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NATIONAL Ambassador

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“Uplift the people, project the nation”

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Governor Otti Starts Govt House Reconstruction, Insists On People's Welfare First

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, has announced the commencement of the long-awaited reconstruction of the Governor's Office at Government House, Umuahia.

Speaking during a Sabbath service at the Unity Chapel within Government House, the Governor said his administration adopted a strategic approach based on economic principles, prioritizing sectors that directly impact the lives of citizens.

“As a student of economics, we came in with a scale of preference. Everything is important, but some things are more important than others,” Otti stated.

“We didn't consider this Government House more important than paying salaries. It wasn't more important than revamping our Primary Healthcare Centres or our schools. We didn't think it was more important than providing free basic education so that children from low-income backgrounds can access the opportunities that many of us had”.

He added that addressing poor road infrastructure and dilapidated public offices took precedence, and was only after recording significant progress in these areas was the Government House project initiated.

“Now that we've tackled many of those urgent issues, work has commenced here,” he said, noting that visible signs of the reconstruction are already evident around the premises.

Dr. Otti also highlighted ongoing projects within the State Capital, including the reconstruction of the Michael Okpara Auditorium, which he said would be completed by the end of June.

He added that the Office of the Secretary to the State Government is currently being furnished, and construction work is progressing at the Government House Clinic.

Describing the current Governor's Lodge as “more or less a makeshift place,” Otti announced plans to rebuild the lodge along with the Unity Chapel.

He reaffirmed his belief that governance must prioritize the welfare of the people, adding, “Leadership is only meaningful when it earns the people's support. Government is about the people, and without their support, leadership cannot thrive.”

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Governor Alex Otti Addressing A Crowd Of Mourners During The Funeral Of Comrade Sunny Okebugwe Nwanganga Onwuma, Former Commissioner For Labour And Productivity, At His Country Home In Ihie-Obuaku, Isiala Ihie Autonomous Community, Ugwuagbo.

Abia Govt Unveils Gov Otti's 2nd Anniversary Plans

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has released a detailed schedule of activities to commemorate the second anniversary of Governor Alex Otti's administration, following growing calls from citizens and stakeholders for a more visible celebration.

Speaking with journalists after the weekly Executive Council meeting, the Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, revealed that although the administration initially planned a modest observance, public demand prompted the governor to approve a more elaborate celebration.

“Since the announcement, there has been significant pressure on His Excellency to make the anniversary more visible”.

“In response to widespread requests from within and outside the State, the Governor has agreed to elevate the celebration,”

Prince Kanu said.

The anniversary events will start on May 25 with an interdenominational church service at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia.

On May 26, a special Executive Council session will be held. Children's Day,

May 27, will see the First Lady, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, visiting orphanages and destitute homes. Governor Otti is also expected to participate in the Children's Day parade, taking the traditional salute and joining in the celebration.

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Govt. Reiterates Commitment To Abia Newspaper, Workers' Welfare

By Ngozi Ndubueze & Ekebuisi Precious

The Abia State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to improving workers' welfare and creating an enabling environment that fosters efficiency and productivity across government

agencies.

This assurance was given by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Kenneth Kalu, during a working visit to the Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation (ANPC) in Umuahia.

Prof. Kalu, who was accompanied by top government officials, urged the management and staff of the corporation to uphold high standards of professionalism in line with Governor Alex Otti's vision and ongoing reforms.

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News

Abia Govt Unveils Gov Otti's 2nd Anniversary Plans

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A keynote Anniversary Lecture will be delivered on May 28 by Dr. Kalu Idika-Kalu, a former Commissioner for Finance in the old Imo State and one-time Minister of Finance for the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The anniversary will culminate on May 29 with a State broadcast by Governor Otti, followed by a grand celebration at Umuahia Central Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner announced the postponement of the commissioning of the newly reconstructed Port Harcourt Road in Aba and the flag-off ceremony for Abia Medical City, initially scheduled for May 23, Prince Kanu further stated.

"Some of you may have heard informally but let me confirm that the event has been postponed". "President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was originally slated to launch the project, will now visit in early June due to scheduling constraints."

In a related development, the Commissioner disclosed that the First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, and the wife of the Vice-President, Hajiya Nana Shettima, will visit Abia on May 23 for a humanitarian outreach.

Hosted by the Abia First Lady, Mrs. Priscilla Chidinma Otti, Senator Tinubu will formally launch her Social Intervention Initiative aimed at supporting vulnerable groups in the state. The programme will include the distribution of food items and essential supplies to disadvantaged residents.

"This outreach reflects the First Lady's commitment to uplifting the lives of vulnerable Nigerians". "It also highlights the spirit of collaboration between the Federal and State Governments in tackling social challenges," the Commissioner said.

Experts Call For Vigilance In Early Detection Of Autism, Learning Disabilities

By Favour Okorie

Health and education experts have called on parents, caregivers, and educators to be more observant of early signs of autism and learning disabilities in children.

The appeal was made at an awareness programme held today, in Umuahia, Abia State.

The event was organized by the Shades of Life Foundation in collaboration with the Abia State Commission for the Welfare of Disabled Persons.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Eziakaku Nwaokolo, Chief Executive Officer of Shades of Life Foundation, described autism as a spectrum of complex neurodevelopmental disorders that affect communication, behavior, and social interaction.

"Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) presents differently in each child," Dr. Nwaokolo said. "Some show signs as early as 12 months, while others may not exhibit noticeable symptoms until 24 months or later. What's important is that caregivers and teachers pay close attention and do not dismiss these early indicators."

She emphasized that although autism typically begins before the age of three, it is a lifelong condition that evolves over time.

"Adolescents with autism may struggle with forming friendships, understanding

social cues, and adjusting to expectations in school or the workplace," she added. "Early detection and consistent support are key to helping them reach their full potential."

Dr. Nwaokolo also highlighted the urgent need to combat stigma and misinformation about neurodevelopmental disorders.

"We must move away from labeling children with autism as 'stubborn' or 'possessed,'" she said. "These are medical conditions that require compassion, professional care, and informed support."

She expressed gratitude to the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, for his inclusive policies and continued support for persons with disabilities.

"Governor Otti has shown that he is a leader who listens and prioritizes the needs of vulnerable populations," she

noted.

Dr. Stanley Onyebuchi, Commissioner for the Welfare of Disabled Persons in Abia State, commended the initiative, describing it as both "timely and necessary."

"Raising awareness about autism, especially in rural communities, requires the combined efforts of parents, teachers, health workers, and traditional leaders," Dr. Onyebuchi said. He stressed the importance of professional training in autism diagnosis, noting that a tailored approach is required for each child.

"There's no one-size-fits-all model," he explained. "Diagnostic tools and interventions must be adapted to each child's age, environment, and unique challenges. Building local capacity is essential."

He further urged health institutions and civil society organizations to extend

awareness efforts to grassroots communities, where knowledge about developmental disorders is often lacking.

Also speaking at the event, Comrade Dan Onuoha, Head of the Information Unit and Public Relations at the Secondary Education Management Board, outlined some key early warning signs of autism and learning disabilities.

"If a child does not make eye contact by 12 months, avoids playing with peers, repeats certain behaviors, or doesn't use gestures like pointing or waving, these could be red flags," Onuoha said. "Teachers must be trained to identify these signs and communicate them to parents early."

He advocated for stronger collaboration between schools and health agencies to build inclusive learning environments for children with special needs.

The event concluded with a collective call for sustained public sensitization, stronger policy implementation, and a more empathetic approach to neurodevelopmental conditions.

"We need a society that sees ability—not disability," Dr. Nwaokolo said in her closing remarks. "With the right support, children with autism and learning challenges can thrive at home, in school, and beyond."



Overview Of Participant At Autism Awareness Campaign

Govt Reiterates Commitment To Abia Newspaper,

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He encouraged the workforce to remain diligent and self-motivated, emphasizing the need to carry out their responsibilities with dedication—whether supervised or not. According to him, the Corporation plays a critical role as a communication arm of the government and must reflect the values of transparency, accountability, and excellence.

Describing the media outfit as a vital platform for projecting the policies and activities of the state government, Prof. Kalu called for unity and teamwork among the staff to enable the organization achieve greater results. He assured them that the challenges presented would be addressed appropriately.

Earlier in his remarks, the General Manager of ANPC, Hon. Jones Nnanna Ike, expressed gratitude for the SSG's visit and described it as a morale booster for the entire staff. He highlighted the strategic importance of the

Corporation in preserving the historical and developmental records of the State.

"The newspaper house is not only for public information dissemination, but it also serves as the official record-keeper of government activities, offering future researchers valuable documentation," he said.

Hon. Ike recounted the poor state of the Corporation prior to the advent of the current administration, noting that there was a total breakdown in operations and infrastructure. He commended Governor Otti for prioritizing the revival of the public sector, with ANPC being one of the early beneficiaries through the Ministry of Lands and Housing.

While appreciating the support already received, Hon. Ike appealed for further assistance, particularly in the establishment of an in-house printing press. "What is a publishing

house without its own printing press? We need this to operate optimally and meet growing demands," he stated.

He also pointed out the inadequacies in equipment and technology, noting that the computer systems supplied to the Corporation were not built to handle its workload and had since broken down. He cited the lack of essential tools such as cameras, printers, and other equipment as key operational setbacks.

The ANPC General Manager further stressed the need for skilled editorial staff to be injected into the system to improve content quality and boost productivity.

On a positive note, he praised the state government for its consistent and timely payment of salaries, noting that it has greatly enhanced staff discipline, reduced absenteeism, and

increased overall commitment to duty.

"We assure you that our staff are motivated and committed. They come to work and do the job they are paid for. Timely salary payments have truly made a difference," he concluded.

In a vote of thanks, the Head of Administration in the Corporation, Mr. Dandy Nwachukwu, appreciated the SSG for the visit and reaffirmed the Corporation's unwavering support for the present administration.

The visit featured an interactive session during which staff engaged the delegation on various issues.

The SSG was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Godwin Okezue; Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Due Process, Dr. Oluebube Chukwu; and other senior government officials.

Governor Otti Starts Govt House Reconstruction,

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With his administration approaching the two-year mark, Governor Otti assured residents that his government would intensify efforts to deliver more dividends of democracy across the state.

The service also featured a sermon by Elder Ezekwem Odigbo of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, who encouraged worshippers to draw strength from faith in the face of challenges, citing the biblical story of David and Goliath.

Reconciliation of Name

I affirm that Nwankwo Jonah Owoh and Success Owoh which appeared differently in some of my documents are one and same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as NWANKWO JONAH OWOH. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

NWANKWO JONAH OWOH.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as N W A N K W O S O P H I A NKECHINYERE. Now wish to be known and addressed as N N A B U I H E S O P H I A NKECHINYERE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

NNABUIHE SOPHIA NKECHINYERE

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as OGECHI AUGUSTA AKADIEZE. Now wish to be known and addressed as OGBONNA OGECHI AUGUSTA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OGBONNA OGECHI AUGUSTA

ADDITION OF NAME

This is to affirm that VICTOR OKOROAFOR which appear in my Bank Verification Number(BVN) and OKOROAFOR VICTOR CHIKEZIE, as appeared in my National Identification Card are same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as OKOROAFOR VICTOR CHIKEZIE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OKOROAFOR VICTOR CHIKEZIE.

News

Abia Govt Signs MoU with MTN

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has signed a six-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MTN Nigeria Limited, aimed at positioning the state as a digital hub in Africa.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, made the announcement while briefing journalists on the outcome of Executive Council (Exco) meeting, presided over by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu noted that the strategic partnership between the two entities is the result of several months of meetings and negotiations between the Abia State Government and MTN's management.

He added that the collaboration would ensure 100 per cent broadband coverage across the state by the end of the year.

"The Digital Transformation Agenda of this administration received a major boost today with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Abia State Government and MTN Nigeria Limited, on the sidelines of today's Exco meeting".

"The strategic partnership between both entities comes after months of discussions between Abia State Government officials and MTN's management. This MoU covers six key areas, one of which is providing 100% broadband access across the entire state before the end of the year," Kanu explained.

The commissioner also outlined key provisions in the MoU, including a device ownership scheme for civil servants, digital governance infrastructure, a digital mall for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the rollout of 4G/5G services in key cities, and the creation of a state-owned digital

marketplace.

"The device ownership scheme for Abia civil servants will allow MTN Nigeria Limited to finance the acquisition of laptops, smartphones, and Wi-Fi devices for civil servants. This initiative is aimed at enhancing their efficiency and supporting the Digital Transformation Agenda of His Excellency Dr. Alex Otti".

"Another provision involves digital governance, which will include the provision of cloud services and dedicated cloud computing resources."

"Additionally, we will establish the Abia Digital Mall, which will focus on stabilizing the informal economy by leveraging digital tools to drive SME growth in the state. We will also roll out 4G/5G services in Umuahia, Aba, and Ohafia by the end of the year".

"Finally, the creation of a digital marketplace will support both e-governance and e-commerce initiatives within the state," he further stated.

He further emphasised that the partnership would empower people in rural areas, including farmers, to conduct business remotely using technology.

"This partnership aligns with the governor's vision of digitally transforming Abia State and bringing it into the 21st Century. As you know, our governor is tech-savvy, and he expects no less for the Abia people. This collaboration will allow us to use technology to drive socio-economic growth."

"For example, rice farmers in Abam, cocoa dealers in Bende, or palm produce traders in Ukwa East Local Government, will be able to conduct business from the comfort of their homes in remote areas," the commissioner explained.



■ Gov Alex Otti of Abia State and Chief Jerry Kalu (Oshimiri), as the Abia State Classic Golf and Country Club paid a courtesy and working visit to Abia Gov

British High Commissioner Hails Tinubu's Economic Reforms

From Sophima Ovuike

The British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery, has recommended President Bola Tinubu's administration's ongoing economic reforms, however maintained that the policies have opened the way to more investments, and economic growth.

The envoy stated recently during a press briefing in Abuja,

attributing the positive signs to President Tinubu's "big and bold" economic reforms.

