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"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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**'We'll Borrow Only
For Investments'**

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has reiterated that his administration will only resort to borrowing when necessary and strictly for investments that generate economic returns, not for recurrent expenditure or unsustainable spending.

He made this known recently, during a welcome dinner organised by the Abia State Government in honour of the Abia State Global Economic Advisory Council.

The dinner also marked the commencement of the Government's 2025 mid-year retreat for political appointees.

Reacting to allegations by the opposition that his administration has been borrowing to run the State, the Governor pointed to the recent Debt Management Office (DMO) report which showed that Abia topped the list of States that reduced their debts between March 2024 and March 2025.

He noted that Abia had reduced its public debt exposure by 57.20 per cent within the period under review, describing the development as the highest reduction nationwide.

"The Debt Management Office (DMO), a Federal Agency, put Abia first among the states that reduced their debts between March 2024 and March 2025.

"According to the DMO report, within the period under review, Abia reduced its public debt exposure by 57.20 percent, the highest reduction across the country.

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Abia, UNDP Sign Landmark MoU to Boost Economic Growth, Devt

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aimed at accelerating sustainable economic growth and

driving inclusive development across key sectors of the state's economy.

The agreement, signed recently at Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South, outlines strategic collaboration in areas such as energy, digitization, small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development, and industrial expansion.

Speaking during the ceremony, Governor Alex Otti expressed gratitude to the UNDP for its continued support, reaffirming his administration's commitment to ensuring the

partnership delivers tangible benefits for the people of Abia.

"This MoU marks a significant milestone in our journey," Otti said. "We are ready to invest all necessary energy into this framework and ensure we do not let you down."

Highlighting his administration's commitment to improving the welfare and security of residents, the governor emphasised the importance of creating a conducive environment for business growth and innovation.

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Governor Alex Otti (3rd from right), UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, Ms. Elsie Attafuh (3rd from left), and other dignitaries during the historic signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UNDP. The landmark agreement is aimed at fast-tracking sustainable economic growth and promoting inclusive development across key sectors of Abia State's economy. The signing ceremony took place recently in the governor's hometown, Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South.

INEC Moves to Provide Additional Guidelines for Election Result Review Process

By Sophina Ovuike

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), is preparing to issue a supplementary document to its 2022 Regulations and Guidelines.

The aim is to provide clarity on procedures for reviewing election results, particularly those governed

by Section 65 of the Electoral Act.

INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, made this announcement recently, at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja.

This was disclosed during the second quarterly consultative meeting with

Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs)

Yakubu noted that INEC is gearing up for five major elections within the next 13 months. He stated that the Commission is working on a supplement to the existing regulations to provide clear guidelines on the review of election results, declaration,

and return.

Below are the elections to be conducted as announced by the electoral commission: By-elections in 12 states on August 16, 2025, Anambra governorship election on November 8, 2025, FCT Area Council elections on February 21, 2026, Ekiti

governorship election on June 20, 2026 and Osun governorship election on August 8, 2026.

Yakubu further disclosed that the commission wants to ensure clear interpretation and implementation of Section 65, which has generated debate regarding the review and reversal of election declarations.

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He described the launch of the Abia Export Growth Lab—also taking place Tuesday—as a vital step towards making Abia's products globally competitive.

"It was clear to us that if we support our people—especially in the fabrics and other sectors—our products will reach a level that attracts global attention," Otti said. "We want to see Abia's products on shelves beyond our borders."

UNDP Resident Representative in Nigeria, Ms. Elsie Attafuah, praised the partnership as historic, commending Governor Otti for what she called visionary and exemplary leadership.

"Abia is increasingly standing out as a model for subnational development," Attafuah noted. "This MoU is the first of its kind signed with a Nigerian state under the UNDP's Integrated Smart State of Accelerated Development framework."

She expressed confidence that the agreement would serve as a blueprint for other states and confirmed the UNDP's commitment to supporting Abia's growth agenda. Attafuah also revealed that the UNDP had

earmarked catalytic funding for the Abia Export Growth Lab.

"We believe Abia is going to provide the economic renaissance that Africa needs," she added.

Chief Strategist to the Governor, Mr. Chinenye Mba-Uzoukwu, described the MoU as the product of months of rigorous engagement and alignment with the UNDP's strategic vision. He noted that the framework was developed through consultations involving sixteen key ministries, departments, and agencies, including sectors like energy, agriculture, and gender inclusion.

"This collaboration is fully aligned with the New Abia Agenda," Mba-Uzoukwu said, emphasizing the state's readiness to execute on its development priorities.

With this partnership, Abia State positions itself as a beacon of progressive governance and strategic innovation, aiming to deliver economic transformation through global partnerships and sustainable development practices.

INEC Moves to Provide Additional Guidelines

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"As soon as the Commission takes a decision, the supplementary Regulations and Guidelines will be uploaded to our website and other platforms for public information," he said.

The INEC Chairman reminded Resident Electoral Commissioners (REC) that their responsibilities are continuous and not limited to general elections alone.

"You are full-time commissioners. Your work does not begin as the general election approaches.

Some of you are already doing well, but you need to intensify your efforts," Yakubu further stated.

He however, emphasised on the training of staff by the RECs regularly on new policies and innovations without waiting for elaborate workshops from the headquarters.

"There are policy and procedural issues already determined by the Commission which you need to implement without prompting from Abuja, the INEC boss noted.

He also announced that Continuous Voter Registration (CVR), will resume nationwide on August 18 for online pre-registration and on August 25 for in-person registration.

Maintaining that, Anambra State, which has its governorship election in November, the CVR will begin next week, with the exercise holding simultaneously across all 326 wards.

The meeting also marked the first attendance of four newly sworn-in RECs, while two newly appointed National Commissioners, Professors Sunday Aja and Abdulrazak Yusuf, were formally welcomed.

Yakubu urged the RECs to demonstrate commitment and deep understanding of the Commission's mandate.

"This is a multi-stakeholder responsibility. We must play our part more effectively," he further stated.

Chukwu Hails Gov Otti Over Slash Of Domestic Debt

By Okereke Kate

In a major economic milestone, Abia State has emerged as a national pacesetter in fiscal responsibility, slashing its domestic debt by a staggering 57 per cent within just 12 months under the leadership of Governor Alex Otti.

The commendable achievement has drawn accolades from several quarters, including the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Due Process, Dr Oluebube Chukwu, who praised the governor's commitment to prudent financial management.

Speaking with newsmen in Umuahia, Dr. Chukwu described the development as a cheering news for Abians and the entire nation, noting that Abia's performance has positioned it as a beacon of hope in Nigeria's drive toward economic recovery and sustainability.



Dr Oluebube Chukwu

According to Chukwu, Abia is now leading the National Debt Cure, with the slash of Abia's debt rate, commending the bold and visionary leadership of Governor Alex Otti.

"This is not just a win for the state but a clear signal to the rest of the country that with the right

policies, discipline and political will, we can fix our finances," Chukwu stated.

He emphasised that the debt reduction is a result of strict due process reforms, elimination of wasteful spending and the Governor's insistence on transparency and accountability in the use of

public funds.

Chukwu further noted that the state government's strategic financial approach has not only reduced debt but also opened room for more meaningful investment in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and job creation.

The 57 per cent drop in domestic debt, as reported by the Debt Management Office (DMO), is among the highest recorded by any state within a fiscal year and underscores the Otti administration's pledge to restore financial discipline and public trust in governance.

"Abia's progress could serve as a template for other states battling with mounting debt burdens", Chukwu said.

He further added that the fiscal turnaround will translate into improved service delivery and long-term economic growth.

'We'll Borrow Only For Investments'

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"There is nothing wrong with criticizing the government, but you must criticize with facts. Opinions are free but facts are sacred.

"Some people have come out to say that we are borrowing, they are lying. Did I borrow from them? I saw a report yesterday that says that 26 out of the 36 States have actually reduced loans in the last 12 months and Abia came first, having reduced its debt profile by 57.20 per cent in one year", he added.

Governor Otti however, clarified that the state was not averse to responsible borrowing when the need arises.

"So, when we say we have not borrowed, we know what we are talking about. But that we have not borrowed doesn't mean we will not borrow. We will borrow when we need to borrow.

"We will borrow for investments that are regenerative. We will not borrow to eat. We will not borrow to consume. We will borrow for capital expenditure", the Governor asserted.

Governor Otti also addressed speculation that he was planning to defect to the All Progressives Congress (APC) or join any coalition of opposition parties and dismissed the rumours as baseless.

"I will just spend a few

minutes talking about what some members of the Global Economic Council have been asking me. One of them is the report about five governors decamping to APC.

"I am still a member of the Labour Party and I'm not looking for where to decamp to.

"The second point is about coalition, and a lot of people have been asking me, are you a member of the coalition? And, my response is, have you seen my name? Have you seen me attending the coalition meeting?

"We are just busy doing the work that Abia people have given us. So, we are not attending any coalition meeting. I have not attended any one and nobody has invited me", he clarified.

The governor restated his administration's commitment to providing the right environment for Abians to thrive through critical infrastructure, not handouts.

He said: "Those who don't want to do things right have no business in this government. People making noise about stomach infrastructure must understand that Abians are not people who believe in handouts but are hard-working people who just need the enabling

environment, like good roads and clean surroundings, to succeed".

He revealed that his government would soon embark on projects to restore potable water supply to parts of the State adding that government would soon flag off water projects in Umuahia, Aba and other parts to the state.

"We want to get to that level where you open your tap and you have public water running. In the next few weeks, we are going to flag off the water project in Aba around CKC. There is also another one in Umuahia and a lot of other places. We will get there", he assured.

The governor also disclosed the establishment of a Project Implementation Bureau, headed by Mr. Onyinye Nwosu, an Abia indigene who left his job with General Electric (GE) in Canada to contribute to the State's development.

Earlier in her remarks, the Co-Chair of the Abia Global Economic Advisory Council, Prof. Ms. Arunma Oteh, described it as an "absolute pleasure", to serve the state, noting that Abia is now truly number one, "not just in alphabet but also in performance".

The event which featured the cutting of a cake to mark the Council's first anniversary, was

attended by members of the State Executive Council, political appointees, and leading members of the State Advisory Council.

Change Of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Sunday 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.

Correction of Name

This is to affirm that KanuChibuzo Gladys which was wrongly written in my Bank Verification Number and Bank Account and KanuChibuzo are the same person. I now wish to be called and addressed as KANU CHIBUZO. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

KANU CHIBUZO.

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Ogugua Anne Orioha which appeared in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) with Access Bank, Ogugua Anne Onyenweaku that is in my marriage certificate and Anne Ogugua Henry are same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as ANNE OGUGUA HENRY. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

ANNE OGUGUA HENRY.

News

Oil Derivation Fund: ASOPADEC Boss Calls For Upward Review

By Ebere Tasie

The General Manager of the Abia State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ASOPADEC), Ven. Joshua Onyeike, has called for an upward review of the oil derivation fund to better equip the Agency in addressing the unique challenges and development needs of oil-producing communities in the state.

Onyeike, made this call while receiving a delegation from the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), led by the Federal Commissioner representing Abia State, Mrs. Nkechi Linda Otti, during a courtesy visit to his office in Umuahia recently.

He emphasised that ASOPADEC, as an interventionist Agency mandated to develop the oil-producing areas and their environs, requires increased funding to meet its growing responsibilities and expectations.

While describing the visit as a remarkable event in the history of the Commission, Onyeike expressed gratitude to Mrs. Otti and her team and assured the delegation that ASOPADEC would leverage the support of her office to further improve the living standards of residents in oil-producing communities and other parts of the State.

Highlighting some of the Commission's achievements under his leadership, Onyeike listed the construction of civic centres – most notably the Asa Civic Centre – renovation and retrofitting of public schools, reconstruction of roads, provision of scholarships to indigent students, rehabilitation of market stalls, borehole drilling, and distribution of agricultural inputs.

He reiterated ASOPADEC's commitment to the rapid transformation of oil-producing areas in line with the developmental agenda of Governor Alex Otti. Onyeike also disclosed upcoming plans, including the rehabilitation of electricity infrastructure in Asa land and the launch of youth skills acquisition programmes. He however, commended Governor Otti for empowering the Commission to fulfill its intervention mandate.

Earlier, Mrs. Nkechi Linda Otti, said her visit aimed to familiarize herself with key stakeholders in the State and to foster collaboration that would contribute to Abia's development. She praised Governor Otti's leadership, describing him as a team player who has performed commendably in office and stressed the importance of support from her office in advancing the state's interests.

In their contributions, the Director of the State Office on Local Governments in the Commission, Mrs. Florence Oko, and the Administrative Secretary for Abia and Imo States, Mrs. Elizabeth Okafor, emphasised the need for a strong working relationship between ASOPADEC and the Abia representative at RMAFC. They expressed concern over the declining oil production in the State, attributing it to rampant vandalism.

Contributing, they condemned such destructive acts and urged perpetrators to desist, noting that continued sabotage hinders the growth and development of their own communities.



ASOPADEC GM, Ven. Joshua Onyeike



Radio Stations, Don FM, Ikoru FM

Abia Govt Commends Don Lulu Over Setting Up Radio Stations In Umuahia

By Okereke Kate

The Abia State Government has called on Abians living outside the state and across the globe to return home and invest, citing significant progress in infrastructure, security, and the ease of doing business.

