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NATIONAL Ambassador

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Abia Govt. Commits N4.1 B Counterpart Fund For World Bank-Assisted Rural Projects

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has announced the payment of N4.1 billion as counterpart funding for the World Bank-supported Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP).

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, disclosed this while briefing journalists on the outcome of the State Executive Council meeting presided over by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu, who underscored the governor's commitment to the infrastructure development of rural communities across the state, revealed that under the programme, 11 rural roads and three agro-logistics hubs would soon be flagged off by Governor Otti.

"As part of the requirements for this World Bank Assisted Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project, the State Government has so far paid N4.1 billion as counterpart

funding.

"This underscores the governor's commitment to statewide infrastructure-led development of our rural communities", Prince Kanu emphasised.

The Commissioner revealed that the projects which are designed to boost access to markets and agricultural productivity, are distributed across the 17 Local Government Areas of the State.

He noted that the agro-logistics hubs are sited at

Obinto in Arochukwu, Eke Uzuakoli in Bende, and Ndiuru in Ikwuano local government areas, while the rural roads, cut across various communities, to enhance connectivity and economic activity in the hinterlands.

Prince Kanu announced that the formal flag-off of the \$1.3 billion Abia Medical City project will take place on July 10, 2025.

According to the Commissioner, Governor Otti would perform the

ground-breaking ceremony of the mega facility, billed to transform Abia State into a leading destination for advanced medical services in Nigeria and the West African sub-region.

He emphasised that the flagship project, which occupies a 200-hectare land space, will feature a 1,000-bed capacity hospital with state-of-the-art medical equipment, a five-star hotel, accommodation for patients and their families, as well as facilities aimed at promoting

medical tourism.

"We have it on record the flagship project, when completed, will transform the State into a major hub for advanced medical services", he said.

He noted that the Abia Medical City is being executed through a build-operate-transfer agreement between the State Government and MKP International Holding adding that the State has provided land and its reputation as part of the partnership.

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Abia Council Workers Endorse Otti For Second Term

By Ekebuisi Precious

Local government workers in Abia State have commended Governor Alex Otti, for prioritizing their welfare and fulfilling his campaign promises. In recognition of his achievements, they have endorsed him for a second term in office.

The endorsement was unanimously announced by members of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE) in Ukwu East, Ukwu West, and Ugwuagbo; led by their Chairmen—Mr. Felix Nwagbara, Mr. Nana Emeka, and Mrs. Vine Dike—during the official visit of the Chairman, Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), Elder James Ebere Nwokochah, and his team of Commissioners to the Council Areas.

The Union leaders applauded Governor Otti for restoring regular salary and pension payments, a gesture they described as unprecedented in the state's history. They emphasised that their endorsement was driven by a moral obligation to support a leader who has consistently prioritized the welfare of workers and retirees.

Earlier in his address, Elder Nwokochah reaffirmed Governor Otti's commitment to improving workers' welfare, particularly at the grassroots level. He lauded the Governor's people-centered policies and infrastructural strides across the state.

He also urged Council Staff to remain professional, dedicated, and neutral in the discharge of their duties, stressing the importance of integrity in public service. The LGSC Chairman warned against corruption and partisanship, stating that the Commission would maintain a zero-tolerance stance on misconduct.

Responding to concerns over delayed promotions, Elder Nwokochah called for patience, assuring workers that the governor remains committed to resolving all outstanding issues affecting their welfare.

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■ Governor Alex Otti (Left) in a warm hand shake with the Minister of Works, Engr. Dave Umahi (right), at the Governor's Office during the minister's working visit and inspection of ongoing Federal Road Projects in Abia State.

Gov Otti Declares Zero Tolerance For Crime In Abia

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has restated his administration's commitment to addressing the rising security challenges in parts of the State, particularly in Umuunneochi and Isuikwuato Local Government Areas, with a firm declaration of zero tolerance for all forms of

criminality.

He disclosed this recently, at Government House, Umuahia, during his Monthly Media Parley with Journalists tagged; "Governor Otti speaks to Abians".

The governor emphasised that responsive security measures have been reactivated to address the disturbing trend, following

recent incidents, including an attack on a serving Commissioner by unknown gunmen along Umuunneochi Road.

He reiterated that his administration maintains a zero-tolerance stance against all forms of criminal activity such as kidnapping, bank robbery, and fraud, stressing that security of lives and property remains a top

priority to the present government.

On healthcare delivery, Governor Otti revealed that some of the 200 primary health centres currently undergoing renovation, retrofitting, and re-equipping across the state to improve access to quality medical services, have been completed and commissioned.

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According to the Commissioner, the access route to the facility, is nearing completion which he said is "another pointer to the present administration's commitment to realising the project within its scheduled 24-month delivery period".

"That's a signature project that will ultimately reverse medical tourism not just in Abia State but in the whole of Nigeria and the West African sub-region", he added

Prince Kanu announced that the ceremony marking the formal reintroduction of Sanitary Inspectors popularly known as ("Ndi Ole Ala"), an initiative towards deepening the success already recorded in environmental cleanliness, was held. He said that the scheme would be extended to all 17 local government areas to ensure that communities benefit directly from the presence and activities of sanitary inspectors.

The Commissioner said that the road maintenance work of the State Government has continued unabated with two recently completed work on the 11.4 kilometer Nkwoegwu - Afugiri - Umuyota road in Umuahia North LGA and the 1-kilometre Ahiama-Umuikaa, Okwu Olokoru, Road in Umuahia South.

Prince Kanu announced that the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA) has expanded its operations to all three senatorial zones, covering many communities adding that the State Government has also deployed 26 new waste receptacles fabricated by the Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, in addition to desilting stormwater channels to prevent flooding during the rainy season.

On security, the Commissioner said that a member of one of the cult groups that matched a resident around Imo Lane, off Uzuakoli Road Umuahia, while trying to run away was hit by bullet from men of the Operation Crush who arrived the scene through a tip-off.

"In an attempt to stop them, Operation Crush, fired some warning shots and one of the fleeing cult members was hit by a bullet.

"Operation Crush succeeded in arresting a member of the gang who is in custody now and is helping the police with their investigations.

He said that the macheted victim is currently receiving medical attention, while the body of the deceased suspect had been deposited in the morgue.

"Ordinarily, we would have waited for the police to conclude their investigations, but for the fake news and wrong narratives that have heralded the unfortunate incident across certain media channels.

"The sponsors of such reports intend to deceive members of the public into believing that Operation Crush shot at an innocent by-stander or citizen. Nothing could be further from the truth", Prince Kanu stated.

He assured that updates on the incident would be communicated to the public as investigations progress.

Otti Dcries Rising Cases Of Insecurity In Abia

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The governor noted that similar upgrade projects are ongoing in several secondary healthcare facilities, including general hospitals in Okeikpe, Umunneochi, Arochukuwu, and Okpuala Ngwa.

While noting the existence of 948 primary health centres in the state, Governor Otti assured that communities not captured in the current phase of rehabilitation would benefit in subsequent phases, with a target to renovate at least one centre in each political ward.

He also announced that the second phase of renovation at the Abia State University Teaching Hospital, Aba, has started, featuring state-of-the-art equipment.

The governor disclosed that preliminary works such as the creation of access roads and installation of street lights for the proposed Abia Medical City have been completed, with the formal launch of the project expected soon.

In the education sector, Governor Otti stated that 5,394 newly recruited teachers are currently undergoing orientation and will be deployed to schools across the state.

He also revealed plans to recruit an additional 4,000 teachers as part of the state government's strategy to engage over 9,000 teaching staff to meet manpower needs in the sector.

Addressing concerns over the poor state of public libraries, Governor Otti disclosed plans to set up a library board to oversee the revival of the State Library System and the establishment of modern libraries in all 17 local government areas.

Methodist Girls High School Wins Abia Inter-School Debate

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka and Favour Okorie

Methodist Girls High School, Umuahia, has emerged champions of the 2024/2025 Inter-School Debate Competition, organized by Vision Africa Radio 104.1 FM in collaboration with the Abia State Ministry of Education.

The highly anticipated competition, which featured 14 secondary schools—both public and private—from the three senatorial zones of Abia State, culminated in a thrilling final where Methodist Girls High School convincingly outperformed Valley View College, Ebem Ohafia, who claimed second place.

Speaking on the opposing side of the topic, "Is Social Media Impactful in the Lives of Teenagers?", the winning team earned praise from judges for their compelling arguments and eloquent delivery.

Basic Secondary School, Aba, and Ndume Otuka Secondary School, Ibeku, Umuahia, secured third and fourth positions, respectively.

Speaking at the grand finale, the wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Chidinma Otti, commended the students for their brilliance and confidence, describing them as future leaders.

Represented by the

Senior Special Assistant to the Governor, Prof. Ijeoma Ihekweumere, she highlighted the administration's commitment to education, revealing that 20 per cent of the state's annual budget is allocated to the education sector.

"This is a testament to Governor Alex Otti's belief in education as a critical investment in the future of Abia's children," she said, while urging students to stay focused on their studies and avoid social vices.

The Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Elder Goodluck Chinedum Ubochi, represented by Mrs. Stella Ogugbue, Director of Scholarship in the Ministry, also lauded the students' performance.

He was joined by the Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Ahukwe, who emphasized the government's commitment to girl-child education and gender equality.

"This debate highlights what is possible when our students are provided with a conducive learning environment and access to quality education. We remain committed to supporting academic excellence across Abia,"

they affirmed.

In his address, President of Vision Africa and convener of the debate, Bishop Dr. Sunday Ndukwo Onuoha, underscored the importance of public discourse and youth empowerment through education.

"This platform is designed to ignite the minds of our young people and prepare them for leadership," Bishop Onuoha said, praising the students for their performances and expressing hope that they will become global leaders.

He expressed gratitude to Governor Otti and the First Lady for their support of youth development and educational advancement, promising continued collaboration.

The high point of the event was the announcement by Bishop Onuoha of free SSCE (WAEC) registration for the 24 students representing the top four finalist schools. Additionally, trophies, educational materials, and individual awards—including Best Speaker—were presented to deserving participants.

The debate competition stands as a beacon of Abia's commitment to nurturing intellectual growth, critical thinking, and leadership among its youth.

Abia Council Workers Endorse Otti For Second Term

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Meanwhile, the Commissioner 1 in LGSC Jerry Uzosike, has called on local government workers to throw their full support behind Gov. Alex Otti's transformative initiatives across the state. He emphasised that sustained support from the grassroots and workforce is crucial for the Governor to continue delivering meaningful development and good governance to the people of Abia.

Contributing, the Permanent Secretary in LGSC, Dr. Princess Ezinne Ngwakwe, charged LG workers to uphold the highest standards of integrity, ensure accountability in the management of public resources, and remain responsive to the needs of the citizens at the grassroot.

She said, "Let your work reflect the true spirit of public service—driven by passion, diligence, and a genuine desire to build a better future for all."

The Mayors of Ukwu West, Ugwuagbo, and Ukwu East—Pastor Dike Nwankwo, Hon. Iheanacho Wagbara, and Hon. Chibunna Akara, represented by the Secretary to the Local Government (SECLOG), Pastor Iheanyi Adindu—welcomed the LGSC Chairman and pledged continued support for the governor's transformative agenda under the "New Abia" mantra.

Heads of Service of Ukwu East and Ugwuagbo LGAs, Mr. Emeka Akparanta and Mr. Ekenta Henry respectively, expressed appreciation for

Governor Otti's achievements in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and security.

They reaffirmed their commitment to upholding service standards and supporting the administration's vision for a better Abia.

Also present at the event were LGSC Commissioners; Hon. Allen Wogu, Dame Ngozi Nwagbara, Dr. Godwin C Duru, and Oji Uka Kalu among others.

Highlight of the event was the resounding voice affirmation by local government workers, unanimously endorsing the re-election of Gov. Otti for a second term in 2027.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Paul Precious Uloaku, now wish to be known and addressed as OMENIHU PRECIOUS ULOAKU. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OMENIHU PRECIOUS ULOAKU.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Chukwuemeka Enyiazu, now wish to be known and addressed as CHUKWUEMEKA IROECHE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

CHUKWUEMEKA IROECHE.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Onyenkwere Clementina, now wish to be known and addressed as O NYE MA ON W U CLEMENTINA. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ONYEMAONWU CLEMENTINA.

Change of Name

I, formerly known, called and addressed as IHIM-IBERE DEV. UNION FED. A/C, now wish to be known, called and addressed as IHIM DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION. All documents bearing former names still remain valid. First Bank Plc and the general public should please take note.

IHIM DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Goodluck Oluchi, now wish to be known and addressed as IKECHI GIFT. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. First Bank Nigeria Plc and the general public should please take note.

IKECHI GIFT.

Reconciliation of Name/Correction of Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Alejo Fisayo Thompson which appeared in my Bank Verification Number with Polaris Bank and Alejo Fisayo are same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as ALEJO FISAYO. My Date of Birth was wrongly captured as 19th August 1997 instead of 17th August 1997. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ALEJO FISAYO.

Reconciliation of Name/Correction of Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Adindu-Possible Nkechinyere Lilian and Possible-Adindu Nkechinyere Lilian which appeared in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) with Guaranty Trust Bank are same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as POSSIBLE-ADINDU NKECHINYERE LILIAN. My Date of Birth was wrongly captured as 1st June 1965 in my National Identification Number (NIN) instead of 1st June 1970. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

POSSIBLE-ADINDU NKECHINYERE LILIAN.

News

Newly Recruited Teachers In Abia, Urged to Uphold Professionalism

By Adindu Stephanie

The Executive Chairman of the Abia State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), Lady Lydia Onuoha, has charged the newly recruited teachers in the state, to embrace professionalism, resilience, and integrity in the discharge of their duties.

Speaking during a two-day onboarding and orientation programme organized by ASUBEB in collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Lady Onuoha emphasised that the recruitment marks a strategic milestone in the state's effort to reposition its basic education sector. The orientation took place at the Teachers' House, Ibeuku High School and SEMB, Umuahia.

She expressed appreciation to Governor Alex Otti for his unwavering commitment to educational reforms and for approving the recruitment of over 5,000 qualified teachers – a move she described as a bold investment in the future of Abia's children and a reflection of the administration's AbiaFirst agenda.

"The transparent and merit-based recruitment process is not just a policy achievement; it is a practical demonstration of our government's commitment to quality education, accountability, and the future of our children," Lady Onuoha said.

She urged the new teachers to view themselves not just as educators, but as mentors and role models who must exemplify the highest values of integrity and service.

"You are the moral compass of the next generation. As mirrors of society, you must reflect the best virtues and inspire excellence," she added.

Lady Onuoha also called on the teachers to uphold the ethics of the profession, adhere to civil service codes – including proper conduct and dressing – and commit to continuous self-improvement. She reaffirmed the government's dedication to supporting teacher welfare and professional development under Governor Otti's leadership.

She commended the Commissioner for Basic and Secondary Education, Elder Goodluck Ubochi, and the Chairperson of the Recruitment Committee, Dr. Mrs. Uzoamaka AmaMba, for overseeing a transparent process. She also praised the Education Reform Implementation Team (ERIT), led by Mrs. Bolaji Osime, for co-ordinating a comprehensive and impactful orientation.

