastor Faith Oyedepo is the wife of Bishop David Oyedepo, the founder of the Living Faith Church Worldwide a.k.a. Winners' Chapel, and Senior Pastor of Faith Tabernacle, Canaanland, Ota, Nigeria.

God's grace is the carrier of salvation. If you respond to it today, you will escape the distress, which most couples are facing.

Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph



NDDC Set For Maiden Niger Delta Sports Festival

By Aligwe Stella PH



Godwill Akpabio International Stadium

As part of aligning with Nigeria's new vision for sports development and innovation in sports, the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, is set to stage the maiden Niger Delta Sports Festival. This festival is aimed at strengthening penetration and access to sports at the grassroots, reinvigorate and sustain the region's competitiveness, supremacy, and influence in Nigerian sports, and use sports to enhance more significant interaction, unity, friendship, and security across the region. The launching, which is scheduled for the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, on April 1, 2025 and the Games will run till April 9, 2025. The sports festival will kick off the activities marking the 25th anniversary of the Commission. According to the Commission's Executive Director of Finance and Administration, who also is the

chairman of the Festival Planning Committee, Alabo Boma Iyaye, the commission has adequately prepared for the sporting event with their Project Consultant, Dunamis Icon Limited. "In the coming weeks, there shall be a flurry of activities to herald the sports festival, intended as a celebration of the sporting prowess of the Niger Delta", Iyaye said. The multi-sports-festival will bring together thousands of young athletes from the nine states of the Niger Delta region, and allow them to showcase their talents. Iyaye states, "The festival will be organised in Olympic standard and will feature over ten sports. The NDDC as a responsible organization fully understands the power of sports in transforming society, and as a key stakeholder in the Nigeria project, they want to contribute their quota to sports development in the country."

Eziaku Joy Okpa-Obuba: Uplifting Sports In Abia State

By Joseph Jacob

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." In line with those words of former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill, Eziaku Joy Okpa-Obuba, a former Abia State volleyball player, recently donated volleyball equipment to the Abia State Sports Council in solidarity to the concerted effort being made by the Governor of Abia State Dr. Alex Otti in sports development; to contribute to the development of volleyball in the State, as well as, to give back to the sport that brought her fame and fortune.

Items donated include six Mikasa Volleyballs with net, souvenirs for upcoming volleyball players and new modern electronic whistles for referees, which are blown by just pressing a button.

The Abia State 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 Joy Eziaku Okpa-Obuba to support the Sports

Council.

But, who is Joy Eziaku Okpa-Obuba? She started her Volleyball career in Abia State and was a former player of Abia Queens Volleyball Club.

'A golden fish' they say, "has no hiding place," before long her dexterity took her to Nigerian Immigration Service Volleyball team, where she proved to be head and shoulders above her contemporaries. She eventually left the shores of the country.

In the United States of America, she played for Seeward County Lady Saints Volleyball Team and made the Seeward County All Americans in two consecutive years: 2001 and 2002. The Lady Saints Volleyball Team emerged

Region IV Tournament Champions from 1999 to 2003 consecutively and in 2018 and 2019 with Joy Okpa-Obuba being an integral member of the 2001 and 2002 squad.

Between 2003 and 2004 she moved to Louisiana Tech and shone like a million stars. She garnered all-tourney honours at the Arkansas State Tournament.

In 2019 Seeward County Athletics inducted two of their former great players into their Hall of Fame and Joy Okpa-Obuba was one of the inductees alongside Danny Vais.

Joy Okpa-Obuba is currently a coaching staff of Hercules Dynamite Volleyball Club.

We appreciate Joy Okpa-Obuba for her support in volleyball development in Abia State, and call on other individuals and corporate organizations to throw their weight behind the administration of Dr. Alex Otti especially in sports development. The words of Martin Luther King Jr. deserve our consideration: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"



Joy Okpa-Obuba (R) in action during her playing days



Joy Okpa-Obuba after receiving an award

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti acknowledging cheer Crowd of Abian's, During the Reconstruction of 12.6 kilometer Ohanze Ntighauzo-Obete- Umuoha Oberete-Akirika Obu Road Recently.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (c), Mayor of Obingwa LGA , Hon. Maxwell Nwadike flanked by his (Rt), SA on Homeland Security, Fire and Emergencies, Mr Chinenye Alajemba (Lft) and others, during the Abia Gov's, visit to Obingwa LGA for an on-the-spot assessment of the fire incident that engulfed a section of the Local Government Council.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti addressing Abian's during the flagged-off, reconstruction and dualization of the 5.5 kilometres Owerinta - Umuekea Road recently.



Abia Deputy Gov, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (3rd left), Director General, National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), Dr. Nkeiruka Maduekwe, (2nd left) and others, during a visit by the Council's Team to Abia Deputy Gov in his Office, Umuahia.



Abia state Deputy Governor, Engr Emetu with some members of Ohafia Development Union, Umuahia Branch who paid him a courtesy visit recently.



NDDC MD, Dr Samuel Ogbuku (right), Presenting a Plaque to the GOC of 6 Division of the Nigerian Army in Rivers State, Major General Emmanuel Ejim-Emekah (left).



Abia Land Owners, led by Rt. Hon. Uzor Azubuike, during the inauguration of a Joint enlarged Technical Committee to facilitate ongoing engagement process between the Govt and Land owners of the proposed Abia Airport project in Nsulu, Isialangwa recently.



Some members of the enlarged Abia State Executive Council during the a two - days retreat organized by the State Government, held at International Conference Centre, Umuahia, recently.

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PUBLISHED BY:

Abia Newspapers & Publishing Corporation
 Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat Road, Government Station Layout, Umuahia.

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U.O.O. NIGERIA PLC

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Goodwill Message

The Board, management and staff of U.O.O Nigeria plc heartily congratulates the Action Governor of Abia state, His Excellency Dr. Alex Chioma Otti [OFR] on a meritorious 60th birthday anniversary.

We wish you more years of good health, progress and prosperity, our beloved Governor.

SIGNED
Management

ABAM ONYERUBI FANS OF GOV. ALEX OTTI

Felicitation

TO OUR ACTION GOVERNOR
Dr. Alex OTTI (OFR)
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