The government said it was time for Abians to showcase the "Aku ruo ulo" spirit. The government commended the Chief Executive Officer of Don Media Group and II Flame Entertainment, Mayor Lucky Igbokwe, fondly called Don Lulu, for setting up a multi-

million naira radio stations in Umuahia, Don 103.7 FM and Ikoru 93.3 FM.

Interacting with the media, shortly after the commissioning of the radio stations at Umuawa Alaocha, in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State, the Senior Special Assistant to the Abia State Governor on Special Duties, Dr George Chidozie, who represented Governor, Alex Otti, at the event, described the development as a clear reflection of the impact of the Governor's policies.

He said that the current

administration's efforts to address insecurity, improve power supply, and build critical infrastructure are yielding visible results.

Chidozie disclosed that the influx into Abia by investors, is an evidence of the good works Governor Otti, is doing, adding that if the governor was not working, no Abian would see the need to return home to invest.

According to him, the state has long been appealing to its citizens in the diaspora to bring their investments back to Abia, especially now that the state is enjoying an enabling

environment for business growth.

"His Excellency has tackled key challenges head-on, from insecurity to power supply and infrastructure development, and the results are clear. We are now witnessing a surge of investors interest in Abia. Investors are coming because they see the difference", he stated.

He said the huge investments in the media industry by Mayor Igbokwe, could only be obtainable in a place where security was prioritized.

"This kind of development can only happen where security is assured, infrastructure is in place, and government policies support business growth. His Excellency has laid that foundation, and today, investors are coming to Abia in torrents", he added.

Dr Chidozie while hinting on the numerous benefits the Don Lulu's investment would have in the state, commended him for leading by example. He described his investment as a true demonstration of the "Aku ruo ulo" spirit, which basically means, "bringing wealth back home".

"Don Lulu is a shining example of this spirit, he has exhibited true faith in the potential of Abia by investing here. He did not let fear hold him back. That fear belongs to the past. Today, Abia is open for business, safe, secure, and ready for growth", he also stated.

He further called on Abians to come home and invest, adding that the fears of the past were gone. He assured them that businesses operating in the State, particularly in Umuahia and Aba, now have a business-friendly atmosphere to thrive, stating that the environment is safe and welcoming for both Abians and non-Abians alike.

CAN Calls For Stronger Law To Protect Victims Of Gender-based Violence

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has advocated stronger enforcement mechanisms to protect victims of gender-based violence and to hold perpetrators accountable.

The association also called on church leaders to lead the fight against violence inflicted on women and girls in the country.

CAN President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, said this at the inauguration of the Gender-Based Violence Prevention Project in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the event, with the theme, "Christian Leaders' Response to Violence Against Women and Girls", brought together faith leaders, civil society organisations, and advocates.

Okoh stressed the urgency of the theme, while noting the prevalence of abuse and exploitation faced by women and girls in communities across Nigeria.

"We are daily confronted with heartbreaking stories of abuse, exploitation, and violence, often perpetrated in silence.

"CAN is committed through this project to work with churches across all blocs by raising awareness of gender-based violence and its devastating impact on families and communities.

"We will train clergy and church workers on how to identify, prevent, and respond to cases of abuse.

"We will also promote survivor-centred support systems that affirm the dignity of women and girls," he said.

He urged Christian leaders to break the culture of silence and shame, calling for an end to

the anomaly.

"As Christian leaders, we must join forces with other humanitarian organisations that want an end to this anomaly.

"Men and women of God must not be silent when women are being brutalised in their homes and communities.

"The church must not be indifferent when girls are denied education, dignity, or protection. As Christian leaders, we have the moral responsibility to protect the weak and vulnerable around us.

"We must use our voices, pulpits and influence to break the culture of silence and shame that often surrounds gender-based violence," the archbishop said.

Meanwhile, he commended the Ford Foundation and WEWE for their tireless work in promoting gender justice and supporting faith-based approaches to social transformation.

He highlighted the importance of collaboration between faith-based and humanitarian organisations.

"This partnership represents what can be achieved when faith meets action and compassion is translated into advocacy and service," he said.

Quoting Isaiah 1:17, Okoh reminded the audience of the Biblical instruction to defend the cause of the fatherless and plead the case of the widow.

He urged the church to follow Jesus' example by creating safe spaces and speaking out against injustice.

Culled from NAN

News

Norah Okafor Launches Advocacy Office

By Charles Ogbomaya

A journalist and gender rights advocate in Abia State, Ambassador Norah Okafor, has officially unveiled the new office of her non-profit organization, **Protect the Precious Foundation**, located in Crowther Street, Umuahia.

Speaking during the unveiling, Okafor said the foundation was established to provide a platform that protects and amplifies the voices of the girl child and other vulnerable children in society.

Recalling her own childhood struggles growing up in a male-dominated environment, Okafor said those early life challenges shaped her passion for advocacy.

"There were many nights I cried over difficult situations, but those experiences pushed me to become a strong voice for the rights of women and girls", she stated.

She expressed joy that the new centre now offers a safe and confidential space where girls, women, and even boys can freely share their challenges.

"We assess their cases and select the ones we can handle, working in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice, Women Affairs, and other relevant agencies, to ensure that these voices are heard," she further stated.

Reflecting on her journey, she said: "I remember the many nights I cried over difficult cases – some lost due to legal technicalities, and others we triumphed in. I think of the girls I've mentored and raised, whom I proudly call 'my daughters.' Sometimes I tell myself: if I were to leave this world today, I may not have biological children, but I've transferred my values, my resilience, and my vision to so many girls who will carry the baton forward."

Okafor also celebrated her recent induction as a Speaking Ambassador for Peace by the United Nations, calling it a humbling honor and a renewed call to action.

"This recognition reaffirms my commitment to ensure that the rights of girls and women are not only acknowledged but actively championed. It's a reminder that the echoes of our work are reaching far beyond Abia—reverberating across the world."

In her new role, she said she is more determined than ever to deepen the fight for justice, amplify the voices of the marginalized, and help women and girls fulfill their God-given potential.

Fed Lawmaker, Nkwonta Calls For Strategic Investment To Unlock Southeast Potential

Stories By: Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The Chairman, House Committee on the South East Development Commission (SEDC), Federal House of Representatives, Hon. Chris Nkwonta, has called for a shift from fragmented aid efforts to strategic, long-term investments in the Southeast, stressing the region's readiness for economic transformation.

Speaking on behalf of the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, at a High-Level Roundtable on Strategic Collaboration in Southeast Nigeria, Hon. Nkwonta emphasized that the SEDC was not designed to be another layer of bureaucracy, but a results-driven platform to accelerate inclusive growth and development.

With the theme

"Rebuilding Legacy: Co-Creating a New Era of Growth in the Southeast," the roundtable focused on unlocking the region's untapped potential. Nkwonta pointed to the Southeast's youthful population, entrepreneurial dynamism, and rich opportunities in infrastructure, agriculture, innovation, education, and healthcare as strong foundations for regional renewal.

"The SEDC must serve as a bridge between vision and execution," Nkwonta stated. "This is the time for bold partnerships, policy alignment, and private sector-led initiatives that create real impact. The Southeast is open for investment – not pity."

The event brought together key stakeholders including the Minister of Regional Development,

Minister of State for Regional Development, Alhaji Uba Maigari Ahmadu; SEDC Board Chairman, Dr. Emeka Wogu; Managing Director, Mr. Mark Okoye; and Executive

Directors of the Commission. Also present were development partners, private sector leaders, and senior government officials.

The roundtable

marked a renewed commitment to coordinated action in rebuilding the Southeast through sustainable investment and strategic collaboration.



Hon. Chris Nkwonta

Calls For Equity, Restructuring Dominate Southeast Constitution Review Hearing

Over the weekend, the city of Enugu hosted the 1999 Southeast Zonal Public Hearing on the review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). The two-day event, organized by the Nigerian Senate Committee on the Review of the Constitution, brought together lawmakers, legal experts, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, youth representatives, and other key stakeholders from across the five southeastern states.

Senator Austin Akobundu, representing Abia Central Senatorial District, led a strong delegation of Southeast senators to the public hearing. Other senators in attendance included Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe (Abia South), Senator Osita Ngwu (Enugu West), Senator Ifeanyi Ubah (Anambra South), and Senator Kelvin Chukwu (Enugu East), among others.

In his opening remarks, Senator Austin Akobundu emphasized the historical importance of the constitution review process, describing it as a "critical opportunity to address long-standing structural issues and strengthen the foundations of Nigeria's democracy." "This is not just a legislative exercise," Akobundu said. "It is a people-driven process that must reflect the true yearnings and aspirations of our constituents across the Southeast. We must be bold in confronting the limitations of the current constitution and visionary in crafting a more inclusive and functional framework."

Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, a ranking member of the Senate and a vocal advocate for constitutional reforms, called for a more federated Nigeria, urging the committee to give serious attention to issues of

resource control, devolution of powers, and the creation of additional states in the Southeast. "The Southeast has only five states compared to other regions with six or more," Abaribe stated. "This imbalance affects our representation, our development, and our voice in the federal structure. It must be corrected as a matter of equity and justice."

The hearing also featured submissions from civil society groups, youth leaders, and legal experts. Mrs. Amaka Umeh, representing a coalition of women's organizations, urged the committee to enshrine stronger gender equality provisions in the constitution and to address barriers to women's political participation. "We cannot talk about constitutional reform without making room for the full inclusion of women and marginalized groups,"

Umeh said. "A revised constitution must protect the rights of every Nigerian, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or religion." Chief Emmanuel Eze, a respected traditional ruler from Ebonyi State, stressed the importance of community-based governance and advocated for constitutional recognition of traditional institutions as partners in grassroots development. Meanwhile, Senator Ifeanyi Ubah spoke on the need to enhance security in the Southeast through state policing. He said the centralized policing structure had failed to effectively protect lives and property in many parts of the country.

"Security must be localized," Ubah argued. "Our people are suffering, and we need a structure that understands the local terrain, language, and dynamics. A constitution

that permits state police is long overdue."

The Enugu session was part of a nationwide series of zonal hearings held concurrently across five geopolitical zones, with the exception of the Northwest, whose session is scheduled for a later date due to logistical delays. The Senate Committee on Constitution Review is expected to collate all submissions from the zonal hearings and incorporate them into a draft amendment bill, which will undergo further debate and approval processes in the National Assembly. As the hearing concluded, participants echoed a shared sentiment: that the time for transformative constitutional change in Nigeria is now – and the Southeast must be fully represented in the process.

Editorial

Abia Excros Retreat: A New Chapter In Statecraft

In a world awash with information, it is no longer what we know that defines progress, but what we do with what we know. As Governor Alex C. Otti of Abia State rightly emphasized at the close of the State Executive Council Retreat last week, knowledge without application is powerless. In a single statement, he distilled a truth that continues to elude many in public service: real change begins when capacity meets action.

The second-quarter retreat in Umuahia was not a ceremonial gathering of government elites. It was a masterclass in leadership accountability and execution. For the first time in recent memory, a state government appears not only eager to learn but determined to do. The Governor's address didn't dwell on platitudes, rather it was a blueprint for institutional transformation. It laid bare the issues, clarified direction, and announced a bold new era of public sector discipline, productivity, and impact.

At the core of this "new consciousness" is an uncompromising emphasis on performance. The Otti administration recognizes that Abia's future cannot be built on good intentions alone. It requires capacity, honed through rigorous training, strategic mentoring, and the courage to embrace reform. That is why every Commissioner and Head of Ministries, Departments, or Agencies (MDA) has been directed to develop robust capacity-building programmes tailored to the unique goals of their offices. This is not optional. It is the foundation upon which sustainable governance must rest.

But the Governor didn't stop with today's leaders; he cast his gaze forward for tomorrow through a proposed Leadership and Mentorship Academy for 1,000 Abia youths aged 16 to 20. Indeed, the administration is planting seeds of transformation that will shape the state for generations. The idea is not merely to educate, but to awaken. To empower a generation with the skills, discipline, and civic orientation needed to lead their communities and industries, not just in Nigeria, but globally.

Equally compelling are the landmark projects set to redefine Abia's economic and developmental narrative. The forthcoming \$1.3 billion Abia Medical City, for instance, isn't just a hospital, it's a revolution in healthcare delivery, research, and capital attraction.

Designed as West Africa's first quaternary medical hub, this initiative aims to reduce outbound medical tourism, plug capital flight, and create thousands of skilled jobs.

Similarly, the Enyimba Hotel and International Convention Centre project promises to breathe new life into Aba's tourism and industrial potential. It will showcase Enyimba City as more than a hub of commerce—it will position it as a global destination for investors, innovators, and decision-makers.

And what of the infrastructure backbone? The Otti administration has not just made promises, it has equally delivered. From the strategic rehabilitation of Omenuko Bridge, Ohanku and Obohia roads, to the comprehensive upgrades at Abia State University and the College of Education Arochukwu, real work is happening. Contractors are being paid on schedule, projects are progressing without bottlenecks, and for the first time in years, there is visible proof of responsible leadership in Abia.