He stated that foreign reserves are going upward and that makes Nigeria less risky for investment.

"These economic reforms are now making Nigeria more investible".

"We all know about the abolition of the fuel subsidy, we all know about the unification of the exchange rate system, and

my headline this morning is that these economic reforms are paying off, and these economic reforms are now making Nigeria more investible.

"I realise that some of these reforms for ordinary people are painful.

"Inflation is still high; it's in the 20 percent territory in the mid-20s. And it's going to take time to bring that rate down.

"But we can see very good prospects for that

rate coming down in the coming months and years," he said.

Montgomery said the British Commission aligns with the World Bank's May 2025 Nigeria Development Update (NDU), which affirmed that the Naira is now more stable and that a predictable economic environment buoys investment.

"Foreign exchange reserves are up, significantly up, so that makes Nigeria less risky. There's been a very big increase in government revenue collection, not by raising tax banks, but by tax administration and management".

"It's almost a 90 per cent increase in the amount of resources we've collected, partly through administrative management and making sure that revenues from various MDAs reach the treasury, and that increase in revenue means reductions in fiscal deficit.

"It means that the combination of increased revenue and the abolition of the fuel subsidy have doubled federal allocations to the states, enabling more investments in infrastructure and public services.

"Most importantly, we're seeing a growth rate in Nigeria, too, so between 2015 and 2019, the growth rate in Nigeria was an average of 2 percent.

"It's now, in the last 12 months, at least about 3.5 per cent. But most positively, in the last quarter for which we have data, it's up to 4.6 percent. So, there's a real uptick in growth."

NAWOJ@34: Gov Otti Pledges Support For Women Journalists

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Government has pledged to partner with the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), in building a more inclusive, informed, and progressive society.

Governor Alex Otti made the pledge during the 34th Anniversary Celebration of NAWOJ, Abia State Chapter, held at the Police Officers' Mess, Umuahia.

The governor, represented by the Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, commended NAWOJ for blazing the trail and transforming the media landscape in Abia and Nigeria at large.

He assured the association of the government's continued support in promoting press freedom, building the capacity of women journalists, and protecting their rights to operate without fear or intimidation.

The Governor lauded the founding mothers of NAWOJ and members for their role in holding leaders accountable and amplifying the voices of the voiceless.

"This occasion reminds us of the journey of intelligent and passionate women who have dared to speak truth to power, hold leaders accountable, and amplify the voices of the voiceless in our society.

"We recognize and commend your pivotal role in nation-building. You have shown that journalism is not just about

reporting news; it is also about shaping public opinion, influencing policies, and driving positive societal change", he stated.

Governor Otti further highlighted his administration's commitment to gender inclusion, revealing that 67 per cent of permanent secretary appointments in the state have been given to women.

Also speaking, the Wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, represented by the Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Aghukwa, emphasised that women's voices are now being heard in national discourse.

She stressed the need to empower women not only in the media but across all sectors.

The Chairman on the occasion and Rector of Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, Dr. Christopher Okoro, described the theme of the event, "Empowering Women's Voices: 34 Years of Trailblazing Journalism", as timely.

He noted that women are no longer relegated to the background but are now at the forefront of national issues.

Delivering the anniversary lecture titled "Eliminating Obnoxious Cultural Practices Against Women", the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Becky Oguama, identified harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early child marriage as challenges still facing women. She called for the domestication of local laws to protect women and children.

News

Organization Empowers Women With Business Start-up

By Okereke Kate

A non profit organization, SieDi Hub, in marking its 3rd anniversary, has moved to improve the quality of life in underserved communities by promoting social justice, healthcare and sustainable enterprise, empowering women with business start up capital.

Committed to social impact with a renewed mission to transform the standard of living in communities, SieDi Hub remains steadfast in its mission to inspire change, empower communities and drive long-term solutions for a better future.

Speaking at the event, held in Umuahia, the Abia State Capital, the SieDi Hub representative and Trustee Treasurer, Enyioma Ndukwe Orji, recounted that the theme of the 2025 IWD celebration entitled, "Accelerate Action on Women Leadership: A Policy Dialogue," was apt, as it emphasised the urgency of advancing gender equality and inclusive development.

Orji noted that the yearly event usually affords SieDi Hub, women and youth-focused organization based on Abia, to address challenges posed by technological advancements, including digital safety, through research, advocacy, policy engagements, and direct interventions.

According to the organization's trustee treasurer, the organization collaborates with youth, international partners, government Ministries, Department and Agencies, civil society and the media for impactful outcomes.

She noted that since the inception of the organization, it has been a beacon of hope, working tirelessly to bridge gaps in essential services and create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, adding that the milestone anniversary served as a reminder of the power of collective action in building a more just and equitable society.

Delivering her keynote address, the keynote Speaker and Deputy vice-chancellor, Administration, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof Ursula Akanwa, advocated for women to be empowered so they could fully utilize their potentials.

Prof Akanwa insisted that there was a need for a

change of perception if leadership must be redefined.

She emphasised that leadership must transcend outdated norms that hinder women's participation in leadership roles. She further stated that leadership begins at home, asserting that if women could effectively manage household responsibilities, then, they could equally take up leadership positions.

In their separate remarks, representatives of the Commissioner for Women Affairs in Abia State and the founder of Vicar Hope Foundation, commended SieDi Hub for fostering a strong network of women and implementing transformative initiatives that empower women, children, and vulnerable groups.

They highlighted the importance of creating a more prosperous society by enhancing women's economic status, which, in turn, helps combat gender-based violence, dismantle barriers, and amplify women's voices.

In his goodwill message, the Abia State Director of National Orientation Agency (NOA), Comrade Victor Orji, congratulated SieDi Hub on its anniversary.

He reiterated that the National Orientation Agency (NOA), remained dedicated to raising awareness and advocating for gender equality and social justice, aligning with SieDi-Hub's mission.

The Abia State Police Public Relations Officer, Maureen Chilaka, who participated in the panel discussion, highlighted the ongoing evolution of the Nigerian Police Force. She emphasized that the force has become more gender-sensitive compared to the past.

Chilaka also informed the group about the NPF Gender Policy, which promotes inclusivity by enabling women to attain top ranks, ensuring a 30 per cent recruitment quota for women and introducing other progressive changes.

The event also included presentations from the Nwanyibuihe Project on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the official launch of Nwanyibuihe Community Project 2.0.

As part of the empowerment initiative, selected women received a cheque of ₦100,000 as business startups.



■ The Deam CAERSE, Prof. Nnanna Agwu (12th Left) The Deputy Deam, CAERSE, Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamfule (7th Left) and others during the Maiden CAERSE Int'l conference at MOAU recently.

CAERSE-MOUAU Holds Int'l Conference, Calls for Improved Resilience to Climate Change

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The College of Agricultural Economics, Rural Sociology and Extension (CAERSE), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), has held its maiden International Conference, highlighting the urgent need to enhance food security in the face of climate change challenges.

Declaring the event open, the Vice-Chancellor, MOUUAU, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, described the conference theme, "Food Security and Climate Change: Nigeria's Contemporary Socio-Political and Technological Environment," as timely and relevant.

Represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academics), Prof. Nneoma Elechi Obasi, Prof. Iwe emphasized that the country's insecurity is closely linked to food insecurity, urging stakeholders to address the root causes.

He decried the declining quality of food across Nigeria, largely due to limited funding, and expressed optimism that the conference would offer viable solutions to issues surrounding food insecurity, climate change, and national safety.

In his welcome address, Dean of CAERSE, Prof. Nnanna Mba Agwu, called for increased collaboration among researchers to develop sustainable responses to food insecurity driven by climate change.

Citing projections that Nigeria's temperature could rise by 2.9°C to 5.7°C by 2100, he referenced the 2022 ND-GAIN Index, which ranks Nigeria 157th out of 187 countries in terms of climate vulnerability and readiness.

He emphasized the nation's exposure to extreme weather conditions and underscored the importance of academic discourse in formulating appropriate strategies.

Delivering the keynote address, Abia State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, advocated for climate-smart agriculture as a critical strategy in ensuring food security and driving sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

Speaking on "Ensuring Food Security in the Midst of Climate Change: A Panacea for Nigerian Economic Development," Dr. Agbaeze highlighted the harsh impacts of climate change on agriculture and called for the adoption of resilient policies and innovative technologies. He commended MOUUAU for spearheading academic innovation and applauded the leadership of Prof. Iwe and Prof. Agwu.

He reiterated Abia state government's commitment to sustainable farming practices, citing Governor Alex Otti's initiatives promoting environmental

protection, traceability, and global compliance in agriculture.

Speaking virtually from Russia, Prof. Galina V. Astratova of the Federal University emphasized the need for greater investment in Nigeria's agricultural and industrial complex.

In her lecture, titled; "Geopolitical Pressures and Policy Complexities for Russian and Nigerian Food Security," she called on the Nigerian government to pursue agricultural self-sufficiency.

She described the agro-industrial sector as pivotal to economic growth and national development, urging authorities to embrace digital transformation and strategic policy shifts to ensure future food security.

Fielding questions from newsmen, the Deputy Dean of CAERSE, Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamfule, stressed the importance of sustainable agriculture and environmental resilience.

She identified organic farming as a vital tool to combat climate change and food insecurity.

"Organic farming is not just an agricultural method—it is a holistic system that respects natural cycles, reduces harmful chemical usage, and supports biodiversity," she noted.

Dr. Ahamfule also highlighted the climate

benefits of organic farming and called for institutional support for organic agriculture through training, certification, and improved market access.

In their goodwill messages, the Abia State Coordinator, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Alloysius Chibuzor Mbah, and Head of Station at the Humid Forest Research Institute, Umuahia, Dr. Afoke Koyeso, described food security as a fundamental human right.

They warned that climate change poses a severe threat to food production and access, calling for a holistic approach that includes sustainable agriculture, climate-resilient infrastructure, and social protection programmes.

In her vote of thanks, the Chairperson of the Conference Organizing Committee, Prof. Judith B. Simonyan, expressed appreciation to the Vice-Chancellor, invited speakers, students, and participants for their contributions and active involvement.

She noted that their collective efforts ensured the success of the event and expressed hope that subsequent editions of the conference would be more impactful.

The event also featured plenary sessions, academic paper presentations, and the conferment of awards to distinguished scholars and researchers.

Editorial

JAMB's 2025 UTME Mass Failure: A Systemic Failure with Real Consequences

The recently concluded 2025 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) has become a flashpoint of national disappointment and outrage. The public outcry, especially from students, parents, educators, and civil society groups, stems from the widespread failure reported across the country. Now, with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) officially acknowledging systemic errors, it is imperative we confront the gravity of this failure and chart a concrete path forward.

The explanation provided by JAMB's Registrar, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, was a sobering account of technical lapses, administrative oversights, and inadequate post-deployment checks that marred what could have been the Board's most successful UTME exercise yet. Over 380,000 candidates from 157 centers across Lagos and the South-East were directly affected by grading anomalies due to a software update patch that was improperly applied.

This, brought incorrect scores, psychological trauma, public mistrust, and, more worryingly, a threatened academic future for thousands of young Nigerians.

This failure is not merely technical. It is a human crisis with educational, social, and emotional repercussions. Remember, UTME is not just an exam—it is a gateway to higher education, career aspirations, and national development. For it to be riddled with such basic errors, after all the so-called "robust simulations" and "in-house innovations," is unacceptable. It reflects deep flaws in quality assurance mechanisms and raises questions about the competence and accountability of key service providers.

While JAMB's transparency in acknowledging its faults and committing to remedial exams is laudable, apology alone cannot erase the lost trust. This is the second year in a row where systemic issues have threatened the integrity of the UTME process. The recurring nature of these glitches hints at more than occasional lapses—it signals a pattern of operational instability that must be urgently addressed.

Moving forward and to forestall repetition of this ugly history, we must adapt the following:

Third-Party Audits of JAMB Systems: A complete overhaul and external audit of JAMB's examination and result-processing software must be conducted. Independent tech experts and educationists should be involved in certifying the readiness and reliability of JAMB's platforms before every examination cycle.

Public Blacklisting of Inefficient Vendors: The service providers responsible for the botched update must be publicly identified, penalized, and barred from future contracts. Accountability should go beyond internal disciplinary action. When public trust is lost, only visible and firm action restores it.

Creation of a National Examination Integrity Taskforce: A cross-sectoral body involving stakeholders from WAEC, NECO, NUC, the Ministry of Education, and civil society should be established to monitor and evaluate the integrity of major public examinations in Nigeria.

Candidate-Centric Innovations: JAMB should prioritize students. This includes timely communication about errors, stress-relieving measures like counseling, flexible rescheduling, and provisions for special cases such as WAEC exam conflicts. The examination system must not punish candidates for failures beyond their control.

Reinforce the Role of Mock Exams: JAMB must re-evaluate how mock exams are used. They should serve as true stress tests for all systems—including delivery servers, grading algorithms, and database updates—not mere trial runs.

Education in this part of the world must not be a gamble.

JAMB's mantra for this year—"Man proposes, God disposes"—is philosophically poignant but practically unhelpful. Education, particularly public examinations, must never be reduced to matters of chance or fate. Nigerian students deserve a system they can rely on—one that upholds merit, fairness, and technical excellence.

As the Board regroups from this national embarrassment, it must do so with humility, transparency, and an unwavering commitment to reform. The future of millions of young Nigerians depends on it. Let this be the last time that technology, rather than talent, determines who makes it to the next phase of life.

Enough of the excuses—it's time for lasting solutions.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
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Urgent Need to Sensitize the Masses to Vote and Not Sanction Non-Voters in Nigeria

Dear Editor,

Permit me to use this platform to express my deep concern regarding the increasing calls within our national discourse to impose sanctions on Nigerians who fail to vote during elections. While the intention to boost voter participation is commendable, I believe that punitive measures are not the appropriate or effective way to address the issue of low voter turnout in our country.