In his remarks, the State Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), Comrade Madu Friday Chukwujekwu, lauded the exercise as the most transparent recruitment in the state's history. He commended Governor Otti for fulfilling his promise to teachers, first made during the 2024 World Teachers' Day celebration.

"This process has set a new standard for fairness and professionalism," Chukwujekwu said, while urging the teachers to maintain high ethical and performance standards.

ADA Leaders Launch Nationwide Mobilization Ahead Of 2027 Polls

By Emeka Egejuru

In what appears to be a significant political realignment ahead of the 2027 general elections, key figures from Nigeria's major political blocs have initiated a co-ordinated mobilisation campaign under the banner of a proposed new political party – the All Democratic Alliance (ADA).

The movement, widely perceived as a direct challenge to the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), has started nationwide consultations, aimed at galvanising grassroots support across Nigeria's six geo-political zones.

The coalition's leaders,

which include notable political heavyweights, such as former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, former Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi, ex-Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, and the convener of the League of Northern Democrats, Dr. Umar Ardo, are united in their belief that Nigeria's democracy is in urgent need of redirection.

According to insiders, the group has formally submitted an application to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), seeking registration as a political party. There is growing optimism within the ranks that the request will be approved in the coming weeks.

In a letter addressed to INEC, ADA's Protém National Chairman, Chief Akin A. Ricketts, underscored the coalition's commitment to offering Nigerians a credible alternative that prioritises national unity, economic recovery, and governance reforms.

"We respectfully write to the Independent National Electoral Commission requesting the registration of our association, the All Democratic Alliance, as a political party," the letter read.

Initially, the coalition explored the possibility of adopting an existing party platform, with the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP)

being among those considered. However, internal wrangling, legal battles, and factional instability within those parties, prompted the coalition to pursue a fresh political structure.

Now operating under the provisional ADA framework, the group has launched a strategic mobilisation campaign aimed at attracting disenchanted members from both the APC and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), while also targeting youth inclusion, regional balance, and innovative policy development.

Observers believe the movement could dramatically reshape the Nigerian political landscape, particularly as public dissatisfaction grows over economic

hardship, rising insecurity, and perceived leadership failures under the current administration.

While the coalition awaits INEC's official decision, ADA's growing momentum and grassroots activities suggest that Nigeria may be on the verge of a new era in its democratic journey. Political analysts say the emergence of the ADA could mark the beginning of a serious three-horse race in 2027, potentially ending the long-standing duopoly of the APC and PDP.

As consultations continue and new political alliances are formed, the coming months are expected to be crucial for the consolidation of the ADA and its bid to become a formidable force in Nigerian politics.



The General Manager of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, Honourable Jones Ike (4Left) with members of the Clergy from the Presbyterian Church, World Bank Parish, Umuahia, during their recent courtesy visit to his office.

Hon. Jones Ike Charges Clerics To Partner With New Abia Government

By Offor Okechukwu

The EXCO'S and members of delegation of the Pacesetters Synod, Umuahia Presbyterian Church, World Bank, have commended the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, for his unwavering support to the church and his developmental strides to move the state to enviable height.

Speaking during a courtesy visit to the General Manager of Abia Newspapers, Hon. Jones Nnanna Ike, recently, the Moderator of Umuahia Synod, Rt. Rev. Dr.

Chinedu Okorafor, stated that the Pacesetters synod, is relatively two years old, carved out of former Umuahia South Central synod, with the new vision tagged "A decade of aggressive Evangelism", where the church would compete favourably with other sister churches, to enable smooth penetration to every nook and cranny of Umuahia.

Contributing, the Umuahia East Presbytery Moderator, Most Rev. Dr. Imo Onu, described the Presbyterian church as media friendly, dating

back to 1862 when the first Presbyterian Press was established in Nigeria with a printing press that is functional even till date.

The cleric further said that the Umuahia Synod of the Presbyterian Church, with the members of delegation, felt the need to visit media houses in a bid to create awareness for her second annual synod on June 21, 2025, at same vein relate with the public closely through her aggressive evangelism as a church and body of Christ.

Responding, Hon. Ike, noted that the foundation

of the new Abia, with Dr. Otti as the Executive Governor, is deeply rooted in Christianity because the Christians fought, they prayed and cried and God heard their prayers.

The Abia Newspapers boss, further disclosed that the church is an able partner of the present government and whatever the cabinet members are doing has its foundation in God because the present administration of Dr. Otti is an able partner to the church, particularly to the Presbyterian church, and both the government and

church, are now one.

Hon. Ike charged the clerics to always pray for the governor and the cabinet members, noting that no human being is infallible and any student who sit for exam and gets 70 per cent, scores an "A" and any person that has seen how the state has progressed in the past and seen how it is doing today will know that the governor can be scored up to 70 per cent.

Highlight of the courtesy visit to the general manager was presentation of Holy Bible by the clerics of the Pace Setters Synod World Bank Umuahia, to Hon. Ike.

News

Vision Africa Hosts 2025 Training, Urges Journalists to Inspire Change

By Okereke Kate

Media professionals have been charged to use their platforms to promote truth, inspire societal transformation, and shape public perception positively. This call was made during the 2025 Media Institute Training, organized by Vision Africa in Umuahia, the Abia State capital.

Themed "Image Makers: Shaping Culture, Inspiring Change Through Media," the annual event brought together journalists, broadcasters, students, and content creators to reflect on the critical role of the media in nation-building and enhance their professional capacity for ethical and impactful storytelling.

Representing the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, the Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, delivered the keynote address. He emphasized the state government's commitment to collaborating with journalists who are ethical, data-driven, and committed to truthful reporting.

"The new Abia seeks journalists who are thorough and objective, not purveyors of fake news. We need media professionals who interpret data accurately and lead by example," he stated. Prince Kanu further described media practitioners as "cultural architects" with the power to shape public perception and societal values through their content.

Also speaking at the event, Mrs. Susan Obi, Coordinating Director of Broadcast Monitoring at the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), commended Vision Africa's consistency in training the next generation of media professionals. "Holding a microphone comes with responsibility. You're not just speaking—you're helping people make informed decisions. Be intentional with your voice," she urged participants.

Founder of Vision Africa Radio, Bishop Sunday Onuoha, in his welcome address, noted that for over 13 years, Vision Africa has remained committed to equipping media professionals to positively impact society through its annual training initiatives. He encouraged attendees to put their new knowledge into action and contribute to improving the media landscape.

Troy Miller, President and CEO of the National Religious Broadcasters, delivered the keynote lecture, describing media practitioners as "image makers" and agents of cultural transformation. "By telling stories that reflect both the challenges and hopes of the people, media professionals shape national identity and foster unity," he said.

The event featured several technical and thematic sessions. Media experts Vic Costello, Jeff Wilson, and Don Geiger presented on topics such as "Design That Connects," "Visual Storytelling Through Photographic Composition," and "Writing 101."

A second phase of the training focused on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern media practice. Vic Costello spoke on "AI 2025: What I've Learned and How It's Changing My Work," while Jeff Wilson addressed "Pre-Production: Storytelling, Shot Lists, and How AI Changes the Game." Don Geiger concluded the



Vision Africa Media Institute Training 2025

Assault On Journalists: NUJ Boycotts Activities By Umuahia North Mayor

By Amarachi Uzonkwu

The Abia State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), has announced a total boycott of all activities involving the Mayor of Umuahia North Local Government Area, Hon. Smart Iheoma, following allegations of verbal abuse against journalists during an

environmental sanitation exercise held on May 31, 2025.

In a strongly worded communiqué issued at the end of its monthly congress held at the NUJ Press Centre in Umuahia, the Union condemned the Mayor's conduct, describing his remarks as derogatory, offensive, and unbecoming of a public

officeholder.

Presided over by the NUJ State Chairman, Comrade Chidi Asonye, the Congress alleged that Mayor Iheoma referred to journalists as "imbeciles" and "criminals" and further threatened to bar media professionals from covering official state events.

"The mayor's

utterances were not only demeaning but a direct attack on press freedom and the dignity of the journalism profession," the Congress stated.

As a result, the NUJ unanimously resolved to boycott all activities associated with the Umuahia North Local Government and placed a reporting embargo on the Mayor and his administration across all affiliated media platforms. The Union also issued a stern warning that any registered journalist or media outlet found violating the directive would face severe disciplinary sanctions.

While reaffirming its commitment to a co-operative relationship with the Abia State Government, the NUJ emphasised that it would not tolerate any form of intimidation, harassment, or insult directed at its members in the course of their legitimate duties.

In a broader resolution addressing public safety, the NUJ raised concerns over rising criminal activities in the Isuikwuato and Umunneochi local government areas.

The Congress urged the Operation Crush security task force to intensify efforts in curbing banditry and kidnapping, applauding the Abia State Government's initiative in establishing the security outfit.

The Union also called on

community leaders — including traditional rulers, village heads, and town union presidents-general — to take a proactive role in safeguarding their localities by forming vigilante groups and fostering community policing.

On agricultural and labour matters, the NUJ demanded the immediate enforcement of the state's anti-grazing law, citing the persistent destruction of farmlands and property by wandering cattle as a source of tension and economic hardship for rural communities.

Additionally, the Congress called on the state government to expedite action on the long-delayed 2022 and 2023 civil service promotion exercises, noting that the lack of implementation has demoralized many deserving workers who are yet to receive their promotions and entitlements.

The NUJ Abia State reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to press freedom, journalistic integrity, and the protection of its members' rights.

The communiqué was drafted by a committee comprising Michael Imeremba (Unity Federated Chapel), Chioma Rich-Ufomadu (BCA Chapel), and Mirth Ekejiuba (State Information), and officially endorsed by Comrade Iyke Onuegbu (Secretary) and Comrade Chidi Asonye (Chairman).

Otti's Wife Commends NDLEA For Fighting Drug Abuse

By Chibumma Ikeokwu

The wife of Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has extolled the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), for its commitment and resilience in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking in Abia State.

Mrs. Otti stated this recently during an anti-drug awareness campaign in Umuahia, organized by the NDLEA in collaboration with the Abia State Government.

The governor's wife represented by the wife of the Deputy Governor, Mrs.

Adaeze Emetu, said that youths must be guided and protected from the scourge of drug abuse, asserting that the state government will always support every initiative that prevents drug abuse, protects the youths, and promotes a culture of wellness.

Mrs. Otti, described the 2025 United Nations International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as a platform to emphasise the state government's dedicated fight against drugs and substance abuse.

On his part, the Acting State Commander of NDLEA, Abia Command, Deputy Commander of Narcotics, Chigbu

Odoemelam Chilee, said that organized crime often stems from societal cases such as poverty, lack of education, broken families, and unresolved trauma.

"If we treat addiction as a public health issue and invest in preventive mechanisms, we will make a lasting impact, starting with our children before they are exposed to the streets."

Chigbu, maintained that the dangerous cycle of drug abuse and organized crime in society can be broken through preventive mechanisms, increased investment in family life, youth orientation, mental healthcare, and drug education.

Editorial

Ending Nigeria's Illicit Drug Crisis

As Nigeria joins the global community in commemorating the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, it is time to pause and reflect — not just on how far we've come, but on how much further we must go to overcome one of the most insidious public health threats of our generation.

For over twenty years, Nigeria has grappled with the relentless spread of drug abuse, a crisis that has become increasingly complex and devastating. What began in the shadows — with limited cannabis use — has morphed into a full-blown national emergency marked by the widespread abuse of opioids, stimulants, and dangerous street cocktails. With over 14 million current users and projections pointing to 20 million by 2030, the time for token responses is over. Nigeria needs a strategic, prevention-led, and health-centered approach to halt this alarming trajectory.

Between 2005 and 2018, drug use in Nigeria doubled the global average, reaching 14.4% of the adult population. That figure has since worsened. Investigations, such as the BBC's Sweet Sweet Codeine, pulled back the curtain on widespread codeine abuse, leading to government bans and heightened scrutiny. But even with crackdowns and seizures, illicit alternatives like "Monkey Tail," methamphetamine, and tramadol-laced concoctions have continued to flourish, often outside the reach of regulators.

The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has carried out commendable enforcement campaigns under its revitalized leadership since 2021. In just four years, the agency seized nearly 10 million kilograms of drugs, arrested over 57,800 suspects, secured more than 10,000 convictions, and rehabilitated or counseled over 22,000 individuals. NDLEA's aggressive raids and international collaborations have disrupted major drug networks and destroyed thousands of hectares of cannabis farms.

Yet, despite these efforts, the streets remain flooded. The demand for drugs continues to outpace the state's ability to intercept supply.

Why? Because enforcement — while necessary — addresses the symptoms, not the disease.

Obstacles in the Fight have been identified to include the following:

First, underdeveloped Treatment Infrastructure which Nigeria's public rehab capacity remains woefully inadequate. Only a handful of government-supported centres exist — many are underfunded, understaffed, or concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities completely exposed.

Second, is lack of Harm Reduction Policies. Unlike many countries that have adopted evidence-based harm reduction strategies like opioid substitution therapy or

needle-exchange programmes, Nigeria still leans heavily on punitive models, deterring users from seeking help.

Of all measures engaged in the fight against illicit drugs in the past two decades, prevention has remained the least prioritized and the missing pillar.

If enforcement is the sword, then prevention must be the shield.

Unfortunately, Nigeria's drug response has underinvested in the latter. While the National Drug Control Master Plan (2015–2025) provided a roadmap integrating prevention, enforcement, treatment, and monitoring, implementation has been uneven — particularly on the prevention front.

A few bright spots exist. School-based programs like UNPLUGGED now reach over 110 federal unity schools. Community outreach initiatives have also expanded under NDLEA's Drug Demand Reduction efforts. But this is still a drop in the ocean.

To reverse the drug tide, Nigeria must pivot urgently to a public health approach that places prevention, education, and rehabilitation at the core.

Grassroots sensitization should be intensified through faith-based organizations, youth centres, traditional rulers, and civil society groups.

Programs tailored to local realities — especially in high-prevalence zones — must be prioritized. Drug education should become part of the national school curriculum, not an extracurricular option.

Peer-to-peer education models, backed by digital tools, can help demystify drug myths and equip students with resilience skills.

Introduction of needle exchange, safe injection sites, and medically assisted treatments like methadone therapy — particularly in high-risk communities, Collaboration with global health agencies to implement WHO-recommended harm reduction frameworks, are some of the recommended options.

At least one well-equipped drug treatment and mental health center should exist in every state, with mobile clinics in underserved areas. We also advocate for the training of more addiction counselors, psychologists, and social workers to manage rising cases.

Launch mass campaigns to challenge the stigma around drug addiction, with targeted messaging for women. Encourage media to report on recovery success stories and not just arrests.

The war on drugs in Nigeria can no longer rely on arrests and seizures alone. These methods, while critical, do not prevent first-time use, nor do they help users heal.

The true measure of progress will be when fewer Nigerians, specially youths, find themselves turning off to drugs in the first place. This will require bold leadership, smart investments, and a coordinated national effort that prioritizes prevention, treatment, and dignity.