Indeed, this isn't just political rhetoric. The Debt Management Office recently ranked Abia No. 1 among Nigeria's 36 states and the FCT in reducing its public debt burden over the past year. That's not a small feat, it is evidence of financial discipline in an era when fiscal recklessness has become the norm in many quarters.

But this government is not working in isolation. It is building on a broad coalition of knowledge, expertise, and goodwill. The presence and contributions of the Abia Global Economic Advisory Council (AGEAC); a body of distinguished Nigerians and global thought leaders, has given this administration a rare intellectual edge. Individuals like Prof. Arunma Oteh, Bolaji Balogun, Ifueko Omogui Okauru, and others have provided Abia with access to the kind of wisdom and insight that money cannot buy.

And perhaps that is the biggest win: restoring credibility. Across Nigeria, technocrats, investors, and patriots are choosing Abia, not because it is the easiest place to work, but because they see a government that is honest, competent, and hungry for excellence.

In the final analysis, what Governor Otti has introduced is not merely a change in projects or policy; it is a change in paradigm. This is a government that refuses to be distracted by politics as usual. It is deeply committed to remaking Abia into a model of what governance should look like: transparent, efficient, visionary, and citizen-centered.

But this journey is not his alone. It is our collective task. The citizens of Abia must not only support this transformation, they must demand that it continues. As Governor Otti concluded, "Building the New Abia is our collective project." We agree. And it is one project worth fighting for.

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

Need For Affordable Housing In Umuahia

Dear Editor,

I write through your widely read newspaper to express deep concern over the skyrocketing cost of house rent in Umuahia and to appeal for urgent government intervention.

The cost of housing in Umuahia has become a growing burden for residents—many of whom are civil servants with fixed or limited incomes. Today, a two-bedroom apartment goes for as high as ₦1 million annually, while a one-bedroom unit is often priced between ₦400,000 to ₦500,000, if not more. In a city largely populated by civil servants, one wonders how many can afford such rents without sacrificing basic needs.

Many blame the situation on greedy landlords and housing agents who not only demand exorbitant rents but also ask for advance payments covering two or three years. While it's understandable that the rising cost of building materials and the overall economic situation contribute to this issue, it is unreasonable for landlords to expect to recoup their entire building investment all at once through rent.

Affordable housing is fast disappearing, and the traditional "face-me-I-face-you" apartments are being replaced by more modern structures, often at much higher prices. This trend, combined with growing demand in developing areas like World Bank, Agbama, and Aba Road, has further pushed rents beyond the reach of average residents.

This surge in rent prices is having a real and painful impact on people's standard of living. Many are forced to move to the outskirts or into rural parts of Umuahia, simply because they can no longer afford to live in the city.

On behalf of concerned residents, I am appealing to the government to urgently address this issue by:

Introducing policies to regulate and control rent prices, creating affordable housing options for low- and middle-income earners, reforming the mortgage system to make home ownership more accessible, tackling corruption in property registration and addressing inflated building material costs.

Without swift and comprehensive government action, more residents may be pushed out of decent housing and into poverty. Housing is a basic need, should be affordable not left to the mercy of market forces alone.

Ifeanyichukwu Ogidi
From Umuahia.

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Discourse

Assessment Of The Potential Impact Of The New Tax Regime

Major tax reforms in the Nigerian economy have been signed into law by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, popularly called BAT (short form), by the Nigerian media.

While addressing State House correspondents, after the President's assent to the bills, Chairman of the Nigeria Revenue Service, Zach Adedeji, disclosed that these four tax fiscal reform laws will commence by January 1st, 2026.

Overview Of The Tax Reforms The four new laws are:

The Nigeria Tax Act, which merges various rules into a single, easier-to-understand code and eliminates more than 50 small, overlapping taxes. The presidency has said that reducing the number of taxes and eliminating duplication, will making doing business easier

The Tax Administration Act, which sets common rules for how taxes are collected across federal, state, and local governments

The Nigeria Revenue Service Act, which replaces the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) with a new, independent agency - the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS)

The Joint Revenue Board Act, which improves co-ordination between levels of government and creates a Tax Ombudsman and Tax Appeal Tribunal to resolve disputes

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TAX REFORM BILL

Though information remains relatively sketchy, while awaiting the implementation design, some salient points remain lucid and could form a convergence criterion for forecast and decision making.

Reduction on the Incidence of Taxation for Categories of Persons and Businesses

By classifying Nigerian with monthly salary of N250,000 as poor and Tax Exempt, reduction in applicable income tax rate for workers earning N1.2m to N1.5m monthly, the new tax regime aims to enhance the purchasing power parity of the poor and middle class, thereby stimulating consumption expenditure, which will impact purchasing managers index by increasing manufacturing orders.

For businesses and in particular Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), which has consistently faced "Capital Access Marginalization" (CAM), as a result of high cost of funds for business, a sigh of relieve is in the offing. The financial systemic imbalance against these businesses stem from monetary policy of the Central Bank of Nigeria, which in trying to address inflation and foreign exchange fluctuations, hiked the MPR for 8 consecutive times between 2024 and 2025, from 18.75% to 17.50%, increased Cash Reserve Ratio, (CRR), Liquidity Ratio at 50% and kept the asymmetric corridor hovering around +500/-100 to the benchmark interest rate.

Arising from the policy adjustment in the tax regime, while the MSMEs may be unable to compete with bigger or stable firms in assessing funding from Deposit Money Banks, (DMBs), a window for operational cost reduction, with the profit possibility, given efficient utilization of scarce resources, is projected by the tax policy shift.

As indicated by the new tax regime, companies with turnover of N0m - N50m are exempt from the tax bracket as the minimum taxable threshold is adjusted to turnover in excess of N50m. Qualified small businesses will no longer be

required to file Audited accounts under this provision of the tax law.

Essential goods and services such as food, healthcare, education, rent, power, and baby products are excluded from Value Added Tax (VAT), thus enhancing the ability of families to afford their basic needs. This will impact aggregate consumption in the domestic economy and stimulate increased sales and production of these basic necessities.

For large entities, corporation tax rates, will be reduced from 30% to 27.5% in 2025 and a further 25% in subsequent years, with a window for claiming tax credits for VAT paid on expenses and assets, which implies recouping the 7.5% that would have been paid as VAT. This money will definitely support business operations, reduce costs enhance profit prospects.

The reform also provided tax incentives for charitable groups, co-operatives, educational and religious organizations, where it can be established that the targeted earnings do not arise from commercial business activities.

Increased Government Revenue

The APC led administration of Mr. Tinubu has targeted a \$1 trillion economy by 2030, with current fiscal budget for 2025 at N49.74 trillion, expected to be funded by a revenue of N36.35 trillion and a deficit of

(HNIs), will feel a greater tax burden, with higher VAT on luxury goods, premium services, and capital gains tax imposed on large share sales, thus reflecting a more progressive tax structure and efficient distribution of resources.

The new tax regime has eradicated multiple taxes. The Nigerian Revenue Service (NRS) is expected to act as an autonomous revenue collection agency, responsible for collecting revenues of other agencies such as the Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA); further driving efficient resource utilization.

With the President directing proper implementation of the reform, thereby providing executive impetus, efficiency in the tax system is conceivable. It is expected that professional bodies, civil society groups, public and private sector participation in the implementation stage will drive the effectiveness of the new tax law, if the postulations of the Chairman, Presidential Committee on Tax Reform, Taiwo Oyedele is anything to hold.

The new system will introduce a unified filing system and streamlined state and federal tax processes, capable of reducing compliance time fall by up to 40 percent.

net. To this extent, the reform is expected to further reduce inflation. However, depending on implementation pattern, an expansion of the tax bracket, in addition to early compliance adjustments, could fuel short-term slight increase in core inflation as businesses re-price goods and services. Nevertheless, systemic adjustments, reduction in tax inefficiencies and striking a balance between monetary and fiscal policies, will mute inflation pressures, with time.

Aggregate Demand

As government revenue increases through the expansion of tax bracket, total government expenditure on goods and services will automatically increase, contributing to the growth of the GDP. In line with the above, domestic consumption for households is expected to increase by the value of non-taxable income, which can be saved for investment or spent on goods and services. For businesses, tax exemptions and reductions will free up cash flows which can be used for re-investment or business expansion.

Trade Competitiveness

The tax reform is an essential entry point for trade competitiveness in the African market. As a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), accelerating export earnings is only possible with reduction in the cost of production, high product quality, provision of infrastructure, improved trade policies and better business environment. With proper implementation of the new tax laws, Nigeria, can play competitively in the free trade supply chain.

Employment Creation

Businesses need capital for expansion. Depending on the size of the business, bank borrowing may not be a viable option. While established businesses, can borrow from commercial banks or even issue equities, bonds and commercial papers (CPs), to raise both short-term and long-term funds, small businesses rely on free cashflows or the re-investment of profits. To this extent, the adjustments seen in the reform can spur business growth and create additional employment as business expansion occur.

Increased Investor Confidence

Multiple taxation has been a disincentive to business growth. Aside concerns for cash flow constraint, it creates uncertainties for financial forecasts, distorts working capital management and hinders effective operational planning. With the provision for institutional safeguards and IT driven systems for monitoring and control, the autonomy of the Nigeria Revenue Service, (NRS) and performance reporting platforms, fiscal discipline, there is a glimmer of hope for systemic trust and reliability. This will reduce overall business risk and support investor appetite.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of a policy reform is contingent upon the efficiency with which it is implemented. Nigerians have seen inconsistencies in policy implementation overtime. This has led to increased skepticism around the new tax law. Stakeholder accountability and executive impetus is required to drive the new regime, as a tool for economic growth. The effects of fiscal policies also depend on the sensitivity of transmission channels to policy adjustments, prevailing economic factors and institutional frameworks.

Christian Isaac Anyalisi M.Sc, ACIS,
ACIP, ACS, ADC
(Chartered Stockbroker/Securities Analyst)

The effectiveness of a policy reform is contingent upon the efficiency with which it is implemented. Nigerians have seen inconsistencies in policy implementation overtime.

N13.39 trillion, which will come through borrowing. Giving the incremental approach to budgeting in Nigeria, budget for 2026, will exceed current figures. Consequently, the government is thinking ahead, to fund future expenditure through an enhanced tax revenue of 18% to the GDP by 2026 against the current the tax to GDP ratio circa 7%-8%, which is about the least in Africa. The targeted tax revenue is in keeping with the average tax to GDP ratio of 16% - 18% in Africa.

With this determination to steer the fiscal policy thrust, via innovative tax reforms, it is possible that non-oil tax receipts will hit N4.8 trillion through this revenue source to support domestic expenditure, thus, reducing increased government borrowing, which is expected to reach a whopping N187 trillion, with debt to GDP ratio around 51% in 2025 and 2026.

Tax Collection Efficiency

In a remarkable development, the Nigerian government, propelled by the economic necessity of exiting over-reliance on monetary policy as a way managing the economy, has reformed the tax system, considered outdated, inefficient and unfairly harsh on the poor.

Through tax rule simplification and expected voluntary compliance, there are expectancies for funding infrastructure and public services, such as healthcare and education, as well as reduced the reliance on borrowing.

High-Net Worth Individuals

Enhanced Information Technology Adoption

Driving the new model of taxation has implications for data capture, which can only be facilitated via increased adoption of information technology to track taxable activities across the country. In the pursuit of streamlined bureaucracy, for small businesses, to boost compliance and encourage informal traders to enter the tax system, information technology is expected to play a critical role. For these reforms to achieve the desired goals, a more robust access to mobile networks and increased digital capacity will be required. It is expected that the telecommunications industry will leverage the reform to scale service provision by creating additional products that fit into the tax space, with capacity to drive efficient tax-service delivery. There is huge opportunity here, when we consider the size of the country with 774 local government areas and its demography.

Broad Implications Of The Tax Reforms On The Economy

A fiscal policy-driven economic growth will have implications on the economy both in the short-term, medium-term and long-term.

Inflation

A critical examination of this reform indicates a tendency towards an expansionary fiscal policy, from the angle of tax reduction. This is noticeable from the removal of the poor category of citizens and small businesses from the tax



Abia State Civil Service Commission

Vacancies for Ministry of Health

• Umuahia, Abia State • Nigeria

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Applications are hereby invited from suitable and qualified candidates for the below-mentioned positions in the Ministry of Health of Abia State.

1). HOSPITAL-BASED CONSULTANT

S/N	DEPARTMENT	GENERAL/SUB-SPECIALTIES
1	Surgery	General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Plastic Surgery, ENT, Maxillofacial surgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Paediatric surgery, Urological surgery
2	Internal medicine	Cardiology, Respiratory, Gastroenterology, Dermatology, Endocrinology, Neurology, Nephrology and Rheumatology
3	Ophthalmology	Ophthalmology
4	Anesthesiology	Anaesthesiology
5	Obstetrics and Gynaecology	Obstetrics and Gynaecology
6	Paediatrics	Paediatrics
7	Pathology	Haematology and Immunology, Chemical Pathology, Anatomic Pathology
8	Radiology	Radiology
9	Family Medicine	Family Physician

REQUIREMENTS:

- Possession of an MBBS degree or its equivalent, NYSC Discharge or Exemption Certificates.
- Current registration/Practicing License with the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria.
- Fellowship of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria/West Africa Postgraduate Medical College or its equivalent.
- Research Publications in reputable journal outlets would confer an added advantage.
- Three referee reports must be submitted with the application.