Nigeria, despite being Africa's most populous nation and one of its largest democracies, continues to witness alarmingly low voter participation during elections. This unfortunate trend is not the result of laziness or irresponsibility on the part of citizens, but rather the consequence of longstanding issues that have bred disillusionment and apathy. These include inadequate voter education, insecurity, logistical challenges, electoral malpractices, and a deep-seated lack of trust in the political system.

Many citizens have become discouraged by a political process they perceive as corrupt, unresponsive, and disconnected from their daily struggles. Promising change and delivering none has become a recurring pattern, and as a result, a growing number of Nigerians no longer see the value in casting their votes. In such an environment, threatening to punish non-voters only exacerbates the sense of alienation and further undermines the democratic process.

What is urgently needed is a proactive, inclusive, and sustained campaign to sensitize the populace on the power and significance of their vote. Civic education must be prioritized and embedded in our national curriculum, grassroots outreach, and public communication strategies. Nigerians need to understand how their participation can influence policy, improve governance, and foster accountability. When citizens see clear links between their votes and real outcomes in governance, they are more likely to engage willingly and enthusiastically in the electoral process.

Moreover, rebuilding public trust in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and ensuring transparency and fairness in all electoral processes must be at the core of our reforms. Political leaders must also demonstrate integrity, responsiveness, and a genuine commitment to addressing the needs of the people. Only through these measures can we hope to transform passive observers into active participants in our democracy.

Rather than impose sanctions, the government, civil society organizations, and all stakeholders must work collaboratively to inspire hope, rekindle civic responsibility, and renew the social contract between the governed and those in power.

Nigeria's democracy cannot thrive through coercion. It will flourish only when every citizen is empowered, informed, and motivated to participate of their own free will.

From Okenwa, Adaku Jane
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Focus

Is Gov Soludo envious of Peter Obi?

By Ugoji Egbujo

President Tinubu was in Anambra. The timing of the visit was ominous. Anambra governorship elections are due in November. Southern first-term governors from opposition parties are defecting in droves to Tinubu's party. Soludo didn't defect but a defection might have been more hygienic. Soludo showcased his projects and swore allegiance to Tinubu. Soludo was within his right to twerk for Tinubu, but did he have to spit on Peter Obi to magnify and enchant the president?

The first line of Soludo's speech was reeked with pettiness. He said that the last time a President visited the state was in 2021 to commission the Premier Breweries which he called a private brewery project. That Soludo's preferred hook was puerile. Some might say it should be seen as political banter. But did Soludo need to introduce that famed line of bigotry peddled by Tinubu's men in this welcome address to the president to the home of Peter Obi, Tinubu's arch-rival?

Soludo was free to preach unity or choose churlish partisan politics. He was free to say Tinubu is the father of modern Lagos who tamed the Atlantic and transformed a jungle into a bustling city. Nobody would challenge hyperboles. But Soludo didn't have to sound like MC Oluomo or Bayo Onanuga riling up a Shinedu. He didn't need to use Peter Obi as the red carpet. If Peter Obi had a dog in the November fight, Soludo might have had a little justification. But Obi, it appears, isn't interested in the Anambra governorship, so why would Soludo seek to aggravate Obi's supporters with a gratuitous motor park remark?

Soludo is brilliant but many have said he lacks political tact and emotional intelligence. But tact isn't required to abstain from irritating the youths in a state you govern. A brilliant Anambra governor in 2025 doesn't need emotional intelligence to know that while courting Tinubu he must not fart into the faces of Peter Obi's supporters. Even if that would titillate Tinubu. It's political maths. Obi will win any presidential election against Tinubu by a wide and wild margin. Soludo knows that. It wouldn't matter if Soludo took APGA to live in the boys' quarters of the APC. I understand the haste to ensure Tinubu doesn't avail Nicholas Ukachukwu of the APC federal forces of coercion to attempt the Edo experiment, but did Soludo have to serve Obi as nkwo bi to Tinubu to fatten his ego? Has Tinubu now become the oba of Nigeria at whose feet governors must grovel without compunction? Or is Soludo's sporadic

pettiness now incurable?

Soludo once suspended a traditional ruler because he conferred a small village title on a serving senator, who was Soludo's political opponent. That unnecessary act of vindictiveness attracted a long letter of rebuke from the usually quiet Obi of Onitsha.

Soludo once attended the funeral ceremony of the mother of a popular catholic priest in Anambra. At the funeral service, he cast aspersion on the bereaved priest and his family because they printed posters and brochures for the funeral. He said the burial contravened the state's burial laws, which he dusted up on the assumption of office. Soludo's outburst attracted an acidic letter of reprimand from the Catholic Archbishop of Onitsha. The Archbishop said the governor had abandoned critical affairs of government to pursue shadows. He urged the governor to distinguish himself with big ideas rather than cantankerousness. So perhaps Soludo's penchant for the demystification of Peter Obi isn't envy.

Soludo had a first class. Obi had a colourless degree

Obi survived the streets and the odds to become a billionaire, Chairman of a commercial bank and Anambra governor. At levels, Soludo had no reason to envy Obi.

certificate. Both are from the University of Nigeria. Soludo raced to become an Economics Professor and Adviser to international financial institutions. Obi on the other had a shop while he was a philosophy student at the UNN. He was probably eager to leave school and become a member of the famous OMATA. Their paths couldn't be wider apart. While Obi became a trader importing wines and groceries, Soludo lectured, researched and advised. Soludo went on to become chief economics adviser to President Obasanjo and later the central banker governor.

Obi survived the streets and the odds to become a billionaire, Chairman of a commercial bank and Anambra governor. At levels, Soludo had no reason to envy Obi. Both of them have now governed Anambra state. Soludo, who fancies himself as the Solution is perhaps the better intellectually endowed of the two. Peter never discusses Soludo. Soludo never misses an opportunity to mock Obi. Peter Obi has become a national political colossus. Is Soludo's thinly veiled animosity borne of disdain or envy? Does Soludo harbour contempt for Peter, seeing him as a lucky political charlatan riding the wave of luck? Or does Soludo envy Peter Obi as the new dominant political figure in the Southeast? Why is Soludo bellyaching?

Soludo had contested against Peter in 2009. In 2013 Peter backed Willie Obiano when a few thought Soludo was a better candidate. Willie became governor and fell out with Peter Obi. In a beautiful irony, Willie Obiano chose Soludo in 2021 and defeated Peter Obi's protégé. So Soludo and Peter have enough tension between them. But there could be more. President Yar'adua once toyed with the idea of grooming Soludo to be president. He recalled Soludo from the UK to get him to run for Anambra governor in 2009. Yaradua's death truncated that mission but the seed had been sown in Soludo's heart. Obi parades an endearing simplicity, empathy, and a sense of frugality that has charmed the masses. Soludo, despite big ideas and great efforts, hasn't been able to create that magic. If Obi goes to the villa, Soludo's chances evaporate. Soludo owes Obi nothing. But he owes himself and the state political maturity. To worship Tinubu with dignity: to bow but not roll on the floor.

It was good to assemble all the traditional rulers in Anambra to bestow a title on the president. It's courteous. But thanking the president for giving many Anambra citizens prominent federal appointments was going too far. That's called shameless suffering and smiling. Tinubu's Yorubacentricism is astonishing. Nobody expects Soludo to develop balls overnight and champion oppositional politics. In addition, Anambra needs to secure funds to check rampaging erosion. Anambra needs railway lines. Anambra needs to tap its gas resources. But Soludo could have conducted his good charm offensive without becoming a fact-bending Otimkpu. Anambra has only a junior minister. Ogun has more senior ministers than the entire Igbo land. Why does Soludo say things that would aggravate the sensibilities of his people?

Wisdom for Living

Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

A scar is a mark on the body that signifies a healed wound. However, many people still feel hurt at the sight of their scars, even years after the injury. Rather than accepting it as a symbol of healing, they focus on the wound that once was. In reality, scars represent healing, not the pain that caused them.

Scars should be reminders of resilience, perseverance, endurance, and the strength to overcome adversity. They signify the ability to rise after a fall, to start afresh, and to find light after darkness. Celebrate the process of healing, not the hurt or the blame. Life is a battlefield, and only champions emerge victorious.

"The Strength in Our Scars" is a powerful collection of reflections, poetry, and

insights written by Bianca Sparacino. The book explores themes of healing, resilience, and personal growth. Through her evocative writing, Sparacino addresses the emotional struggles of pain, the journey toward self-acceptance, and the importance of embracing one's scars—both physical and emotional.

Here are key lessons from the book:

1. **Embracing Vulnerability:** Sparacino emphasizes that vulnerability is a strength, not a weakness. She encourages readers to open up about their experiences and feelings, understanding that vulnerability fosters connection and authenticity. Embracing our scars leads to deeper self-acceptance and more meaningful relationships.

2. **The Journey of Healing:**

Healing is rarely a linear process. Sparacino highlights that setbacks are a natural part of the recovery journey, encouraging patience and self-compassion. Healing may come with ups and downs, but each step is essential to growth.

3. **Finding Strength in Struggles:** Strength often arises from adversity. Sparacino shares personal stories to show how struggles lead to growth and resilience. By facing and confronting pain, individuals can uncover their inner strength and valuable life lessons.

Scars should be reminders of resilience, perseverance, endurance, and the strength to overcome adversity.

4. **The Power of Self-Compassion:** Practicing self-compassion is crucial in the healing process. Sparacino encourages readers to treat themselves with kindness and understanding, particularly during difficult times. Self-compassion helps overcome self-criticism and nurtures a healthier relationship with oneself.

5. **The Importance of Self-Reflection:** Self-reflection is key to healing. Taking time to understand your emotions and behaviours can provide clarity and insight. Through

introspection, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of themselves, making empowered choices for the future.

6. **Reclaiming Identity:** After experiencing trauma or hardship, reclaiming your identity is essential. Sparacino reminds readers that scars, whether physical or emotional, do not define a person's worth, instead, they symbolize survival and growth, serving as reminders of strength.

7. **The Role of Community:** The book emphasises the importance of community in healing. Reaching out for support and connecting with others can provide comfort and validation. Having a network of people who understand your struggles helps you feel less isolated.

8. **Letting Go of the Past:** To heal and grow, Sparacino encourages readers to release past hurts and grievances. Forgiveness—of both yourself and others—is necessary for moving forward. Letting go of negative experiences clears the way for healing.

9. **Celebrating Progress:** Every step of healing, no matter how small, deserves to be celebrated. Acknowledging progress fosters motivation and encourages a positive mindset. Sparacino reminds readers to recognize the strength it takes to face challenges and to honour their journey.

10. **Embracing Imperfection:** Imperfection is a natural part of life. Sparacino encourages readers to accept their flaws and scars as part of their unique journey. Embracing imperfections helps cultivate self-love and appreciation for one's personal growth.

"The Strength in Our Scars" by Bianca Sparacino offers a heartfelt exploration of healing, resilience, and self-acceptance. The book inspires readers to see their scars as symbols of strength and encourages them to navigate their healing journey with compassion and courage. It serves as a powerful reminder that healing is possible, and every person's story is valuable and worth celebrating.



Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike
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House of Reps Committee Summons NRC, Railway Property Bosses Over Alleged Assets Mismanagement

The House of Representatives Committee on Land Transport, has summoned the Managing Director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), Kayode Opeifa, and the Managing Director of the Railway Property Management Company Limited, Timothy Zalanga, over the management of NRC operations and its nationwide assets.

The decision followed a resolution reached during a committee meeting, where lawmakers raised concerns about alleged mismanagement and questionable sales of NRC properties. Committee members also decried reports that pensioners and staff were being forcefully evicted from NRC staff quarters, with the properties sold off without due process.

Chairperson of the committee, Hon. Blessing Onuh, clarified that the invitation is not intended to witch-hunt

the officials but to ensure accountability and transparency in the operations of the NRC and its subsidiaries.

Quoting Sections 88, 89, 128, and 129 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), Onuh emphasised the oversight responsibility of the legislature, stating that the committee will not sit back and allow misconduct or mismanagement within key transport agencies.

The committee has directed the management of both the NRC and the Railway Property Management Company to submit comprehensive documents detailing the 2022, 2023, and 2024 budget performances, the current status of NRC's assets, and all Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements. These documents are to be submitted to the committee secretariat on May 20, 2025.



■ Member Representing AMAC/bwari Federal Consistency Hon. Joshua Chinedu Obika (4th Right) During A Visit Meeting With His Consistency In Abuja Recently

No Room For Military Rule In Nigeria – Gen. Gowon

A former Head of State, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, has said that in spite of the imperfections in democracy, the era of military rule must remain behind Nigeria.

Gowon made the above statement in Abuja, recently at the unveiling of a book titled "Military Factor in Nigerian History, 1960-2018", by the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN), as part of activities to mark the association's 70th anniversary.

"The era of military governance is and must remain behind us. Democracy, despite its imperfections, provides the best framework for national development and popular participation.

"The armed forces must fully embrace their constitutional role as defenders of the nation's territorial integrity, not as administrators or political actors," he said.

However, he said that the military factor in Nigerian history is neither a simple story of heroism nor villainy.

Gowon, therefore, explained it as a complex narrative of an institution that had been deeply intertwined with the country's national journey.

"With the wisdom that comes from age and reflection, I believe the answer lies somewhere in between. On one hand, the military preserved national unity during the civil war.

"We built infrastructure, created states to bring the government closer to the people, and at times restored order when civilian structures faltered.

"Our armed forces have distinguished themselves in peace-keeping operations across Africa and beyond.

"On the other hand, I must acknowledge that military rule stifled democratic development, sometimes violated civil liberties, and created structures that enabled corruption.

"The interruption of our democratic journey in 1966, 1983, and the annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections, represented dark chapters in our history that we must confront honestly.

"However, by acknowledging these mistakes, we pave the way for a brighter, more democratic future," Gowon said.

Reflecting on the civil war in Nigeria, Gowon described it as the most painful episode in Nigeria history, "but one ultimately reaffirmed our commitment to national unity."