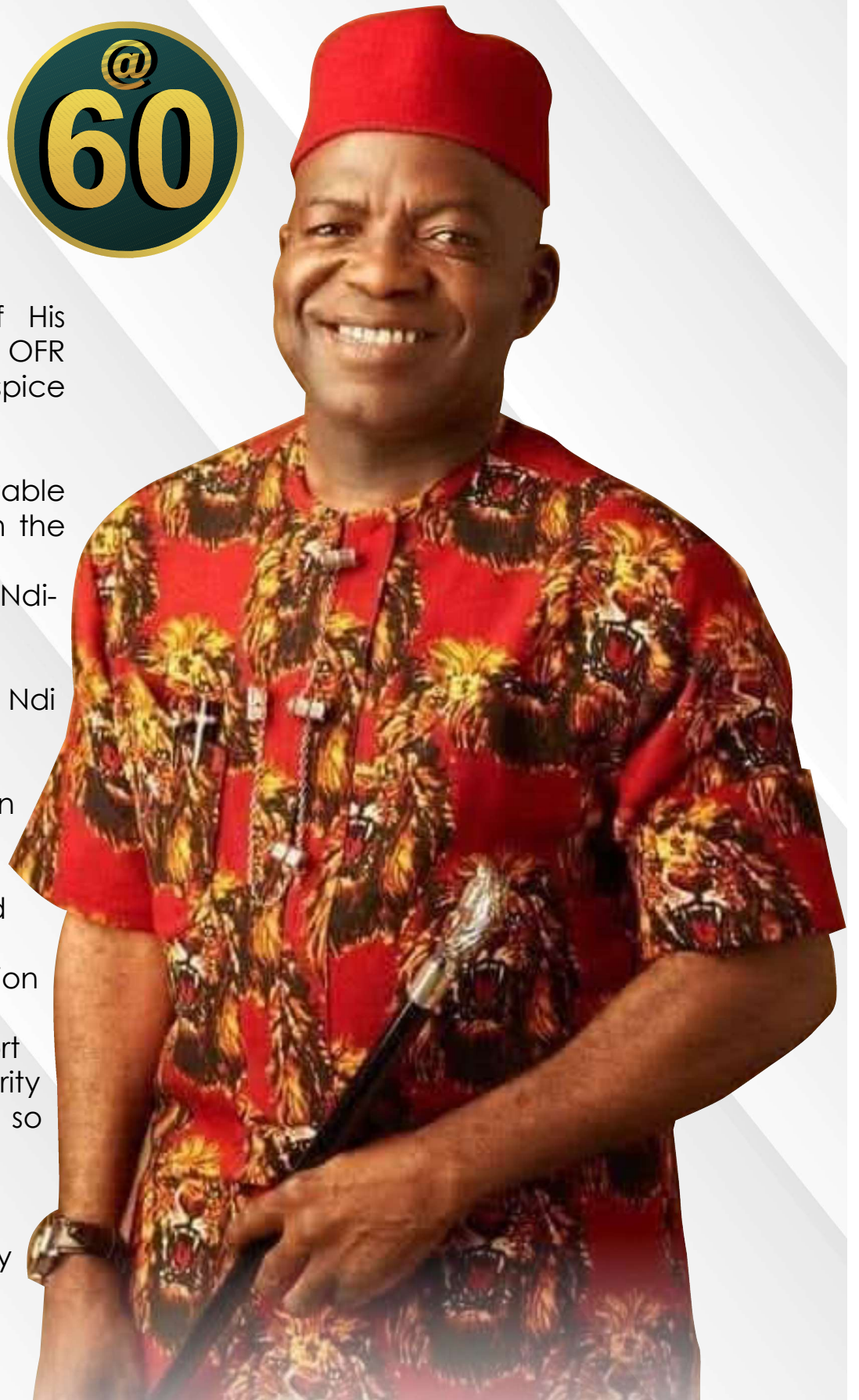


We the Abam Onyerubi Fans of His Excellency Dr. Alex Chioma Otti OFR wish to felicitate with him on the auspicious occasion of his 60th Birthday.

We particularly note with pride the notable transformations that has taken place in the State which includes:

1. The construction of the Ozu Abam -Ndi-Okereke-Arochukwu road
2. The flag off of Omenuko Bridge
3. The proposed General Hospital, Ndi Ememe Abam
4. The proposed Abam Ring Road
5. The massive reconstruction of Urban and rural roads
6. The massive rehabilitation and retrofitting of Health Centers tagged "Project Ekwueme"
7. The free and compulsory Education Scheme.
8. The construction a Brand-New Airport
9. Promotion of transparency integrity and openness in governance and so on.

We thank God for your life.
Happy birthday sir and happy many returns.



Signed:

Eze Dr. Robert Nwankwo – USA
Engr James Ogbuka Anukwe – USA
Professor Awa Nkole – UK
Arch Uche Uche Jude – Abuja
Mr Frank Azubuike Nwaka – Aba

Dr. Emmanuel Kalu Okoro (Esq) – P H
Engr. Paul Iro Awa – Abuja
Captain Chibuike Eke Usim – Lagos
Engr. Enyinnaya Okereke – Bonny
Engr. Louis Okorie Abali – PH



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CONSTRUCTION

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THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR TURNING 60

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▶ HIS EXCELLENCY

DR. ALEX CHIOMA OTTI
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

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INFRASTRUCTURE & ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS

COMMITTED TO PERFECTION

Features

Omenuko Bridge: A Symbol Of Hope And Progress In Abia



■ Gov. Otti Flags Off The Reconstruction Of Omenuko Bridge:

By *Ebere Uzoukwa, Ph.D*

The Omenuko Bridge, a vital connection for over 23 communities in Abam, Arochukwu, Ohafia, and surrounding areas, has been a lifeline for thousands of people. However, its deteriorating condition had become a significant concern, necessitating a modern and durable replacement. The Abia State Government, under the leadership of Governor Alex Otti, has taken a significant step towards addressing this issue by flagging off the construction of a new Omenuko Bridge in Ozu-Abam, Arochukwu LGA.

The Omenuko Bridge has a rich history, dating back to 1955 when it was constructed by British colonials. At the time of its construction, the bridge was a major feat of engineering and a testament to the colonial government's efforts to improve infrastructure in the region. However, over the years, the bridge's condition had deteriorated significantly, making it a hazardous route for commuters. The bridge's narrowness and lack of protection had resulted in numerous accidents and loss of lives, including 17 students traveling to write their SSCE examinations in 2007.

The bridge's condition had also taken a toll on the people of Arochukwu and Ohafia, who are primarily farmers. Many vehicles avoided plying the road due to its narrowness, making it difficult for farmers to transport their produce to markets. This

had resulted in significant economic losses for the farmers and had hindered the growth of the local economy. The poor condition of the bridge had also made it difficult for people to access healthcare and other essential services, exacerbating the already challenging living conditions in the area.

Despite its importance, the Omenuko Bridge had become a campaign tool for politicians, with past administrations failing to fulfill their promises to reconstruct the bridge. The people of Abam, Arochukwu, Ohafia, and surrounding areas had lost hope, and the bridge's condition had become a symbol of the government's neglect and lack of commitment to the welfare of its citizens. The lack of attention to the bridge's condition had also led to a decline in economic activities in the area, as businesses and investors were deterred by the poor infrastructure.

However, Governor Otti's administration has demonstrated a commitment to delivering projects that directly impact lives, ensuring that no community is left behind. The reconstruction of the Omenuko Bridge is a significant milestone in Governor Otti's efforts to improve critical infrastructure across the State. The project is expected to restore safety and open up the areas for businesses and increased agricultural ventures. The new bridge will also improve access to healthcare, education, and other essential services, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents in the area.

The Mayor of Arochukwu Local Government Area, Dr. Okereke Eze Aru, commended Governor Otti for giving the people of Arochukwu and Ohafia hope and for responding sensitively to their plights. The Mayor noted that the reconstruction of the bridge would not only improve the safety of commuters but also boost economic activities in the area. He also applauded Governor Otti's commitment towards completing the project within 9 months.

Notably, the Omenuko Bridge and Arochukwu -Ndi Okereke road are Federal Government roads, but Governor Otti's administration did not hesitate to take on the project, demonstrating his determination to make life easy for the people without waiting for the government at the center. This proactive approach has earned Governor Otti widespread praise and has demonstrated his commitment to delivering on his campaign promises.

In addition to the reconstruction of the Omenuko Bridge, Governor Otti's administration also disclosed plans to commence work on several other critical infrastructure projects in the State. These projects include the construction of the Abam Ring Road, the establishment of a General Hospital in Abam Onyerubi, and the ongoing construction of the Ozu Abam-Ndi Oji-Ndi Okereke-Arochukwu road. These projects are expected to have a significant impact on the lives of the people of Abia North and Abians at large,

improving access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities.

The reconstruction of the Omenuko Bridge is also expected to have a positive impact on the State's economy. The improved infrastructure will make it easier for businesses to operate in the area, attracting investors and creating jobs. The project will also boost agricultural production, as farmers will be able to transport their produce more easily to markets.