2). MEDICAL/DENTAL OFFICERS:

REQUIREMENTS:

- Possession of a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (B.D.S.) for Dental Officers and an MBBS degree for Medical Officers, NYSC Discharge Certificate or Exemption Certificates.
- Current registration/Practicing License.
- Experience from a Tertiary Institution will be an added advantage.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University.

3). PHARMACIST:

REQUIREMENTS:

- Possession of a Bachelor of Pharmacy (B. Pharm). NYSC Discharge Certificate or Exemption Certificates.
- Current registration/Practicing License with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University.

4) MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENTIST:

REQUIREMENTS:

- Possession of a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science (MBLS). NYSC Exemption Certificates.
- Current registration/Practicing License with the Institute of Medical Laboratory Science of Nigeria.
- Three referee reports with at least one from a candidate's former University.

5) OPTOMETRIST:

REQUIREMENTS:

- Possession of Doctor of Optometry (O.D), NYSC Discharge Certificate or Exemption Certificates.
- Current registration/Practicing License with the General Optical Council of Nigeria.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University Teacher.

6) NURSING OFFICERS:

REQUIREMENTS:

- NRN, NRM, or equivalent certificate, duly registered with Nigeria's Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- SPECIALTY IN Anaesthesia, Paediatrics, Accident and Emergency (A/E), Preoperative, Ophthalmology, Psychiatry, ICU, Nephrology, Ophthalmic, Dental, Anaesthesia and Intensive care, ENT, and Orthopaedics will be an added advantage.
- Possession of a Bachelor of Nursing will be an added advantage.
- Experience from a Tertiary Institution will be an added advantage.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former Nursing School.

7) MEDICAL RADIOGRAPHERS

REQUIREMENTS:

- DCR, DIR, B.Sc. or equivalent certificate, NYSC discharge or Exemption Certificate
- Current registration/practicing License with the Radiographers Registration Board of Nigeria
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University.

8). DENTAL TECHNOLOGIST /DENTAL THERAPIST

REQUIREMENTS

- B. Tech certification and current license from the dental technologists' board of Nigeria
- NYSC Discharge Certificate or Exemption Certificates.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University.

9) PHYSIOTHERAPIST

- Bachelor of medical rehabilitation or Bachelor of physiotherapy (BMR or B. Physio)
- Current license by the medical rehabilitation therapist board (MRTB)
- NYSC Discharge Certificate or Exemption Certificates.
- Three referee reports with at least one from the candidate's former University.

SALARY AND ALLOWANCES

The Public Service Structure will determine salary and allowances for all categories of employees.

Closing Date: Application closes **9th August, 2025.**

Method of Application

Interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to apply online by visiting: <https://abiastate.zohorecruit.com/jobs/Careers>

Please note that **only applications submitted through the online portal** will be reviewed and considered for further evaluation.

Signed:

Ekaette Oham
Permanent Secretary
For: Chairman



FG Rolls Out \$40m Digital Transformation Project For 10 Universities

The Federal Government of Nigeria has unveiled a \$40 million Blueprint ICT Development Project aimed at revolutionizing the nation's tertiary education sector through cutting-edge digital infrastructure and innovative solutions.

During the launch in Abuja recently, the Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, said the project would be implemented across 10 federal universities across the nation.

Ten federal universities that have been selected for the Blueprint ICT-Development Project pilot phase, including:

1. University of Calabar, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Ibadan, Federal University of Technology, Minna, University of Maiduguri, Bayero University, Kano, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and the University of Jos.

These institutions will benefit from the project's digital infrastructure and innovation initiatives.

According to him, the project reflected a renewed national focus on digital transformation, inclusive education, and human capital development.

"This project is a strategic investment in the future of Nigerian education. It's about building smart campuses, empowering smart people, and nurturing smart ideas," Alausa said.

This initiative aligns with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, aiming to establish a model for innovation and global partnerships in higher education.

The project would enable universities to digitize administrative systems, develop hybrid and cross-border academic programmes, and foster international education co-operation.

"The initiative would promote teacher training, improve education data systems, and integrate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) across university curricula, to support skills-based learning," he added.

Other focus areas include the development of digital libraries, enhancement of research management systems, and connection of all participating universities to the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN).

Co-ordinator of Special Projects at the National Universities Commission (NUC), Dr. Joshua Atah, noted that the project was structured into two main components:

Component One (\$38 million): This would support ICT upgrades in 10 selected federal universities. It included renovation of digital infrastructure, improved campus connectivity, academic staff training, and provision of digital resources for students.

Concurrence Delay: House Of Reps Halts Consideration Of Senate Bills

The House of Representatives has halted consideration of Senate bills due to prolonged delays by the upper Chamber in giving concurrence to House-passed legislation.

The decision was made recently, after Minority Leader, Kingsley Chinda, highlighted the disparity in legislative co-operation between the two chambers.

Chinda noted that while the House routinely considers and fast-tracks Senate bills, the Senate has failed to reciprocate.

Over 140 bills passed by the House are still pending in the Senate, with some delayed for over six months.

Speaker of the House, Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, confirmed the growing frustration among lawmakers.

Abbas revealed that at least 146 bills passed by the House, including over 10 sponsored by him, are currently awaiting Senate concurrence. He stated that unless the House receives considerable assurance from the Senate, they will no longer consider their bills. "This is not acceptable," Abbas emphasised.

The impasse came to a head during the debate on a Senate bill seeking to establish a Federal Orthopaedic Hospital in Obokun, Osun State.

Members raised strong objections, with Hon. Dagomie Abiante, disclosing that two of his bills, passed by the House earlier in 2024, had not been listed or considered by the Senate.

Hon. Ahmed Jaha urged the House Committee on Rules and Business to engage its Senate counterpart to investigate the cause of the delays.

He suggested that stepping down Senate-originated bills would serve as a strong message demanding reciprocity.

The House voted to step down the bill and suspend further consideration of all pending Senate legislation.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Nigerians React as U.S. Halts Long-Term Visas

The U.S. government's decision to suspend long-term visas for Nigerian citizens has sparked widespread concern and anger across the country, with many Nigerians voicing frustration over what they see as the fallout of poor foreign policy choices.

"I've worked for years building my career and preparing to relocate to the U.S. for postgraduate studies. Now, it all feels wasted," said Adaobi Eze, a software developer in Abuja. "Why should ordinary Nigerians pay the price for political missteps?"

The suspension comes shortly after Nigeria's attendance and active participation in the BRICS summit – a move many now fear has triggered diplomatic backlash from traditional Western allies. Critics of the Tinubu administration argue the president's limited diplomatic experience and perceived lack of strategic foresight are beginning to show.

On social media, hashtags like #VisaBan and #DiplomaticFallout are trending, with many users blaming the government's foreign policy pivot for what they describe as a "self-inflicted wound."

"Tinubu wanted to play big on the global stage without understanding the game," tweeted one

user. "Now, students, professionals, and families are suffering."

Others are calling for immediate diplomatic engagement to repair the damage. "This is not just about visas," said political commentator Yusuf Ibrahim. "This is about Nigeria's global credibility. If we lose

that, we lose much more than travel access."

The visa freeze also comes amid increasing disunity within ECOWAS, where Nigeria's leadership role is being challenged following disagreements over regional security and

governance. For many Nigerians, the developments mark a troubling shift – from regional fragmentation to global isolation.

"This isn't just a foreign policy issue anymore," said university lecturer Dr. Bisi Akinyemi. "It's becoming a national crisis."

Tetfund Invest N110bn In Training Of Medical Personnel

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), has announced a landmark allocation of N110 billion to enhance the training of medical personnel and introduce cutting-edge simulation technologies across Nigeria's tertiary institutions. This move aims to address the persistent shortage of healthcare professionals and improve the quality of medical education nationwide.

The announcement was made by the Chairman of the TETFund Board of Trustees and former Governor of Katsina State, Amidu Bello Masari, during the commissioning of eight major projects at the Federal University of Technology, Babura (FUTB) in Jigawa State recently.

The projects were developed under TETFund's Special High Impact Intervention programme, which targets strategic investments in education and infrastructure.

Masari emphasised that the N110 billion fund was part of a five-year strategic plan aligned with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda.

The fund will focus on equipping public tertiary institutions with advanced simulation tools, modern medical training equipment, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the healthcare sector.

"Starting from 2025, this significant investment will improve the training environment for medical personnel across the country. Our goal is to reduce medical tourism by enhancing local expertise and stem the brain drain of health professionals seeking opportunities abroad," Masari said.

The initiative aims to produce well-trained, competent health workers by leveraging state-of-the-art simulation technologies that replicate real-life medical scenarios, enabling students to gain hands-on experience in a controlled setting before engaging in clinical practice.

Masari further highlighted the importance of ongoing collaboration between TETFund and beneficiary institutions to ensure that the funding translates into sustainable and transformative outcomes that will positively impact national development.

Since 2021, the Federal University of Technology, Babura – one of four specialized universities established by the Federal Government – has received N11.36 billion from TETFund for infrastructure projects, with over 75 per cent of the funds already utilized. The recently commissioned projects at FUTB alone cost approximately N5.8 billion and underscore the university's growing reputation as a hub for research, innovation, and technological advancement.

"The Federal University of Technology, Babura, is rapidly positioning itself as a leader in technological education and research, thanks to sustained investment and strategic development," Masari added.

This substantial investment by TETFund is expected to revitalize medical education, enhance healthcare delivery, and support Nigeria's broader ambitions to develop a robust, self-sufficient health sector capable of meeting the country's needs and competing globally.

Religion

Gateways to Financial Dominion

By Bishop David Oyedepo

...God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" - (2 Corinthians 9:8). Prayer counseling.

We recognize from scriptures that financial dominion is our heritage in Christ. That means, every child of God is a candidate for wealth and by redemption, has an inheritance of financial fortune in Christ. As it is written:

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" - (2 Corinthians 8:9).

It is also written: "...Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" - (Revelation 5:12). Prayer counseling

This establishes that redemption is our gateway to financial fortune. However, God empowers us for wealth through the revelation and application of the covenant. Thus, it is trading the covenant secrets in the Word that launches people into financial

prosperity. This is because in the midst of crisis, God's Word always triumphs.

Prayer counseling

For instance, in my crave to know the secret of Kingdom prosperity; I went on a three-day prayer and fasting adventure on March 20-22, 1982. I took my Bible and the books of Kenneth and Gloria Copeland (The law of Prosperity and God's Will is Prosperity), searching and asking God to show me this secret. On the third day, God spoke to me from Deuteronomy 8:18 which says: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day". He further said, "My son, my prosperity plan is not a promise, so it does not answer to prayers. It is not a promise, and so it has no respect for fasting. My prosperity plan is a covenant and until your part is played, I am not committed." This encounter changed my life forever! Buy bestselling books online! Prayer counseling

No one can empower himself for financial dominion, it is only God that can do so; and until He empowers us, we

are utterly powerless. We must therefore recognize that we can only commit God on His own terms, not ours. That is, there is always a part we must play before we can commit God to His part. Therefore, it is the revelation of the terms of the covenant that launches and positions men into the realms of inexplicable but undeniable wealth.

But, what is a Covenant?

A covenant is a deal enacted by God, based on well-defined terms and sealed with an oath. As we all know, the Bible is a book of covenants. The Old and New Testament simply mean the Old and New Covenant, and revelation is about accessing the covenants of God on every issue of interest to us, including the covenant of prosperity

(Hebrews 6:13-18). Prayer counseling

It is important to note that the covenant is superior to all prevailing economic situations and circumstances because it is God's bailout instrument from ALL harsh economic situations. That means economic hardships; famine and drought cannot stop it (Psalms 33:18-19, 37:18-19, 91:1-7).

Today, the world is facing the worst global economic challenge in history but the present economic holocaust is not strange. The good news is that God has a plan in place to exempt His people. From scriptures, we understand that every generation of people who walked in the covenant went through economic

triumphantly. Prayer counseling

For instance, Israel dwelt in Goshen in the land of Egypt in the days of famine but according to scriptures, they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. Also, Abraham became very wealthy in livestock, silver and gold. By the time he was old and well stricken in age, the Lord had blessed him in all things. Furthermore, Isaac, in spite of the prevalent drought went forward, became very great and the Philistines envied him. Moreover, the famine was sore in the land during the days of Jacob, but he had more than enough money to import food for his household. Job also walked in financial dominion. The Bible records that he was the greatest of all men in his days and that his substance was greatly increased in the land (Genesis 13:2; 24:1, 26:1, 12-14, 42:1-2, 43:1, 11-12; 47:27; Job 1:3).

This establishes the fact that covenant people are peculiar and as long as we commit to covenant practice, we will be exempted from the economic ordeals of our time (Exodus 19:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9).

However, for us to access the blessings of financial

fortune as received by the prophets of old, we must walk in their steps to command the same order of financial fortune that they commanded. Remember, it is following the steps of giants that make giants. The Bible admonishes us not to be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12).

Thus, there is no shortcut to a world of financial fortune; it is engaging in covenant practice that empowers us to prevail in hard times (Malachi 3:10-18, 4:1-4).