On present insecurity in the country, Gowon said that addressing it demanded a military that is technologically sophisticated and intelligence-driven.

He also advised the armed forces to become more integrated with civilian institutions and society.

The former head of state said the military should not stand apart from the people but should be seen as an essential component of the national fabric, working in tandem with civilian authorities.

According to him, the Nigerian military must continue to play a vital role in regional security while strengthening the nation's defence capabilities.

Former Chief of Defence Staff, retired Gen. Lucky Irabor (Rtd), in his keynote address, also said that the military had made immense contributions to the peace and development of Nigeria.

Irabor said that in terms of development, the military had been engaging in the construction of roads, bridges, dams, and several other tasks that have boosted economic development in the country.

"Diplomatically, the military has been active. Their participation in various peace and peace enforcement efforts across Africa and the rest of the world have boosted the image of the country globally.

"On the other hand, the military regimes have had both positive and negative impacts on our national development journey.

"The political, economic, and social development of the country have been shaped by military regimes in multiple ways.

"The outcomes of the infrastructural developments and back-to-back military regimes are eloquent testimonies," he said.

He also listed some of the achievements and interventions of military regimes to the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, development of shipping lines, among others.

Irabor, however, said that in spite of the positive contributions, the issues of human rights and perceived suppression of public freedoms during military regimes had come under very serious scrutiny.

He, however, recommended the forum for unveiling the book, as very important to appreciate the past and set goals and visions for the future.

Irabor expressed optimism that the book will inspire dialogues, debates, and deeper inquiry into the

forces that shaped, going to further shape the development of the country.

The book reviewer, Prof. Patrick Ukase, described the 598 pages book as a well researched book that analysed the various military regimes in the country.

Ukase said that the book under review was a comprehensive examination of Nigeria's military's multi-faceted role in shaping the nation's political, social, and economic landscapes.

He said that the book structured into six thematic areas, encompassing 27 chapters, offered a nuanced analysis of the military's influence on Nigeria's post-colonial development trajectory.

"It is a vital resource and highly recommended for the Nigerian military, other security forces, scholars, students, policymakers, and security professionals.

"It is a well-researched, comprehensive work that offers a valuable perspective on the history, structure, contributions, and policies of the Nigerian military," Ukase said.

I The Acting President of the Society, Prof. Zara Kwaghe, said the idea of the book was conceived at the 2024 yearly conference of the association, in recognition of the military's major role in the unity and development of Nigeria.

Kwaghe said that Nigeria military had been strategic in keeping the country together, urging Nigerians to keep supporting them.

She urged the military to continue to do what they have been doing to help the nation to stay together and to move forward in peace.



Kayode Opeifa

Family Matter

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

The home is the most important institution in the world. It is the first department in which a child learns to become a proper citizen - a man or woman of dignity and value. By home, I mean primarily the members of the family or more specifically, the father and mother. Family vacation packages

Among the institutions for child training, the home has the largest share of the responsibilities. If the home fails, the church, society and the school will be greatly affected. Many atrocities all over the world today, are a direct result of improper home training.

Drug addicts, armed robbers and fraudsters all have a family, because nobody dropped from the sky. Every living being today came from a family. If the respective families that make up a society fail to carry out their responsibilities, then the children which are products of the family will become dregs of the society. "Charity begins at home," they say. Family vacation

It is also important to understand that child raising in the home should be allowed to follow a natural process. While the formal method of training is good, you must use every opportunity that presents itself in the home to communicate morals across to the child. These include: mealtimes, when you are in the kitchen together, in the sitting room or even before bedtime. All these times that you may count as informal can be used to train a child.

It is in this atmosphere of love that the Holy Spirit is able to move freely, and the destiny of the child is easily realised. Thus, it is time to work on the atmosphere of your home and make it conducive for the Holy Spirit to move. God cannot dwell in a place where there is strife, fighting, envy and bitterness. Where such things are found, there will be room for all kinds of evil. The Bible says: For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work (James 3:16).

The question you must answer is, "What kind of home do I have?" Is it a place

of healing or centre of gossip, where you criticise everybody in your church or office? I discovered something amazing in Jeremiah 22:29, which says: O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Do you know that even the ground of your home absorbs what you say? So, when you abuse people, backbite or gossip, the ground is absorbing the words of your mouth! In other words, the words of your mouth are seeds being sown into your ground. Unfortunately, you are the

one doing the sowing, but it is not only you who reaps it; your children also do. May you be a sower of good seeds!

Most importantly, the place of a woman in raising a child can never be over-emphasised. This is because, to a large extent, it is the woman who determines the atmosphere of the home. Do you know that just by entering a home, you can feel the atmosphere in it? If there is bitterness, envy, strife, etc, you can sense it. However, where there is peace, love and joy, it is easy to tell also.



We are told that Napoleon Bonaparte, was asked what the greatest need of France was. He said, "Good mothers!" If I am asked what the greatest need of this generation is, I will also say the same. This is our greatest need because irrespective of your efforts on the adults of today, if you don't raise responsible children, tomorrow might be bleak! So, child raising is an important aspect of the society.

However, until you are born again, you don't have what it takes to make child's training conducive. To be born again, you have to confess your sins and accept Jesus as your personal Saviour and Lord. If you are ready for this new birth experience, please say this prayer in faith: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins and cleanse me with Your Blood. I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Make me a child of God today. Thank You for delivering me from sin and satan to serve the living God and thank You for accepting

me into Your Kingdom.

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

With this, you are guaranteed all-round rest and peace in Jesus' Name! Call or write to share your testimonies with me through contact@faithoyedepo.org.

For more insight, these books authored by me are available at the Dominion Bookstores in all Living Faith Churches and other leading Christian bookstores: Raising Godly Children, Understanding Motherhood, Building A Successful Family and Success in Marriage (Co-Author). Family vacation packages

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.

Opinion

The Construction Of The Aba-Port Harcourt Road And Its Significance

By Okechukwu Ubani

As someone who grew up in Aba, I would like to express my deep appreciation for our proactive governor, Dr. Alex Otti, for the construction of the Aba-Port Harcourt road. The previous administration, despite numerous promises, failed to reconstruct this vital road. However, Dr. Alex Otti has achieved this milestone within just two years, fulfilling a long-standing prayer of nearly every Aba resident.

This crucial infrastructure project is not only a testament to his commitment to improving the state's transportation network but also provides a significant boost to the socio-economic development of Aba. The road serves as an essential route for the transportation of raw materials, finished goods, and personnel to and from

Port Harcourt, Nigeria's oil and gas industry hub. This connectivity contributes to the overall growth of the sector.

The completion of this road has greatly enhanced connectivity between Aba and Port Harcourt, facilitating smoother travel for commuters and improving the movement of goods and services. Such development is instrumental in promoting trade, reducing travel time, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents of Abia State, particularly for those traveling to and from Port Harcourt. Aba is known for its bustling markets and industries, while Port Harcourt is a key oil-producing and industrial centre. The road connection promotes easier movement of goods and services between the two cities, bolstering trade and commerce.

Local businesses in

Aba are already witnessing the direct positive impacts of this project on the economy as a whole. Improved infrastructure leads to increased investment opportunities,



New Constructed Part-harcourt Road, Aba

job creation, and a higher standard of living for the people of Aba.

The construction of the Aba-Port Harcourt road holds significant implications for economic development and infrastructure improvement. It plays a

critical role in facilitating trade and commerce between Aba and Port Harcourt, two major commercial hubs in Nigeria. Enhanced road infrastructure reduces

travel time, lowers transportation costs, and improves the movement of goods and services. Residents of Rivers State, who previously traveled to Aba for goods due to the poor state of the road, can now comfortably access local markets.

Better roads also attract investors by providing improved access to markets, suppliers, and customers. The construction of the Aba-Port Harcourt road has the potential to increase both local and foreign investments in the region.

Furthermore, this road serves as a vital artery connecting various communities and regions. Enhanced connectivity fosters better social interactions and improves access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Local businesses can more easily transport their products to larger markets, expanding their customer base and encouraging economic growth in rural areas.

The improved road conditions can also enhance public transportation services, making it easier for residents to commute for work and education.

In conclusion, the construction of the Aba-Port Harcourt road is instrumental in enhancing economic activities, improving the quality of life for the local population, and fostering overall regional development. It lays a foundational element for future growth and connectivity within the region and the broader Nigerian economy. This project is crucial not only for the Southeastern region but also for Nigeria's national development. It will enhance economic activities, transportation, regional integration, and social infrastructure while providing long-term benefits such as job creation and improved national connectivity. It is a key initiative that aligns with the broader vision of enhancing Nigeria's road network for sustained economic growth and regional progress.

News



■ Gov Alex Otti

Abia State Will Witness Continued

By Ngozi Ndubueze

The Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, has reiterated his administration's commitment to the ongoing transformation and development of the state.

Speaking through the Secretary to the State Government, Professor Kenneth Kalu, Governor Otti made this assurance during the 15th Diocesan Synod of the Methodist Church Nigeria, held at All Saints Methodist Church, Umuabali, Ezeleke Circuit, Diocese of Umuahia West. The synod, themed, "He Will Rise Again".

Governor Otti emphasised the significance

Transformation – Gov Otti

of the synod's theme, drawing inspiration from the Biblical story of Lazarus' resurrection. He likened it to the revival taking place in Abia State, where according to him, struggling systems are being revived through focused leadership and governance.

He highlighted several achievements of his administration, including the prompt payment of workers' salaries and the execution of significant road construction projects across all three senatorial zones of the state. These efforts, he said, are tangible signs of the dividends of democracy being delivered to the

people.

The Governor also praised the Methodist Church for its longstanding role in fostering spiritual growth and moral development in the state. He urged the church to continue its prayers for the government and people of Abia.

In his address, the Bishop of the Diocese, Rt. Rev. Dennis Okey, described the synod's theme as timely, especially given the current national uncertainties. He expressed confidence that, through continued prayers and the transformative leadership of Governor Otti, both Abia and Nigeria would

experience revival and progress.

Delivering the keynote lecture, the Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Professor Maduebibisi Iwe, encouraged Nigerians to sustain hope and work together for national renewal.

He emphasised the importance of unity, perseverance, and faith as essential tools for overcoming the country's challenges.

The 15th Diocesan Synod brought together clergy, laity, and distinguished guests, all of whom reaffirmed their commitment to spiritual and societal development.

Oyibo Thompson Celebrates 80th Birthday, Shares Emotional Reflections On Life

By Okereke Kate

It was a moment of celebration and thanksgiving as the family of Emesiobi Barth Oyibo Thompson, hosted guests from far and near to a memorable event in honour of Oyibo Thompson's 80th birthday.

The milestone celebration, held at his country home in Umuajata Olokoro, in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State, brought together relatives, friends, and well-wishers from across the country and beyond.

They gathered to pay tributes to a man widely regarded as a pillar of wisdom, humility, and integrity. The event began with a thanksgiving service, where heartfelt prayers and songs of praise echoed in gratitude for Oyibo Thompson's life and enduring legacy.

Guests were later entertained with a vibrant reception featuring traditional music, lively performances, and a sumptuous feast.

Emotional tributes flowed freely as family members and long-time friends shared touching stories and fond memories, reflecting on the celebrator's journey through life, from his early years and professional achievements to his dedication to family and community.

In their goodwill messages, a former senator who represented Abia Central Senatorial District, Senator Chris Adighije, and the member representing Ikwoano/Umuahia Federal Constituency, Hon. Obi Aguocha, showered praises on Oyibo Thompson, describing him as a man of vision.

They acknowledged that, although he was not born with a silver spoon, Thompson remained focused on his goals, overcame numerous challenges, and rose to become the highly respected figure being celebrated.

Both lawmakers described him as a God-fearing man, kind-hearted, and a philanthropist par excellence, who has touched many lives through his acts of generosity. They wished him continued grace, good health, and fulfillment in his life's journey.

In his response, the octogenarian expressed deep gratitude to God, his family, and all who honoured him with their presence.

"I am overwhelmed with joy and thankful for the grace to witness this day," he said, his voice filled with emotion.

Oyibo also expressed deep appreciation for the outpouring of love shown to him and his family, saying, "Regardless of our big history, I am grateful for the affection shown to me and my family. People came from far and wide to celebrate with me. This shows Nigerians love to appreciate each other."

He reaffirmed his support for the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which he described as "the greatest army we need." He commended advocates of justice and those who give voice to the weak and voiceless in society.

Reflecting on the broader meaning of the celebration, Oyibo Thompson remarked, "Today, we celebrate a symbol of triumph and hope. What I want us to take away from here is the enormous loss inflicted on humanity every day. A race is impoverished whenever it fails to give each child the opportunity to be who the Almighty God has made them. That is where we fail woefully as a community, state, and nation."

He recounted his own early struggles, noting how he nearly lost the opportunity for an education in 1962 when no one could raise 60 pounds for his school fees.

"Every child who wants to go somewhere should be allowed to lead us. That was the case with me. When we had no money, the words from my mother, 'I will support you,' were what brought me here today. Let's encourage every child; it might not be about money, but words of encouragement can go a long way."

Thompson also offered a philosophical reflection on life and mortality, stating, "When we celebrate life, we should also celebrate death because life and death are like Siamese twins. As we embrace each other in celebration, we should also bid each other farewell," he remarked.

He, however, expressed appreciation to the guests for coming to celebrate with him.

In an interview, Dr. Chinonso Umeh, who read the biography of Oyibo Thompson at the event, described his uncle as an enigma and a man with an indomitable spirit.

He credited Chief Thompson for playing a pivotal role in his personal and professional journey, stating that his success today is largely due to the guidance, mentorship, and unwavering support he received from him.

Umeh expressed deep gratitude, acknowledging that every good thing he enjoys today is a result of Chief Thompson's influence and encouragement.

He further celebrated the life and legacy of his uncle, describing him as a beacon of hope, resilience, and unwavering conviction, praying that God continues to water him, just as he has watered others to success.