The Omenuko Bridge is a symbol of hope and progress in Abia. Governor Otti's commitment to reconstructing the bridge and improving critical infrastructure across the State has restored hope and confidence in the government's ability to deliver on its promises. As Governor Otti continues to work tirelessly to improve the lives of Abia residents, it is clear that his administration is dedicated to achieving a New Abia, where no community is left behind. The successful completion of this project will not only improve the quality of life for the people but also serve as a testament to Governor Otti's dedication to achieving a developed and prosperous Abia. As the State continues to move forward, it is clear that the reconstruction of the Omenuko Bridge is a shining example of the government's commitment to progress and development.

Dr. Ebere Uzoukwa:
The SSA to the Abia State Governor on Public Affairs.

FASHION TIPS FOR MEN DURING THE HARMATTAN/ DUSTY WEATHER

Fashion tips
with
Sandra Chibuike
sandychybyke1@gmail.com

If you are in Nigeria at this period, you will certainly observe that the weather is dry, hot and dusty. It is Dry season. During this period of the year, a lot of things change, including fashion. Yes, fashion in the dry season is different. From clothing to footwear and accessories. Everyone has to be selective with the things they wear, in order to either protect them from the scorching sun or avoid getting obviously stained with dust. In this edition, I shall be sharing a few tips that will help specifically the male gender, to stay fresh, neat and elegant in the harmattan season.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLORS:

Because of how dusty everywhere is, you should pay attention to your choice of colors. It is advisable to choose colors that are not bright enough to reveal stains. If the nature of the work you do requires you to wear light colors, then you can cover your shirts with dark colored jackets or blazers to shield your shirt from the dust. Here are some of the color options to choose from: Grey, Tan, Coffee

brown, Chocolate brown, Oxblood, Navy blue, Burgundy, Bottle-green etc. You also need to pay attention to the texture of the fabrics. Due to the hot weather, you can opt for light breathable fabrics. Still on your choice of clothes, I want you to be conscious of stains. You will want to treat stains immediately, especially dirt that accumulates at the shirt collar. Don't wear and dumb, ensure they are laundered almost immediately.



MOISTURIZE OFTEN:



There's a tendency for your knuckles, hands and face to look dried and ash because of the dry weather. Therefore, it's good to always moisturize. To do so there are very nice moisturizers for all skin types, that are good for men. Your lips are not left out. You will always find a good lip balm that will leave your lips fresh and not cracked. I know you don't want to look all dried and white in this dry season, so ensure you moisturize before leaving your house. And you may need to keep small bottles of moisturizer, lip balm and a pack of wipes in your office, car and bag, so as to have them handy. Once in a while, check your face to be sure it doesn't look dry. Also ensure your hair and bears are not dusty. These are little things that can elevate or mar your outlook.

WEAR THE RIIGHT SHOES:

A man's footwear is one of the important accessories in his fashion. So, you have to treat it with care. Wipe your shoes after walking a long distance with shoe wipes. Don't assume nobody is seeing them. The first place a lady's eyes go to most of the time is on your shoes. So always keep it clean and shiny. Dusty shoes can demean your good looks and leave a negative impression in the minds of those that come in contact with you. *I would like to suggest a few things you can do to keep clean feet.*



- 1) Avoid shoes that attract dust in certain colors; for instance, black suede shoes. If you wear black suede shoes, it'll attract dust which will be noticeable. But dust on brown suede shoes will hardly be noticed.
- 2) Go for shoes that are easy to clean; patent leather is easier to clean. Just wipe the dust and it'll become shiny again.

Avoid Shoes That Attract Dust



CLEAN UP DUST BEFORE SITTING /RESTING YOUR HANDS ON ANY SURFACE:

This looks so simple and ignoble, but it can mar your elegant outfit or leave you looking all white as a result of dusty weather. So deliberately run a dry hand towel across any surface before sitting or resting your hands on it.

ALWAYS HAVE A FACE HANDKERCHIEF:

Due to the heat that is associated with the dry season, men tend to sweat a lot. And it's only good to have a face towel handy, in order to wipe off beads of sweat on the forehead, cheeks and jaws. This is necessary because, when sweat accumulates, it has some negative

effects on the skin, for example; clogged pores which gives rise to acne. Skin irritation, and other skin infections. To keep your face clean and fresh you need not just any handkerchief, but cotton handkerchief or a soft

microfiber cloth. This practical approach ensures you stay stylish while navigating the dry, dusty season without compromising on comfort or hygiene. It's all about keeping clean, staying cool, and choosing the right materials!

News

Abia Govt Inaugurates Nsulu Airport Land Technical Committee

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has formed a Joint Enlarged Technical Committee to facilitate the ongoing engagement with landowners concerning the proposed Abia Airport project in Nsulu, Isiala Ngwa North Local Government Area.

The Committee, which was inaugurated at the Banquet Hall, Government House, Umuahia, is chaired by Pastor Caleb Ajagba, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, while Rt. Hon. Uzor Azubuike leads the delegation of landowners.

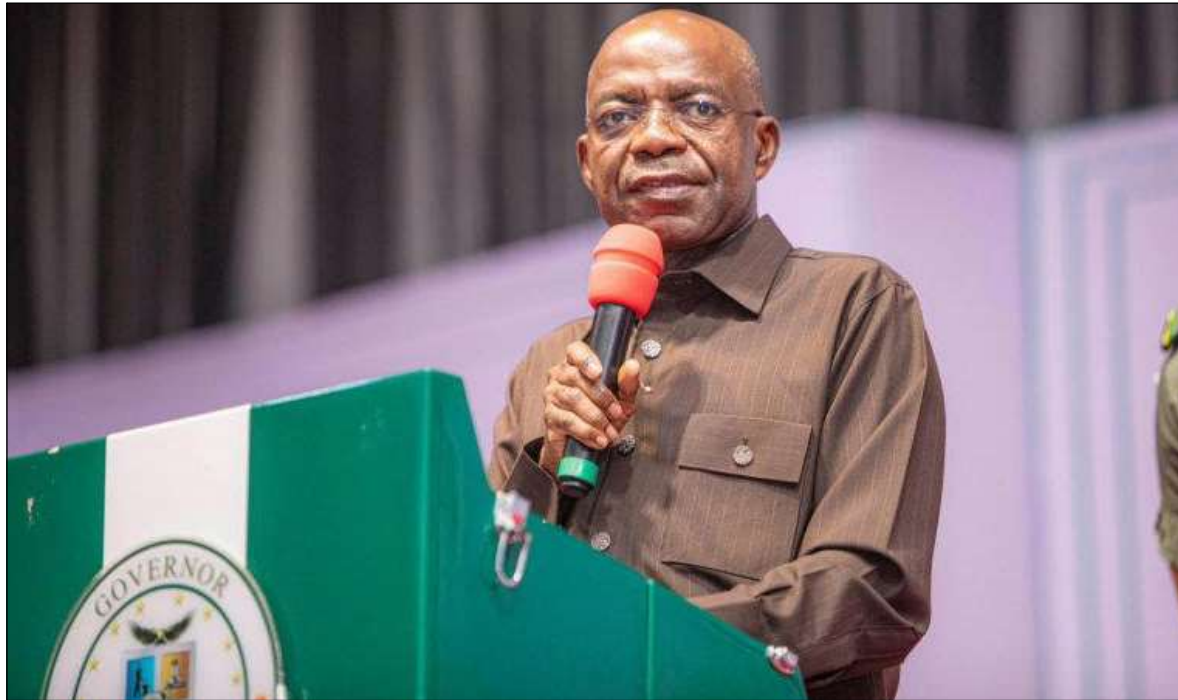
The Committee includes several key stakeholders, such as Hon. Ginger Onwusibe, Hon. Collins Iheonunekwu, Amb. Innocent Uruakpa, and various government commissioners, traditional rulers, and community representatives.

This Committee follows extensive discussions between the government, landowners, and local communities to address concerns over land acquisition, compensation, and community benefits.

A key outcome of the meeting was the landowners' appreciation for the federal government's approval of an airstrip for Abia State, with specific praise for Governor Alex Otti's decision to upgrade the project to a full-fledged airport.