What, then, is the covenant of financial fortune?

Financial dominion anchors on the covenant of seedtime and harvest. It is written: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

'Seedtime' and 'harvest' means giving and receiving, which provides the gateway to financial dominion. Our giving is a spiritual transaction for provoking all-round favour (Genesis 22:15-22; 2 Samuel 24:24-25; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11).

It is the room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:30).

...what is a Covenant?
A covenant is a deal enacted by God, based on well-defined terms and sealed with an oath.

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

By the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, we shall be examining Intimacy: a pillar for a healthy marital relationship.

Intimacy is the pillar for every successful marriage and it is the responsibility of the man and his wife to build and develop a strong and healthy intimate life in their marriage. Many couples wistfully remember those sweet, innocent times before marriage that they were so interested in each other. A loving and joyful marriage is one in which both partners are intimate with each other. Intimacy is crucial for strong family and marital relationships. Family vacation packages

Intimacy is the closeness of you and your spouse in all ways. It is not an achievement but something you nurture every day of your marriage. If you neglect intimacy in your marriage, you both will grow apart and have a dry marriage. Intimacy means a warm, close, confidential or private relationship, which develops through long association, friendship and familiarity. When we talk about intimacy in marriage,

it is that warm, close, confidential or private relationship between the husband and his wife, which should be the most intimate relationship a husband and wife should be in. Neither of them should be as close to anyone else as they are to one another.

Intimacy indicates the deepest level of privacy that one can think of. Intimacy is what makes marriage to be successful and enjoyable. Without intimacy, marriage becomes horrible, cold and lonely. God commanded the husband to cleave to his wife, that is to spend time with her so as to 'know' her more. For intimacy to be developed in marriage, both husband and wife should depart from all forms of interferences and cleave to one another to become one flesh. God's Word says: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32). Therefore, you must leave so that you can cleave and when you do, you are sure to enjoy intimacy in your marriage. Prayer counseling

Types of Intimacy

Reviving Marital Relationship

Emotional intimacy

This is the closeness created through sharing feelings, plans, thoughts and openness of mind. Emotion can be described as a strong instinctive feeling. Women generally understand emotions better than men. The first step to emotional awareness is to pay attention to each other's feelings, identify them, and think of possible reasons for them. No

and wife having the same thought, believing in the same thing, discussing highly intellectual ideas together such as politics, sports, etc. This reduces friction between couples as they never run out of topics to discuss. They become each other's, gist partner.

Spiritual intimacy

Marriage has a spiritual dimension that involves both the husband and the wife

will become united in your attitudes and goals with your spouse. Family vacation packages

Recreational & Social Intimacy

This involves enjoying activities like sporting activities, watching a TV program or preparing a meal together. These can be good ways to build recreational intimacy. Marriage has a social dimension in which the partners enjoy doing things together and spending time together. Couples should always plan to go on vacation by creating enough time to be together.

Financial or monetary intimacy

The fiscal dimension of marriage deals with decisions and actions concerning earning a living and spending money. This comes with discussing and sharing your finances and each other's financial goals. If as a wife you don't know how much your husband earns, then there is a financial intimacy problem.

Sexual intimacy

Though listed last, this is the most important determinant of healthy marital intimacy. Husband and wife share their physical love for each other by sharing their bodies and physically becoming one. This is one of

the most important dimensions of healthy marital intimacy. Healthy sexual intimacy includes sexual frequency that both partners are satisfied with, sexual activities both partners enjoy, and open dialogue about sex. Someone once said, 'A major strength for happily married couples is the quality of their sexual relationship'.

The grace to build strong intimacy with your spouse is available when you get born again. You get born again by confessing your sins and accepting Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. If you are ready to be born again, please say this prayer of faith with me: Dear Lord Jesus, I come to you today as a sinner. I believe you died and rose on the third day for my sins. I accept you as my Lord and Saviour. Make me a child of God today. Thank You for accepting me into Your Kingdom, in Jesus name. Amen. Prayer counseling

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



reservations; be free and let the doors of your heart be open and not just that of your mouth.

Mental or intellectual intimacy

This involves husband

observing religious practices together, such as fasting, praying, studying of the Bible, having a family altar and attending church together. As spiritual experiences are shared, you

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti with Prof. Ms. Arunma Oteh, Co-chair of the Abia Global Economic Advisory Council, during the Abia State Q2 Strategy Retreat organized for government appointees at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, recently.



Governor Alex Otti (Left), Deputy Governor of Abia State, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (Right), at the Abia State Q2 Strategy Retreat organized for government appointees at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia, recently.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia (6th Right), Prof. Ms Arunma Oteh (5th Right), Mrs Ifueko Okauru (c), Abia Deputy Gov, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (6th L) and other members of the Abia State Economic Advisory Council in Abia State.



Participants at the Abia State Q2 2025 Executive Council Strategy Retreat, held at the International Conference Centre in Umuahia, recently.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia (5th R), Prof. Ms Arunma Oteh (4th R), Mrs Ifueko Okauru (3th R) and others, during the Abia State Q2 2025 Exco Strategy Retreat in Umuahia Abia State, recently.



Governor Alex Otti of Abia State (center); Prof. Ms. Arunma Oteh (2nd right); Mrs. Ifueko Okauru (2nd left); and other members of the Abia State Economic Advisory Council in Umuahia, Abia State



Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, representing the Executive Governor of Abia State, alongside his beloved wife, consoling the family of late Chief Israel Chinemerem Nwoke, former Mayor of Osisioma Ngwa, at Amavo Ukwu, Osisioma Ngwa.



Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, representing the Executive Governor of Abia State, arrived at the funeral of the late Chief Israel Chinemerem Nwoke, former Mayor of Osisioma Ngwa, alongside his beautiful wife at Amavo Ukwu, Osisioma Ngwa

Photos Speak



Wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti (2nd right); Administrator of the Abia Eye Health Management Bureau, Dr. Betty Emeka Obasi; Commissioner for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Mrs. Blessing Felix; Chairman of the National Senior Citizens Centre, Abia State, Mazi Otti Nwaka; and others during the commemoration of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day



L-R Ukaoha Njoku Ukaoha, Chief Press Secretary to Abia Gov, Abia Com. for Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Prof Joel Ogbonna, Abia Com. for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, Com. for Agriculture, Dr Cliff Agbaeze and SSA to Abia Gov on Media, Mr Ferdinand Ekeoma, during their Press briefing after Executive Council meeting.



A cross-section of participants at the welcome dinner organized by the Abia State Government for the Abia State Global Economic Advisory Council, marking the commencement of the 2025 mid-year retreat for government appointees.



A diverse group of attendees at the welcome dinner hosted by the Abia State Government in honour of the Abia State Global Economic Advisory Council, marking the start of the 2025 mid-year retreat for government appointees.



Bishop David Oyedepo, Founder of Winners' Chapel International, anointing Pastor Biodun Fatoyinbo, Founder of COZA Global, as he knelt alongside his wife during the 2025 edition of '7 Days of Glory', a yearly revival program organized by COZA Global.



Bishop David Oyedepo, Presiding Bishop of Winners' Chapel Int'l (Middle) Pastor KK, Lead Pastor of The Master's Place International Church, Warri (Right), and Biodun Fatoyinbo, Founder and Senior Pastor of the Commonwealth of Zion Assembly (left) during the annual 7 Days of Glory revival program organized by COZA Global.



Founder of Chapel of Answer Ministry, Rev. Chibueze Samuel Joseph Okezie, pictured with his lovely wife during his 50th birthday celebration at the church building located at 86 Jubilee Road by Kent, Abia.



Rev. Chibueze Samuel Joseph Okezie of the Chapel of Answers Church International, Aba, and his wife (1st and 2nd left); Abia State Deputy Governor, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (center); and others during Rev. Okezie's 50th birthday celebration in Aba

News



Abia State Commissioner For Information, Prince Okey Kanu

Aba Export Lab Will Serve As Platform To Help Local Business – Prince Kanu

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, is set to formally commission the Aba Export Lab on July 8, 2025, as part of the state government's renewed drive towards export-led industrialization and economic rejuvenation.

The Export Lab is expected to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive state-level trade policy aimed at driving sustainable growth and boosting foreign exchange earnings for the state.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, who disclosed this recently, while briefing Journalists in Umuahia, said the Export Lab is a major initiative under the Growth Exports Pillar of Governor Alex Otti's Economic Rejuvenation Agenda.

"The commissioning of this Export Growth Lab signals a strategic shift towards an export-led industrialisation drive in Abia State, with Aba at the forefront as the State's industrial and innovation hub", Prince Kanu stated.

He explained that the lab would serve as a platform to help local businesses identify viable international markets for their products, strengthen internal capacities, and kick-start export activities.

Prince Kanu further stated that in its initial six-month phase, about 20 carefully selected Aba-

based businesses will receive export readiness training, market leads and strategies to expand into the African market.

"The primary purpose of the export growth lab is the provision of a platform for export development within the state. This lab will provide targeted interactions to help businesses identify viable international markets for products manufactured and made in Abia State, assess and strengthen their internal capabilities while initiating export activities.

"In this first phase, a number of carefully selected and qualified businesses will be chosen as pilots. The program is designed to run for six months in the first instance.

"During this period, there will be export readiness training and sensitization for companies involved, development of tailored export strategies and roadmaps, capacity building in marketing, compliance, logistics, and operations, facilitation of lead generation and market trials, performance evaluation and impact assessment to inform future scale-ups", the Commissioner explained.

He listed the expected outcomes to include verified market leads and initial export transactions for the participating businesses, improvements in pricing, packaging, production management,

and compliance with international standards.

According to the Commissioner, the programme also aims to build the capacity of key Ministries and Agencies to design effective export support policies.

Prince Kanu listed the main products of focus as the famed Aquatic Lot, a product with protected cultural and commercial identity, safety footwear and industrial gear, and locally made apparels targeted at the African diaspora.

Contributing, the Commissioner for Industries and SMEs, Mr Mike Akpara, said the initiative would restore Aba's reputation as the "Japan of Africa".

"What the export lab is going to do is instil confidence into the producers. Basically they will be confident in their products and they will want to write 'Made in Aba' on them," Mr Akpara said.

He emphasised that the Lab would equip producers with the skills to meet international finishing and packaging standards, and ensure their products can compete globally.

"The government is just going to produce the enabling environment and that is exactly what the government is doing.

"A part from providing good roads and infrastructure, this export lab is to facilitate exports so that we will be able to receive dollars in

return", Akpara stated.

He stressed that businesses would participate in the programme free of charge adding that increased exports would ultimately generate employment and more revenue for the State.

Also speaking, the Principal Secretary to the Governor and Chief Strategy Officer, Mr Chinenye Mba-Uzoukwu, said the Lab would mark a new phase in harnessing the entrepreneurial capacity of the people of Abia.

"What we may not have done is what this lab is going to help us do, to take those products from being made as crafts to industrial production, industrial quality, and quality that can be accepted anywhere in the world". MBA -Uzoukwu said.

He noted that while Abia-made products already find their way into global markets, the Export Lab would help formalise and scale the success under frameworks such as the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and World Trade Organisation rules.

"It's a very exciting time for us. It's very ambitious. We think the Government is rising to the challenge of supporting its people in ways that are not so obvious like infrastructure of roads and power", Mba-Uzoukwu further stated.

Gov Otti Committed To Workers Welfare, Says LGSC Chairman, Nwokochah

By Stephanie Adindu

The Chairman of the Abia State Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), Elder James Ebere Nwokochah, has assured local government workers that Governor Alex Otti remains fully committed to addressing their yearnings and welfare, describing the administration as people-centered and reform-driven.

Speaking during his official working visits to all the Local Government Areas (LGAs) with his team of Commissioners and Permanent Secretary, Elder Nwokochah lauded Governor Otti for instituting regular salary and pension payments across the state's 17 LGAs. He said the Governor's consistent prioritization of workers' welfare represents a new dawn in Abia's public service.

In his words: "Governor Otti has demonstrated uncommon sincerity in his commitment to the grassroots workforce. The prompt payment of salaries and pensions is not only commendable but unprecedented in the history of this state."

He urged council staff to maintain professionalism and integrity in service delivery while assuring them that issues such as delayed promotions and outstanding welfare concerns were receiving the attention of the government.

"We ask for your patience and continued dedication. The Governor is fully aware of your concerns and has mandated us to ensure that no worker is left behind," he added.

He also emphasized that the Commission would not tolerate any form of misconduct or negligence, and called on staff to rededicate themselves to responsible and impactful service delivery.

Following the Chairman's address, local government workers across the LGAs, under the aegis of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), announced their endorsement of Governor Otti for a second term in office.

The endorsement was made by the NULGE Chairmen of respective LGAs, who applauded the Governor's worker-focused policies and unprecedented reforms.

They cited the restoration of salary and pension payments as a turning point in the lives of workers and retirees, declaring that supporting the Governor for a second term was both a moral obligation and a show of appreciation.

"We are grateful to Governor Otti for keeping his promises. For the first time, workers feel seen, valued, and respected. That is why we are giving him our full support for a second term," they said.

Welcoming the LGSC delegation, the Mayors of the council areas, reaffirmed their alignment with the Governor's "New Abia" agenda and pledged to sustain support for his developmental vision.