The high point of the event was the cutting of the 80th birthday cake and the unveiling of two books: Centuries of Igbo Civilization: Origin, Cosmology & Epistemology of The Igbo People, written by the celebrator, and The Candle and The Wind: The Autobiography of Obi Barth Oyibo Thompson.

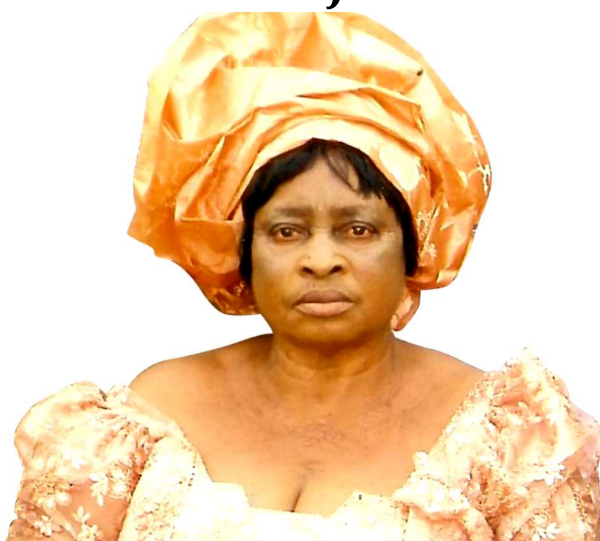
Lolo Happiness Lazarus, 64, Laid To Rest At Ndi-Oji Abam

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The community of Ndi Oji Abam in Arochuku Local Government Area, Abia State, gathered on April 29, 2025, to bid a heartfelt farewell to Lolo Patience Happiness Ekenta Lazarus, who passed away on October 22, 2023, at the age of 64.

A devoted wife, mother, and faithful sentinel of God, Lolo Happiness Lazarus was laid to rest in her husband's hometown following a solemn funeral service conducted by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The service drew a large congregation of dignitaries, family members, friends, clergy, and community members, all united in honoring a woman widely admired for her compassion and selflessness.

In his sermon, Pastor Kennedy C. Ihuoma, President of the Aba North Central Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, described Lolo Lazarus as a woman of Woman of Virtue and Faith



■ Lolo Patience Happiness Ekenta Lazarus

with deep moral conviction and spiritual dedication.

"She was a modern-day Dorcas," Pastor Ihuoma said, "a true sentinel of God whose unwavering support for widows, the needy, and the less privileged uplifted many lives. Her devotion to the Ndi Oji Abam branch of the church was foundational to its growth and stability."

Her husband, Chief Lazarus Arunsi, delivered a

deeply moving tribute, recalling her steadfast faith, humility, and boundless generosity. He spoke of her role as the heart of their family, emphasizing the indelible legacy she leaves behind.

Their first son, Prince Blessing Lazarus, echoed these sentiments, describing his mother as "a voice to the voiceless" and vowing to uphold her values of peace,

generosity, and service.

Also speaking at the funeral, Hon. Orji, a prominent community leader, highlighted Lolo Happiness Lazarus's notable contributions to healthcare. She was known to treat underprivileged patients free of charge and often shared the produce from her farm with neighbors, needy and the less privileged.

"Her life was a testament to selflessness and love in action," Hon. Orji noted.

Lolo Patience Happiness Ekenta Lazarus is remembered as a pillar of her community, a nurturing mother, and a woman of unwavering faith. Her legacy of kindness, service, and devotion to God lives on in the hearts of those she touched.

She is survived by her husband, children, extended family, and a grateful community that mourns her passing but celebrates a life well lived.

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Chioma Otti of Abia State (left) presents Awards to the top graduating students during the graduation ceremony of 510 Abia youths who participated in the TechRise Project, sponsored by the Abia State Government.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (left), receives a portrait from one of the graduating students during the graduation ceremony.



Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (left), presents an award to one of the best female graduating students during the graduation ceremony.



The Chairman of ALGON and Mayor of Isiukwuato LGA of Abia State, Mr. Chinedu Ekeke (Right), and the CEO of LEARNFactory, Engr. Chibueze Ukaegbu (Center), during the graduation ceremony in Umuahia.



Happy graduating students during their graduation ceremony.



The Deputy Chairman of the Abia State Council of Traditional Rulers, HRH Eze.



A cross-section of the Local Government Mayors during the graduation ceremony.



The parents of the CEO of LEARNFactory, Dr. Chinedu Ukaegbu, during the graduation ceremony.

Photos Speak



Abia House of Assembly Member, Hon. Chinaza Anthony (right), exchanges pleasantries with the LGA Mayors present during the graduation ceremony.



GM of Abia Newspapers, Hon. Jones Ike Nnanna (Right), and Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu (Left), during his visit to the Abia Newspapers & Publishing Corporation Headquarters in Umuahia.



Dr. Alex Otti And His Beloved Wife, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, During The Special Night Of Tribute In Honor Of The Late Commissioner For Labour And Productivity, Held At The Jaac Building Auditorium.



Abia SSG Prof. Kenneth Kalu (right) addressing the staff of Abia Newspapers during his visit to the corporation.



A Crowd Of Participants During The Special Night Of Tribute In Honor Of The Late Commissioner For Labour And Productivity, Comrade Sunny Okebugwe Nwanganga Onwuma, Held At The Jaac Building Auditorium.



HOD of Administration, Mr. Dandy Nwachukwu, delivering a vote of thanks to the SSG and his team during their visit to the corporation.



The Deputy Dean CAERSE, MOUAU, Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamuefule (Middle) with Rural Women, during an Outreach in Umudike Abia State recently.



Cross-section of ANPC Management Staff During The Meeting With SSG Prof. Kenneth Kalu And His Team.



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News

Abia State Public Procurement Bureau Reels Out Remarkable Progress Under Otti's Administration

By Okereke Kate

The Senior Special Assistant to the Abia State Governor on Due Process, Dr. Oluebube Chukwu, has shared exciting updates on the significant strides being made in the state's procurement and due process systems, stating that they are working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the vision for the New Abia is realized.

In an exclusive interview, Dr. Chukwu revealed that the Public Procurement Bureau is undergoing transformative changes aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in government transactions.

According to him, the Bureau is currently registering vendors and tractors, a move designed to streamline procurement



■ Gov. Alex Otti

activities and open the door for more private sector participation in government business.

He, however, highlighted that the administration is introducing vital reforms, including the development of a State Procurement

Index and a State Procurement Journal to institutionalize best practices.

One of the most impactful initiatives is the planned launch of an e-procurement portal, which he stated would digitize procurement processes

and reduce bureaucracy.

"We have created 11 departments and brought on board trained professionals who are committed to their duties daily", Dr. Chukwu disclosed.

He also noted that the Bureau is actively issuing certificates of no objection and other procurement documentation that previously did not exist.

"All of these reforms are in line with Governor Alex Otti's vision to not only transform the physical infrastructure of the state but also, to rebuild systems and processes for good governance", he emphasised.

Dr. Chukwu reaffirmed the Bureau's commitment to supporting the governor's agenda, adding that the office is working diligently behind the scenes to ensure his vision for a new Abia is fully realized.

Food Security: Varsity Don, Ahamefule Champions Organic Farming

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The Deputy Dean, College of Agricultural Economics, Rural Sociology and Extension, (CAERSE), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU), Abia State, Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamefule, has advocated for sustainable agriculture and environmental resilience, highlighting organic farming as a vital tool in the fight against food insecurity and climate change in Nigeria and beyond.

The Agricultural expert who disclosed this during a community service outreach at Umudike, Ikwuano Local Government Area (LGA), Abia State recently, decried the disruption of microbial ecosystems, ammonia emissions among other biodiversity loss due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers.

She emphasized that conventional farming practices have contributed significantly to environmental degradation, soil depletion, and reduced food quality, asserting that a shift toward organic agriculture could reverse these trends while ensuring long-term food security.

In her words: "Organic farming is not just an agricultural method—it is a holistic system that respects natural cycles, reduces reliance on harmful chemicals, and promotes biodiversity."

"By investing in organic practices, we are addressing two of the greatest challenges of our time: feeding our growing population and protecting our environment."

Dr. Ahamefule noted that organic farming minimizes carbon emissions through reduced use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, while improving soil health and water retention—key factors in climate adaptation.

The scholar who noted that the consumption of organic farm produce has no health risk, further identified other effects of indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers to include; water contamination, nutrients imbalance, plant toxicity, reduced crop resilience, cancer risk, methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome), endocrine disruption among others.

Dr. Ahamefule who further urged the rural women to mitigate these negative effects by adopting sustainable agricultural practices, also called on policymakers, development agencies, and private sector players to support training, certification, and market access for organic farmers.

She said: "Our future depends on how we treat the soil beneath our feet and the food we put on our tables. It's time for a radical but achievable transformation - starting with organic farming."

In a vote of thanks, Mrs. Nwadinobi Adanma, on behalf of Umudike and Umudike Ukwu communities, thanked Dr. Ahamefule for sharing her research findings with them.

They promised to make utmost use of the resources gained in the outreach, while praying God to bless her abundantly.

The event featured an interactive session and distribution of free farm inputs and food palliatives to rural women.



Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamefule

Abia Govt. Will Not Abandon You, Gov. Otti Assures Onwuma's Family

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has assured the family of the late Commissioner for Labour and Productivity, Sunny Onwuma, that the State Government will not abandon them.

The governor who gave the assurance during the funeral service for the burial of the commissioner, held at Ihie-Obeaku Primary School, Ugwuagbo LGA, reaffirmed the state's commitment to standing by them.

He pledged continued support to the bereaved family, describing the late Onwuma as "a colleague, a brother, a friend, and a strong voice in the cabinet".

"We thank God that he (Onwuma) left a lot of legacies. And the challenge now is for the family, the children, to carry on from where he stopped. I want to pray that God will help them."

"I also would like to assure them that the Abia State Government will

not turn its back on them" Gov. Otti stated.

Otti expressed deep sorrow over Onwuma's untimely death on March 3, 2025, at the age of 62.

"When this journey started, I feared a day like this. We fought for him to live, but we lost that fight. I believe God had a different purpose," the Governor said.

He acknowledged that Onwuma's death was a heavy blow to the administration and the people of Abia, but maintained that he lived a life worthy of emulation.

"It's not so much about how long one lives, but how well and we are all gathered here today because he lived his life well and left legacies", the Governor stated.

While urging the family to be strong and uphold the legacies of their patriarch, Gov Otti prayed for peace and protection over the family and the state.

He noted that,

"affliction shall not rise a second time," and expressed hope that "on the resurrection morning, we shall meet again, to part no more".

Also speaking, the State Chairman of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Mr. Ogbonnaya Okoro, described the deceased as a committed unionist and thanked the Governor for showing interest in their fallen colleague.

In his remarks, the First Vice President of the Old Boys Association of Government College, Umuahia, Mr. Onyii Wamah, described Onwuma as a dedicated member and appreciated the governor's support for the family, urging him to sustain it.

In his sermon, the Bishop of Aba Diocese, Anglican Communion, Dr. Christian Ugwuzor, emphasised the need for righteous living in preparation for the day of judgment.

He described

Onwuma as a good man who supported the church and helped those in need.

Delivering a funeral oration, the first son of the deceased, Mr. Gooddestiny Onwuma, eulogized his father as a gentleman, a man of integrity, committed unionist, and devout Christian.

He thanked the state government and all sympathizers for standing by the family during their period of mourning.

The wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, member representing Ugwuagbo, Osisioma and Obingwa Federal Constituency, Hon. Munachim Alozie, members of the Abia State House of Assembly, members of the State Executive Council, Mayors, clergymen, traditional rulers among many dignitaries were present at the funeral.

News

Abia TechRise Equips Graduates For Digital

By Favour Okorie

The Abia State Government, in collaboration with the 17 Local Government Mayors and LEARNFactory Nigeria, has celebrated the graduation of 510 youths trained under the Abia TechRise Initiative, equipping them with essential digital skills to thrive in the 21st-Century economy.

The ceremony, held recently at the new JAAC Building, Secretariat, Umuahia, saw the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Prince Uzor Nwachukwu, describing the TechRise programme as a transformative platform that prepares Abia youths with practical digital skills crucial for today's technology-driven world.

He emphasised that, in just three months of intensive training across three centres, Umuahia, Aba, and Ohafia, the programme had unlocked the potential of 510 youths. The initiative also fostered teamwork through sports, intellectual competitions, and cultural displays, culminating in the formal graduation event.

Nwachukwu highlighted that the programme reflects the government's commitment to technical education, youth empowerment, and community building. He expressed gratitude to Governor Alex Otti for his unwavering support in making the initiative a reality.

In his keynote address, Governor Otti reaffirmed his administration's commitment to sustaining the TechRise programme. He directed the Chief Strategic Officer to establish a digital platform for ongoing engagement, mentorship, and global networking opportunities for the trainees.

Governor Otti commended Hon. Nwachukwu and other stakeholders for their roles in the programme's success and announced the commencement of the second batch of TechRise training. The next phase will train 850 youths, selecting 50 candidates from each of the state's 17 local government

areas.

In a landmark gesture, the governor awarded automatic employment to the 19 best-performing graduates of the TechRise programme. He directed the Head of Service, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Science and Technology and the Chief Information Officer, to ensure their immediate placement in the Abia State civil service.

Also speaking at the event, the CEO of LEARNFactory Nigeria, Chibueze Ukaegbu, described the organization as the first full-stack software development training and technology hub in South-East Nigeria, located in Aba.

He explained that the training covered seven key digital courses designed to meet the demands of the modern digital age.

Ukaegbu also referenced the launch of the Dr. Alex Chioma Otti Tech Fellowship in February 2023, which forms part of LEARNFactory's broader Tech Discipleship initiative. The fellowship aims to prepare Abia youths to become industry-ready professionals through rigorous instructor-led training and internship placements.

From May 2023 to June 2025, the initiative will train three cohorts, totaling 155 individuals, including the current Head of IT at the Ministry of Digital Economy and SME, Abia State.