If Nigeria is to win this war, it must stop treating drug abuse as a criminal issue and start recognizing it as a public health emergency; one that demands empathy, innovation, and, above all, prevention.

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

Curbing The Housing Deficit In Southeast Nigeria

Dear Editor,

The housing deficit in Southeast Nigeria has reached a critical level, demanding urgent attention from both government authorities and private stakeholders.

Urban centres such as Enugu, Aba, Awka, Owerri, Umuahia and Onitsha among others are experiencing unprecedented population growth, yet housing development has not kept pace. This imbalance has led to overcrowded living conditions, inflated rental costs, and the proliferation of informal settlements lacking basic infrastructure.

Several factors contribute to this crisis, including poor urban planning, bureaucratic bottlenecks in land acquisition, limited access to affordable housing finance, and a lack of incentives for private sector investment. Moreover, many local governments have not prioritized housing as a key component of regional development, despite its direct connection to health, productivity, and economic stability.

To address this growing challenge, a multi-pronged strategy is necessary such as:

Governments in the Southeast should actively encourage PPPs to mobilize investment, technical expertise, and innovation in housing delivery. Offering tax incentives, land subsidies, and fast-tracked approvals can attract credible developers.

Financial institutions must create flexible mortgage schemes tailored to low- and middle-income earners. The government, in turn, can support with guarantee funds and reduce interest rates through intervention programs.

There is an urgent need to modernize urban planning frameworks. Efficient land use, improved infrastructure, and transparent titling systems are essential for creating sustainable communities.

Encouraging the use of locally sourced materials and low-cost construction technology can reduce building costs and create employment within the region. Housing policies should not be top-down. Community input ensures that housing solutions are culturally appropriate and meet the real needs of the population.

Curbing the housing deficit in Southeast Nigeria is not merely a construction challenge — it is a socio-economic imperative. With deliberate planning, collaborative effort, and political will, the region can transform its housing landscape and improve the quality of life for millions.

Okenwa, Adaku Jane
from Umuahia, Abia State.

Features

Israel- Iran Conflict: The Nigerian Connection

By Dakuku Peterside

When Israel launched Operation Rising Lion in the early hours of June 13, 2025, most Nigerians were asleep. The footage came in fragments—precision airstrikes, sirens over Tel Aviv, defiant chants in Tehran. Within hours, Iran responded with Operation True Promise III, unleashing waves of drones and missiles toward Israeli positions. It was dramatic, brutal, and all too familiar: another chapter in the long, looping narrative of Middle Eastern conflict. But the shockwaves didn't stop at the borders of Iran or Israel. They travelled through global oil markets, diplomatic corridors, and geopolitical nerves—and in their wake, Nigeria began to feel the tremors.

By the end of that first week, crude oil prices had jumped sharply. For Nigeria, an oil economy in all but name, this was both a relief and a riddle. Higher oil prices meant more dollars from exports, more money flowing into government accounts, and—at least on paper—a budget easier to balance. After all, oil still accounts for more than 90% of Nigeria's export earnings and approximately half of the government's revenue. With the 2025 budget benchmarked at \$75 per barrel, any sudden climb toward \$100 looked like a gift from chaos.

But nothing is ever that simple. The same price surge that may pad Abuja's pockets may also punish everyday Nigerians. The cost of diesel, already elevated due to subsidy removals and pipeline vandalism, may rise further. Transporters may hike their fares. Manufacturers facing higher energy costs may pass them on to consumers. Tomatoes, noodles, cement—everything cost more. The Central Bank, still trying to steady the naira and tame inflation, has hinted at another interest rate hike. What began as a geopolitical explosion thousands of miles away may be shaping monetary policy in Abuja and emptying wallets in Enugu. It was a familiar paradox: Nigeria, rich in oil, drowning in cost.

The Israel-Iran conflict touches nerves far beyond the battlefield, and for Nigeria, it activates a complicated web of diplomatic, religious, and geopolitical considerations. First, Nigeria's identity as a multi-religious nation plays an outsized role in how it engages with conflicts in the Middle East. With a large and politically active Muslim population, especially in the northern regions, Nigeria must be mindful of public sentiment. Historically, Muslim-majority countries across Africa have taken strong stances on Palestinian liberation and opposed Western alignment with Israel. Domestic political actors and Islamic clerics in Nigeria often echo this sentiment, making neutrality a high-wire act for Nigerian diplomats.

Furthermore, Nigeria has long held an official position that supports the Palestinian cause, often voting in favour of Palestinian self-determination at the United Nations and other multilateral platforms. This legacy shapes its foreign policy and regional affiliations, including membership in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). However, over the past decade, Nigeria has also established discreet but critical bilateral relations with Israel, particularly in the areas of technology, security, counterterrorism, agriculture, and water management. Israeli companies have participated in developmental projects in Nigeria, and security cooperation has

included counter-insurgency support in the fight against Boko Haram, Piracy and banditry.

This means that Nigeria cannot afford to alienate either side. It must craft a nuanced diplomatic language that upholds its historical solidarity with Palestine while preserving its growing strategic relationship with Israel. It also has to navigate its broader relationship with the Islamic world, which includes key oil-producing allies in the Middle East like Saudi Arabia and the UAE—countries that are themselves carefully managing their stakes in the Israel-Iran drama. All this unfolds while Nigeria also depends on the West, particularly the United States and European Union, for development assistance, security cooperation, and trade.

Nigeria's diplomatic stance on the Israel-Iran conflict may not significantly alter global outcomes, but it must be carefully calibrated to prevent internal unrest, diplomatic fallout, or reputational harm. Silence, ambiguity, or outright bias could ignite tensions at home or weaken strategic partnerships abroad. A clear, principled voice that calls for de-escalation, protection of civilians, and respect for international law may be Nigeria's best option.

security challenges, such as the Sahel insurgency, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and democratic backsliding in West Africa.

There is also the danger of ideological spillover. Nigeria, like many African nations, is not immune to the influence of radical religious narratives. An intensified Middle East conflict could embolden extremist rhetoric among fringe groups in Nigeria, feeding into existing tensions and undermining national security. The more the region becomes radicalised by foreign grievances, the harder it becomes to sustain Nigeria's fragile religious harmony.

This underscores the need for Nigeria to strengthen its intelligence and border control capabilities, monitor ideological infiltration, and insulate its domestic narrative from imported conflicts. It also suggests that Nigeria must be more proactive in multilateral diplomacy—working with the African Union, ECOWAS, and international partners to advocate for de-escalation and peaceful resolution.

One of the more cynical realities of modern geopolitics is the profitability of war. The Israel-Iran conflict, like many before it, activates a global defence economy—particularly centred around the U.S., where the military-industrial complex

productive capacity—the more it risks being seen as a peripheral player in a world order defined by power politics. The war economy is seductive but ultimately unsustainable. Nigeria must avoid being pulled into its orbit.

The short-term benefit of this crisis—a spike in crude oil prices—should be treated with strategic sobriety. If the Nigerian government sees this windfall as a new lease on life for its oil-dependent model, it will only delay the inevitable reckoning. Instead, this moment should be used as a pivot: to increase oil production where possible, reduce infrastructural leakages, and reinvest earnings into non-oil sectors.

Nigeria should urgently ramp up efforts to repair its vandalised pipelines, restore confidence among international oil companies, and support indigenous players. Clear fiscal terms under the Petroleum Industry Act must be enforced and simplified to remove ambiguity. With production levels at 1.3 million barrels per day—well below potential—there is room to grow responsibly and transparently.

But more importantly, this is the time to channel revenues into transformational infrastructure. Funds should be directed toward stable electricity, modern rail networks, agricultural value chains, and digital infrastructure. This includes supporting local refining through modular refineries.

At the same time, Nigeria must demonstrate fiscal responsibility. Revenues should be used to rebuild the Excess Crude Account, pay down expensive external debt, and introduce legal frameworks that limit excessive recurrent spending.

Most importantly, Nigeria must stop pretending that commodity booms are equivalent to economic growth. Proper growth requires the development of human capital, the rule of law, institutional reform, and policy continuity. It requires investing in people and systems that can withstand the inevitable bust when oil prices crash again. Because they always do. Any windfall from the Israel-Iran conflict may be unearned, but what Nigeria does with it will be the most accurate test of leadership.

Ultimately, the lesson Nigeria should draw is one of providence tempered by prudence. The sudden windfall from rising oil prices triggered by the Israel-Iran conflict offers a narrow corridor to shore up finances, invest in the future, and strengthen institutions. But it also carries a warning: depending on episodic spikes driven by external instability is neither sustainable nor ethical. Actual resilience demands focusing on governance reforms, economic diversification, and social cohesion so that when the next shock—whether geopolitical, climatic, or technological—arrives, Nigeria's economy and polity are better equipped to absorb it.

In the unfolding drama between Tehran and Tel Aviv, Nigeria may feel tremors in its markets and society, but it must direct its fate by using any temporary gains to build enduring foundations rather than chasing transient gains born of conflict. There is no oil price high enough to replace good governance. No foreign war is sufficient to substitute for domestic vision. As the world watches the Middle East burn, Nigeria must look inward, ask hard questions, and act with clarity because the real conflict isn't just between Israel and Iran. It's between what Nigeria could become—and what it will settle for.

Most importantly, Nigeria must stop pretending that commodity booms are equivalent to economic growth. Proper growth requires the development of human capital, the rule of law, institutional reform, and policy continuity.

The possibility that this conflict might escalate into a broader regional war is very real. Should the United States choose to launch direct attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities—or if Iran's proxies such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, or Shia militias in Iraq step up hostilities—there could be a cascading effect involving multiple regional and global actors. Such a scenario would send oil prices soaring well past \$120 per barrel, destabilise maritime routes like the Strait of Hormuz, and unleash a wave of economic, political, and humanitarian crises that would reverberate across the globe.

For Nigeria, the implications would be immediate. Escalation means higher global risk aversion, reduced foreign investment, rising credit costs, and potential disruptions to international trade, particularly in refined petroleum products. Furthermore, regional escalation would lead to increased Western military engagement, further entrenching U.S. and European interests in the Middle East and possibly diverting attention and resources away from African

thrives on instability. Every missile launched, every defence shield deployed, and every infrastructure project destroyed and rebuilt becomes a commercial opportunity for arms manufacturers, defence contractors, and reconstruction firms. The result is a self-reinforcing cycle in which war fuels business, and business, in turn, incentivises prolonged instability.

This pattern is not lost on observers in the Global South. Nigeria, a resource-rich but infrastructure-poor country, should be cautious about relying too heavily on global instability as an economic stimulus. Rising oil prices may temporarily swell government coffers, but they are not a development strategy. Countries that rely on geopolitical chaos to grow their revenue become addicted to volatility and unprepared for long-term planning.

Moreover, this cycle of conflict reinforces geopolitical blocs and divides the world into transactional alliances. The more Nigeria appears to benefit from war passively—without articulating its long-term interests or building internal



Abia State Government

Ministry of Power and Public Utilities

The Abia State Government through the Ministry of Power and Public Utilities Umuahia invites qualified and experienced auctioneers to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) tender on Boarding of Unserviceable vehicles and items at Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, Abia State Water and Sewage Cooperation Stations and Abia State REWASSA for auctioning as per the following technical and evaluation reports listed items:

DEPARTMENT	ABIA STATE RUWASSA
STATION	RUWASSA
MAKE	ACADIA
TYPE	SCANIA RIGHTY
REG NO.	
YEAR OF PURCHASE	(x/IMO)
ENGINE NO.	NIL
CHASSIS NO.	NIL
MACHINE/SERIAL NO.	MOTOR VEHICLE
CLASSIFICATION	RIG TRUCK
DETAILS:	
ENGINE	knocked
LUBRICATING	NOT FUNCTIONING
COOLING SYSTEM	NIL
IGNITION/ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	NO IGNITION KEY, NO BATTER, NO WIRES
STEERING	KNOCKED
FRONT AXLE	KNOCKED
REAR AXLE	KNOCKED
CLUCH/GEAR BOX/TRANSMISSION	GEAR BOX KNOCKED, NO CLUCH
BODY/CHASSIS	CURED
TYRES	NO 4 TYRES
INSTRUMENT GAUGES	NOT SEEN
GENERAL CONDITION	Unserviceable vehicle that are presently constituting health hazard to the working environment reptiles and other dangerous animals are hiding inside the vehicle
RECOMMENDATION	ABANDONED OUTSIDE FOR YEARS in public for auction sales expensive to repairs, beyond economic usage
DEPARTMENT	ABIA STATE RUWASSA
STATION	Olorokoro
MAKE	HILUX
TYPE	TOYOTA
REG NO.	
YEAR OF PURCHASE	(x/IMO)
ENGINE NO.	NOT SEEN
CHASSIS NO.	NIL
MACHINE/SERIAL NO.	MOTOR VEHICLE
CLASSIFICATION	VEHICLE
DETAILS:	
ENGINE	knocked
LUBRICATING	NOT FUNCTIONING
COOLING SYSTEM	NIL
IGNITION/ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	NO IGNITION KEY, NO BATTER, STEERING
STEERING	KNOCKED
FRONT AXLE	KNOCKED
REAR AXLE	KNOCKED
CLUCH/GEAR BOX/TRANSMISSION	GEAR BOX KNOCKED, NO CLUCH
BODY/CHASSIS	BAD
TYRES	NO 4 TYRES BAD
INSTRUMENT GAUGES	BAD
GENERAL CONDITION	BAD
RECOMMENDATION	Unserviceable Hilux Toyota very bad engine knocked, body corroded ABANDONED in mechanic workshop at Olorokoro for many years recommend boarding to avoid further deterioration.
DEPARTMENT	ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION
STATION	UMUOKPARA
MAKE	504
TYPE	PICK-UP
REG NO.	
YEAR OF PURCHASE	(X/IMO)
ENGINE NO.	NIL
CHASSIS NO.	VF3504V5106072876
MACHINE/SERIAL NO.	MOTOR VEHICLE
CLASSIFICATION	VEHICLE
DETAILS:	
ENGINE	knocked
LUBRICATING	NOT FUNCTIONING
COOLING SYSTEM	NIL
IGNITION/ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	NO IGNITION KEY, NO BATTER
STEERING	NOT SEEN
FRONT AXLE	BAD
REAR AXLE	KNOCKED
CLUCH/GEAR BOX/TRANSMISSION	GEAR BOX KNOCKED, CLUCH BAD
BODY/CHASSIS	RUSTED
TYRES	4 TYRES WORN-OUT
INSTRUMENT GAUGES	NOT SEEN
GENERAL CONDITION	SCRAB
RECOMMENDATION	Unserviceable 504 vehicle engine knocked, and not functioning abandoned outside for many years and it not will serve the purpose if repairs therefore recommended for public auction

DEPARTMENT		Abid State Water and Sewage	
STATION		Cooperation	
		Umuokpara	
S/N	UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	Generator set 1000KVA unserviceable x/Imo engine knocked not function and it was covered by bush beyond economical usage recommended for public auction	.1	

TECHNICAL INSPECTION/EVALUATION REPORT MOT/AB/GB			
DEPARTMENT		ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION	
STATION		Obingwa	
S/N	UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	unservicable Generator set 100KVA rolls - Royce x/Imo engine knocked and vandalized recommended for public auction	1	