They expressed their support for the project but also raised concerns about

Land Technical Committee



Governor Alex Otti

displacement, loss of livelihood, and the land size allocated for the airport. The landowners have requested a further reduction in the land size and have asked to continue farming on the acquired land until construction begins.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be drafted to guide the project, outlining the benefits for the host

communities and ensuring transparency and adequate compensation for the landowners. Both the government and the landowners are committed to working together to address concerns and ensure the smooth execution of the airport project.

During the meeting, government officials, including Hon. Ginger Onwusibe and Hon.

Ugochukwu Iheonunekwu, commended the government's efforts to engage with the rightful landowners and encouraged the resolution of any concerns. Pastor Caleb Ajagba, Chief of Staff, reiterated the government's commitment to fairness and the reduction of the land size, while Pastor Okorougo Aji, the Special Assistant to the Governor on Lands and

Housing, provided updates on the project's progress.

The engagement helped clear up any misconceptions about the acquisition, and landowners such as Mrs. Kate Nnanna, Nneooha Roseline Orji, and Mr. Martin Ajuonu, expressed their appreciation for the government's efforts to engage them in the process and urged the government to honour its promises.

Govt. Directs Communities In Boundary Disputes To Submit Proof Of Ownership

By Charles Ogbonnaya

Abia State Government has directed the Amaba Community in Ikwuano Local Government, Lodu Ibeku in Umuahia North and Olokoro in Umuahia South, involved in boundary dispute, to submit their claims of ownership to the state government, within one week.

The State Deputy Governor, Ikechukwu Emetu, gave the directive in his office, at Government House, Umuahia, during a meeting with the three contending communities warring over ownership of land.

He noted that the State faced both internal and external boundary challenges as she shared boundaries with seven States of Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Cross River, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, and Rivers, and restated the present administration's resolve to ensure that all the internal and external boundaries problems are resolved this year.

The Deputy Governor, who is also the Chairman of the State Boundary Committee, said that the meeting was convened following a complaint by the Amaba Community over the encroachment of their land by Lodu Community.

He said that he has no interest in the community that owns the land but on truth to ascertain the real owners.

Emetu maintained that under the new Abia, they uphold truth and honesty and say things the way they are and assured that the boundary committee would rely on Archives and documentation in government archives to resolve the issue.

He further disclosed that every contending boundary has its maps and documents in Enugu Archives, that would be relied upon in resolving the lingering boundary disputes.

"We want peace. Many people can speak good by saying the truth or painting a lie very well that you take to be the truth but documents in the Archives don't lie that is one good thing to rely on", the Deputy Governor said.

He decried the lots of stories been peddled in some quarters of government trying to take people's land but said that unlike past government that showed non chalance towards encroachment on government lands, the Otti's administration was committed in recovering every inch of government lands encroached and built upon by individuals.

The Chairman of the State Boundary Committee specifically mentioned Government College, Umuahia, where map in the Abia State Archives showed the perimeter fence as the boundary but that today many people had taken over Government's College lands and built houses on them, and that this government is determined to take back what belongs to the people.

5th Anniversary Activities: Diri Flags Off Free Medical Outreaches In Bayelsa

From Owunna Goodness, Bayelsa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has flagged off free medical outreach as part of his fifth anniversary celebrations, while the Governor of Cross River State, Senator Bassey Otu, inaugurated the Road 24 High Profile Road, Okaka in Yenagoa, the State capital.

Diri said, the inauguration of road infrastructure and other projects mark the commemoration of our fifth year in office. The face of the capital city, Yenagoa, is changing for good. The State landscape is wearing a new look as his administration would inaugurate projects across the length and breadth of the State.

He commended the Obenibe-Epie, King Malla Sasime, and the people for their peaceful conduct, which had enabled the contractor to deliver the project.

"The Epie people have been very supportive in all the developmental efforts we have been engaged in, and that is the least we want from our traditional rulers and his people. That is why the State will continue to wear a new look at all times. The face of Yenagoa is changing and it will continue to change for good", he said.

The Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Moses Teibowei, said the project was initially awarded by the immediate past government in 2012 to L and D Construction Company of Nigeria. The road

was in a deplorable state when the Prosperity Government re-awarded it to the same contractor.

He said, the road which is equipped with solar-powered lights, was a dual carriage way measuring approximately 1,475 metres with a width of nine meters on either side and having a shoulder of two meters on both sides.

The Project Engineer, Chief Ernest Amadi, described it as the widest road in the capital city and appreciated Governor Diri for his visionary leadership.

Diri noted that, the anniversary of his administration was usually preceded by medical outreaches, because, healthcare delivery was its priority, and that without good health, its prosperity agenda would not be realised.

The Governor said that the facility was built in 1998 by Agip (now Oando) as part of its corporate social responsibility. It is heartwarming, that today we have gathered to mark the flag off of the fifth anniversary of our government, with a medical outreach in Ikarama community. We cannot be talking about prosperity without taking care of our health. That is why we always started our anniversaries with a medical outreach.

"Today, this hospital has

been put to use. I am aware that a medical doctor, nurses and other supportive staff have been posted here. Therefore, the hospital will now function effectively", he stated.

He advised the community to protect the facility and cooperate with staff to ensure its smooth operations.

The World Health Organization (WHO), representative, Dr Marcus Oluwadare, thanked Governor Diri for the support to health partners, saying that the State witnessed five health outbreaks in 2024, but they were successfully tackled as a result of the support of the Governor.

He equally revealed that, cases of cholera outbreak in some communities were also swiftly responded to, by the government. He pledged the support of WHO to ensure a healthy Bayelsa State, with the support of the Governor.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Health, Prof. Seiyefa Brisibe, stated that, the statewide medical outreach was a demonstration of the government's commitment to provide healthcare to all Bayelsans, irrespective of financial status.

He said, that the key focus of the programme was to provide free medical intervention for indigent patients, and that minor surgeries were also conducted

at the facility, while major surgeries would be referred to designated centres at Otuasegha, Okolobiri, Dieta Koki and other secondary and tertiary health facilities.

Speaking further, Prof. Brisibe said the outreach provided the opportunity, to formally open the hospital for use after years that the facility was left to rot away. A full complement of staff of the ministry have been posted to provide services at the hospital. Other services offered, apart from minor surgeries, were polio vaccination, distribution of 1000 treated mosquito nets, food supplements and other consumables.

The Commissioner, who said the cottage hospital would serve Ikarama and surrounding communities in Okordia, Zarama and Rivers State, encouraged the communities to take full advantage of the hospital.

The ruler of Ikarama community, His Royal Highness, Wariebi Jonah, thanked the Governor for ensuring the renovation and commencement of operations at the hospital.

Governor of Cross River State, Senator Bassey Otu, on the other hand, inaugurated the Road 24 High Profile Road, Okaka in Yenagoa, the state capital.

Senator Otu, who is Vice Chairman of the South-South Governors Forum, said

News

Emetu Tasks Ohafia Communities On Peace, For Rapid Rural Development

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Deputy Governor, Ikechukwu Emetu, has charged communities in the State, to ensure a sustainable atmosphere of peace to actualise government rapid rural development plan.

Emetu disclosed this when he granted audience to members of Okagwe Ohafia Development Union, Umuahia Branch, who were on a courtesy visit.

He reminded the Okagwe community and the larger Ohafia Clan, that no meaningful development can take place in the midst of rancour and crisis.

The Deputy Governor told his guests that the State government plans to electrify Ohafia along with four other local governments with 300 mega wats off-grid solar power.

He disclosed that the solar pan would be installed in Ohafia for distribution to other councils and urged youths in the larger Ohafia community to work in unison and guard against the vandalisation of public infrastructure solely built for their benefit.