In his vote of thanks, the Chairman of ALGON and Mayor of Isuikwuato Local Government Area, Mr. Chinedu Ekeke, expressed deep appreciation to Governor Otti, describing him as "a round peg in a round hole." He also commended the partners and fellow mayors for their presence and support.

Ekeke encouraged the graduates to make the most of their training by becoming leaders and change-makers in their communities.



■ Governor Alex Chioma Otti of Abia State (left) presents Awards to the top graduating students during the graduation ceremony of 510 Abia youths who participated in the TechRise Project, sponsored by the Abia State Government.

Abia Govt. Bids For 60% Stake In EEDC, To Boost Power Supply

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has submitted a bid to acquire a 60 per cent stake in the Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC) assets within the state.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, made this disclosure while briefing journalists on the outcome of the previous Executive Council (Exco) meeting, presided over by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu further revealed that negotiations for the acquisition of 60 per cent of EEDC's assets have reached an advanced stage. He also shared that the state is preparing to re-fence eight local government areas in Abia Central and Abia North Senatorial zones to

facilitate infrastructure and grid upgrades.

"In a major move to enhance the power initiatives of this administration, the Abia State Government has submitted a bid for the acquisition of 60 per cent of the electricity assets of EEDC in Abia State".

"The initial offer was made not long ago, and negotiations for the acquisition have now reached an advanced stage. Additionally, the process of re-fencing the eight LGAs in Abia Central and Abia North is already underway," he stated.

The Commissioner also announced that the state government would launch its participation in the EU-sponsored Solar for Health power project next week,

aimed at providing solar electricity to at least nine healthcare facilities across the state.

"This project is financed through a 70-30 funding split, with the EU contributing 70% and Abia State providing 30 per cent of the counterpart funding".

"Once launched, the project will bring solar power to a minimum of nine health facilities across the state," he further added.

He emphasised that these energy interventions are part of the administration's vision to deliver uninterrupted power to citizens.

Contributing, the Commissioner for Power and Public Utilities, Mr. Ikechukwu Monday, said

the proposed acquisition of EEDC assets is driven by the state's underperformance in power supply, particularly in Abia Central and Abia North, due to lack of investments.

"We've made progress with Aba Ring-Fenced, but from Umuahia to Abia North, we've been struggling", Monday stated.

He further disclosed that due diligence on EEDC assets had been completed, and the initial offer had already been submitted. The state government is now awaiting a response from EEDC's management.

"We are waiting for the management of EEDC to respond. Whether they accept or decline, we will return to the negotiation table until we reach a fair value", he added.

Monday also provided technical insight into the ongoing solar initiatives, stressing the importance of energy storage systems in the Solar for Health project.

"The design of the project will account for weather-related power fluctuations. For instance, if there's a fault or the solar panels aren't producing enough power during the rainy season, there will be a battery and energy storage system to handle that", he explained.

He also revealed that over 50 trained personnel from the Ministries of Power and Health have been selected to operate and maintain the solar systems.

Additionally, energy audits are currently being conducted in the selected health facilities to determine the best way to deploy the technology.

Experts Decry Rising Boat Hijacking In Rivers State

From Jane Maduadugwo, PH

The recent hijacking of a passenger boat carrying 12 people from Port Harcourt to Bilie has raised fresh concerns about the safety of Rivers State's waterways.

Security analyst, Stanley Nsofor, described the increasing frequency of boat hijackings as "beyond alarming," warning that residents no longer feel safe using water transport.

He urged the government to take immediate action to restore public confidence, suggesting the declaration of a state of emergency on the waterways.

Nsofor criticized the Marine Police for their failure to respond to the hijacking, citing reports that officers were unable to act because they lacked fuel.

"What a country," he exclaimed, calling for a complete overhaul of the security personnel stationed on the waterways.

He further urged the Sole

Administrator of Rivers State, a retired naval officer, to take the lead in collaborating with the Nigerian Navy to improve marine security.

"This is his area of expertise; he must act to protect the riverine communities," Nsofor stated.

Another analyst, Charles Nko-Tariah, echoed these concerns, emphasising that the frequent hijackings highlight the weakness of current security measures.

He questioned the whereabouts of patrol boats donated by previous administrations and stressed the need for a strategic, demographic-based security plan, noting that water accounts for 60 per cent of Rivers State's 11,500 square kilometers.

Nko-Tariah condemned the ease with which criminals operate on the waterways, describing them as a "free zone," for illegal activities. He called on the government to take immediate action to safeguard citizens across the coastal regions.

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Religion

The Supremacy of Faith

By Bishop David Oyedepo

From scriptures, we discover that we engage in faith to tap into divine virtues, which in turn enhance our value. The Bible says: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report (Hebrews 11:1-2). Also, our vision can never deliver beyond the level of faith we are operating in. Hence, the beauty and colour of every vision is a function of the quality of faith that is employed. Therefore, without faith, our vision has no substance because it is faith that defines the substance of our vision. Every act of God in our lives is only realisable via faith and as long as our faith is on fire, we remain on flight and also in command of things happening around us. Thus, it is to us according to our faith, not according to our vision (Matthew 9:29). So, if our faith is down, our life and destiny will be down.

What, Then, is the Supremacy of Faith?

1 Faith Engages the Word for Performance: It engages the Word of God in order to enforce the delivery of our destiny and desires. The Bible

records about Mary: ...Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her (Luke 1:38). Sometimes, it may not be convenient for us but if it is commanded, we must engage in it because that's the only way to where we are going and it is what determines the happenings in our lives. That is what makes faith a vital force that gets the job done. As long as our faith is in place, we remain in command over the issues of life.

2. Faith is A Spiritual Force: Faith is neither a psychological nor philosophical force; it is a spiritual force. It is not an intellectual issue either; it is a spiritual virtue that operates within the spirit of man not in his head. As it is written: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:10). Thus, whatever is working contrary to our inheritance in Christ, faith can stop it instantly. For instance, the woman with the issue of blood had her faith intact and her health was restored immediately (Mark 5:25-34).

3. Faith is a Spiritual Chemistry: It is the spiritual chemistry with which we quench the oppositions, clear obstacles and access our possessions. The Bible says: For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his

value.

Also Read: Accessing the Wonders of the Word through Revelation! by David Oyedepo


4. Faith is A Living Force: It is a living force, drawn from the living Word to produce living proofs. That woman drew from Jesus, the Living Word, and a living proof was

him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, faith is the only way to move God in our direction and the only way to stop the devil from molesting us (Ephesians 6:16).

5. Faith is Hard Work: Faith is no cheap talk; faith is hard work. It is written: For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief (Hebrews 4:10-11). It requires a form of labour. We don't wish for faith but work at faith. Faith does not answer to wishes; it answers to workings, that is, working with the Word of God. Whether it is conventional faith or supernatural faith, all forms of faith draw from our Word bank or reservoir. The things on our inside are what faith draws from; it has to be there before faith can draw. The Bible says: So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17; see also 2 Peter 1:5).

6. Faith is a Great Profession: Faith is no mere confession; it is a great profession. As it is written: Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised (Hebrews 10:23). Profession here connotes definite skills. Thus, it requires skills to maximise its benefits (Hebrews 5:12-14).

In summary, faith is an asset of inestimable value, an unstoppable force which taps into the omnipotence of God, quenches all the fiery darts of the devil, addresses all satanic assaults and commits the integrity of divinity. However, you cannot experience the supremacy of faith unless you are born again. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You Jesus for saving me! Now, I know I am born again! For further reading, please get my books: Unlimited Power of Faith, Understanding the Power of Faith, Exploits of Faith and Born to Win!

 **Faith is A Living Force: It is a living force, drawn from the living Word to produce living proofs. That woman drew from Jesus, the Living Word, and a living proof was produced.**

heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith (Mark 11:23). Every time faith is at work, a spiritual connection is established and that connection provokes the flow of virtue from God. That virtue flows to enhance our

produced. Faith is not just believing that God can do something; it is being moved to do something to prove that we believe. When we are moved to act on what God commands, He is committed to perform. So, faith is an act. For it is written: But without faith it is impossible to please

Features

Can An American Pope Speak To Nigerian Realities?

By Dakuku Peterside

When white smoke curled into the Roman sky and the world learned that the College of Cardinals had elected Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost, Pope Leo XIV—an American—it was met with mixed emotions across Africa. For many, particularly in Nigeria, it stirred a sense of cautious hope layered with curiosity.

However, it also raised questions about whether a pontiff shaped by the wealth, power, and contradictions of the United States could truly understand the depth of Nigeria's struggles and the weight of its aspirations. Could he effectively address the wounds of a country still healing from centuries of colonisation, exploitation, and spiritual marginalisation?

Yet as days passed and the new Pope began to speak—not in abstractions, but in words charged with moral clarity and historical awareness—Nigerian Catholics began to feel a surprising resonance. Nigeria with the second largest population of Catholic population in Africa is home to significant church influence. From rural churches in Ebonyi to urban

dioceses in Lagos and Kano, conversations shifted. What started as distant interest has evolved into an emerging conviction: that Pope Leo XIV might be the global moral voice Africa, and Nigeria in particular, has long yearned for—not because he is perfect, but because he appears willing to listen, learn, and lead with compassion.


The emergence of an American Pope now could mean a lot for global Christianity. It is coming at a time of great moral possibilities for a world in active realignment. Can democracy go awry while morality remains intact? Can an American political leader destabilize the world order while an American pope preaches unity and peace? Pope Leo XIV has a heavy moral burden. He can only discharge it by emulating Pope Francis, by drawing closer to the masses to emphasize our common humanity over and above the clashing swords of global big powers and political showmanship.

Sister Benedicta Okeke of Onitsha captured this shift in a post-mass conversation: "You can't imagine how healing it is to hear a pope

acknowledge colonialism not as a thing of the past but as a system whose aftershocks still affect our people. When he said, 'Africa's poverty is not a divine mystery but a human-made injustice,' I wept. For once, our pain was not dismissed as charity fodder. It was treated as a matter of justice." Recalling Leo XIV's inaugural homily in which he condemned "the old and new empires that bleed the global South," her words distilled decades of frustration among believers

anymore."

Nigeria is home to a significant proportion of the world's poorest populations. A pope who places the poor at the centre of his teachings reaffirms the Church's mission of compassion and solidarity. Pope Leo XIV's unwavering focus on social equity and economic justice will resonate deeply in Nigeria, where poverty, inequality, and limited access to healthcare and education persist. His leadership could redirect global Catholic aid priorities

 **A pope who places the poor at the centre of his teachings reaffirms the Church's mission of compassion and solidarity.**

who have watched multinational corporations extract resources. At the same time, local communities remain poor. In that moment, she said, "our wounds were not invisible

towards Africa, inspiring international donors and Catholic organisations to intensify their commitments to humanitarian efforts. His voice could also encourage local Catholic communities

to build stronger, self-sustaining social ministries that reflect the Church's preferential care for the marginalised, instilling a sense of inspiration and motivation in believers nationwide.

The new Pope's empathy for migrants struck another chord. His bold defence of migrant rights, a stance that has reverberated among Nigerian migrants worldwide, is a testament to his global perspective. In a modest flat in Milan, Chidozie Umeh shared a message with his local parish group: "The Pope's bold defence of migrants made me feel visible for the first time in many years. When he said 'no human being is illegal,' it wasn't just a slogan—it was a lifeline." For thousands of Nigerians enduring racism, statelessness, and institutional neglect in Europe and North Africa, the Pope's stance is more than symbolic.

It is a form of pastoral advocacy that they rarely receive from their home or host governments. For Nigerians navigating uncertain legal status in Europe or the Middle East, Leo XIV's stark defence of migrant rights is surely a

lifeline.

But the promise of Leo XIV's papacy is not confined to words. Its echoes are beginning to shape the ground realities of faith communities across Nigeria. In Enugu, some Catholic faithfuls have begun mobilising funds for mobile health clinics in underserved communities. The Pope's emphasis on structural justice—not just acts of mercy—has pushed them to reimagine healthcare as a right, not a luxury. Similar ripples are felt in Jos, where some youth leaders recently mobilise agricultural cooperatives: They're starting a community farm project because the Pope reminds them that the Eucharist must extend beyond the altar, and charity begins in the parish. For these Catholics, papal words are seeds that must germinate in local initiatives.

A broader theological implication of this papacy is its impact on representation and hope. For many Nigerians, the election of an American pope signals that the papacy is no longer a preserve of European tradition. If a man from the United States can lead the Church, then perhaps Africa's turn is not far, and this is no longer a distant dream. It is a possibility.

Creative Writers Hangout

The Hot Snow (17)

By Joseph Jacob

Chioma had not rested since 6 AM she resumed work. Customers were trooping in and out. Her good customer relations have brought more customers to the joy of her employers but to her own detriment.

It was Azuka, the proprietress first daughter that came to her rescue. As soon as she returned from school, she dropped her school bag and started attending to customers, "Aunty, please go and take your lunch." She told Chioma breathlessly as she carried out a heavy packet of ice fish.

Chioma thanked her, went to her little office and sat on a yellow plastic stool. She picked her wrapper on the table and wiped her face. It was then that she realized that she was not just sweating she was shedding tears. She was very tired and all her body ached. But, who would she complain to? She fixed her eyes on the sky blue food flask and spoon on the table but felt so dispirited to stretch her hand and collect them. When she eventually took the flask and opened it, she heard some voices from outside shouting, "Mama Ada, mama Ada" She shuddered, closed the food and came out as her heartbeat increased. She saw a neighbor telling her something in tears, but her head suddenly swelled, she could not understand anything.

"What are you doing, Azuka?" the proprietress asked as she emerged. She turned to Chioma, "Why am I paying you? Come on go in and do your work."

The neighbour came closer to Chioma and shouted into her ears, "Obi your pikin..."

"What about him?" Chioma asked as she grabbed the neighbour for support.

"I don't know weting happen. E don naked himself."

Chioma ran into her small office picked her wrapper and purse as her boss followed her shouting, "After this month I will look for someone else to work for me. I don't need someone that her untrained children will be disrupting my business...."