TECHNICAL INSPECTION/EVALUATION REPORT MOT/AB/GB			
DEPARTMENT		ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION	
STATION		Isiaiangwa North (Mbutu)	
S/N	UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	unserviceable Generator set DALE 150KVA x/Imo engine very-very Bad abandoned outside under the rain for many years and was covered by bush recommended for public auction	1	
	scrap engine Block	1	
	Steel tank	1	
	Total		

DEPARTMENT		ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION	
STATION		UMUAU	
S/N	UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	unserviceable Generator set 150KVA X/IMO engine knocked, not function. Recommendation: corroded, beyond economical usage, public auction.	1	

TECHNICAL INSPECTION/EVALUATION REPORT MOT/AB/GB			
DEPARTMENT		ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION	
STATION		MBAWSI	
S/N	UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	unserviceable Generator set 250KVA x/Imo (NOT SEEN)		
	Scrap Head Pump	1	
	Scrap pipes	4	
	Total		

DEPARTMENT		ABIA STATE WATER AND SEWAGE COOPERATION	
STATION		UMUAHIA	
S/N	DISUSED ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	REGIRATOR	4	
2	Steel tank	1	
3	Television	4	
4	Solar batteries	34	
5	Old Yamaha motorcycles (x/Imo)	3	
6	Old computer tube	11	
7	CPU	4	
8	Printer	2	
9	Seater cushion	1	
10	Wheelbarrow	2	
11	Swivel chairs	4	
12	BURNT SOLAR PANEL	8	
13	FIRE EXTINGUISHER	18	
14	AC pipe (assorted) at Ariaria Aba	2000	
15	Steel pipe Ogbor Hill	1	

16	Steel tank Ogbor Hill	1	
17	STEEL TANK Ariaria	1	
18	OLD RUGS (floor)	Many	
19	Steel pipe Ariaria	5	
20	Ac pipe Ohafia	135	
21	Steel pipe Iron Ohafia along the road	4	
22	Rechargeable torch	18	
23	Ac pipe (Associated)	Many	
	Steel cabinet	3	
	Standing fan	3	
	Photocopy Machine	1	
	Old Television	2	
	Mowing Machine	1	1
	Total		

DEPARTMENT		MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITY	
STATION		UMUAHIA	
S/N	DISUSED ITEMS	QTY	Amount (N)
1	Rugs	5	
2	WASH HAND BASIN STAND	6	
3	WOODEN BED	2	
4	AC PROTECTOR	2	
5	WHEELBARROW	1	
6	Ac cover	1	
7	Not seen		
8	Curtine	3	
9	Car tyre	3	
10	Aluminum Solar battery box	16	
11	Tables	5	
12	Iron drum	2	
13	Loovers glass	Many	
14	Photocopy machine	4	
15	Old Television	4	
16	Standing Gas cooker	1	
17	Curtain rail	8	
18	Ac pipe	2	
19	Electric office Refrigerator (room 6) 1 and office of the director (room 2) 1	2	
20	Water resources department 2 refrigeration		

21	Open registry 1 refrigerator	1	
22	Iron Table and iron plate	1	
23	Fire extinguisher	3	
24	Stabilizer	4	
25	Steel cabinet	1	
26	Standing fan	1	
27	CPU	3	
28	Monitor	3	
29	AC	2	
30	Printer	2	
31	Radio set	2	
32	Key board	3	
33	Office chairs	3	
34	Hp lasserjet printer	2	
35	STAINLESS ARM POLES	MANY	
36	HP LASERJET PRINT	13	
	TOTAL		

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

All interested companies. Individuals and general public are encouraged to participate on the auctioning day, two weeks from the date of this publication.

Mode of tendering

- All application must be addressed to the Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, P.M.B 7226, Umuahia, Abia State.
- The application should bear the reference number of this publication and be submitted under seal to reach the Ministry's Planning, Research and Statistics Department within seven (7) days from the date of this letter.

Engr. Ikechukwu Monday.
Hon. Commissioner
Ministry of Power and Public Utility



Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike
+2348037744514

Senate Begins Constitutional Review, Considers States Creation

The Nigerian Senate has started a comprehensive review of the 1999 Constitution, with major proposals on the table including the creation of new states, establishment of state police, judicial and electoral reforms, and strengthening local government autonomy.

According to, the Deputy Senate President and Chairman of the Constitution Review Committee, Senator Barau Jibrin, the Senate has received 31 proposals for new states, which will be evaluated during a two-day zonal public hearing scheduled for July 4-5, 2025.

The hearings will be held simultaneously in Lagos (South-West), Enugu (South-East), Ikot Ekpene (South-South), Jos (North-Central), Maiduguri (North-East), and Kano (North-West).

The Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to Senator Jibrin, Ismail Madashif announced in a statement recently that the committee is committed to gathering broad public input on proposed constitutional amendments.

Breakdown of State Creation Requests showed that, the committee has received: 5 state creation requests from the South-West, South-South, and North-Central zones; 7 from the North-East; 6 from the North-West; and 3 from the South-East.

Among these proposals is a bill sponsored by Senator Osita Izunaso (Imo West) for the creation of Anim State in the South-East, to be carved out from parts of Anambra and Imo States. The bill has already passed second reading and is under committee review.

Other Key Areas Under Review Include: Local Government Autonomy; the bill seeks to formally recognize local governments as a constitutionally guaranteed tier of government with secure tenure.

Electoral Reform: Proposals include establishing an independent National Local Government Electoral Commission (NALGEC) and allowing for independent candidacy and diaspora voting.

Security and State Police: Two bills propose the creation of state police and the formation of State Security Councils to oversee internal security policies at sub-national levels.

Fiscal Reforms: Six bills will address fiscal restructuring. These include empowering the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation, and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) to enforce revenue remittances and proposing deadlines for budget submissions by the President and state governors.

Judicial Reform: Over 20 bills are under review, focusing on expanding election tribunals' jurisdiction and mandating timelines for judgment delivery.

Gender Inclusion: A bill proposes the creation of additional legislative seats reserved for women in both national and state assemblies.

Traditional Institutions: Proposals also aim to establish national, state, and local government councils of traditional rulers.

Power Devolution: Some amendments seek to transfer items such as labour and shipping from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent List to allow states greater legislative powers.

Senator Jibrin urged Nigerians to actively participate in the public hearings across the six zones, emphasizing that citizens' engagement is crucial to the legitimacy and success of the constitutional amendment process.

Tinubu Launches 2,000 Tractors, 9,000 Implements to Boost Agric Mechanisation

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has inaugurated the deployment of 2,000 advanced tractors and over 9,000 specialised farm implements under the Renewed Hope Agricultural Mechanisation Programme, aimed at transforming Nigeria's agricultural sector and empowering young Nigerians.

The commissioning held recently in Abuja, marked a significant milestone in the Federal Government's efforts to modernise agriculture and ensure food security. President Tinubu noted that the initiative was in collaboration with international partners and is part of his administration's broader strategy to promote year-round farming and reduce seasonal food shortages.

"We have here over 2,000 advanced tractors, 50 industrial-grade land preparation bulldozers, 12 fully equipped mobile workshops, and more than 9,000 specialised farming implements. This equipment will empower mechanisation service providers, create job opportunities, and make farming more attractive – more sexy – for our young people", the President

state.

He emphasized that the goal is to equip Nigerian youths with modern agricultural skills, financial independence, and technological know-how, thereby pulling them off the streets and into productive ventures.

"You don't have to use 18th-century methods for

national productivity and drastically improve Nigeria's mechanisation level.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, said the initiative aligns with President Tinubu's vision of using agriculture as a cornerstone for economic

initiatives launched under the Tinubu administration: the John Deere Tractorisation Programme, the Greener Hope Project, the Green Imperative Programme, and the Belarus Project.

Also speaking, Minister of State for Agriculture, Aliyu Abdullahi, described the new scheme as a landmark effort to address Nigeria's low level of farm mechanisation.

"With this programme, our mechanisation level will leap from the current 0.27 horsepower per hectare to nearly 2.5 horsepower per hectare, aligning us with the global average. That's a quantum leap," Abdullahi said.

President Tinubu urged stakeholders across the country to ensure the equipment is used efficiently and responsibly, promising strict oversight and accountability.

"We will work with you, supervise you, and hold you accountable. Let history record this day as the beginning of Nigeria's agricultural renaissance – where modern technology meets our farmers' legendary resilience to create unprecedented prosperity," he further stated.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

21st-century agriculture. With our nation's vast arable land and favourable climate, we must seize this opportunity to achieve full agricultural independence and food sovereignty," Tinubu added.

The programme, which includes equipment sourced through international partnerships such as the Belarus Project, is expected to enhance recovery, employment generation, and social stability.

"From the onset of this administration, Mr. President made it clear: food security is national security. This mechanisation push under the Renewed Hope Agenda is a game-changer," Kyari said.

He also highlighted four major mechanisation

FG Supports Firm Over Foreign Investment

The Federal Government has thrown its full weight behind a \$400 million foreign direct investment (FDI) by Hasetins Commodities Limited to establish Africa's largest rare earth and critical minerals processing plant in Nasarawa State.

Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Dele Alake, who announced the government's support in a statement released by his Special Assistant on Media, Segun Tomori, described the initiative as a major leap toward industrialization and job creation in Nigeria. The facility is projected to generate over 10,000 jobs across the country.

Dr. Alake commended Hasetins Commodities for backing President Bola Tinubu's value addition

agenda, stating that the establishment of the plant is a strategic milestone in the government's efforts to promote in-country processing, beneficiation, and economic diversification.

"I'm glad our ongoing engagements have culminated in this groundbreaking initiative. With your collaboration, we are now witnessing the establishment of the largest rare earth and critical metals plant in Africa, right here in Nigeria," the minister stated.

He emphasized that the project would not only boost investor confidence in the mining sector but also contribute significantly to skills transfer, local content development, and sustainable growth of the solid minerals industry.

Hasetins Commodities Limited plans to expand its

production capacity from 6,000 to 18,000 metric tonnes as preparations intensify for the groundbreaking of the expanded facility.

Speaking the Managing Director and CEO of Hasetins Commodities Ltd, Prince Jidayi expressed gratitude for the minister's reforms, particularly the deployment of mining marshals to tackle illegal mining and the streamlining of licensing processes. He said these measures played a key role in attracting the company's investment.

"Our model ensures early-stage beneficiation by pre-separating metals locally, which provides immediate income for artisanal miners. We are also establishing regional separation plants, training local communities, and supplying protective

equipment to miners," he said.

Director of Corporate Affairs at Hasetins, Peter Butt praised the minister's focus on local value addition, which he said aligns with the company's commitment to sustainable development and community empowerment.

Reaffirming government support, Dr. Alake noted that the project aligns with the Ministry's strategic vision to transform Nigeria's solid minerals into a driver of industrial growth and economic transformation.

"This investment confirms that our policies are producing tangible results. We remain committed to providing the institutional support needed to make Nigeria a hub for mineral processing in Africa," he said.

Religion

Understanding God's Settlement

By Chukwunweike Chikaodi

God's settlement can be defined as God given man all round rest.

When God is at work in the life of any man, He gives you rest all round. I see God given you rest in your health, family, finances and every area of life in Jesus Name. The state of your mind determines the outcome of what happen. (Prov 4:20-23). My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their

flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are issues of life. Transformation is a product of renewing mind set. The things that cause supernatural flow in man's life is word of God you know and practice. In the book of Mark 11:23 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 heart but shall believe that those things which he said shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. The seed is the word. When you speak the word of abundance. When you speak the word, it will

come to reality. The word is creative, it can make things to happen the way you wish. (Romans 4:17). As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believes, even God, quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. The word is arrow that shoot at enemy. The

word is sword that cut the enemy into pieces. It makes alive and it can be destructive. (Eph 6:17) Therefore speak the word against the mountain that is against you. Speak wealth, prosperity. The word is a generator that generate power Lk 5:17, Job 6:25.

How powerful is right word?

Right words are so

As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believes, even God, quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. The word is arrow that shoot at enemy.

powerful therefore don't allow your tongue to cause your body and flesh suffer (Eccl 5:6). What you said is what you will eventually have. (Act 19:20, Num 14:28)

What to do to maintain financial flow

Work: God blesses the works of our hand Ps 1:1-3, your work is your worth. Anything can happen at place of your work, you can find more opportunities as you are working. Find something doing, no matter how small it is (Prov 14:23) In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

A v o i d

wastefulness: Learn how to manage your finance and other materials (John 6:12). When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

Covetousness: Avoid desiring what others are having.

Comparison: Stop comparing yourself to others, be contented with what you have.

Slothfulness: Avoid slothfulness in everything you do.

Lastly, be born again.

Build your faith with word of God; then, demand for your settlement with prayer and fasting.

Glory be to God.

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

We shall be looking into the topic, Keys To A Lasting Marriage. It is my prayer that as you open up your heart to God's Word, your home will experience the glory of a lasting marriage, in Jesus' name.

I will like to start by asking you this question: What is marriage to you? Is it a thing of joy and pleasure, or a 'necessary evil', as many would say? Is it a bed of roses or one that is full of thorns and thistles? Is it a thing that you are glad you are in or one that hurts you day by day, and you are trying to get out of? Well, I have good news for you!

What then is marriage? Marriage is the legal union of a man and a woman coming

together as husband and wife. It is the foundation for the family, because until it is in place, there can be no family. A family is a social group in the society, consisting of a man, his wife, and their offspring.

Marriage is a covenant relationship. It is not just the coming together of a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation. Although having children is one of the blessings of marriage, it means much more than that. Some people think marriage is merely co-habiting with someone of the opposite sex, but, this perception is wrong, as it goes beyond that. Marriage is a covenant.

Advertisement

When a man and a woman come together as husband and wife, they are expected to have entered a better way of

living. Ecclesiastes 4:9 says: Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

Marriage is meant to be exciting, but when it is not founded upon God, the joy, excitement and satisfaction the couple had at the onset is short-lived. It's like owning a car. With time, new models come out, and what was once new begins to age; the car owner now desires to change the once new car for the latest one. Why? Because the old one does not excite him anymore. However, when God is at the centre of your marriage, you find that instead of getting tired of each other, your excitement and satisfaction increase as the years go by, making the relationship go from good to better and from better to best!

Marriage is good!

Don't think that marriage is for shame and reproach. No, my friend! You don't have to settle for an average home, you don't have to put up with continuous quarrelling and fighting; you can make that marriage work! You can have a marriage free of hurt and wounds; you can enjoy fulfilment and God's goodness, and His lasting peace

Marriage can be likened to a house. The Architect who drew the master plan is God, while the husband and the wife are the builders, who must diligently follow the design of the Architect, so as to experience success in their marriage and family. This is why the scripture expressly says in Hebrews 3:4: For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. Also the Bible says in

Proverbs 24:3: Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established.

The realm of marriage that God wants you to enter is such that you would get to a point where men and even devils are compelled to acknowledge God's glory that is all over your family. This is your heritage as a child of God!

I command an end to whatever is bringing unrest in your marriage today. If there is any tumult in your life and family, I command the peace of God to replace it now, in Jesus' name.