Emetu said that the off-grid solar power would start with 75 Mega Watts, which would be upgraded to 300 Watts to cover the intended areas.

He further revealed that some of the major roads in Ohafia have been captured in 2025 Budget and that will construction work would soon kick off.

The Deputy Governor appreciated members of Okagwe Ohafia Development Union for their show of gratitude and for supporting the present government.

He encouraged them to endeavour to co-exist with their neighbours in peace and advised those that found themselves in positions of authority to align with the government's vision and not engage in anything that will bring disrepute to him and Ohafia Community.

Earlier, the President General of Okagwe Development Union, Umuahia Branch, Mr. Uduma Uguru, and traditional ruler of Okagwe, Eze Odum Amaogu, appreciated Emetu for giving them audience and for representing Ohafia well with his position as Deputy Governor.

They acknowledged that his position as the Deputy Governor has attracted good development for the Ohafia Community and pledged their support to him and the Alex Otti led government.

They also pleaded with the Deputy Governor to help them actualise their dream of building a secretariat in Umuahia, for their meetings.

Also speaking, the Personal Assistant to the Deputy Governor, Comrade Sunny Pele, thanked Emetu for the opportunity given to him and other Okagwe sons, to work with him and for many things he had done for the community.

The high point of the courtesy visit was the presentation of a symbolic gift to the Deputy Governor by the union.



Abia State Deputy Governor, Engr Emetu with some members of Okagwe Ohafia Development Union, Umuahia Branch who paid him a courtesy visit recently.

Your Lands Will Not Be Polluted, Governor Otti Assures Oil, Gas Host Communities

By Faith Ifeanyichukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State, has assured the oil and gas host communities in the State that his administration is committed to ensuring their lands are protected from the harmful effects of oil production.

Speaking at the inauguration which had Maxwell Nwaghara as Chairman and other members of the State's Oil and Gas Host Communities Committee, the Governor expressed concern over the poor state of many oil-producing communities in both Abia and the broader Niger Delta region.

The Governor regretted that despite their crucial role

in fueling the nation's economy, these communities have faced decades of neglect and environmental degradation.

Governor Otti emphasised that the era of neglect in the oil and gas sector was over, and his administration would ensure that local communities benefit from the wealth generated by oil production. This includes fostering economic prosperity, protecting the environment, and ensuring social equity.

The Governor, represented by the Commissioner for Petroleum and Mineral

Resources, Professor Joel Ogbonna, highlighted steps, such as establishing the Abia State Industrial and Innovation Park, building a modular refinery at Owaza, and compensating landowners, as part of efforts to protect the interests of host communities.

He pointed out that the oil sector should bring prosperity and environmental protection, but many areas in the Niger Delta, including Abia, suffer from environmental damage and a lack of development.

Governor Otti assured the host communities that

oil companies operating in their areas must demonstrate their contributions to the local population, including creating job opportunities for indigenes.

Additionally, the Governor hinted that oil production in the State has risen significantly, from about 8,000 barrels per day to around 34,000, thanks to the peace and oversight provided by his administration.

The National President of Oil and Gas Host Communities, Benjamin Style, represented by National Vice Chairman, Ibinabo Sanipe, appealed for greater attention to be

given to the struggles of host communities.

He urged the new executive members to collaborate closely with the State government and ensure the fulfillment of their mandate.

Nwaghara, the newly elected Chairman, expressed gratitude to the Governor for his efforts and commitment to working with the government to improve conditions for oil-producing communities.

He emphasized that the host communities are non-political entities that aim to support any government in power, while working to foster the development and well-being of their people.

Abia Students Exposed To Dangers Of Internet Usage, As SieDi-Hub Advocates For Digital Safety

From Okereke Kate

Addressing the growing cyber threat among internet users, an Innovation Hub for Inclusiveness, Empowerment and Social Development, SieDi-Hub in partnership with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and other relevant stakeholders, have organized a one day Digital Safety Conference for Secondary Schools in Abia, to mark the 2025 Safer Internet Day.

The Conference which was held at the Havilah Missions School, Umuahia, was part of activities marking the 2025 Safer Internet Day, themed, "Together for a Better Internet". It highlighted the urgent need to expose the younger generation to the rising threats emanating from internet usage and proffering a safer haven for users.

In her welcome address, the Board of Trustee member and Treasurer of SieDi-Hub, Mrs. Enyioma Ndukwe Orji, stated that the growing threats in the digital space have continued to raise concerns about online safety and morality,

prompting SieDi-Hub to take proactive steps in educating students on responsible internet usage.

Mrs. Orji expounded the importance of the Digital Conference, giving the risk the Internet posed on users. She said protecting one's self while using any digital device was imperative.

She emphasized the need for the awareness of online threats, including scams, cyberbullying, misinformation, and privacy violations, urging students to exercise caution when sharing personal details such as full names, addresses, school or workplace information, National Identification Numbers (NIN), bank details, usernames, among other vital information.

The SieDi-Hub representative called on parents, teachers, guardians, and stakeholders to take an active role in guiding students through the complexities of the digital world, stressing that the importance of instilling moral values and ethics in young internet users and ensuring how they navigate the online space with wisdom and

responsibility.

Giving biblical references, Mrs. Orji underscored the role of religious teachings in shaping the character of children and advocated for parents to raise their teenagers in the fear of God, which she added could stand as a veritable means of curbing social vices and promoting good conduct.

She disclosed that SieDi-Hub was ready to combat online scams and promote responsible digital behavior, announcing its commitment to raising awareness and equipping students with the necessary skills to identify and prevent digital fraud. She added that her organization would champion the establishment of Digital Safety Clubs in schools to provide continuous education in online security and responsible internet usage and called for all hands to be on deck by parents, teachers, guidance and stakeholders to help students navigate the online space with all sense of safety and morality.

Creative Writers Hangout

Hot Snow (14)

By Joseph Jacob

Two days after they relocated to a one room apartment, Chioma was returning from market when she saw 'Workers Wanted' in a cold room.

The following morning, after their breakfast, Ada and Obi left for hawking while Chioma went in search of the cold room job. She met the proprietress and they spoke at length.

Chioma would have to report to work by 6:00 am every morning and would not leave until 10:00 pm for a monthly salary of thirty thousand naira. The condition was unfavorable, but half bread is better than none. So Chioma took the job. After she received her first salary, Ada and Obi resumed school in a public secondary school.

The job took most of Chioma's time that she came home every night very tired and could not do anything more than eat, bath and sleep.

Chioma was distressed that she no longer spend time with her children and know what was going on in their minds. But, there was practically nothing she could do.

With their mum not having time for them, Ada and Obi spent most of their time with their mates in the neighborhood.

Ada made two friends, Stella and Favour, her classmates as well as neighbors at home.

Stella and Favour lived extravagant lives even though their parents were very poor. At school they buy snacks and soft drinks more than all other students. It was not long Ada realized the source of the money her friends lavished at school. During break, they would sneak out of school to meet their boyfriends.

"This behaviour is wrong", Ada started one day as they were walking home from school, "why should you let him be cuddling you like that?" Ada queried.

"Ada, wake up", Stella started, "It is love. We love ourselves so what is there?"

"Is that why you should let him be touching and holding you so close..."

"Ada", Favour cuts in, "enough of this your over righteousness. You don't want him to hold her but you like to enjoy fruit juice and fried meat."

"Oh! My sister, how else do I get the money?" Stella asked.

Ada, who regretted raising the issue mumbled, "I don't know."

"Ada" Stella called and stopped. Ada and Favou halted as well, "You're beautiful with attractive shape. You can make money and buy things for yourself, under wears, clothes, make-up items and among others things."

"You're right, Stella", Favor takes over, "has a man touched you before?"

Ada shook her head in embarrassment.

"Try it", Favour went ahead,

"you'll enjoy it."