Chioma was stung. She turned and looked at her boss, but could not say anything as someone whose house is on fire does no go about chasing rats. Chioma left with the neighbor. When they got home people were already gathered.

"Where is my son?"

"The young boys had gone to catch him." A neighbor replied.

"Where? Where?" Chioma asked and started running towards the direction someone pointed.

In faraway Germany, Eze was taking a risk of his life. He hoped to right all wrongs if he eventually succeeds. As early as 3 AM, Hilda had awoken him up. Before he could be fully awake, her hand was already inside his boxer

working between his legs with dexterity. Eze dozed off after the wild love making that lasted for hours.

When he woke up around quarter after ten, Hilda had left for work. It took him one more hour to regain the strength to get out of bed.

He quickly packed his belongings into a suitcase and headed for the bank. He got to the bank with a check of seven hundred thousand Euros supposedly signed by Hilda. He had studied Hilda's signature for months. He knew he could be caught but his desperation had overtaken his fears.

The cashier looked at him suspiciously. She went to the phone and called Hilda. That was the most anxious moment for Eze as he was worried whether Nneka would keep her own end of the plan.

Nneka was another stranded Nigerian, a computer scientist, who was tricked to France with the promise of a better job only to be forced into prostitution. She escaped from the syndicate and found her way to Germany. She met Eze few weeks ago at a shopping mall. He was with Hilda, when Nneka approached her for alms.

"Get out from my sight." Hilda barked.

"Nne gi nwuokwa." Nneka replied.

Eze realized that she was a Nigerian. He surreptitiously gave her ten Euros and a piece of paper containing time and venue. The following day, they met and have been planning all these while how to dupe Hilda.

Nneka succeeded in hacking into Hilda's phone and diverting the bank cashier's call to her own phone. She authorized the payment.

As soon as Eze left the bank, he spoke with Nneka in Igbo Language, "The white woman's head has fallen. I have paid your share into your account"

"I have seen it. Thank you Dedem." She replied.

"Every man for himself. See you one day in Nigeria." Eze terminated the call and headed for Bon International Airport. The forty five minutes he spent passing through airport checks was like forty five years. Eze finally heaved a sigh of relieve when the plane took off.

His worries shifted to his family. He closed his eyes and saw Chioma's beautiful face giving him a tender kiss.

Six hours later their aircraft hit the runway of the Murtala Mohammed International Airport Lagos. Eze lugged into a five star hotel and tried to get his wife on phone. But all his effort was fruitless. How would he reach her since Chioma had sold her phone to solve family problems?

It was dark when Chioma and the boys who went on the fruitless search for Obi

returned. Chioma saw a torch light at their door. "Ada, Ada", she called out. "Who is there?" she asked as she approached.

"Madam", came a man's voice. Chioma came closer and saw two men. "I'm Corporal Yahaya from the Owerri Police command. We're looking for the parents of Miss Ada Eze."

Chioma felt dizzy as she tried to piece the jigsaw together. With a quivering lips she replied, "I'm her mother. What's the problem?"

"You have to come with us to the station." The other man said.

"What happened? Tell me what happened to my daughter?" Chioma wept as the policemen dragged her to their patrol van. Olamide a youth corper and one of her neighbours, volunteered to accompany her.

At the police headquarters, Owerri, the force PRO told her that the corpse of a young girl was picked at a herbalist place. She was suspected to be undergoing abortion.

Chioma saw herself in the morgue of the Federal Medical Centre FMC Owerri. In the midst of corpses, Chioma identified her darling daughter lying lifelessly on the morgue floor. Caked blood covered her skirt.

It was Olamide that held Chioma as she was about to crash to the floor. She was rushed to the emergency ward of the FMC.

* * *

Eze arrived Owerri the following evening with his Mercedes Benz GLK. It took him about three hours to locate where his family was residing.

As Eze was introducing himself to his neighbors they quickly informed him that his daughter was dead and that Chioma was hospitalized in FMC.

Eze managed to remain calm as he entered his jeep. He closed his eyes and saw Ada donning her Manchester United jersey taunting Chioma and Obi how they would defeat Chelsea.

He wiped his face with both palms and set his car in motion to FMC. He nearly had a head on collision

twice before he reached the hospital.

After asking around for a while, Eze located the Emergency Ward and Chioma on a hospital bed. "Chi, your darling is back, I'm back." Eze said as he attempted to embrace her, but the doctors restrained him because of Chioma's condition. When she opened her eyes and saw Eze, tears rolled down her cheeks.

She spoke in whispers as she told him what had happened to Obi and Ada. She concluded by saying, "You insisted on travelling abroad to make money, I can see you've made it. But, where is your family?" she started snoring and breathing with difficulties.

"Doctor, please do something. No matter how much it will cost." Eze shouted to the doctors, who started attending to Chioma alongside two nurses while a nurse asked Eze to wait outside.

After thirty minutes of frantic effort, one of the doctors came to Eze, where he was pacing to and fro along the corridor, "I'm sorry, we lost her."

Eze rushed in and saw a nurse arrange and cover her with a bed sheet.

Eze looked up and down. He looked at Chioma lying lifelessly on the hospital bed. He stormed out of the hospital and got into his car. He set his car in motion and pressed the gas pedal down to the floor as the car move at a speed of 180 kilometers per hour. People shouted as the car headed for a ditch, but, Eze was not listening. The car tumbled several times and burst into flames. When the fire fighters arrived it was only the skeleton of the jeep that was left.

"He, who thinks that money is the most important thing in life would sooner or later realize that money could suddenly become the least important thing."

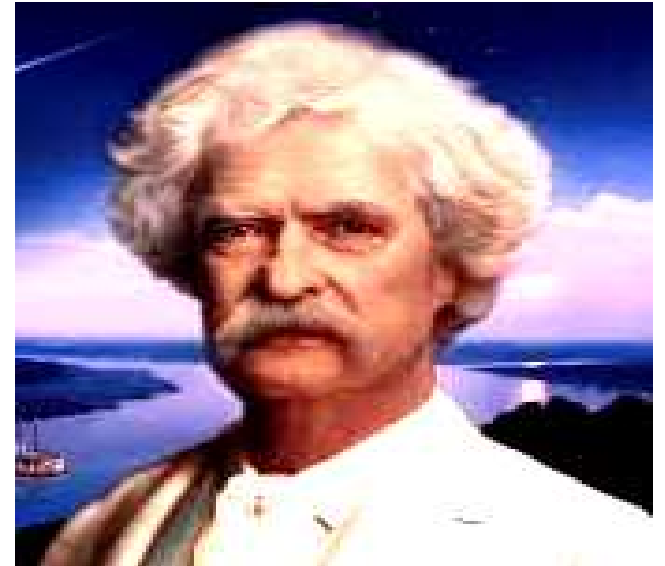
THE END

In our next publication, we will start a new series titled UCHE AND THE SWORD.

Don't miss it.

INSPIRATION CITATION
"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."
- Mark Twain

MARK TWAIN



Mark Twain is a pen name of American writer Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was born on November 30, 1835 in Florida, Missouri, United States of America. His parents were John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton Clemens. He was the sixth of seven children.

When he was only four, Twain's family moved to Hannibal, Missouri, a port town on the Mississippi River, this provided him with the setting for both novels, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Twain was only 11 when his father an attorney and judge died. The following year, he served as an apprentice with a printer. In 1851, he began working as a typesetter, contributing articles and humorous sketches to the Hannibal Journal, a newspaper owned by his older brother Orion Clemens.

When Twain was 18, he left Hannibal and worked as a printer in New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, joining the newly formed International Typographical Union, the printers' trade union. Twain educated himself in public libraries in the evenings, finding wider information than at a conventional school.

When Orion became secretary to Nevada Territory governor, James W. Nye in 1861, Twain joined him as he moved west. The brothers traveled more than two weeks on a stagecoach across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, visiting the Mormon community in Salt Lake City.

Twain's journey ended in the silver-mining town of Virginia City, Nevada, where he became a miner on the Comstock Lode. He failed as a miner and went to work at the Virginia City newspaper Territorial Enterprise. Twain first used his pen name here on February 3, 1863, when he wrote a humorous travel account titled "Letter From Carson - re: Joe Goodman; party at Gov. Johnson's; music" and signed it "Mark Twain".

Twain and Olivia Langdon corresponded throughout 1868. She rejected his first marriage proposal, but Twain continued to court her and managed to overcome her father's initial reluctance. They were married in Elmira, New York, in February 1870.

Twain owned a stake in the Buffalo Express newspaper and worked as an editor and writer. While they were living in Buffalo, their son Langdon died of diphtheria in 1872 at the age of 19 months. They had three daughters: Susy, Clara and Jean.

Starting in 1873, Twain moved his family to Hartford Connecticut, where he arranged the building of a home next door to Stowe. In the 1870s and 1880s, the family summered at Quarry Farm, in Elmira, the home of Olivia's sister, Susan Crane. In 1874, Susan had a study built, an octagonal gazebo set apart from the main house, as a surprise to Twain so that he would have a quiet place in which to write and enjoy his cigars.

Twain wrote many of his classic novels during his 17 years in Hartford between 1874 and 1891, and over 20 summers at Quarry Farm. They include *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889).

The couple's marriage lasted 34 years until Olivia's death in 1904.

Twain was fascinated with science and scientific inquiry. He developed a close and lasting friendship with Nikola Tesla, and the two spent much time together in Tesla's laboratory. Twain patented three inventions, including an "Improvement in Adjustable and Detachable Straps for Garments" (to replace suspenders) and a history trivia game. Most commercially successful was a self-pasting scrapbook; a dried adhesive on the pages needed only to be moistened before use. More than 25,000 were sold.

Twain made a substantial amount of money through his writing, but he lost a great deal through investments. Twain invested mostly in new inventions and technology, particularly the Paige typesetting machine. It was considered a mechanical marvel that amazed viewers when it worked, but it was prone to breakdowns. Twain spent \$300,000 (equivalent to \$9,774,828 in 2024) on it between 1880 and 1894, but before it could be perfected it was rendered obsolete by the Linotype. He lost the bulk of his book profits, as well as a substantial portion of his wife's inheritance. Twain and his family closed down their expensive Hartford home in response to the dwindling income and moved to Europe in June 1891.

Twain was awarded an honorary Doctor of Letter (D.Litt.) by Yale University in 1901 and a Doctor of Law by the University of Missouri in 1902. Oxford University awarded him a Doctorate of Law in 1907.

In his later years, Twain lived at 14 West 10th Street in Manhattan. He passed through a period of deep depression which began in 1896 when his daughter Susy died of meningitis. Olivia's death in 1904 and Jean's on December 24, 1909, deepened Twain's gloom. On May 20, 1909, his close friend Henry Rogers died suddenly. Twain died of a heart attack on April 21, 1910, in Stormfield. Twain and his wife were buried side by side in Elmira's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Mark Twain brought joy to our hearts as a writer, humorist, entrepreneur, publisher and lecturer. Besides Mark Twain, he used Josh and Thomas Jefferson Snodgrass as pen names.

By Mercy Emeh

Entertainment

Stop Being Too Proud To Apologise - Mercy Aigbe Warns African Parents

Nollywood actress Mercy Aigbe has called on African parents to reflect deeply on their parenting styles and emotional connections with their children.

Speaking at the premiere of her latest film, *My Mother Is a Witch*, Aigbe opened up about her own parenting journey, emphasising how much she had to grow in order to understand her daughter, Michelle, better.

My daughter, Michelle might think that the upbringing I gave her was harsh and truly it was. I was harsh on her I can't even lie but I raised a vessel for God. As parents we need to have closure on so many issues with our children and we also need to pay attention to them. I want to quickly share a story.

She recalled how Michelle opened up to her

about how harsh she was in raising her, and how she spotlighted one time she hit her with a bucket and never apologised for it.

A few years ago I sent my daughter to Canada for school and one day I

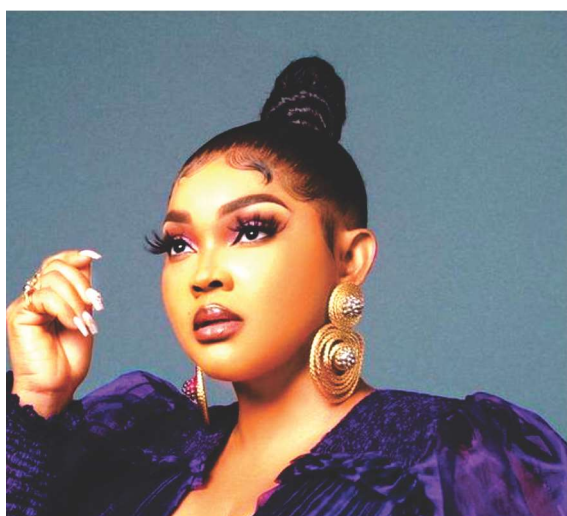
and she said 'mum you hit me on the head with a bucket one day.' At the time I thought she was going mad because she was abroad but I realised that I wasn't thinking about how she felt.

The actress emphasised the need for African parents to be more emotionally available and to apologise when necessary.

We have a lot of damaged adults out there who have not properly healed from their childhood trauma so I'm very proud to

be part of this project that highlights this.

I think it's time we start having these conversations, this is why we have narcissists all over the place. And as African parents, we're honestly too proud to apologise. If I can apologise, other parents should too, this film is a call to action for African parents.



Mercy Aigbe

was calling her and she wasn't picking my calls so I called her friend and told her I couldn't reach my daughter.

Eventually when Michelle picked and I asked her why she wasn't picking she said 'mum I'm traumatised' and at the time I asked her 'Which trauma, are you okay?'

Davido Pays N2 Million Per Haircut - Singer's Barber Reveals

Nigerian afrobeats superstar Davido Adeleke, popularly known as Davido, pays as much as N2 million every time he gets a haircut, according to his long-term barber, Kufre Nnah.