Nevertheless, all hope is not lost. If you make a decision today to become committed to your marriage and family, God's grace will be available to you to establish your desire.

Grace is only

available to the redeemed of the Lord. So, if you are not born again, there is no way you can be committed to God or your marriage. You need to give your life to Christ. You do this by confessing your sins and accepting Jesus your Lord and Saviour. Are you set for it? Why not say this prayer of faith from your heart: Dear Lord, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. I accept You as my Lord and Saviour. Now I know I am born again!

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

Keys To A Lasting Marriage

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti (Middle), Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (2nd Left), acknowledging cheers from Abians during the grand civic reception organized in honor of the Governor by the Abiriba Communal Improvement Union (ACIU), held at Enyimba International Stadium



Governor Alex Otti (left), Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (right) seated during the grand civic reception organized in honor of the Governor by the Abiriba Communal Improvement Union (ACIU), held at Enyimba International Stadium.



Governor Alex Otti (center), flanked by the Chinese Consul General, Ms. Yan Yuqing, and the Commissioner for Health, Prof. Enoch Ogbonnaya Uche, during the commissioning of several Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) retrofitted by the current administration under Project Ekwueme.



L-R: Governor Alex Otti of Abia State (center), Chidi Nnadi of the NDLEA (4th left), Brigadier General O.O. Diya of the Nigerian Army (5th left), Navy Captain O.A. Eytayo of the Nigerian Navy (6th right), Dr. Shelema Muhammed Soso of the DSS (5th right), and others during the send-off ceremony for the outgoing Service Commanders, organized by the Abia State Government in Abia State.

Photos By Chukwu Chidiebere



Governor Alex Otti and Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, waving to cheerful supporters of the Aba community, accompanied by Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Ihuoma Emeruwa, Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, and others, during the grand civic reception organized in honor of the Governor by the Abiriba Communal Improvement Union (ACIU), held at Enyimba International Stadium.



Governor Alex Otti (5th left) with the state champions of the 2025 Civic Connect Hackathon, organized by the State Ministry of Science and Technology and the Special Adviser to the Governor on Digital Economy.



The Chairman of the Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), Abia State, Elder James Ebere Nwokochoh (4th left); the Chairman of Obingwa LGA, Hon. Maxwell Nwadike (5th left); Commissioner I, LGSC, Barr. Jerry Uzosike (3rd left); Commissioner IV, LGSC, Dame Ngozi Nwagbara, PhD (5th right); and the Permanent Secretary, LGSC, Princess Ezinne Ngwakwe, PhD (3rd right), among others, during the Commission's recent visit to the Obingwa Council Headquarters in Obi-Mgboko, Abia State.



L-R: Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Mr. Matthew C. Ekwuribe; Deputy Governor of Abia State, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu; Wife of the Abia State Governor, Lady Priscilla Otti; Governor Alex Otti of Abia State; Chief Chika Okpala, a.k.a. Chief Zebrudaya Okoro Igwe Nwogbo alias "4:30"; and his wife, during the 75th birthday celebration of Chief Chika Okpala of the defunct New Masquerade TV series fame, hosted by the Abia State Government.

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti (right) shakes hands with veteran actor, Chief Chika Okpala (left), during the 75th birthday celebration of the legendary actor, organized by the Abia State Government at the Banquet Hall of the Government House, Umuahia.



Deputy Governor of Abia State, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (6th from left); Governor Alex Otti (center); his wife, Lady Priscilla Otti (6th right); the celebrant, Chief Chika Okpala, a.k.a. Chief Zebrudaya Okoro Igwe Nwogbo; and members of the Abia State Executive Council during the 75th birthday celebration of Chief Chika Okpala (a.k.a. Chief Zebrudaya alias "4:30" of the defunct New Masquerade TV series), hosted by the Abia State Government.



Governor Alex Otti and his wife, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, in a cheerful mood with Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu during a friendly visit by the senator representing Abia North Senatorial District to commend and encourage the Governor for the good work he is doing in the state.



Senator Darlington Nwokocha, Governor Alex Otti of Abia State, Brigadier General O.O. Diya of the Nigerian Army, Navy Captain O.A. Eytayo of the Nigerian Navy, and Dr. Shelema Muhammed Soso of the DSS (5th right), during the send-forth ceremony for the outgoing Service Commanders, organized by the Abia State Government in Abia State.



Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa (2nd right); Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Austin Okezie Nmerigini (2nd from left); Majority Leader of the 8th Assembly, Hon. Uchenna Okoro Kalu (1st right); and Member representing Umuahia North State Constituency, Hon. Barr. Anderson Akaliro.



Chairman of the Abia State Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), Elder James Ebere Nwokochah (4th left); Mayor of Aba South LGA, Hon. Anyanwu Obialor (5th left); Hon. Allen Wogu (1st left); Hon. G.C. Duru (4th right); Hon. Oji Kalu (3rd right); Permanent Secretary of the LGSC, Princess Ezinne Ngwakwe, Ph.D. (2nd right); Dame Ngozi Nwagbara, Ph.D. (2nd left); and Hon. Jerry Uzosike (5th right), among others, during the Commission's visit to Aba South LGA.



Some staff members of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Umuobia, Umuahia, during the presentation of a Pillar of Support Award to Mr. Uke Oji in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the development and growth of the church.



Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State (4th left), Senator Ekong Sampson, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Solid Minerals Development (3rd left), and other members of the Committee during their visit to Enugu State.

News

I'll Never Forsake You, President Tinubu Assures Eno

By Lovina Emole

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has reassured Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno that he would never forsake him in his political sojourn.

The president gave the assurance recently, during the grand reception of Governor Eno by the All Progressives Congress, APC, which held at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

The President, represented by his Vice, Senator Kashim Shettima said Gov Eno would never regret his decision to join the APC, acknowledging that it was a huge sacrifice that the governor made.

He stated that APC believes in building bridges and not walls adding that in unity and togetherness the nation would thrive.

According to him, "We are here because we believe in building bridges not walls and mending fences, not destroying it. President Tinubu is a bridge builder and your decision to come to APC is one you can never regret. The President assures you that you won't be humiliated or forsaken. We are your brothers and we will rise together. We are not assemblage of politicians, we are a family."

"We will stand by you as we stood by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio who went through fire because of our Party. We are all with you and we shall succeed together. On behalf of the President I thank you for coming to APC."

Speaking, the President



Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno

of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio applauded Governor Eno for taking the bold step to join the APC noting that the Governor from onset has been identifying and showing support to President Bola Tinubu's led administration.

Akpabio said among other things Gov Eno's request from the centre was the realization of Ibom Deep Seaport, assuring that his request shall be granted.

While pledging resolve to ensure the victory of President Tinubu in the South South during the 2027 election, Akpabio expressed hope that the remaining two states in the region will join the APC soon.

"What we have here today is not just a political movement, but a political maturity. You have placed the peace and development

of Akwa Ibom state above party lines. We say welcome to the progressive family and we know you are going to add value and not number to the family. It's going to be from celebrations to collaborations."

"I see things turning around for good in Akwa Ibom, you are a man of your words, there is nothing anybody can do to you, among the things you asked for from the centre was the Ibom deep seaport, don't worry, we will give you more than you asked for, he stated."

Earlier, Governor Eno recalled that on June 6, he made the Progressive movement to APC to align to the centre and support President Tinubu reforms to bring economic growth to the state.

He appealed to the President and the Federal

Government to make his movement to the progressive party translate to the realisation of the Ibom Deep Seaport in the state.

"So, we are not afraid to join the APC as we know with APC, we will realise our Ibom Deep Seaport. Today we are reassured by the Federal Government that we will have it. Akwa Ibom has 19.1m deep water and we don't even need to dredge even if it is one terminal, this movement would have been justified."

"We have taken the risk to join the Senate President to deliver the President come 2027, and we know that every risk has a reward and our reward should be the Ibom Deep Seaport which for over 30 years we struggled to have." The Governor said.

The APC National Chairman, Abdullahi Ganduje, while welcoming Governor Eno to the Party described him as a wise man who knows the difference between national isolation and national unity.

Ganduje expressed joy that South-South Zone of the Country has four APC Governors and would soon have the remaining two in the opposition Party saying that with uniformity of political Party, it would be easier to solve the common problem in the South South region.

"Since we are progressive governors in the South South, it will be easier to take care of the problem of the region," he said.

Abia Ministry Of Tertiary Education Partners With Gender Mobile Initiative To Launch Safety Framework

By Ekebuisi Precious

In a concerted effort to combat sexual harassment in higher institutions, the Ministry of Tertiary Education in Abia State recently hosted a one-day campaign in collaboration with the Gender Mobile Initiative (GMI), a non-governmental organization.

The campaign, themed, "Institutionalizing Campus Safety Initiative Framework at All Tertiary Institutions in Abia State," brought together key stakeholders to discuss actionable strategies for creating safer academic environments.

Welcoming members of the NGO, the Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Prof. Eme Uche Eme, commended the initiative, describing it as timely and essential. She, however, emphasized that more still needs to be done, noting that sexual harassment is deeply rooted in societal structures including culture, tradition, and religion.

"Sexual harassment—whether verbal or physical—is real. It can affect anyone, regardless of gender. Your body is your private property, even if you are a call girl," Prof. Eme stated.

She urged participants to examine the issue critically, pointing out that harassment often begins subtly, "with one look at a time." She also highlighted that harassment is not limited to heterosexual contexts, stressing that same-gender incidents should be equally acknowledged and addressed.

The event featured a presentation by Mr. Emmanuel Olatunde, Learning, Measurement, and Evaluation Officer at GMI, who introduced the organization's Theory of Change on sexual harassment. He defined the term and outlined various types and causes of harassment, including the absence of effective anti-sexual harassment policies and the failure to implement existing ones.

Olatunde showcased CampusPal, a mobile app developed by GMI that allows students and staff to report incidents anonymously. He described it as "a beautiful community" built to support both students and lecturers in tackling the menace of harassment on campuses.

He also introduced the Independent Sexual Harassment Prohibition Committee (ISHPC)—a seven-member body set up by institutions that sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GMI.

This committee is responsible for overseeing and resolving sexual harassment cases internally with transparency and trust.

In her closing remarks, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry Mrs. Chinyere Okezie-Nwoko, expressed appreciation on behalf of both GMI and the Ministry of Tertiary Education.

"Today marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to create safer, more respectful, and more inclusive learning environments across Abia State. The adoption of the model anti-sexual harassment policy is not just a procedural step—it is a bold statement that Abia State stands with survivors, promotes accountability, and upholds dignity in our educational system, she said."

She emphasised that policies are only as effective as the commitment to enforce them, urging all stakeholders to ensure that the resolutions made during the campaign are translated into real change across campuses.

"As partners in knowledge management," "let us ensure that our tertiary institutions not only impart knowledge but also model integrity, fairness, and justice." She further stated.

The campaign concluded with a renewed pledge from participants to foster a culture of safety, respect, and equality across all tertiary institutions in Abia State.



The Perm. Sec. Min of Tertiary Education and other members of the GMI

Anyaso Commends Gov. Otti's Leadership Qualities

By Charles Ogbonnaya

A politician and business mogul, Dr Chimaobi Anyaso, has said that Gov Alex Otti has demystified purposeful and transformational leadership as he has within two years rekindled hope in governance, restored dignity to public service.

According to him, the governor has demonstrated and shown that transformational leadership is not a myth but a mandate that can be delivered with discipline, integrity, and empathy.

Speaking at the Practising School, Uzuakoli, Bende Local Government Area, when Gov Otti commissioned the Uzuakoli retrofitted health

centre, Dr Anyaso said that Bende Federal Constituency believes in leadership with vision, character and courage that are in line with the qualities being exhibited by Gov. Otti.

He described Bende Federal Constituency as the governor's strong hold, stating that the visit was an affirmation of the bond existing between the people and Otti and assured him of their unwavering and total support towards his reelection come 2027.

The former deputy governorship candidate of the Young People's Party (YPP) enumerated the governor's impressive and giant achievements profile from infrastructural renewal to economic

reforms and civil service sanitization, security reinforcement, stating that his leadership has ignited a new spirit of possibility across Abia State.

He stated that the people of Bende are feeling the pulse of his governance with roads being fixed, the schools being revived, the healthcare system being repositioned, and our people are beginning once again to believe someone like Otti can make still make a difference in governance.

Dr. Anyaso, therefore pledged his and the people's bold and unequivocally total support to Otti's administration and pledged to strengthen their already existing harmonious relationship

with Governor Otti.

According to him, their endorsement of Gov. Otti was not out of convenience or compulsion, but was born out of conviction as he remains the right man for the job, and that his leadership remains exactly what the people deserve at this critical moment in our history.

He said that the visit would further strengthen their shared resolve to build an Abia that works for all and where governance is not a privilege of the few, but a promise kept to the many and assured him, that the people of the Federal Constituency believe in his capacity and vision and would work with him into the future.

News

Nwachukwu Harps On Need For Obedience Among Christian Fathers

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs, Prince Uzor Nwachukwu, has said that acts of disobedience brings down a man irrespective of his position, whether in the secular or spiritual society.

Speaking at the 2025 Fathers' Day celebration of The Redeemed Evangelical Mission (TREM), 2 Uwalaka St, Umuahia, Prince Nwachukwu said that no king, priest or prophet has escaped the consequences of disobedience.

He appreciated God for the unique position bestowed on the fathers in the family and challenged them to fulfil it with a great sense of responsibility.

Nwachukwu who commended Gov Alex Otti for the dawn of good governance in the state, stated that the good democracy dividends being enjoyed in the state was a testament that the state would not go back to the era of bad governance but will continue to build a great Abia everyone would be proud of and secure the future of our children.

The Commissioner stated that the governor wants to replicate the good working system in places like Lagos, Abuja and build an Abia everyone would be proud to call our own and join hands to develop instead of migrating to those other places because of lack of infrastructures and good opportunities to excel.

He thanked the church for honouring his kinsman, Prince Sunny Agomuoh and wife with the award of golden Father and Mother, which he came to celebrate with them.

In his sermon, the Zonal Pastor, TREM Southeast Zone II, Rev. Prof. Ugochukwu Adeyemi Orgally said that fathers are the pillars upon which the house rested and that they were created for a purpose, but that purposes if not actualised, could lead to abuses.

Rev Orgally, who anchored his preaching on the theme of this year's

celebration, "The King, The Priest and The Prophet" read from Gen 18: 17-19 and Hosea 6: 3, reminded fathers that as potential tools created by God, they must maximise positively the responsibilities God has entrusted on them to be kings, priests, and prophets.

He therefore, challenged fathers to defend their families in time of war, battles, and set standard legacy their families would follow even when they have gone.

Drawing inferences from the scriptures to back up their ordained roles, the clergy reminded them that as kings, they are expected to inculcate the value of the word of God in their families and ensure that their children don't speak anyhow or against the word of God, make them obey the word of God as a prophet and show them how to pray as a priest.

Earlier, the leader of the Joint Christian Men Fellowship of the church, Peter Ikechukwu Agbakuru, said that the theme of this year's celebration, "The King, The Priest and The Prophet", was indicative of the several roles fathers should play in our homes, church, workplace, and society in general.