"No." Ada said vehemently as she remembered the sex education her parents gave to her and obi, "I'll not do such a thing until I get married. My mum warned me not to try it and my mum is always right."

Stella and Favour laughed and clapped their hands together, "Mummy's hand bag", Stella said scornfully.

After facing this mockery on a daily basis for a while, Ada decided to talk to her mum about it. She waited till her mum came back by quarter after ten. Chioma took her bath and started taking her dinner of rice, stew and fried fish. Ada sat beside her, "Mummy, we have not been talking like we used to."

"You're right my dear", Chioma said as she munch the food in her mouth, "It pains me so much, but there is little or nothing I can do. I am very sorry, but, I have to work to ensure that you and Obi remain in school. That reminds me, where is Obi?"

"He went to his friend's place. But, mummy I want to tell you something."

"Go and find your brother. When you come back we can talk."

Obi had gone to see his classmate Udochi when he met two other boys, John and Chuks.

"Obi, we want to visit the grand master." Udochi said.

"Who's the grandmaster?" Obi asked.

"Come with us if you want to know," Chuks retorted.

Obi followed the other three boys to a nearby bush. Chuks brought out a packet of cigarette from under his shirt. John produced a lighter from his knickers pocket. Obi was shocked.

Chuks lit one stick, sucked in and blew out the smoke with his eyes closed. Udochi and John clapped for him. The three boys took turns in smoking and were applauding themselves while Obi was stunned.

The three boys with their lighted cigarettes between their fingers turned and faced Obi, who was yet to recover from the shock of seeing his friends smoking.

Udochi offered Obi his lighted cigarette, "Boy, join us." Obi shook his head, still too startled to speak.

"I hope you're not a chicken?" John asked and cackled with his friends.

"Come on, Obi, I thought you're a big boy? Just take once"

"Boy, don't disappoint us." Chuks said.

"I'm not going to smoke." Obi said and started leaving.

They laughed and made mockery of him. Obi felt bad that he let his friends down, but he somehow managed to walk away.

Meanwhile, Ada had looked for Obi everywhere he used be and was about going home when she met Stella.

"Ada, how far?"

"I'm fine. Please, I'm looking for Obi. Did you see him?"

"No, but, I have a good news for you."

"What's it?"

"Sunny, Nduka's friend is having sleepless nights because of you. He has fallen in love with you."

"I'm not interested, Stella", Ada said sternly.

"Ada take it easy. He'll give you money, buy jewelries and underwears for you. Above all", Stella paused for emphasis, "And make you feel like a woman with pure love sweeter than honey."

"I'm not..."

"Wait", Stella cuts in, "Don't be hasty in your response. Think over it tonight, we'll talk about it at school tomorrow."

Ada stood still as Stella left. She had started wondering if her parents stand on morality was really right. Everything Stella told her sounded good. "Well, I'll tell mummy tonight." She concluded as she started walking home.

Obi eventually met Ada and they walked home together.

Chioma had finished eating and was about to lay down when her children came back. Obi greeted her, lay down and slept off almost immediately.

"Mummy, did you remember I wanted to tell you something?" Ada asked as she sat beside her mother.

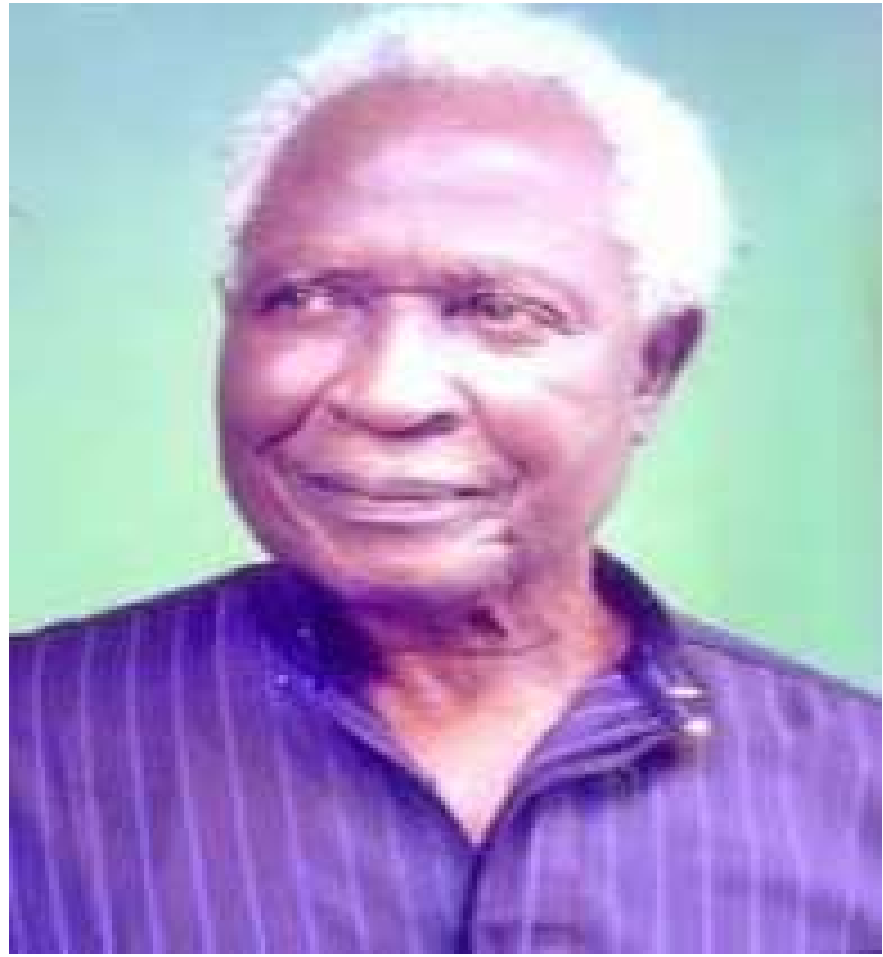
"I'm listening", Chioma said as she yawned and stretched herself.

Chioma started telling her mum the pressure she was facing to start dating. "What am I supposed to do?" she asked. When she got no answer, she looked at her mum, Chioma had fallen asleep.

Chioma wants to spend time with his children but she is overwhelmed. Will her children navigate the peer pressure they are facing? Don't miss our next edition.

Frustrated, Ada went to bed very disturbed.

Elechi Amadi- Soldier And Creative Writer



Emmanuel Elechi Daniel was born in Mbado-Aluu in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. He attended Government College, Umuahia between 1948 and 1952. He proceeded to Survey School and graduated in 1954. He attended University of Ibadan, where he studied Physics and Mathematics between 1955 and 1959. He adopted the name Elechi Amadi while in the University to reflect his Ikwerre heritage.

After working for a while as a surveyor, he later took up teaching and taught in several schools including the Nigerian Military School Zaria, after he had joined the Nigerian Army.

Amadi rose to the rank of captain before he retired from the military. He joined the Rivers State civil service and rose to the rank of Permanent Secretary. Between 1987 and 1988, he served as the Commissioner for Education and moved to the Ministry of Lands and Housing in the next two years.

As an author, Elechi Amadi was best known for his historical trilogy about traditional life in Nigerian villages: The Concubine, published in 1966. In 1969 The Great Ponds was published and The Slave followed in 1978. These novels focused mainly on destiny and the extent to which it can be changed: the relationship between people and their gods is the central issue explored.

His verse play, Isiburu, published in 1973 was about a champion wrestler who was ultimately defeated by the supernatural power of his enemy. He also wrote Pepper Soup and Road to Ibadan, both works were published in 1977. Estrangement was published in 1986 while the play Woman of Calabar was published in 2001.