Kufre made the revelation in a social media post, in which he shared a picture of himself working on Davido's hair.

The Barber, who runs his business as Kayz Place, additionally revealed that he's been Davido's Barber since he was 12 years old, when he used to pay only N200 to get a haircut.

Disclosing that Davido now pays him N2 million per haircut, Kufre admired the singer and appreciated him for being a part of his journey over the years.

Kufre's post, which also had pictures showing Davido's haircut up close, was captioned:

"I started cutting Davido's hair when he was

just 12 years old, when he use to pay me 200 Naira. Today, he's paying 2 million for haircut... what a journey! So proud to have been part of his story from the beginning. Big thanks to you brother for trusting me all these years. Your success is truly inspiring."

Recall that earlier this weekend, on Saturday, Davido was out showing up for another long-term associate, his manager Asa

Asika, at his traditional wedding where he was on groomsmen duties.

In his heartfelt speech at the ceremony held in Lagos, Davido recounted how he and Asa worked hard together to build their music empire from absolutely nothing.

Davido hailed Asa for being more than just his manager, saying he's his 'shield,' his sanity and his brother in every battle.



Davido Adeleke

Foreign

Nigerian Televangelist Timothy Omotoso Deported to Nigeria Amid Rape Case Appeal

Nigerian televangelist Timothy Omotoso, recently acquitted of 32 charges including rape, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking, was deported to Nigeria from Johannesburg's Tambo International Airport according to local media reports. The 66-year-old pastor's departure follows his rearrest on immigration charges and comes days after South African prosecutors announced plans to appeal his acquittal.

Omotoso, leader of the Jesus Dominion International (JDI) church based in Durban with branches in Nigeria and Israel, was acquitted in April 2025 by the Eastern Cape High Court in Gqeberha. Judge Irma Schoeman ruled that prosecutors failed to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt, citing mishandling by the state. The decision sparked widespread outrage across South Africa, with many criticizing the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for its handling of the eight-year trial.

Omotoso was rearrested in East London for violating the Immigration Act after the Department of Home Affairs declared him a prohibited person due to an expired and allegedly fraudulent visa. The East London Magistrates Court granted him temporary reprieve on May 13, ruling he could not be detained



Timothy Omotoso

beyond 48 hours without formal charges, leading to his release pending deportation proceedings.

Images broadcast by SABC and Newsroom Afrika showed Omotoso at OR Tambo Airport, dressed in a grey hoodie and sunglasses, speaking with an immigration official. A transport ministry official confirmed to AFP that Omotoso required no clearance from their department to leave the country.

The NPA announced on May 13 its intent to appeal the acquittal under Section 319 of the Criminal Procedure Act, focusing on questions of law. "The NPA believes there are reasonable prospects of a successful appeal despite the complexities involved," the authority stated, adding that

an internal investigation into the prosecution team's conduct is underway, with a report expected in June 2025.

Omotoso's deportation has divided public sentiment. Some South Africans expressed frustration, accusing him of evading justice, while his supporters, including members of the JDI church, celebrated his release and departure. The case continues to highlight challenges in addressing gender-based violence, human trafficking, and the complexities of legal and immigration procedures in high-profile cases. The appeal process and ongoing investigations into the prosecution's conduct are expected to keep the case in the public eye for the coming months.

Public Notice

This is to bring to the notice of the public that I, **OBASI CHIBUEZE**, a native of Amankwa in ITU OLOKORO in Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State; a Christian and a serving member of the Nigeria Police Force attached to Ado-odo/Ota Division Police Headquarters, in Ogun State.

That on the 5th day of March, 2025, I submitted a petition to the Commissioner of Police, Umuahia, Abia State, of a threat of violence, trespass of land, malicious damage of cassava and other crops worth Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N500,000) only, by **Mrs. Nwaocha Florence Ikpegbu**.

On another development, that I, Mr. **OBASI CHIBUEZE**, wrote a petition to the Assistant Inspector-General of Police, Zone 9, on the 2nd day of May, 2025 concerning a case of unlawful and unjustified Oppression, Victimization, Detention and violation of my Fundamental Human Rights by ACPX Squad Zone 9.W/ASP **Ngozichukwu** and W/Inspector **Rosemary Ukaegbu**. They charged me to court on the 23rd day of April, 2025 with charge No.US/61C/2025. It was between Commissioner of Police vs **CHIBUEZE OBASI** and **IFEANYI OBASI**. That the essence of this publication is that, I, be granted freedom and rights as a citizen of Nigeria with Justice and Equity.

Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph

Abia Warriors: Making Continental Outing A Success

There was joy across Abia State, from Aba to Arochuku, from Ikwuano to Isuikwuato and from Umuahia to Umunneochi, when Abia Warriors qualified to play in the continent next season after a 2-1 victory over El-Kanemi Warriors which gave them unassailable four points with just last weekend matches to go. Beyond the celebrations, what should be done to ensure that the club put up a superlative performance in the continent?

Firstly, million thanks should go to the governor of Abia State Dr. Alex Otti for financing four professional clubs. While some states are huffing-and-puffing for sponsoring a single club, Dr. Alex Otti is sponsoring Abia Warriors, Enyimba International, Abia Comets and Abia Angels with remarkable aplomb. However, "the reward for hard work," they say, "is more work." Therefore, the government would have to substantially increase the funds released to the club in order to help the club pursue their continental campaigns effectively.

Secondly, the team should be strengthened. Why most Nigerian clubs do not perform well in the continent is the problem of assembling a new team different from the one that qualified for the continent. While new players



Abia Warriors Players Celebrating A Goal

should be added to strengthen the team, it is important that the nucleus of the club should not be tampered with.

Thirdly, the home advantage still plays significant role in African football, therefore, the Enyimba International Stadium should be refurbished to meet the Confederation of African Football standard so the team can use it as

their home ground. Playing in Aba is better than playing outside the state. There are economic benefits in hosting Warriors home matches within the state as hospitality industry will be patronized and the attention of the international media will be on the state.

Fans should be mobilized for every home match, even if it will mean throwing the stadium open.

The power of the fans as the twelfth player on the pitch can never be overemphasized.

Furthermore, continental football involves a lot of travelling. Therefore, the team must put its house in order as it relates logistics. They must start on time to process travelling documents to avoid visa denials and there should be air-tight arrangement on

how the team should come back after honouring an away match. The idea of the team travelling in batches, no matter the reason should be rejected as team bonding is achieved if the team travels as one.

Payment of salaries and bonuses to the players and technical staff should be upmost priority to the management of the club. Motivation-extrinsic and intrinsic should be taken seriously. After all, it is the performance of the players on the pitch that will be used to access whether team performed well or not.

The management should know that playing in the continent means having more matches to play. Abia fans will not accept the team performing poorly on the domestic front because they are playing in the continent. Therefore, they should bolster the squad with quality players that will strengthen the team to compete in all fronts next season.

Finally, as we congratulate Abia Warriors for qualifying for the continent, they should ensure that they do not disappoint the governor Dr. Alex Otti and government of Abia State as well as their fans across the country by putting up a spirited fight in the continent as they target winning domestic titles next season.

Ex-athlete Donates Wheelchairs to Abia Sports Council



Clement Chukwu

Head of the 22nd National Sports Festival slated for Ogun State, Team Abia has received a boost through the donation of five wheelchairs by Clement Chukwu.

The United States based ex-athlete, who was part of the Nigerian team that won the silver medal in the 4 x 400 metres relay, which was later elevated to gold after the USA team was stripped of the gold medal, while donating the wheelchairs, said him and his colleagues overseas will continue to support the ongoing sports development in the state under the administration of comrade Obioma George Abia State director of Sports till sports takes its rightful position in the state

He thanked the state government led by Dr Alex Otti for all he has done and will do for the sports sector and advised the youths to take advantage of this support by

government to develop their sports skills for a better tomorrow. While acknowledging that they never saw such support in their time, he prayed God to bless the commissioner for sports Sir Nwaobilor Nwadinma Ananaba and all the Abia State sports family.

Receiving the equipment on behalf of the Director of Sports, Comrade George Obioma, the Director Technical, Mary Nwachukwu Chima, thanked him for coming to the aid of the Para-athletes and said the wheelchairs will go a long way in enhancing athletes performance in the fourth coming National Sports Festival.

Recall that Clement Chukwu won gold medals in at the 1997 Universiade and the 1998 African Championship and a silver medal at the 1999 All-Africa Games.



Boundless Joy: (L-R)

Coach Uwom Onyekwere, Mary Chukwu Chima, Director Technical and Secretary, Miracle Azoribe while receiving the wheelchairs



Lucky Anyanwoke (L)

NATIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL: Team Abia Make Flying Start

Team Abia started their campaign in the ongoing 22nd edition of the National Sports Festival in Ogun State like a house on fire. Abia deaf Badminton athlete, Chimezie Ekpo defeated Anambra 2-0. Similarly, Lucky Anyanwoke defeated Niger 2-0 before defeating Delta State by the same margin.

In the female category, Mary Njikoni Chinyere defeated Kaduna State 2-0 while Chikodi Hook defeated Niger State 2-0. Unfortunately, both players

lost to Edo State in the women's double event.

Team Abia are participating in 25 out of the 40 sports approved by the Nigerian Sports Commission.

The Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George expressed confident that Team Abia will do better than they did in the last edition.

Team Abia finished 12th in the last edition of the National Sports Festival hosted by Delta State. They won 10 gold, 11 silver and 20 bronze medals.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

₦250 VOL. 28 NO. 006

May 25, 2025

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EUROPA LEAGUE FINAL: Spurs, United Clash in Battle of Redemption

By Joseph Jacob

Tottenham Hotspur will clash with fellow English Premier League side, Manchester United in the final of the 2025 UEFA Europa League this Wednesday at the San Mamés Stadium in Bilbao, Spain.

Both sides have had a very disappointing domestic performance, this season with both teams just above the relegation zone in the league. This final offers them their only opportunity to win silverware this season and above all their route to play in the prestigious UEFA Champions League next season. This is simply a war of redemption.

Spurs have won this competition twice when it was known as the UEFA Cup in 1972 and 1984 while the Red Devils emerged champions in 2017.

To reach this final, Spurs won five, drew two and lost one in the league phase; scoring 17 and conceding only 9 goals.

In the round of 16, they eliminated Dutch side AZ Alkmaar 3-2 on aggregate before eliminating German side Eintracht Frankfurt 2-1 in the quarter-finals.

Their biggest win came in the semi-final where they confronted Bodo Glimt and demolished them 5-1 in aggregate.

Manchester United, on the other hand, are the only side yet to lose a match in Europe this season. They won five matches, drew three scoring 16 and conceding 9 goals in the League Phase.

They crushed Real Sociedad 5-2 before their remarkable

comeback against Lyon in the quarter-final which saw them eliminate the French side 7-6 after extra-time.

They faced Athletic Club Bilbao of Spain and crushed them 7-1 on aggregate to book their place in the final.

The first time Spurs and United met was on January 28, 1899 in an FA Cup encounter, when Manchester United were known as Newton Heath. The match which took place at the Northumberland Park in North London ended 1-1. The replay took place four days later and Willie Bryant scored the first hat-trick of this fixture as Spurs won 5-3.

Both sides have met 204 times with Manchester United having the upper hand with 96 wins and 51 draws, while Spurs have won only 57 times. But in recent times, Spurs have dominated this fixture. For instance this season, Spurs have won all of their three meetings.

Their first encounter this season was on September 29, 2024,

at the Old Trafford and Spurs turned the Theater of Dreams into Theatre of Nightmare with a 3-0 victory. The goals were scored by Brennan Johnson, Dejan Kulusevski and Dominic Solanke scoring.

Their next encounter was in the League Cup and Spurs won 4-3 in the encounter littered with goalkeeper errors.

The reserve fixture in the league saw James Maddison score a 13th minute goal to give Spurs all three points.

Manchester United will have to fight hard to ensure that they do not suffer a fourth defeat this season in the hands of Tottenham hotspurs.

Ruben Amorim, has confronted Tottenham Hotspur four times. The first two game were in the 2022/23 season, when he was the coach of Sporting CP. His side picked four points across the two legs in the group stage of the Champions League. But he has lost two matches to Spurs as United coach.



OFFICIALS

German referee, Felix Zwayer will officiate the UEFA Europa League final between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United. Zwayer will be assisted by Robert Kempter and Christian Dietz.

Swayer has officiated seven Champions League games this season, including last two week's second-leg semi-final between Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal, which ended in favour of the French side.

It will be his second UEFA final as a referee, having previously been in charge of the 2023 UEFA Nations League final between Croatia and Spain.

THE BATTLEFIELD

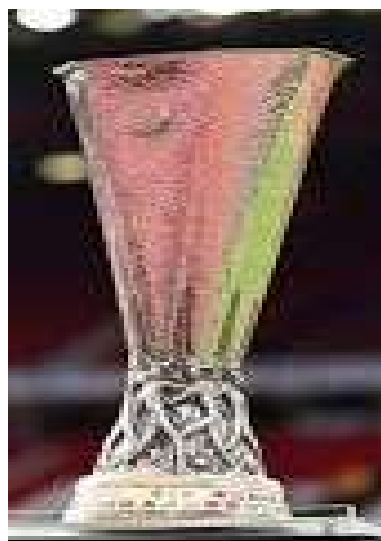
The 2025 Europa League final takes place at San Mamés Stadium in Bilbao, Spain. With a capacity in excess of 50,000, the venue is home to Athletic Club and last year staged the 2024 UEFA Women's Champions League final, in which Barcelona were 2-0 winners against Lyon.

San Mamés Stadium opened in September 2013, replacing the old San Mamés. Its predecessor hosted the second leg of the 1977 UEFA Cup final, Athletic Club defeated by Juventus 2-1 on the night but lose on away goals, as well as three games at the 1982 FIFA World Cup.



THE TROPHY

The UEFA Europa League trophy is, at 15kg, the heaviest piece of UEFA silverware. To make things extra interesting, it also has no handles.



SUDOKU

Puzzly By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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