He stated that men repositioned for greater exploits; will in turn, prepare the next generation to play greater positive roles.

The high point of the celebration was the conferment of Golden Father and mother on former Commissioner for Special Duties, Prince Sunny Agomuoh and his wife, Princess Ori Agomuoh. Prince Agomuoh thanked the church and the Men Fellowship for the honour done them and pray that God would continue to strengthen them in their work in God's vineyard.



■ The Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Dr. Samuel Ogbuku

NDDC Must Refocus On Human Capital – Dumnamene

From Nzenzor Jane, Port Harcourt

An environmental advocate, Fyneface Dumnamene, has called on the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), to scale up its efforts in developing human capital across the nine states of the Niger Delta region.

Speaking during an interview assessing the commission's performance over its 25 years of existence, Dumnamene emphasised the urgent need for the NDDC to shift focus from purely infrastructural projects to also investing in education and grassroots engagement.

"The NDDC must extend its developmental efforts to include secondary schools and youth-oriented programmes," said Dumnamene, who is the Executive Director of the Youth and Environmental Advocacy Centre (YEAC). "Education is the foundation of development, and if we are serious about building the region, then we must start from the schools."

Dumnamene also recommended that the NDDC establish a community-based feedback platform where residents can directly propose development projects for consideration and implementation. He stressed that this participatory approach would ensure that the commission's interventions reflect the actual needs of the people.

"The NDDC is an interventionist agency, and I would have expected them to keep part of their annual budget open to public submissions. They could host interactive radio programmes where community members call in and suggest urgent projects—whether it's road repairs, school renovations,

or healthcare access. Once the NDDC receives such suggestions, they should send officials to verify the need and act swiftly. This level of responsiveness is crucial," he further stated.

Dumnamene, however, criticized the commission's centralized structure, which he described as inaccessible to the average Niger Deltan. He pointed out that most residents find it difficult to engage with the NDDC or get any meaningful response to their concerns.

"The NDDC is currently over-centralized. It's difficult for ordinary people to reach the commission. You write letters, make phone calls, and still get no reply. That needs to

change," he said.

To address this challenge, he proposed the appointment of community liaison officers at the ward level, who would serve as a bridge between residents and the commission. These officers, he explained, would gather feedback, relay community concerns to the state offices, and ensure the information reaches the national level for action.

"If they appoint liaison officers who collect input from each ward and forward it to the state office, which then analyzes and presents it to the national headquarters,

it would make a big difference. These officers can ensure that every community has a voice in how development funds are used," he said.

Dumnamene urged the NDDC to make its operations more transparent and people-centered, reminding officials that they are accountable to the public.

"NDDC officials must make themselves accessible because they represent the people—not themselves. If development is to be inclusive and effective, then the commission must listen to those it was created to serve," he added.

Christians Urged To Live Purposeful, Honourable Life

By Offor Okechukwu

Christians have been called to live a purposeful life of spiritual and moral discipline, purity, integrity and sanctified as vessels for honour unto God.

Preaching on the topic 'A Call to purposeful and honourable Service' during the second annual synod ceremony of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, World Bank Parish, Umuahia, the Guest Speaker, Prof. C.K Okoro, maintained that vessels have their usage either for honourable or dishonourable service, paying close attention to the spiritual formation and character of a christian which further builds on purity, sanctification, purposeful identification, God's design for the vessel among others.

Prof. Okoro enjoined christians to align on the part through Godly living as vessels submitting totally to the will of the Master by influencing the society through Godly living and a call for

christians to look at how well they live their lives as vessels of honour consecrated for God's use.

Also speaking, the Umuahia Synod Moderator, Rt. Rev. Chinedu Itam Okoroafor, noted that the Umuahia Synod envisions to be a vibrant growing synod with viable investments and loyal membership.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Okoroafor, further reiterated that the vision of the Umuahia Synod on vibrancy is geared towards spiritual glow which speaks of the church passion to build economic structure that would reduce the burden of dependence on the grassroot and transiting the synod to sustainable development not loosing sight of raising faithful members who are submissive to God and the leadership of the church.

The 2025 second annual synod ceremony featured special rendition by synod mass choir, bursary awards and cash support for the synod mission building and bus projects.

Discourse

Overview of Nigeria Capital Market Structure And Key Developments

In a circular, BSD/DIR/CON/LAB/01/8/008, dated June 13, 2025, addressed to all banks, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced a major policy shift as it phased out post covid-19 forbearance for commercial banks, resulting in the easing of key capital market performance indices, such as the All-Shares Index (ASI) and Market Capitalization, (MCAP), by 17 basis points on the above trading day.

The forbearance initiative was granted to commercial banks in line with other incentives necessary to cushion the harsh economic realities of the covid19 pandemic. Some banks are yet to exit the platform.

According to the apex bank, certain banks are under close regulatory oversight in a bid to ensure stabilization of the banking sector. To achieve this objective, a number of regulatory actions has been taken by the Nigerian central bank, to ensure that, there is capital adequacy in the banks: a development that led to the increase in the minimum capital requirement for all categories of banks within the country, to drive economic growth agenda.

Part of the directive is the imposition of lien on dividend payment by the affected banks, intended to spur earnings retention,

enhance capital adequacy and commitment to international best practice. The whole idea is to drive de-risking of the banking sector and to create further impetus for the recapitalization exercise. Overall, this is a good policy initiative, aside the conflicting timing, as we shall see in the course of this discourse.

Investors Post-announcement Reaction

There is a fundamental principle in the capital market that share prices reflect all available information with respect to firms, or economic sectors. This theory is known as the Efficient Market Hypothesis, (EMH) or the Random Walk Theory, (RWT).

For the perspectives, the EMH is divided into the Weak Form Efficiency, Semi-Strong Efficiency and the Strong Form Efficiency, with each alluding to the level of impact of historical, present and future information on equities pricing.

Of these three dimensions of efficient market theory, what played out upon the Central Bank Directive reaching the public domain, is the semi-strong efficiency, which states that current prices of equities are reflections of all available information such as historical prices, financial fundamentals and other announcements concerning a firm or business entity.

Among the corporate

information capable of affecting share prices are earnings announcements, dividend declaration, corporate restructuring, mergers and acquisitions plans, information on competition and industry averages, new product launch and macro-economic expectations such as inflation rate, exchange rate, interest rates and GDP figures.

Coterminous with the above on Monday, June 16, 2025, the Nigerian equities bourse suffered significant loss in prices of major banking stocks as a result of the Central Bank directive, imposing restrictions on the payment of dividends by banks. Affected majorly by this policy are the FUGAZ banks - FirstHoldCo Plc

and short-term speculators dumped the banking stocks, reflecting their sensitivity to the denial of the expected interim dividend, which will be pegged on the half-year 2025 performance of these banks.

Market Opportunities

Amid the panic sell-off, in the wake of the announcement, by speculators and short-term profit-takers, a necessary condition for asset repricing has been set in motion, creating opportunity for new entrants into the market. The panic sell-off has led to the under-valuing of FUGAZ bank stocks, creating opportunities for rational investors to buy into equities with strong fundamentals at cheaper than their fair value. It is not without reason that

19, 2025.

Good News

While some investors are panicking, Zenith Bank Plc, FCMB Plc and Access Bank Plc, have come forward with strategic plans to exit the forbearance corridor before June 30, 2025. Zenith Bank Plc has already met and exceeded the minimum capital requirement likewise Access Bank Plc.

For FCMB Plc, a conversion of N23 Billion obligation, to exit the Central Bank forbearance list has been announced. It is reasonable to expect that other banks in the coming week, will be announcing and implementing their strategic exit plan out from the forbearance list, thus freeing them up to pay interim dividends in the current year.

Long-term Investment Philosophy And Risk Mitigation

Against the backdrop of the above policy directive and the panic investor-reaction, the need for "responsible investing", which requires a clear understanding of the capital market, a strategic and tactical investment approach, consistent with an "Investment Policy Statement" (IPS) is brought to the fore. An efficient portfolio of investment, denominated in financial assets, must be based on a sound investment philosophy, tailored along the long-term. This enables investors to overlook short-

term market fluctuations and focus on the long-term profit potentials inherent in equities investing and of course investment in fixed income instruments, such as FGN Bonds for income diversification effect and risk management.

Policy Drawbacks


While the policy represents a pro-active measure aimed at strengthening the financial system, it is coming at a time, when the banks are saddled with the responsibility of recapitalization, with the deadline only 9 months away from now, as banks race to meet the minimum capital requirement by March 30, 2026.

For some investors and economic agents, dividends are sources of capital for re-investment into their businesses. A temporary restriction of dividend payment represents a disincentive to investment, even to foreign investors.

The directive has an implied "crowding out" effect, on the private sector and the capital market, which has shown resilience and supported economic development, in the face of elevated interest rates offered by the federal government on fixed income instruments such as Treasury Bills and FGN Bonds, to attract foreign investors.

Christian Isaac Anyalasi
M.Sc, ACIS, ACIP, ACS, ADC

A chartered
Stockbroker/Securities
Analyst writes from Lagos,
Nigeria. +2348037080343

 **For some investors and economic agents, dividends are sources of capital for re-investment into their businesses.**

(First Bank Plc), Fidelity Bank Plc, UBA Plc, Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, Access Bank Plc and Zenith Bank Plc. And of course, FCMB Plc.

The market shed a significant N121 billion, as investors with "hot money"

Jim Ovia, Chairman of Zenith Bank Plc and Managing Director/Chief Executive, Dr. Adaora Umeobi invested a whopping N3.3 billion in the shares of Zenith Bank Plc shares as at Thursday, June

Wisdom for Living

with

Ezewuru Adaeze Mary

If you love me then you will accept me as I am, why are you complaining- this phrase often is as a result of lack of commitment and unwillingness to do things right. Meanwhile, it does not always mean imposing self on the other or wanting to change a being, it is a call unto responsibility and accountability.

When a man or woman refuses to change, they often seek out someone vulnerable—someone who will accept their

toxic behaviour without question, rather than confront their flaws or strive for personal development, they will hide behind the comfort of dysfunction because it is convenient.

That is why sometimes, no matter how good or genuine you are, such people will avoid you. It's not that you're unworthy of their love or not a good fit for friendship even marriage.

It's because they know you'll require more from them, call out unhealthy behaviours in them. You will hold them

accountable and challenge them to rise to a higher standard, which they are not ready for.

They would rather be with someone who is emotionally worn out, desperate, or broken. Someone who won't demand integrity, growth, or real love. Someone who will settle for the bare minimum

because they don't know they deserve more.

That is why it is essential to know one's worth, be purpose driven before seeking association. Likes begat likes, friendship has influencing power.

Never beg for friendship, desist from anyone with wrong values and unwilling to

change, we all are work in progress never allow anyone drag you into dishonour in the name of friendship.

Be aware of acceptable norms, valuable attitudes, good manners and ensure their presence in the life of people before guaranteeing their acceptance to your circle.

And let me add this: if you are desperate and vulnerable, you'll always be a victim of uncultured, unteachable kind of people.

Such people are looking for the safest place to hide their flaws without facing the road to change.

They're not looking for a partner; they're looking for shelter from


responsibility.

"So choose healing. Choose strength.

Work on yourself so you can recognize when someone is coming to you for love—or simply looking for a hiding place because you are an easy pass". Dr. Dorcas Drock

And most often, when some say they are "looking for peace" in a relationship, what 9 out of 10, really mean is: "Do not question me. Do not correct me. Just go along with everything—good or bad."

But true peace isn't the absence of accountability. It is the presence of mutual growth, honesty, and respect.

 **Work on yourself so you can recognize when someone is coming to you for love—or simply looking for a hiding place because you are an easy pass". Dr. Dorcas Drock**

Opinion

From Failure To Foundation: How Dr. Alex Otti Administration Rescued RAAMP And Exposed PDP's Legacy Of Fraud

The lies propagated by the PDP regarding the World Bank assisted Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP) are desperate fabrications crafted by individuals who looted and dismantled our state during their tenure. In this New Abia, built on truth and progress, their propaganda will inevitably be suffocated by facts and tangible results.

Setting the Record Straight on RAAMP

RAAMP is a federal initiative funded by the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD), requiring counterpart funding from participating states. The PDP's claims about initiating this project are deceptive. Over eight years, not a single road was awarded, constructed, or procured. The road designs presented for the Abia RAAMP Project were technically deficient and structurally unsound. The PDP administration couldn't identify the errors in the design specifications.

Furthermore, the PDP government failed to release the necessary counterpart funds, leaving the project paralyzed. Their administration lacked the political will, technical expertise, and financial discipline to transform RAAMP from paperwork into reality. What they called "progress" was merely a scheme for contract racketeering and misleading photo opportunities.

The Alex Otti Difference: From Dormancy to Delivery

Upon taking office, Governor Alex Otti approved and disbursed over ₦600 million in counterpart funding, reviving a project that had been stagnant under the PDP. Under the Dr. Alex Otti Administration, RAAMP awarded its first significant contract: 19.1 kilometers of rural roads in Obingwa and Isialangwa South LGAs, valued at over ₦2.6 billion. This contract is currently in execution, with more on the way, following revised and World Bank-approved designs facilitated by the Otti administration.

In stark contrast to the substandard road designs, the new designs implemented by this government are structurally sound, climate-resilient, and fully compliant with World Bank standards. This reflects a governance model where vision meets competence, replacing propaganda with effective management.

On Project Coordinators

The PDP's claim of four project coordinators within a single year is false. Under Governor Alex Otti, only two individuals have held the

position. One was a PDP-imposed figurehead, Dr. Babington, who lacked engineering credentials, which was a major criterion for a Project Coordinator as requested by RAAMP in their terms of reference. He was properly replaced by Engr. Chinemerem, who, after a while, voluntarily resigned for personal reasons. However, the selection of a new project coordinator is now ongoing, following due process. There has been no illegality or crisis—only clean, technical, and rule-based governance.

The Role of Mrs. Ngozi Felix: A Respected European Union Development Expert

It is absurd that the PDP, which siphoned billions through bogus appointments, questions the involvement of Mrs. Ngozi Felix, the Honourable Commissioner—a globally respected development expert. Mrs. Felix is not a local politician; she is a certified

(RARA) Bill into law. This legislation is designed to ensure the long-term viability of RAAMP, providing a framework for continuous funding and support, thereby safeguarding the project from future political interference and ensuring that it remains focused on delivering real benefits to our rural communities.

Strategic Engagement and Donor Confidence

Under the leadership of Governor Alex Otti, Abia State has been repositioned as a preferred destination for development partnerships and investments. Through strategic engagement and policy alignment, the Otti administration has created a transparent, accountable, and investor-friendly environment that has restored donor confidence in the state. By streamlining processes and strengthening institutional frameworks, Governor Otti has

partnerships, support, and developmental programs aimed at enhancing the state's growth and infrastructure.

Some of Dr. Alex Otti's Achievements under His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti, Abia has emerged as the poster state for donor confidence and development financing. In less than a year, we have seen:

RAAMP transition from design stagnation to active project execution.

The World Bank's SFTAS successor programme listing Abia for performance-based financing.

The State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) unlocking over \$20 million in pipeline funding.