Elechi Amadi's autobiography,

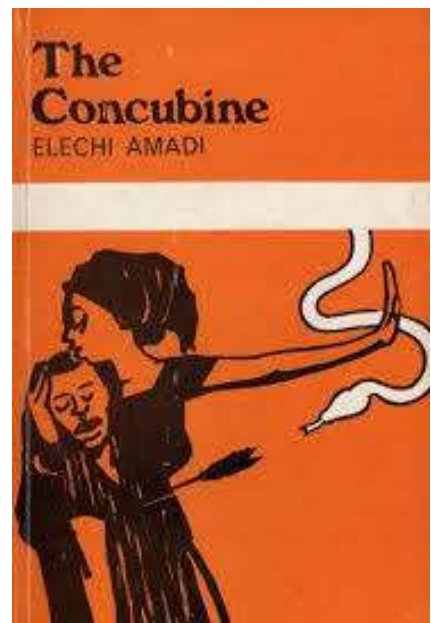
Sunset in Biafra: A Civil War Diary was published in 1973. It focused on Amadi's experiences during the Nigeria-Biafran civil war. He ventured into science-fiction in his later writing years and published "When God Came", a science-fiction in 2013.

Elechi Amadi was kidnapped on January 5, 2009 in Aluu town by unknown gunmen and was released after 23 hours.

In 1992, he received Rivers State Jubilee Merit Award: Rivers State University of Science and Technology awarded him an honorary doctorate award in science and education in 2003.

He became a fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Education in 2003 and in that same year the Federal Government honored him with the Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR).

On June 29, 2016, Amadi died at the Good Heart Hospital in Portharcourt at the age of 82.



Emeh Mercy

CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

Writing is a calling, not a choice. - Isabel Allende.

DO-OR-DIE: City, Madrid, Others Battle For Survival

By Joseph Jacob

It is do-or-die; cruise-or-crash; swim-or-sink; make-or-mar as the UEFA Champions League play-off second leg holds this Tuesday and Wednesday as 16 teams battle for the eight vacant place in the round of 16.

The biggest encounter will take place on Wednesday at the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid Spain, where the most successful side of the competition, Real Madrid with 15 titles will host 2023 champions Manchester City.

The first leg ended 3-2 in favour of the Spaniards, which has made this match a must win for the English champions while Real Madrid will qualify with just a draw. It will be a let down by all standards if any of the clubs failed to reach the round of 16.

After breaking the jinx of never scoring for Manchester City against Real Madrid with the two goals he scored in the first leg, Erling Haaland will be expected to lead the attacking line of the English side. On the other hand Pep Guardiola must have a special plan to silence the deadly combination of Jude Bellingham, Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Junior.

Ademola Lookman's Atalanta suffered a 2-1 loss to Club Brugge in Belgium and must win this Tuesday's encounter to stand a chance of qualifying. Now without the injured African Player of the Year, Atalanta have to struggle harder and they must be at their best to avoid elimination.

Bayern Munich welcome Celtic to the Allianz Arena after Michael Olise and Harry Kane scored to give them a comfortable two goals lead in the first leg at the Celtic Park before Daizen Maeda pulled one back for the Scottish side. It will definitely be an uphill task for Celtic to get a favourable result in Munich, but the lone goal they scored is an anchor for any hope of an upset.

The Giuseppe Meazza Stadium will be the battle field when Samuel Chukwueze's AC Milan take on Feyenoord who won the first leg at their home by a lone goal scored by Igor Paixao.

Having lost for the fourth time in this campaign, AC Milan will need to significantly improve as they host the return leg if they will not be



gave PSG the victory.

This second leg at the Parc des Princes will be a stroll in the park for the Parisians, who had defeated their opponents in their two meetings in the French League this season.

Borussia Dortmund are one leg into the round of 16 after ruthlessly defeated Sporting CP 3-0 in their first leg encounter at the Estadio Jose Alvalade. All the

shamefully eliminated from the competition.

Having won the first leg by a lone goal, Benfica have a better chance of reaching the last 16 as they welcome Monaco to the Estadio du Luz.

Recall that Vangelis Pavlidis gave Benfica the important victory last week. The winner of this encounter will face either Liverpool or Barcelona in one of the round of 16 matches in March.

Paris Saint Germain made mincemeat of their fellow French side Brest 3-0 in the first leg of their encounter. Despite playing at the Stade du Roudourou, Brest could not lay a glove on their more illustrious opponents as Ousmane Dembele's brace and Vitinha's goal

Germans need at home is to avoid any defeat more than a two-goal margin to reach the round of 16.

The old ladies of Italy, Juventus will storm the Philips Stadium in Eindhoven to take on PSV whom they defeated 2-1 in Turin. This encounter is very open as any of the sides can still qualify.

Weston McKennie gave the Italians the lead in the 34th minute with a stunning strike from the edge of the box after the visitors failed to clear their lines. Ivan Perisic scored his first Champions League goal since 2020 to restore parity.

But, Samuel Mbangula scored the winner for Juventus eight minutes from time to give them a slim advantage ahead of Wednesday's second leg.

The first leg of the round of 16 matches will take place on March 4 while the second leg will take place one week later.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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.

Blast From The Past: Heartbreak Of 2006 World Cup Qualifier

Nigeria failed to qualify for the Germany 2006 World Cup losing the ticket to the Palanca Nigras of Angola, who qualified for the first time. It was a heartbreaking experience for Nigerian fans, who had expected Nigeria to qualify from the group that had Algeria, Angola, Gabon, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. What really happened? Why did the Super Eagles failed to qualify for their fourth consecutive World Cup?

Nigeria made her debut at the World Cup in 1994 in USA and qualified for two subsequent editions in France 1998 and in Korea/Japan 2002. Having qualified for three consecutive World Cup tournaments, complacency stepped in as football authorities, players and the fans started thinking that qualifying for the World Cup is the right of Nigeria. Nigeria started the qualifiers on a bright note with Obafemi Martins scoring a brace to give Nigeria a 2-0 victory over Rwanda at the Abuja National Stadium. This result placed the Super Eagles top of the group with three points.

The second match was against Angola at the Estadio da Didadela in Luanda. Nigeria went to the match without key players like Austin Okocha, Kanu Nwankwo, among others. Fabrice Akwa scored an 84th minute goal to give Angola all three points.

On match day three, Joseph Yobo secured all three points for Nigeria against Algeria with an 84th minute goal and Nigeria returned to the top with six points after Angola drew 2-2 with Gabon. Nigeria remained on top after match day four as they went, saw and conquered Zimbabwe 3-0. On match-day five. Nigeria travelled to Gabon but could only settle for a 1-1 draw. This result allowed Angola to leapfrog Nigeria after defeating Zimbabwe by a lone goal. The next match-day Nigeria bounced back to the top after defeating Gabon 2-0 in Portharcourt and Angola losing by the same margin to Zimbabwe.

Problem started on match day seven as key players failed to honour the Battle of Kigali which saw Nigeria drew 1-1 with Rwanda. Austine Okocha

was among the players who were absent and he claimed that he lost his way in London. Angola grabbed the opportunity with two hands and defeated Algeria 2-1 to reclaim the top.

With three matches to go, Nigeria had all it takes to qualify, especially as one of the matches was against table toppers, Angola. On the other hand, the Angolans had their own plans, if they could get a draw against Nigeria and win their other two matches, World Cup ticket would be secured.

The Nigerian Football Federation inexplicably, decided to take the Angola match to the Sani Abacha Stadium in Kano instead of playing the match at the National Stadium Abuja or the Liberation Stadium in Portharcourt. The match ended 1-1 and the Angolans realized that all they needed were to win their remaining matches and they would qualify for their first World Cup.

Nigeria started their usual permutation and combination, hoping that either Gabon or Rwanda would do for them what they failed to do for themselves over two leg-defeating the Angolans.