They highlighted Otti's achievements in key sectors including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and security, expressing optimism that the Governor's reforms would deepen institutional efficiency across the LG system.

Contributing, the Permanent Secretary, LGSC, Princess Ezinne Judith Ngwakwe (PhD), has called on local government workers to uphold the highest standards of ethics and professionalism in the discharge of their duties.

Princess Ngwakwe also warned against acts inimical to public service and stressed the importance of discipline, accountability, and commitment to excellence.

She noted that the current administration under Governor Alex Otti is focused on restoring credibility and effectiveness in the local government system and urged workers to align themselves with that vision.

"We must rise above unethical practices and show the public that we are capable of delivering quality and transparent service. Let us be worthy ambassadors of the local government system," she stated.

The LGSC Chairman was also accompanied by Commissioners Barr. Jerry Uzosike, Dame Ngozi Nwagbara (PhD), Dr. Godwin C. Duru, Engr. Oji Uka Kalu (PhD), and Hon. Allen Wogu, among others.

News



Abia State Governor Alex Otti

SSG Advocates For Increased Revenue Allocation To Support Abia Infrastructural Development

By Ndubueze Ngozi

Increased Revenue Allocation to Support Abia's Infrastructural Development.

The Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Kenneth Kalu, has called for an increase in revenue allocation to bolster the ongoing infrastructural development projects across Abia State.

Prof. Kalu made this appeal during a courtesy visit by a delegation from the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), Abuja, to his office. He assured the team of the state government's unwavering support and co-operation in facilitating their assignments in Abia.

Highlighting the achievements of Governor Alex Otti's administration over the past two years, Prof. Kalu emphasised the need for enhanced revenue allocation to sustain the state's progress and drive further development.

In her remarks, the Federal Commissioner representing Abia at the RMAFC, Nkechi Otti, explained that their visit aimed to engage with critical stakeholders on revenue-related matters.

She outlined RMAFC's responsibilities, which include determining the revenue-sharing formula among federal, state, and local governments, as well as advising governments on fiscal efficiency and strategies to boost revenue generation.

During the visit, she commended Governor Otti for the administration's legacy projects and assured that the RMAFC team would interact with relevant ministries, agencies, and stakeholders to fulfill their mandate effectively.

B-line Remodelling: Abia Govt Pledges Good Deal To Traders In Ariaria International Market

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has assured traders in Ariaria International Market, Aba, that no trader will be subjected to substandard conditions during the first phase of the planned remodelling of the B-Line.

The Special Adviser to the Governor on Trade, Commerce and Industry, Chief Nwaka Inem, gave the assurance recently, after the tripartite committee comprising the state government, the developer, and representatives of the traders inspected the B-Line

Section of Ariaria International Market, slated for demolition and remodelling.

Chief Inem said the inspection was to ascertain the level of readiness of the Free Trade Zone, which will serve as one of the temporary location sites for traders displaced from the B-line, and to ensure that those affected by the reconstruction are adequately relocated within the market.

He noted that the relocation would pave the way for the demolition of the

existing B-Line, which he described as "dilapidated and so dangerous", and posed a major safety risk to traders and customers alike.

"The B-Line is almost an accident bound to happen. By the grace of God, His Excellency wants us to move with a speed to ensure that the accident doesn't happen. And the remodeling takes care", Chief Inem said.

According to him, the developer handling the project, Check-Best International Limited, has already secured spaces for the temporary relocation

and is putting measures in place to ensure the site is conducive.

"The developer promised us that he has acquired some spaces within the market environment and we needed to come and ensure that the place is conducive, to relocate these traders while the reconstruction goes on", the governor's aide added.

Chief Inem reiterated the present administration commitment to transforming the Ariaria International Market into a modern trading hub that meets global standards.

He added that the state government would not allow any trader to operate in "subhuman conditions" during the period of the reconstruction.

Speaking on the progress of the project, the Managing Director and Chief Executive of Check-Best International Limited, Mr. Chiedozi Njoku, who is the developer handling the section of the market, explained that preliminary works had already begun.

Njoku, who disclosed that the company had gradually started pre-construction work at the B-Line, however, emphasised that the immediate priority was to ensure that the temporary site for traders was ready and fit for use.

"What we want to make sure is that the temporary location zone is fit for them to come and start doing their businesses. So give and take, in the next four weeks, everything will be set, both the location and the actual construction", he assured.

Njoku explained that the project would be implemented in three phases, with the first phase sub-divided into three zones to allow for a gradual relocation of traders.

"In the first phase, we're looking at giving it 24 months, but at least a quarter of the first phase would have been concluded in about eight months.

"Subsequently, the other zones will come, but in 24 months, the phase one will be completed, then we'll move over to the second phase", he said.

He, however, observed that misinformation had posed a major challenge to the smooth take-off of the project, but expressed gratitude that series of recent meetings convened by the Tripartite Committee had helped traders gain a better understanding of the project and the government's good intentions for them.

Also, the Chairman of Ariaria International Market, Chief Michael Aniorji, thanked Governor Otti for coming to the rescue of traders, noting that they had long desired the remodelling.

He expressed hope that the developer would make further efforts to accommodate more traders in the relocation plan.

The Commissioner for Trade and Commerce, Chief Kingsley Nwokocha, was part of the inspection visit.

Governor Otti Congratulates Rev. Okezie On 50th Birthday

By Charles Ogbomaya

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has congratulated the founder of Chapel of Answers International, Aba, Rev Chibueze Samuel Joseph Okezie, on his spiritual leadership and humanitarian service as he celebrates his attainment of a golden age.

Speaking at the birthday of Rev. Okezie, held at his Church, at Jubilee Road, Aba, the governor represented by his deputy, Ikechukwu Emetu, on behalf of the government and the good people of Abia State, expressed immense gratitude to God for His immeasurable grace and mercy on the celebrant to celebrate his 50th birthday.

He noted that the life of Rev. Okezie has been a profound source of inspiration and spiritual upliftment to many who have crossed his path and that the clergyman has exhibited unwavering faith, compassionate

leadership and selfless services to God and humanity.

"This golden jubilee celebrates a significant personal milestone and reflects a life dedicated to purpose, spiritual leadership, and service to humanity. Throughout the years, you have been a source of faith and hope for your congregation at and for the broader Aba community and Abia State.

"Through your teachings and humanitarian efforts, countless lives have been transformed, and our communities have been positively impacted. Indeed, your impact transcends the pulpit and continues to contribute to the moral and spiritual fabric of our state," Gov. Otti stated.

He further extolled his vision of tireless dedication to the spiritual and moral growth of the society, and

that as Rev. Okezie celebrated his golden age, that may God grant him more years of wisdom, strength, and grace.

In his words of appreciation, Rev. Okezie expressed gratitude to the governor for attending the birthday celebration, despite his busy schedule. He commended the governor and his team for their humility and strategic approach to governance, highlighting their strong moral principles and ethics.

He also expressed confidence in the governor's leadership ability.

He further encouraged the attendees to have hope in God and believe that the future would be brighter.

The celebration marked a significant milestone in Rev. Okezie's life and ministry were attended by notable individuals, including Mayor of Aba South Local Government.

Focus

Nigeria's Global Influence Wanes Amid Diplomatic Snub

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

In a move that has sent shockwaves across West Africa and diplomatic circles worldwide, President Donald Trump has extended invitations to five African leaders to discuss commercial partnerships at the White House — with Nigeria glaringly absent from the list. This is not a mere diplomatic slight; it is a telling indictment of Nigeria's dwindling relevance on the international stage.

The invited nations — Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal — represent a strategic swath of West Africa. That Nigeria, historically regarded as the sub-region's political and economic powerhouse, was excluded, raises uncomfortable but necessary questions about the country's current standing in global geopolitics.

Once hailed as the "Giant of Africa," Nigeria has long served as a stabilizing force in West Africa, a leading

voice in continental affairs, and a vital bridge between Africa and the West. But in recent years, that stature has eroded, with the latest exclusion serving as perhaps the clearest sign yet of Nigeria's waning diplomatic influence.

Under President Bola Tinubu's administration, critics argue that Nigeria's foreign policy direction has lacked clarity, coherence, and credibility. Tinubu's tenure as ECOWAS chair saw the bloc shrink from 15 to 12 member states — a contraction that speaks to both regional instability and Nigeria's declining ability to foster consensus and unity. Nigeria, once seen as a unifying force, is increasingly viewed as a source of fragmentation.

Nigeria's absence from such a high-level forum

carries serious implications beyond symbolism. It signals to investors and foreign governments alike that Nigeria may no longer be the preferred entry point for engaging West Africa. It suggests that international powers are seeking more

and regional security collaborations. At a time when the nation desperately needs foreign direct investment, the optics of being sidelined could deter much-needed capital and partnerships.

Much of the blame for

Whether one agrees with Atiku's assessment or not, it is undeniable that Nigeria's foreign engagement has suffered. The lack of robust diplomacy, erratic policy moves, and poor public messaging have contributed to Nigeria's invisibility in critical forums.

Moreover, the myth that certain high-profile Nigerians wield outsized influence in Washington — and could leverage personal ties to secure Nigeria's place at the table — has now been exposed as dangerous wishful thinking.

Nigeria's diplomatic machinery needs urgent recalibration. This is not merely about restoring national pride; it is about safeguarding the country's long-term economic and strategic interests. Engagement with global powers must be proactive, strategic, and rooted in a clear articulation of Nigeria's value proposition.

If Nigeria is to reclaim its rightful place as a leader in Africa and a respected global player, it must first address

the failures that led to its exclusion. Leadership must rise above domestic politicking and restore Nigeria's voice in international affairs — before the silence becomes permanent.

Nigeria's exclusion from the Trump-hosted summit is not just a diplomatic embarrassment; it is a wake-up call. The country must take a hard look at the choices and missteps that led to this moment and chart a new course. Africa and the world are moving forward — and Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind.

Nigeria's exclusion from the Trump-hosted summit is not just a diplomatic embarrassment; it is a wake-up call.



President Trump of USA

President Tinubu of Nigeria

predictable, stable, and responsive partners elsewhere in the region.

This could result in Nigeria being bypassed in major trade deals, infrastructure investments,

his diplomatic downgrade has been laid at the feet of the current administration, with former Vice President Atiku Abubakar calling it a "scathing verdict" on Tinubu's presidency.

NEWS

Gov Oti Secures Release Of Citizens on Death Row After 26 Years, Pledges Full Reintegration Support

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Gov Oti Secures Release Of Citizens on Death Row After 26 Years, Pledges Full Reintegration Support

Amarachi Uzoukwu, July 6, 2025
Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Oti, has, through his timely intervention, secured the release of Mr Ogbonnaya Igbojionu, an indigene of Abia, along with two other Nigerian citizens, who had spent 26 years on death row.

Mr Igbojionu was remanded in prison in 1999 and sentenced to death in 2003 in connection with a stolen generator which he had purchased.

Presenting the freed men on Saturday, Honourable Simon Oshi from Enugu State, who had sought Governor Oti's assistance, explained that he first became aware of the inmates' plight through a popular social media influencer, Oluide Ogunsanwo, widely known online as "Sea King".

"When the popular social media influencer brought it up on social media, I took it upon myself and said, let me actually go and verify if what they are saying is true.

"So, I went with a team of lawyers and also our popular influencer here too, to visit the two young men in Kirikiri prison. On getting there, I started

interacting with them.

"And I asked him, where are you from? He said he's from Abia State. I told him, I know your Governor, he's a very good man and an amazing leader. I will pass this message across to him and get back to you.

"They were sentenced to death in 2003 over a case of a stolen generator that he bought. So, I told His Excellency, immediately, the next day, he sent the Attorney-General of Abia State to Kirikiri to go and verify if all I told him was actually true.

"The Attorney-General went there, got back to him, and he said, 'No, this can't be. It can't happen to a son of the soil in Abia State when he is the Governor'. So, His Excellency, being a good leader and an amazing father to us all, hurriedly wrote a letter to the Governor of the State where they were held.

See also CSOs Demand Improved Operational Environment in Prison. "From there, he kept on pushing and after spending 26 years in prison. His Excellency brought them back and now they have seen freedom", Hon Oshi narrated.

Hon Oshi expressed gratitude to Governor Oti for his compassion and leadership, stating that Abians



would show their appreciation by supporting him for a second term in office.

Receiving the freed citizens, Mr Ogbonnaya Igbojionu, Mr Oluale Adediji and a third individual who was unable to travel immediately, Governor Oti thanked Hon Oshi for his "doggedness and consistency" and praised the influencer for his courage.

Governor Oti remarked that God might have allowed the influencer to be remanded in a correctional facility for two weeks so he could help Mr Igbojionu and the others regain their freedom.

"A typical Nigerian would say it

doesn't concern me but because you're a very good person, you took it upon yourself. If you didn't bring it to my attention, I wouldn't have known", Governor Oti said.

He explained how the case, which originated in Ogun State, required collaboration with his Ogun State counterpart and commended his brother Governor for supporting the process, stating that wealth is meaningless without justice.

"So, by the time we enquired, the twist was that they were in Lagos but it was an Ogun State matter. I want to use this opportunity to also thank my brother, Governor, colleague and friend, Dapo

useless.