UNDP establishing Abia's first-ever SDG Data Lab and partnering on e-governance and service delivery reforms.

The European Union and GIZ resuming activities in Abia after years of inactivity.

Major global stakeholders like the Mastercard Foundation and AfDB engaging in discussions on economic transformation.

Over ₦20 billion worth of rural, health, and infrastructure projects initiated or unlocked through effective donor engagement.

Signing of MOU and partnership between IOM and the Abia State Government.

Abia State recently selected to benefit 15 Million Dollars grant facility for the Global Partnership for Education Fund.

Conclusion

This is not just a battle over road projects; it is a clash of governance visions: one rooted in deceit and decay, the other anchored in competence and service to the people. The propaganda machines of yesterday's men may scream louder, but they cannot erase the truth that Abia has turned a historic corner. Under Governor Alex Otti, governance is no longer a tool for personal enrichment; it is a covenant of accountability with the people.

Let the PDP continue to shout from the sidelines, clinging to faded glories and forged legacies. The train of progress has left the station, and it will not stop for those who once buried this state in darkness. In this new era, performance is the only propaganda that matters—and on that score, the Dr. Alex Otti Administration is miles ahead.

*Written by Odinakachi Eric Eme,
Senior Special Assistant to the
Abia State Governor on
Multilateral and Donor Agencies*

Under the leadership of Governor Alex Otti, Abia State has been repositioned as a preferred destination for development partnership and investments

professional with over 20 years of multilateral project experience, having worked with the European Union and international development organizations across Africa.

Her commitment to compliance, value for money, and transparency is why RAAMP is now operational in Abia. She has played a pivotal role in ensuring that projects are executed for meaningful impact, restoring international confidence in Abia—a state once blacklisted under the PDP for gross mismanagement of donor resources.

RARA Bill: Ensuring Sustainability for RAAMP

In a significant step towards sustainability, the Dr. Alex Otti Administration has successfully passed the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project

successfully attracted a growing number of multilateral institutions and donor agencies—ranging from the World Bank and AfDB to bilateral partners—who now see Abia as a viable hub for impactful, scalable development interventions.

Diplomatic Engagements: Strengthening Partnerships for Development

In addition to the progress within RAAMP, Abia State has welcomed numerous diplomatic visits from the Chinese Ambassador, Israeli Ambassador, Vietnamese Ambassador, Netherlands Ambassador, German Ambassador, and the British High Commissioner. Many other Ambassadors from various countries have shown deep interest in visiting Abia. These visits have fostered tremendous



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Foreign

Federal Judge Halts Trump's Order To End Collective Bargaining Rights For Many Federal Workers

A federal judge indefinitely blocked President Donald Trump's effort to terminate the collective bargaining rights for more than a million federal employees.

Judge James Donato of the US District Court in San Francisco granted the preliminary injunction requested by a coalition of unions whose members would be stripped of their collective bargaining rights under Trump's executive order. However, Donato's decision clashes with a May ruling by the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, which lifted a different judge's block on Trump's order pertaining to another union's members.

Donato, an appointee of former President Barack Obama, said the unions that brought the case before him had "demonstrated a serious question as to whether their First Amendment rights have been violated." The judge said he was blocking the executive order pending a trial over the order's constitutionality.

"Plaintiffs have raised serious questions under the First Amendment that warrant further litigation," he wrote, adding that the unions have shown they would face "a strong likelihood of irreparable harm from the loss of their collective bargaining and allied rights."

The Trump administration has the option of appealing Donato's ruling to the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals.

At issue is Trump's unprecedented executive order from March that seeks to abolish multiple agencies' union contracts in the name of national security. It would apply to departments including State, Veterans Affairs and Justice, as well as smaller agencies such as the National Science Foundation and Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The order is aimed at stopping federal unions who have "declared war on President Trump's agenda," according to a White House fact sheet. It claimed the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal workers' union, has filed many grievances to "block Trump policies."

The unions, led by AFGE, argue that Trump's actions are retaliation and violate the right to engage in constitutionally protected speech. Also, the suit alleges the administration is attempting to apply the national security exemption to eliminate the rights of workers whose primary duties are not related to national security.

China Tightens Internet Controls With New Centralized Form Of Virtual ID

China has mastered the craft of policing the internet, operating one of the world's most extensive online censorship and surveillance regimes. With mandatory identity checks on every online platform, it has become almost impossible for users to stay anonymous.

But this rigidly moderated online environment is about to face even stricter controls with the introduction of a state-issued national internet ID.

Instead of requiring individuals to submit their personal information for identity checks separately on each platform, the government now seeks to centralize the process by issuing a virtual ID that will allow users to sign in across different social media apps and websites.

The rules for the new



system, currently voluntary, were released in late May and will be implemented in mid-July. It aims to "protect citizens' identity information, and support the healthy and orderly development of the digital economy," according to the published rules.

Experts, however, have raised concerns that the new policy will further erode already limited freedom of expression by forcing internet users to relinquish even more control to the

state.

Since Chinese leader Xi Jinping took power in 2012, the country has further tightened its grip on the digital space through an army of censors. Deployed around the clock, they remove posts, suspend accounts and help authorities identify critics, quashing any sign of dissent before it can gain traction.

The finalized rules were announced after a proposal that was opened for public comment last summer, a

typical step in China's legislative process. During the course of the public consultation over the past year, the proposal faced backlash from law professors, human rights experts and some internet users. Yet, the finalized rules remained largely similar to the draft.

This is a state-led, unified identity system capable of real-time monitoring and blocking of users," said Xiao Qiang, a research scientist studying

internet freedom at the University of California, Berkeley. "It can directly erase voices it doesn't like from the internet, so it's more than just a surveillance tool – it is an infrastructure of digital totalitarianism."

Control of China's vast portion of the global internet has largely been delegated to a decentralized range of different groups, with authorities relying partially on the social media platforms themselves to identify comments deemed problematic. Xiao warned that a centralized system using the internet ID could make it much easier for the government to wipe out a user's presence across multiple platforms at once.

Shane Yi, a researcher at China Human Rights Defenders, an advocacy group, echoed Xiao's worries. The system gives the Chinese government expanded power to "do what they want when they see fit" on the internet, as authorities are able to track users' entire digital trail "from point zero," she said.

First Images From The Largest Camera Ever Built Reveal Millions Of Galaxies

The first test images from a groundbreaking observatory named for trailblazing astronomer Vera Rubin have captured the light from millions of distant stars and galaxies on an unprecedented scale and revealed thousands of previously unseen asteroids.

While the National Science Foundation initially released only a couple of images and a brief video clip of the Vera C. Rubin Observatory's first imagery, more images and videos taken using the largest camera ever built were shared Monday on the agency's YouTube channel. The facility is jointly funded by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy's Office of Science.

The new images represent just over 10 hours of test observations, offering a brief preview of the observatory's decade-long mission to explore the mysteries of the universe like never before.

"NSF-DOE Rubin Observatory will capture

more information about our universe than all optical telescopes throughout history combined," said National Science Foundation Chief of Staff Brian Stone, who is currently performing the duties of the NSF director (as the position is currently vacant).

While ground- and space-based telescopes spot about 20,000 asteroids each year, Rubin Observatory is expected to uncover millions of the space rocks within its first two years, according to the National Science Foundation. The telescope is also considered the most effective way to spot any interstellar comets or asteroids that may travel through our solar system.

The observatory's mirror design, sensitive camera and telescope speed are all the first of its kind, enabling Rubin to spot tiny, faint objects such as asteroids. The observatory will also constantly take thousands of images every night, cataloging changes in brightness to reveal otherwise hidden space rocks like near-Earth asteroids that could be on a

collision course with our planet, according to the foundation.

A sneak peek shared Monday, seen above, includes a video made from over 1,100 images captured by the observatory that begins with a detailed look at two galaxies. The video then zooms out to showcase about 10 million galaxies spotted by the camera's wide view – roughly 0.05% of the 20 billion galaxies Rubin will observe over 10 years.

The observatory team

also released a mosaic of the Trifid and Lagoon nebulae, which are star-forming regions that resemble clouds located in the Sagittarius constellation. The mosaic, made up of 678 separate images taken over just seven hours, captured faint and previously invisible details such as clouds of gas and dust in the nebulae, which are several thousand light-years away from Earth.

The initial images were selected to showcase the telescope's enormous field of

view, which enables detailed glimpses of interacting galaxies as well as broad views of millions of galaxies, said Dr. Yusra AlSaiyad, deputy associate director of the data management subsystem for the Rubin Observatory.

It has such a wide field of view and such a rapid cadence that you do have that movie-like aspect to the night sky," said Dr. Sandrine Thomas, telescope project scientist for the Rubin Observatory.



with Joseph Jacob
 Ambassador
 09061606621

Creative Writers Hangout

Uche And The Sword (1)

Okuoma village was in tranquility one Sunday evening, as heavy down pour forced people into their homes. Ugo and her son, Uche, had to squat in one corner of their hut as the thatch roof leaked.

Whenever it rains at night, Uche and his mother would not sleep until after the rain because where they would spread their mat would be filled with water.

At times like that, Ugo would only resort to weeping. But that night she was crying bitterly, not just because of her leaking roof, but because her son Uche would be leaving her to stay with her brother Asonye in the town.

It took a lot of persuasion from Asonye, her brother and Ichie Uwakwe, her brother-in-law to let Ugo allow Uche leave the village.

It was exactly two weeks ago that the remains of Ugo's first son was brought home from Aba, where he was learning shoe making.

When the 15 year old boy's corpse was lowered into the grave, Ugo was inconsolable as she wept profusely.

"Leave me let me die with my son. Obi my husband died two months ago, now it's Obinna my son. I'd better die." Ugo wailed as she struggled to wriggle out of the hands of Ezinwanyi and Agbomma, Ichie Uwakwe's wives, who were holding her.

On the other side of the small grave was Ichie Uwakwe, who was carrying little Uche. Beside him was Chief Ufommadu, Obinna's master.

Before the young boys, who dug the grave would start covering it, Chief Ufommadu was asked to tell the people what killed Obinna.

"My people the demise of Obinna pains me so much. He had never stolen my money. He had never disobeyed either me or my wife. I love him so much and everybody in our shop line thought he was my biological son because of the good relationship I had with him."

There was complete quietness except for the whimpering made by some of the mourners including Ugo.

"My brothers it was two days ago", Chief Ufommadu continued, "We came back from market, ate our dinner and watched Super Story together before we went to bed."

"Obinna normally wakes up first, but the following morning I woke up before him. I went to his room and woke him up. He complained of dizziness. I took him to the hospital. The doctor examined him and prescribed some drugs which I bought."

"Obinna said he was feeling better before we went to bed last night. But, this

morning I found him dead." He brought out a white handkerchief and wiped his face.

"Ewo! Chi m O!" Ugo wailed leading the outcry.

"It's OK", Ichie Uwakwe shouted and the wailing subsided a little. "Okuoma kwenu!"

"Yeah", the crowd responded.

"We all have heard what our in-law Chief Ufommadu said. Almighty God sees everything. If Obinna died a natural death, let it be, for all will die one day. But, if it was somebody that killed him, that person will not go unpunished."

While the churchgoers shouted "Amen", the African Traditional Religion followers shouted "Iseh".

After the burial, Ichie Uwakwe's wives, Ezinwanyi and Agbomma led Ugo and Uche to their hut. They helped Ugo in cooking and doing other household chores.

Thinking that everybody had gone home, Eunice, Ugo's neighbor came out and started dancing and singing.

"My enemies will burn to ashes by the fire from my God. Fire burn them, fire, fire, fire." She danced round the compound twisting her waist and clapping her hands.

Ugo wanted to go out and quarrel with her, but Ezinwanyi and Agbomma would not allow her.

"Ugo don't mind her", Ezinwanyi pleaded.

"If you respond to a fool you make yourself a bigger fool", Agbomma added.

When Eunice saw that nobody was responding, she went straight to Ugo's hut. "Woo...Woo...Woo! O kwa m gwara gi agwa. I told you that your wickedness will follow you. This is just the beginning. Is it up to four months your husband died? Now your son has died. I can assure you that Uche will be useless."

Ugo tried to stand up, but the women on both sides of her held her down. She started weeping. "She's right, if not, why should God kill my husband and son?"

"Ózuola Ugo", Agbomma consoled, "God does not cause evil to befall innocent ones."

As Eunice was busy taunting Ugo, Ichie Uwakwe met her as he was coming to Ugo's hut.

"Eunice what is wrong with you? Does the death of a young boy of 15 call for celebration?"

"Woo...woo...De Uwakwe, yes! If you don't know let me tell you." She replied as she moved backwards to her house.

"Since you say so, let it befall you."

"It won't befall me. Evil only befall evildoers like you and your brother Obi. You are

a pagan, you don't go to church."

"I better stay at home than go to church with hands stained with innocent blood. You're Ezinne in your church, but you're jubilating over the death of a little boy. You don't know God."

At this point Eunice' three daughters and their father Obike came out and started abusing Ichie Uwakwe.

"I will quarrel with my enemies because I don't go to church. But, what difference are you making as churchgoers? You're a knight, your wife is Ezinne, your daughters are holding various positions in church, yet you behave worse than we who worship our God at home." Ichie Uwakwe concluded and entered Ugo's hut not listening to the rest of what Obike and his household said.

The bone of contention between these two families was a parcel of land. Obi had pledged the parcel of land to Obike for twenty thousand naira, which he used to settle hospital bills for his wife's major operation.

After Obike had farmed twice on the land as was agreed, Obi went to redeem the land. Obike vehemently refused to return the land, claiming that it was never leased to him that the land was an inheritance from his father, Ojodi.

The elders had looked into the matter and ruled in favor of Obi. Two months later Obi went to clear the land when he started feeling headache. After falling and rising several times along the road, he fell just at the entrance of his hut never to rise again.

That was why Ugo felt so bad to let Uche leave her. But, Asonye and Ichie Uwakwe argued that letting Uche go would at least keep him away from the eyes of enemies. Ugo wept throughout that Sunday preceding Uche's departure.

After the rain, she laid their mat and asked Uche to come and sit beside her. "Uche nwa m, you heard how Eunice was taunting us. You heard her say that you will never be useful. Will you let her laugh at me?"

"Nne, I'll do everything I can to put her to shame. I promise to be a good boy and I will take my studies seriously." Uche said assuringly, holding his mother's hand.

"That will be good my son. You can sleep while I pack your clothes for tomorrow's journey."

Uche slept throughout the journey. When they got to the park Asonye woke him up. The crowd and the noise that hit him frightened him. Uche noticed that the town was a complete contrast to the village.

They boarded another taxi to Eket Street where Asonye lived.

"Welcome daddy", three children cried out with joy as they ran out from their house and embraced Asonye. The oldest was Ifeoma, she was 15 years, a year older than Uche. The second was Ifeanyi, 12 years and Amaka, 10 years.

Uche followed Asonye and his cousins into the parlor where Kate, Asonye's wife was sitting. She was fat, dark and with all fairness, ugly, with a wide mouth and flat nose. The frown that crossed her face when Uche came in made her uglier.