Angola spank Gabon 3-0 as Nigeria defeated Algeria in Oran 5-2. In the last round of matches, Nigeria defeated Zimbabwe 5-1, but could not qualify as Angola defeated Rwanda 1-0. While there were celebrations in the streets of Luanda, there were sorrow and sadness in the streets of Abuja.

Reality dawned on Nigerians. A World Cup ticket is not the right of any nation, those who are more prepared and fight for it will definitely get it.

That qualifier produced a revolution across Africa. In Group 1, the Hawks of Togo qualified ahead of the Teranga Lions of Senegal who reached the quarter-final when they debuted at the previous World Cup.

The Black Stars of Ghana qualified for their first World Cup in Group 2 ahead of Bafana Bafana of South Africa.

In Group 3, the Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire qualified for their first World Cup instead of the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon and the Pharaohs of Egypt.

In Group 5, the Carthage Eagles of Tunisia qualified ahead of the Atlas Lions of Morocco.

Super Congratulations

TO A SPORTS-LOVING GOVERNOR
(Chioma Ndi Sports)
DR. ALEX CHIOMA OTTI (OFR)
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

@ 60

The People's Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, your mega supports to Abia State Sports Council have resulted in excellence in State, Zonal, National and International competitions, with laurels to show.

Barely two years in office, Team Abia has won several laurels, breaking and setting new world records, thus; placing Abia significantly on global sporting map.

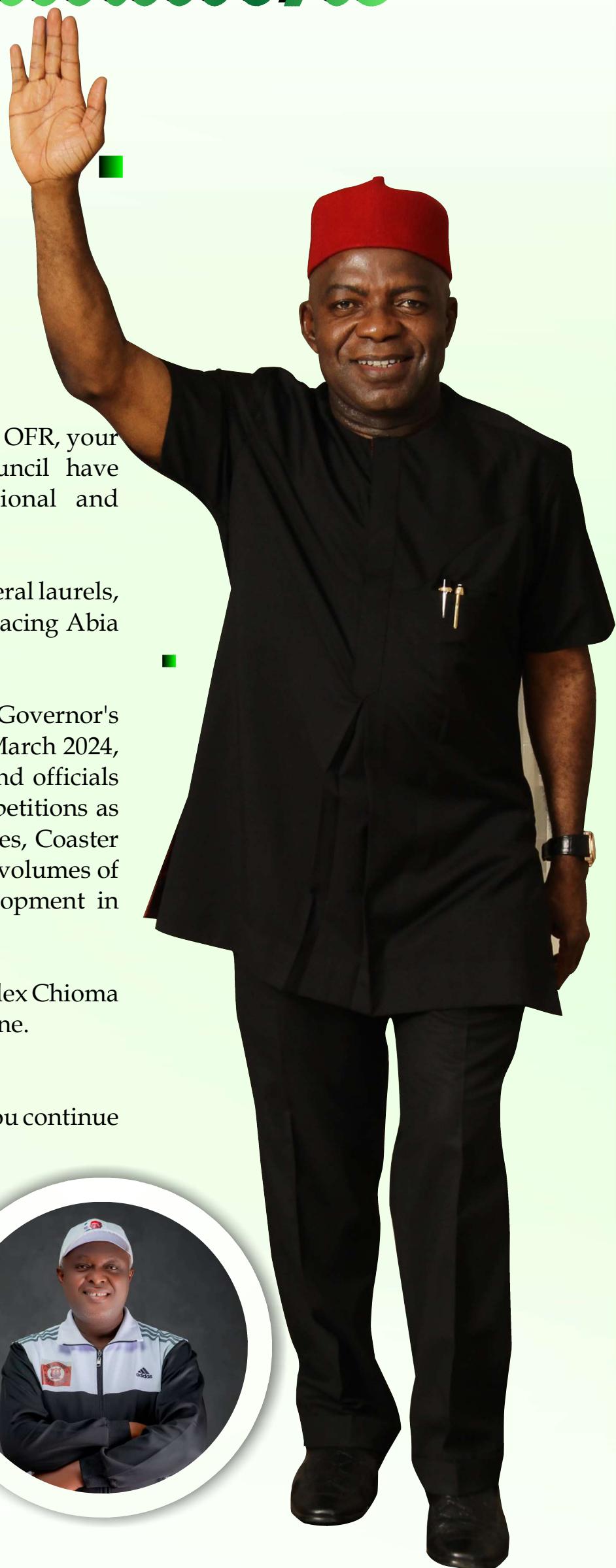
The discovery of talents from the first Abia State Governor's Secondary School Unity Games (ASGUSUG) in March 2024, the N75 Million cash rewards to Abia athletes and officials who excelled in National and International competitions as well as offer of appointments to deserving athletes, Coaster Bus, and Official Car to the Sport Director, speak volumes of your unparalleled commitment to sports development in Abia State and Nigeria at large.

We are super proud of you, Your Excellency, Dr. Alex Chioma Ndi sports Otti" as I fondly call you, on this milestone.

You're indeed the people's choice.
May God Almighty keep you in sound health as you continue your good works to Ndi Abia.

Cheers and many more happy returns!

Signed:
Comrade Obioma George
Director of Sports, Abia State
For The Sports Council Management



DR. OGBONNAYA ONU POLYTECHNIC ABA, ABIA STATE

Felicitations

TO OUR DEAR GOVERNOR

Dr. Alex Chioma OTTI (OFR)
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

The Council, Management, Staff and Students of Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, Abia State rejoice with the action Governor of Abia State Dr. Alex Chioma Otti (OFR) as he clocks 60 years.

It is not just a Birthday celebration, but we are celebrating the uniqueness and the doggedness in his transformative leadership qualities. We celebrate an unequalled track record of excellent performance. Since your assumption of office, you have never ceased to amaze Abians.

You are felt in all phase of the economy, building, reconstructing, constructing and boosting the economic development of the State.

The entire Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic Community is using the opportunity of your 60th Birthday Anniversary to thank you for the gift of quality leaders, who are carrying out your heart beat in the Polytechnic.

We also thank you for the following:

1. Consistent and prompt payment of staff salaries, even the ones owed in arrears before your assumption of office.
2. Enabling our Institution to regain Accreditation of lost courses.
3. Massive rehabilitation of infrastructures.
4. The Promotion of Discipline, Accountability, Transparency and Integrity.
5. The restoration of Security and above all the
6. Donation of N150 Million Naira for our best graduating 150 Students at Distinction and Upper Credit Levels of 3 points and above to start and build up a business for themselves and become self-reliant.

Your magnanimity cuts across urban and rural centres.

Thank you for making Abia a Clean State and returning Abia to her past Glory

Bravoo!! You are truly the Best.

We appreciate the hand of God upon your life and family.

May His Grace continue to speak for you.

We wish you many more fulfilling years ahead.

Signed

Dr. Engr. C. K. Okoro
Rector



Warm Felicitation

To:

DR. ALEX CHIOMA OTTI (OFR)
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

@
60



Happy Birthday to my friend
and the Abia State Governor;
Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR @ 60

On behalf of my family and the good people of Rivers State, I
wish you a memorable birth anniversary.

I am also confident in your ability to leave a lasting
legacy in Abia State.

Super Congratulations the people's choice!
Wishing you more blessed years ahead.

Signed:
Sir Siminalayi Fubara, GSSRS
Governor of Rivers State

INTELLIGENCE



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...Igbo bu nke anyi

Super Congratulations

TO THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE:
Dr. Alex C. OTTI (OFR)
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE

@ 60

Zik FM 96.3Mhz
...Igbo bu nke anyi



As you mark another milestone of existence today, we join your family, friends, associates, political family and the good people of Abia State to wish you a very memorable Birthday.

You have exhibited uncommon wisdom, remarkable vision, commitment and exemplary leadership in service to Abians and the country at large.

Congratulations and many happy returns.

Signed
Management