"We will all come and go. People leave so much behind. Once you close your eyes and you don't open them, that's it. That's the end. Whatever you would have accumulated and acquired would become useless," Governor Oti stated.

Governor Oti who assured that his administration would fully support their reintegration into society, directed the Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Prince Uzor Nwachukwu, and the Commissioner for Power and Public Utilities, Engr

Abiodun, for also following through and being consistent.

"When I brought it to his attention and wrote the letter, he acknowledged it and said he was going to work on it. Just last week, I was away when he called me outside the country and said they have now been released.

"For us, justice is everything. You can have all the money in the world but if you don't contribute to building a fair and just society, your money is

likechukwu Monday, to work with the relevant government departments to ensure a smooth transition.

"It may not be their direct role, but I'm giving them the assignment to work with the relevant parts of government to ensure that they are reintegrated back into society.

"We will support you and get you back into the society. Having said that, I want to welcome you back to this part of the world. Thank God for preserving you up to this time," the Governor added.

Speaking on behalf of the freed men, Mr Igbojionu, an indigene of Ikwo Local Government Area, recounted his ordeal, explaining that he was a generator dealer who, in 1999, bought a generator from one Segun Ajibade.

He further explained that two weeks later, Ajibade returned to his shop with the men of the Nigerian Police Force adding that he was beaten and forced to sign a statement that he was not allowed to read.

Mr Igbojionu who said he was remanded in 1999, sentenced to death in 2003 and remained in prison until 2025, thanked God for using Governor Oti to spare their lives and secure their freedom after nearly three decades behind bars.

Opinion

The Myth of Igbo Prosperity

A popular fiction has been normalized and consecrated into a national myth. Everybody believes it. No one questions a myth. It is often said that when a lie gets repeated ever so often, it assumes the status of a truth. Everyone mouths it, repeats it endlessly to a point where it becomes a creed, a truism that is beyond questioning. People parrot myths. They hardly question them. Worse still, myths condition and shape reality and how people relate to it.

You hear the same thing in garbled versions everywhere. The Igbos are a prosperous lot. In beer parlors, barbers' corner shops, in markets, in the media and social media. The Igbos are a prosperous tribe of Nigerians. Just by being Igbo, people become automatically well off, are conferred with wealth over and above their fellow Nigerians that happen not to be of Igbo stock. Somehow according to this myth, these Igbos seem to have a midas touch which transforms their individual strivings into instant prosperity in the form of retail chain stores, real estate, hotels, shops, whole markets, plush mansions, endless apartment blocks etc. Tenant today, landlord tomorrow, so the catechism goes.

Above all, the Igbos have a way of transforming every part of the federation where they live or do business into islands of prosperity over time. They take home surpluses of their profit to their Eastern countryside. Luxury mansions and castles spring up in most of the Igbo homeland even if most of that land mass remains in primitive neglect and dereliction.

Favourite Igbo business undertakings range from retail trade to inter state transportation, massive importation of sundry goods from around the world-China, Hong Kong, Dubai, Turkey etc. Omenuko is a born wanderer, a compulsive traveler in quest of wares and opportunities.

Other Igbos simply migrate to nearly every corner of the globe where they expand into the professions, establish retail businesses and attract fellow Igbos from all over the place to join them. There is hardly any part of the world where you do not find Igbo enclaves and habitations doing the things they are known for at home: business and hard work in a diversity of endeavours. You do not need to teach an Igbo child to be entrepreneurial. It is in his or her DNA.

Igbos used to be famed for frugality and modesty in spending. They used to save aggressively, practicing delayed gratification and not displaying overt prosperity. Not any more. In recent times, successful Igbo business persons at home in Nigeria have learnt new habits from their Nigerian neighbours. Successful Igbo traders now stage elaborate parties to mark birthdays, naming ceremonies, weddings and burials. At these lavish occasions, Igbos have pushed the excrement of 'spraying' cash to ridiculous extents. Wads, bundles and boxes of mint cash notes are literally pasted or thrown all over the celebrants in assorted currencies.

This has often attracted law enforcement agencies like the EFCC, the police and ICPC in a bid to arrest 'abusers' of the Naira. Some law enforcement agents have embarrassingly found themselves policing 'abusers' of US dollars and UK Pound Sterling denominations. These are currencies not covered by the local legislation against the abuse of the Naira!

I cannot think of Mr. Dangote asking his bankers to send him \$10 million in cash which he goes to "spray" at loafers and lazy urchins at a birthday party! I recall a recent social media clip in which Mr. Dangote announced that he prefers hotel accommodation in places like Abuja, London and Atlanta instead of buying and owning houses all over the world with the attendant maintenance and taxation costs.

Belief in automatic Igbo prosperity has

led to other sad practices. During festive seasons, the knowledge that Igbos will migrate home by road or air has skewed the nation's transportation industry. Air fares sky rocket on Easter routes. Demand and supply you may call it. Fares on land routes equally head for the roof. Police and other security checkpoints increase on routes leading to Igbo homeland. Between Sagamu and Onitsha Bridge head on the Lagos eastern route, people have counted upwards of 60 checkpoints and even more, sometimes an average of a checkpoint every 100 meters literally.

These are 'toll collection centres', not security checkpoints. No police statistics has been published to show that this increased traffic flow is synonymous with an upsurge in criminality on these routes. In all of this, Igbo prosperity remains a myth not backed by any known statistics or informed studies. Just speculations based on a widely held perception of the cultural practices of a people.

Traditional Igbo business practices have not helped in dousing this unfortunate drift. Igbos are mostly traders. Trading takes place in open shops. Shops cannot be hidden; they have signage to guide and direct customers. So, the Igbos can hardly hide their sources of money. This exposed business practice means that the Igbos hardly have covert economic powers. Their businesses are exposed, easy to target by arsonists and

champagnes that would make the average Western party goer green with envy.

For a people reputed for wisdom and prudence in economic matters, the Igbos newfound love for conspicuous consumption has reached a new height. Of all ethnic elites, the Igbos now top the scale in the lavishness of their country homes. Some country yards boast of upwards of 5 to 7 independent mansions-main house, madam quarters, guest wings, family quarters, servants quarters etc. All these for a man who lives in far away Lagos, Abuja, Johannesburg or Houston and only comes home once a year to attend a festivity.

As part of the décor for the new breed Igbo country homes, a \$750,000 -\$1m latest edition Rolls Royce Phantom is parked in the car lot and covered year long with a silk car cover. The car remains unused for upwards of one year or more. The cover is only taken off to show off the prize (asset?) liability only when the proud owner comes home. At best, this car is driven to the village church for a brief Sunday worship or a wedding as the case may be. These practices have become commonplace among a people who other ethnicities envy for their economic wisdom and prudence in economic matters.

Unproductive conspicuous consumption of this magnitude has never been known to aid capital accumulation or assist any group to ascend to economic pre eminence.

I recall a recent social media clip in which Mr. Dangote announced that he prefers hotel accommodation in places like Abuja, London and Atlanta instead of buying and owning houses all over the world with the attendant maintenance and taxation costs.

The myth of Igbo prosperity is not naïve and value free. There is political mischief in it. I suspect that it is deliberately formulated and sponsored by Igbo political adversaries in the Nigerian federation. You can hear it loud and clear in major political voices from outside Igboland: The Igbos as a people are already so prosperous and powerful without apex political power. What would happen if you add political power to their economic and financial prowess? Unfortunately, some Igbos subscribe to this toxic myth.

The truth lies in a different place. The Igbos are citizens with inborn attributes and should be accorded their full citizen rights as "they are". They are born strugglers. The Igbos are not inert wealth carriers. They are beasts of burden. If Nigeria desires goods, the Igbos will supply them. If Nigeria wants errand runners, the Igbos are at their beck and call. If a task seems too far-fetched, requiring unusual grit and grind, send in an Igbo person. If there is a demand for unusual creativity, courage and daring risk, Igbo youth will crack the code. They are in every field. Hard work and adventure brings them returns which they are now showing off to other Nigerians in foolish exhibitionism.

However, Igbos may be embracing hard work because Nigeria has left them no other choice after 1970 than to grind and toil. They are not expecting much from a commonwealth that has condemned them to exclusion and marginalization.

In their current psychology of "otherness" in Nigeria, the Igbo political leadership have continued to subvert and betray their own people. Successive generations of political scavengers and incompetents have assumed power in all Igbo states and further underdeveloped and degraded the zone. If the Igbos are indeed prosperous and enterprising as a people, why has the South East remained an area of darkness and sadness since after the war. The infrastructure remains medieval. The social services remain primitive. In security terms, the area is a hell hole, reminding you of Hobbes' State of Nature, a bloody and brutish hell of darkness?

The answer lies in the internal exclusion of the best Igbos from the governance of the states in the zone. We have a recurrence of fraudulent scam artist in the name of politicians. Only earlier in the emergence of Jim Nwobodo and Sam Mbakwe and recently in the emergence of Alex Otti and Charles Soludo are we able to see that combination of enterprise, development oriented governance and creativity required to transform the Igbo states into a befitting landscape.

Illustrious and hard working patriots do not necessarily have to be compensated with the highest political office in the land. They are only entitled to the full gamut of rights and privileges due every other citizen including of course the right to vie for and assume the highest office in the land. On the contrary, a political atmosphere in which a myth has been deployed to selectively exclude a group from national leadership does not show an honest commitment to democracy and fairness.

For those who are troubled by the concerns expressed in this piece, there are two certainties that will remain inalienable and inextricable. First, I am a Nigerian of Igbo extraction patriot. Second, I am an unrepentant Nigerian patriot. I will never apologize to anyone about either of these truths which I hold to be sacrosanct, inextricable and inalienable.

Written by Chidi Amuta

The myth of Igbo prosperity is not naïve and value free. There is political mischief in it.

envious 'others'. This is the main reason why Igbos and their businesses have been the prime targets of arsonists and looters in upheavals all over the country.

This Igbo visible business culture remains a weakness. Capital accumulation and wealth creation often defy open market trading. Visible shop keeping belongs to a primitive stage in the development of a market economy. The real process of capital accumulation and wealth consolidation is mostly in the form of "invisible" trade. Investment in the stock market, insurance, the media, telecommunications, the digital economy, fintech, technology, high end manufacturing etc, and all forms of invisible businesses that control other businesses are the engine room of wealth creation and consolidation. Igbo investment in 'invisible' sectors of the Nigerian economy remain low. It was in fact only during the Obasanjo presidency that Igbo traders in markets cross the country began to invest in shares and stocks.

Prior to that, the Igbo trader had remained a very conservative, innocuous and traditional holder of wealth in cash. This cash is often hidden in safes at home, mattresses, real estate or cash balances in bank deposits. Part of this traditional business culture includes troves of cash at home, in lockers, septic tanks and overhead empty water tanks and other primitive locations. It is part of this cash trove that is periodically off loaded to 'spray' at these lavish new breed parties. Worse still, these parties provide excuses for illiterate traders to over-eat, over-indulge in alcoholic beverages including choice expensive

An exploration of the new Igbo pattern of lavish consumption reveals a deep-seated achievement complex in the Nigerian ecosystem. The new Igbo successful traders seem eager to show other Nigerians that they are doing well in spite of their marginalization and open exclusion from public offices and fair opportunities. There seems to be an unstated desire to want to show off the signs of material prosperity in spite of the obstacles that the Nigerian state has placed on their way in the post civil war era. The silent anthem seems to be: "Nigeria, you blocked us from the commonwealth but see how well we are doing". This new culture of obscene exhibitionism and obsession with material glamour and glitz is however alien to original Igbo economic thinking. A people with an inherently conservative Catholic economic orientation and Puritan work ethic cannot, in all rationality, embrace a culture of obscene materialism and open exhibition.

In contrast, the economic elite of the competing nationalities in Nigeria are engaged in much more strategic forms of investment. Mr. Dangote has cornered large scale manufacturing of essential goods for the entire Nigerian and significant African market. Mr. Otedola has acquired the majority equity in Nigeria's most significant banks. Mr. Tony Elumelu is perhaps the only oligarch of Igbo extraction that has ventured into banking, power, hospitality and entrepreneurship mentoring.

Mr. Adenuga is the owner of a major telecom firm that is in direct competition with South Africa's MTN. Other more clandestine investors in strategic industries and sectors abound but are mostly non-Igbo.



Abia State Government Ministry of Power and Public Utilities

Our Ref: MPPU/AD/574/I

Date: 10th July, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL(RFP)PROCUREMENT, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF 1 MWFROM GRID SOLAR PV POWER PROJECTS AT ABIA STATE SECRETARIAT COMPLEX

INTRODUCTION

The Abia State Government (ABSG) through the Ministry of Power and Public Utilities (MPPU) invites proposals from interested Bidders for the Development and Construction of a 1MW Scalable Solar PV Mini-Grid System at Abia State Secretariat Complex located at Umuhia in Abia State.

ABSG is committed to energy security, sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint while meeting its energy demands. In pursuit of these objectives and in response to its energy requirements, the state government through the ministry of Power and Public Utilities has formulated a strategic initiative to implement a scalable 1-MegaWatt (MW) solar farm within its facility clusters around the state Secretariat. This initiative aims to produce sustainable and environmentally friendly energy, thereby mitigating its reliance on conventional public power sources and reducing its carbon emissions.