"Good afternoon aunty", Uche greeted quickly, remembering that his mother told him not to forget to greet those older than him.

Kate sighed and let her eyes brush Uche's body, from his old rubber sandal to his jump up trouser up to his faded obituary T-shirt, which his mother got from the burial of the richest man in Okuoma, Pa Ikechi. She never responded to his greetings.

"Darling your nephew is too dirty to live with us. Look at ringworms all over his head, eczemas, all over his body." Kate complained to Asonye angrily.

"That is why I brought him here, so you can help to make him clean..."

"What do you mean? Do you think I have time for another woman's child..."

"Uche is not another woman's child. He is my sister's son. Mind your tongue. Get me my food quickly."

Kate murmured into the kitchen. It was then that Asonye noticed that Uche was still standing.

"Uche sit down and feel free." Turning to his children, "Uche is your cousin. You people must play with him and make him happy." Touching the head of each of them he told Uche, "This one is Ifeoma, Ifeanyi and Amaka."

Uche nodded as he sat at the edge of the sofa clinging to his school bag, which contains all his belongings.

Kate came back with a tray of gari and Egusi soup and placed it before Asonye. Before she would return with the washing hand and drinking water, Asonye had changed his position moving closer to Uche so they could eat together.

Kate was so annoyed that the jug of water nearly dropped from her hand. Uche ate slowly and timidly. He had never eaten with anyone else except his mother.

Kate took her seat where Uche would see her whenever he raises his eyes and whenever their eyes met Kate would glare at him. Uche lost his appetite and said, "Thank you uncle..."

"Come on eat more."

Asonye snarled.

Uche continued eating even though he would have preferred not to.

Ten minutes later Asonye looked at his watch, the time was quarter to one. He quickly washed his hands, donned his shirt and left for his mechanic workshop.

"Come on stop eating that food." Kate shouted. Uche shuddered and the mussel of garri he was about to put into his mouth dropped to the floor. "Come here." She ordered.

Uche quickly washed his hands and went to her. Drawing his ear she said, "Don't ever play with my children. Most importantly, She increased her grip, Uche raised his shoulders, grimaced and groaned under the pain, "Yes most importantly, don't ever tell your uncle whatever I do to you. You hear me?"

"Yes aunty", Uche answered with a tears laden voice.

Drawing his ear to and fro, Kate went on, "If you dare open this stinking mouth of yours and divulge anything to your uncle, I will strangle you to death. Come on go and sit down!" A knock that landed on his forehead accompanied the last command.

"Come on sit on the floor." Kate shouted, as Uche attempted to sit on the sofa, "Don't ever sit on the chair."

Uche quietly sat on the floor as he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand.

Ifeanyi and Amaka started crying.

"Don't cry my children", Kate said as she collected the plate of soup. There was only one tail of fish in the soup and Asonye had deliberately left it for Uche. Kate shared it among her children. As she ate her own, Ifeoma will jerk up her head and touch her throat calling Uche, "Longer throat".

"Ify my darling I love that", Kate said and laughed.

Later, public power was restored. Kate put on a movie for her children. Uche was very excited. He used to watch TV once in a while in Pa Ikechi's house, whose obituary T-shirt he was wearing.

Kate came over to Uche, holding his ear, she drew him up to his feet and dragged him to the kitchen by pulling his ear. "Before one week your ear will be taller than that of the rabbit. I want you to clean this kitchen, if I see any dirt on the floor, I'll cut off your ear."

Uche remained in the kitchen cleaning the floor while Kate and her children watch movie in the parlor.

Will Uche continue to live with his uncle? Find out in our next publication.

AUTHOR OF THE WEEK



Prof. Esiaba Irobi
 Professor Esiaba Irobi was born on October 1, 1960. He attended Comprehensive Secondary School in Ogbor Hill, Aba, and later pursued his higher education at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN).

At UNN, Irobi obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English/Drama and later bagged his Master of Arts degree in Comparative Literature. He travelled to the United Kingdom and furthered his academic pursuit at the University of Sheffield, where he earned another Master of Arts degree in Film and Theatre and the University of Leeds, where he achieved a significant milestone by attaining a PhD in Theatre Studies.

His passion for teaching was strong that Irobi pursued his teaching career around the world. He taught at his Alma Marta, UNN, before teaching at the University of Leeds and Liverpool J. Moores University in England. He moved to the United States of America and taught at the New York University, Townson University and Ohio University.

As early as his days in the University of Nigeria Nsukka his creative writing skills shone like a million stars as he won first prize in short story and playwriting for three consecutive sessions in the annual English Department Literary Night Competition.

Irobi played the role of Macbeth in Dr. Ossie Enekwu's production of Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Esiaba Irobi held the position of associate professor of International Theatre and Film Studies at Ohio University in Athens, USA. He was also a fellow (2009/10) at International Research Center, Freie Universität Berlin.

He passed away on May 3, 2010, in Berlin. The same year Esiaba Irobi posthumously received the NLNG Prize for Literature for his play, Cemetery Road.

Some of his works include: Cotyledons (Poems) (1988); The Colour of Rusting Gold (a play) (1989); Inflorescence (Selected Poems 1977-1988) (1989); Why I Don't Like Philip Larkin and Other Poems (2005)

CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

"Reading makes all other learning possible. We have to get books into our children's hands early and often."

- Barack Obama, 44th US President.

Sporting Ambassador



2024 WAFCON: All You Need To Know

The 15th edition of the African Cup of Nations will take place in Morocco between 5th and 26th July, 2025. Sporting Ambassador's Joseph Jacob brings you all you need to know about the 2024 WAFCON, which is coming a year later.

Morocco will be hosting the WAFCON for the second time consecutively. Last time they came second and will want to go all the way this time. However, they will have to first navigate their way through group A, where they will take on Zambia, Senegal and DR Congo.

The Copper Queens of Zambia will be a hard nut to crack. Their rising profile in African women's football was manifested in the last edition of the WAFCON where they finished fourth and will want to take a step further in this edition.

The Teranga Lionesses are on a mission to emulate their men counterpart who emerged champions of the AFCON in 2021. They got to the quarter-finals in the last edition. Expect more roaring and devouring from them in this edition.

The Ladies Leopards of the Democratic Republic of Congo are returning to the WAFCON after 13 years. Their best performance came in 1998 when they finished third. They seem to be the weakest team in this group but they will certainly put up a big fight.

In Group B, the most successful team in the WAFCON, the Super Falcons of Nigeria will tread tackles with the North African duo of Tunisia and Algeria, as well as Botswana.

The Nigerian ladies are the only side to have qualified for all previous tournaments with 11 titles to show for it. Winning the trophy is their ultimate goal after they were dethroned in the last edition by the Bayana Bayana of South Africa.

The Tunisians will be making their third WAFCON appearance hoping to better their quarter-final place in the last edition. Playing in North Africa should be a big advantage to the Tunisian ladies as they are used to the weather.

Similarly, Algeria will enjoy the weather and can count on their supporters who will troop across their borders into Morocco to give their ladies a massive support. Whether the weather and the

massive support will give the Algerians the fortitude to go beyond the group stages for the first time is yet to be seen.

After making their debut in the last edition and reaching the quarter-finals, the Zebras of Botswana are hoping to cause an upset in this group. At 153, they are the lowest ranked team in this competition. What they lack in experience they have in power, pace and passion. Any of the other teams that choose to underrate them will be doing so at their own peril.

In Group C, defending champions, the Bayana Bayana of South Africa will take on Ghana, Mali and Tanzania.

Having tasted success in the last edition, the South African ladies will fight tenaciously to retain their title. However, their biggest challenge in this group will be the Black Queens of Ghana, who have never won the competition despite reaching three finals. As the West African ladies return after missing the last edition, they will be a big nut for the South Africans to crack.

Mali will be making their eighth appearance in this WAFCON. Their last appearance was in 2018 when they achieved their best result by finishing fourth.

The weakest team on paper in this group is Tanzania, who will be making their second appearance after they debuted in 2010 and were eliminated in the group stage.

May the best team win.

THE GROUPS

GROUP A

Morocco
Zambia

Senegal

DR Congo

GROUP B

Nigeria

Tunisia

Algeria

Botswana

GROUP C

South Africa

Ghana

Mali

Tanzania



NFF

Super Falcons during a training session

SUPER FALCONS SQUAD

Goalkeepers:

Chiamaka Nnadozie
Tochukwu Oluehi
Rachael Unachukwu

Defenders:

Osinachi Ohale
Shukurat Oladipo
Michelle Alozie
Ashleigh Plumptre
Sikiratu Isah
Oluwatosin Demehin

Miracle Usani

Midfielders:

Rasheedat Ajibade
Halimatu Ayinde
Deborah Abiodun
Jennifer Echegini
Toni Payne
Christy Ucheibe

Forwards:

Francisca Ordega
Chinwendu Ihezuo
Ifeoma Onumonu
Esther Okoronkwo
Omorinsola Babajide
Folashade Ijamilusi
Chioma Okafor

Group Stage Fixtures

Date	G	Match	Time	Venue
5 th July	A	Morocco vs Zambia	9:00 PM	Olympic Stadium
6 th July	A	Senegal vs DR Congo	3:00 PM	El Bachir Stadium
6 th July	B	Nigeria vs Tunisia	5:00 PM	Larbi Zouli Stadium
6 th July	B	Algeria vs Botswana	8:00 PM	Pere Jego Stadium
7 th July	C	South Africa vs Ghana	5:00 PM	Honor Stadium
7 th July	C	Mali vs Tanzania	8:00 PM	Berkane Stadium
9 th July	A	Zambia vs Senegal	5:00 PM	Olympic Stadium
9 th July	A	DR Congo vs Morocco	8:00 PM	El Bachir Stadium
10 th July	B	Tunisia vs Algeria	5:00 PM	Pere Jego Stadium
10 th July	B	Botswana vs Nigeria	8:00 PM	Larbi Zouli Stadium
11 th July	C	Ghana vs Mali	5:00 PM	Berkane Stadium
11 th July	C	Tanzania vs South Africa	8:00 PM	Honor Stadium
12 th July	A	Morocco vs Senegal	8:00 PM	Olympic Stadium
12 th July	A	DR Congo vs Zambia	8:00 PM	El Bachir Stadium
13 th July	B	Nigeria vs Algeria	8:00 PM	Larbi Zouli Stadium
13 th July	B	Botswana vs Tunisia	8:00 PM	Pere Jego Stadium
14 th July	C	South Africa vs Mali	8:00 PM	Honor Stadium
14 th July	C	Ghana vs Tanzania	8:00 PM	Berkane Stadium

THE BATTLE FIELD

Six stadia in five cities will host the WAFCON. In city of Rabat, the 21,000 Olympic Stadium will host the opening match between host Morocco and Zambia.

The Super Falcons will play their group matches in two stadia. Larbi Zouli Stadium and Pere Jego Stadium both are in the city of Casablanca.

In the city of Mohammedia, there is the 15,000 El Bachir Stadium. The 35,000 capacity Honor Stadium is located in the city of Oujda. In the city of Berkane is the 12,000 capacity Berkane Stadium.



THE MATCH OFFICIALS

A total of 18 referees, 18 assistant referees and 10 VAR referees have been appointed for the tournament.

The only Nigerian that made the list is Yemisi Akintoye. She is a member of the Lagos State Football Referees Council. Akintoye earned her place at the tournament following her successful performance at the WAFCON preparatory course held earlier this month in Cairo, Egypt. She was badged as a FIFA referee in 2021 and has previously officiated in the WAFU Women's Champions League, WAFU B U 20 Championship, and the CAF Women's Champions League.



Yemisi Akintoye

2025 CLUB WORLD CUP: The African Challenge

By Joseph Jacob

The expanded Club World Cup is still going on in the United States of America. But, for Africa, the competition is over as all her representatives have been eliminated.

Africa was represented by the two CAF Champions League winners between 2021 and 2022, Al Ahly 2021, 2023 and 2024 champions and Wydad Athletic Club 2022 champions. The remaining two representatives emerged through a four-year ranking coefficient which threw up Esperance of Tunisia and Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa.

Al Ahly of Egypt were drawn in Group A against Lionel Messi's Inter Miami of the United States of America, Palmeiras of Brazil and Porto of Portugal.

Esperance of Tunisia were placed in Group D against Chelsea of England, Flaminense of Brazil and Los Angeles FC of United States of America.

Group F comprises of Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa, Fluminense of Brazil, Borussia Dortmund of Germany and Ulsan Hyundai of South Korea.

Wydad Casablanca of Morocco played in Group G against Manchester City of England, Juventus of Italy and Al Ain of the United Arab Emirate.

Al Ahly kicked off the African challenge against Inter Miami and held the hosts to a goalless draw.

Esperance took on Flamengo two days later and were defeated 2-0. But, Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa eventually gave Africa her first win when Iqraam Rayners scored a 36th minute goal to give the Brazilians as Sundowns are fondly called a lone



Erick Farias (L) of Ulsan battling for the ball against Themba Zwane captain of Mamelodi Sundowns

goal victory over Ulsan Hyundai.

This victory brightened the hope of fans across the African continent. Unfortunately, the hope quickly waned into despair when Wydad Casablanca were defeated 2-0 by Manchester City through first half goals by Phil Foden and Jeremy Doku.

Nevertheless, most African fans were still hopeful that the second round of matches would be better.

After a goalless first half, Al Ahly fell

2-0 to Palmeiras of Brazil while Esperance of Tunisia bounced back to winning ways with a Mohamed Bellailli's 70th minute goal against Los Angeles FC.

Sadly, Mamelodi Sundowns could not sustain their winning start as they lost 4-3 to Borussia Dortmund while Wydad Casablanca became the first African side to be eliminated after losing their second group match 4-1 to Juventus.

The last round of matches became a must win for the other three African representative to stand a chance of reaching the last 16.

Al Ahly came into their last match with Porto fired up for victory. Despite taking the lead four times they allowed Porto to equalize each time as the match ended 4-4. With Palmeiras and Inter Miami having five points respectively, Al Ahly's two points could not stop their eliminations.

Esperance of Tunisia lost concentration in the end of the first and second halves thereby allowing Chelsea to score twice and once towards the end of the first and second half respectively to win 3-0.

The Tunisians garnered only three points after three matches and were therefore eliminated.

Can Mamelodi Sundowns be the sunlight in the gloomy performance of African clubs at the Club World Cup? The answer would come after their last group match against Fluminense.

continents. It also shows that African football is not measuring up to expectations.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) should pay more attention to club football in the continent. They should ensure that clubs have youth teams and organize continental competitions for them. CAF should ensure that the emoluments of players are enhanced to discourage the urge to leave the continent at every opportunity. Sadly, some players leave to play in some countries that are far below the standard of many African countries.

The technical and tactical know-how of coaches cannot be overlooked. Many good coaches across Africa do not have the resources to attend coaching courses. Therefore, it will not be out of place to create a system that will ensure that finance does not hinder African coaches from updating their knowledge of the game.

Lastly, Edson Arentes do Nascimento, better known as Pele rightly said that 'the future of football belongs to Africa'. Yes, it is if football administrators will do all that is needed to place African football where it rightly belongs, the top of world football.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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



The Club World Cup trophy