This project aims to harness the abundant solar energy resources in our state and establish a sustainable and renewable energy solution that aligns with the Abia State Government's commitment to environmental sustainability and energy sufficiency. The purpose of this RFP is to invite qualified and experienced companies to submit their proposals for the design, engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning of a scalable solar PV power generation system including provision of training and maintenance services. The system should be capable of generating a significant amount of clean electricity to meet the growing energy demands of the government facilities located at the Secretariat and environs while minimising environmental impact and ensuring the delivery of reliable power supply.

ABSG's target is to move as quickly as practicable possible to identify, through this RFP, the most qualified bidder that: (1) meets the needs of the government; (2) demonstrates a thorough understanding of current or pending solar energy policies, legislation, and/or regulation (3) understands the site location's regulations; and (4) can demonstrate successful implementation of comparably sized projects within Nigeria.

Queries relating to the issuing of these documents may be addressed by email: planning.MPPU@abiastate.gov.ng

Two (2) hardcopies of Original Tender Document including the filled technical specification template and one (1) electronic file via email: planning.MPPU@abiastate.gov.ng or saved on flash USB with password shall be submitted.

Bids must be sealed in two envelopes indicating the bid reference number and the project name, one envelope indicating the commercial offer and another technical offer should be deposited in the Planning, Research and Statistics office of Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, by July 23, 2025 @12h:00 mid-day.

PROJECT SCOPE

This scoping brief serves to delineate the primary goals, scope, and pertinent factors to be considered in the development of this solar farm project, with an overarching focus on both security of supply and sustainability. This project encompasses the design, construction, and commissioning of the 1-MegaWatt Solar Farm, emphasising its adaptability for future expansion, potentially reaching a capacity range of 3 to 5 Megawatts. The following are key scope of supply to be covered:

Site Assessment and Design:

- Conduct a thorough site assessment to determine the optimal location for the solar farm, considering factors such as solar radiation, shading, topography, and available land.
- Develop a detailed engineering design for the initial 1-Megawatt solar farm, including the layout of solar panels, mounting structures, inverters, transformers, and other necessary equipment.
- Ensure the design allows for easy scalability by incorporating flexible infrastructure and electrical systems that can accommodate future expansion up to 3 to 5-Megawatts.
- Ensure compliance with regulations, building codes, and environmental requirements.
- Determine the optimal capacity of the initial 1MW installation, while allowing for scalability to accommodate future energy demands.
- Consider the use of tracking systems or fixed-tilt arrays to maximize energy generation

Procurement and Construction:

- Procure high-quality solar panels, inverters, mounting structures, and other necessary equipment from reputable suppliers, considering the scalability requirements for future expansion.
- Manage the construction process for the initial 1-Megawatt solar farm, including site preparation, installation of solar panels and mounting structures, electrical wiring, and connection to the grid.
- Coordinate with subcontractors and suppliers to ensure timely delivery of materials and equipment
- Implement strict quality control measures to ensure the installation meets industry standards and specifications.
- Develop a construction plan, including a timeline, budget, and contractor selection.
- Supervise and manage the installation of solar panels, inverters, and necessary electrical infrastructure.
- Ensure adherence to safety standards and quality control during the construction phase.

Electrical Infrastructure:

- Design and install the necessary electrical infrastructure, including transformers, inverters, energy storage systems, switchgear, and interconnection equipment, to connect the initial 1-Megawatt solar farm to the electrical grid.
- Ensure the electrical infrastructure is designed with scalability in mind, allowing for easy integration of additional capacity up to 3 Megawatts.
- Ensure compliance with relevant electrical codes and safety standards.
- Conduct thorough testing and commissioning of the electrical system to ensure its proper functioning and integration with the existing grid.

Operations, Monitoring and Maintenance:

- Install a comprehensive monitoring system to track the performance of the solar farm, including energy production, system efficiency, and any potential issues.
- Develop a maintenance plan to regularly inspect and maintain the solar panels, inverters, and other equipment to ensure optimal performance and longevity.
- Provide training to MPPU staff on the operation and maintenance of the solar farm.
- Offer ongoing support and troubleshooting services to address any operational issues that may arise.
- Establish an operations and maintenance plan to ensure the long-term performance of the solar farm.
- Monitor the system's performance, conduct regular inspections, and address any issues promptly.
- Train MPPU staff or contractors for routine maintenance tasks

Documentation and Reporting:

- Prepare all necessary documentation, including engineering drawings, permits, warranties, and operational guides and manuals.
- Provide regular progress reports to the project management team, in line with the shared project plan and all the achievable time bound milestones.
- Assist the State in obtaining any necessary certifications or incentives related to renewable energy generation (e.g Carbon credit, grants etc.).

Project Management:

- Assign a dedicated project manager to oversee all aspects of the solar farm installation, including scalability considerations, scheduling, budgeting, and coordination with stakeholders.
- Ensure effective communication and collaboration among the Developers' project team, Ministry representatives, other subcontractors, and suppliers.
- Monitor project progress, identify and mitigate risks, and address any issues that may impact the successful completion of the solar farm establishment.

Financial Feasibility

- Prepare a detailed financial analysis, including cost estimates for the entire project life cycle including design, permitting, construction, operation, and maintenance. This should include both capital costs (one-time expenses) and operational costs (ongoing expenses).
- Identify potential funding sources, such as grants, incentives, and partnerships.
- Develop a business case with projected returns on investment and payback periods.

Sustainability Initiatives

- Integrate the solar farm with other sustainability initiatives at the Secretariat, such as solar car parks, energy storage, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle charging stations.

Timeline

- Provide a detailed project timeline, including milestones for site selection, design, permitting, construction, commissioning, training, operation and maintenance.

Budget

- Submit a commercial offer that covers all aspects of the project, including design, construction, equipment procurement, permitting, training, operation and maintenance.

Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

- Outline a strategy for engaging with key stakeholders, including state government leadership, government ministries, departments and agencies, local communities, and potential funding partners.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- Conduct an environmental impact assessment to identify and mitigate potential environmental impacts associated with the solar farm project.

Reporting and Documentation

- Provide details on regular progress reporting and documentation procedures, including how project updates will be communicated to key stakeholders and the public.

PREQUALIFICATION AND MODE OF SUBMISSION SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL / EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

All expression of interest must be submitted on a non-refundable tender fee of five million naira only and evidence of payment provided to department of Planning, Research and Statistics of Ministry of Power and Public Utilities Umuhia, Abia State.

Proposal must be submitted in two (2) sealed envelopes indicating the bid reference number and the project name, one envelope indicating the commercial offer and another technical offer and should be deposited in the Planning, Research and Statistics office of Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, by July 31, 2025 @12h:00 mid-day.

Bids submitted after the specified deadline, will not be taken into consideration and will be returned unopened to the Tenderer

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

1. All interested companies must submit Two (2) hardcopies and one(1) electronic file via email: planning.MPPU@abiastate.gov.ng saved on USB with password of their proposals including the filled attached Technical Specification template.

The Employer's Address

Ministry of Power and Public Utilities
No 1 Isama Afara Road Umuhia, Abia State - Nigeria

2. Evidence of tax payment for 3 years or tax clearance certificate.
3. Evidence of registration with CAC Evidence of Registration with Abia State Government via the Due Process Office.
4. Verifiable evidence of successful implementation of standalone solar Mini-Grid Project of capacity between 1 MW - 3MW Nigeria (in Africa will be an added advantage but not a requirement).
5. Evidence of Financial Capacity to execute this project (3 years financial statements).
6. Evidence of appropriate insurance coverage for the project, including liability and performance bonds.
7. Bidders must submit the company's Health, Safety and Environment Plan.
8. Proof of relationship with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) or technical partners.
9. Letter of Recommendation from the Bank

BID EVALUATION CRITERIA

The procedure for evaluation of responsive submissions that bids that demonstrate technical responsiveness will proceed to the commercial evaluation phase. Only Bidders that fulfill the criteria specified in document will be engaged for negotiation for final selection of the right contractor or supplier for project.

The following are the key criteria that will be used when evaluating bids:

1. Technical Qualifications and Experience: (Weighting: 60%)

- Experience (20 Points): Assess the bidder's experience in designing, constructing, and operating solar farms, especially projects of a similar scale and complexity.
- Technical Expertise (10 Points): Evaluate the bidder's technical capabilities, including the qualifications of their engineering and project management teams, any subcontractors or technical partners that the bidder intends to involve in the project.
- References (5 points): Contact and verify references from previous clients or projects to assess the bidder's track record.
- Design (5 points): Review the quality and feasibility of the proposed design for the project. Evaluation of the technical details of the bidder's proposed solar farm design, including equipment selection, layout, and energy generation estimates.
- Scalability (5 points): Assessment will be conducted on the scalability of the proposed solution to accommodate future energy demands.
- Innovative Solutions (5 points): Evaluate if the bidder offers creative and innovative solutions that may provide additional benefits or cost savings for the project.
- Training, Maintenance & Operation (10 points): Consideration of the training, maintenance and operational plan for comprehensive and efficient plans and system monitoring.

2. Commercial and Compliance Consideration: (Weighting:40%)

- Cost Proposal (15 Points): Compare the bidder's cost proposal with the project budget and financial analysis. Ensure it is competitive and within budget.
- Cost Breakdown & Value for Money (5 Points): Review of a comprehensive detailed breakdown of costs to understand how the bidder arrived at their pricing.

Consideration will not only focus on the lowest cost but also the overall value offered by the bidder in terms of quality, experience, and project delivery.

- Project Schedule and Timeline (5 Points): The proposed project schedule, milestones and timeline will be reviewed to ensure it aligns with the project's objectives and deadlines.
- Insurance (5 Points): Review that the bidder has appropriate insurance coverage for the project, including liability and performance bonds.
- Regulatory and Legal Compliance (5 points): Confirm that the bidder follows all relevant laws and regulations requirements related to solar farm construction and operation. Evaluation of the bidder's legal history and any ongoing or pending legal disputes. The bidder's safety protocols and record to ensure a safe working environment during construction and operation, commitment to sustainable and environmentally responsible practices will be evaluated. Evaluation of the bidder's commitment to ethical business practices, including transparency and fair labour practices.
- Local Content / Impact (5 points): Assess the bidders local content component and impact on the local community, environment, and economy including bidder's approach to maintaining positive relations with the local community. Assessment bidder's plans for engaging with the local community, including job creation and community benefits and track record in fostering positive relationships with local communities in previous projects will be evaluated. Assessment of the potential for a long-term partnership beyond the initial project, including Knowledge sharing and expansion opportunities.

SITE LOCATION



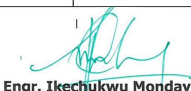
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Abia+State+Secretariat/@5.5222793,7.519984,17z/data=!3m1!1e3m5!1s0x1042dcb03bfb03a5:0x7204b8678017321c:8m2!3d5.5222793!4d7.519984!6s%2Fg%2F!1e2?entry=ttu&gpg=EgoyMDIIMDYyMy4yKXMDSoSAFQAw%3D%3D>

THE RFQ TEMPLATE FOR ALL BIDDERS

S/N	Section	Item	Specification / Response	Qty (Were applicable)	Cost (Were Applicable)	Amount (Were Applicable)	REMARKS
1	GENERAL INFORMATION	Bidder Name					
	GENERAL INFORMATION	Company Registration Number					
	GENERAL INFORMATION	Contact Person					
	GENERAL INFORMATION	Phone / Email					
	GENERAL INFORMATION	Project Location (as quoted)					
	GENERAL INFORMATION	Proposed Delivery Timeline (weeks)					
2	SYSTEM OVERVIEW	Total Installed PV Capacity (MWp)					
	SYSTEM OVERVIEW	Mini-Grid System Type (<input type="checkbox"/> AC-coupled / <input type="checkbox"/> DC-coupled / <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid)					
	SYSTEM OVERVIEW	System Architecture Diagram Attached? (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	SYSTEM OVERVIEW	Grid-Interactivity (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	SYSTEM OVERVIEW	System Autonomy (To be provided by the Customer)					
3	SOLAR PV MODULES	PV Module Manufacturer / Model					
	SOLAR PV MODULES	PV Module Technology (e.g., Mono PERC)					
	SOLAR PV MODULES	Rated Capacity per Panel (Wp)					
	SOLAR PV MODULES	Number of Panels					
	SOLAR PV MODULES	Module Efficiency (%)					
	SOLAR PV MODULES	Warranty (Performance & Product)					
4	INVERTERS	Inverter Type (<input type="checkbox"/> String / <input type="checkbox"/> Central / <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid)					
	INVERTERS	Manufacturer / Model					
	INVERTERS	Inverter Rated Power (kVA or kW)					
	INVERTERS	Efficiency (%)					
	INVERTERS	Grid Synchronization (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	INVERTERS	Protection Features (anti-islanding, surge, etc.)					
	INVERTERS	Warranty (Years)					
5	BATTERY STORAGE	Battery Type (<input type="checkbox"/> Li-Ion / <input type="checkbox"/> LFP / <input type="checkbox"/> Lead-Acid)					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Manufacturer / Model					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Usable Capacity (kWh)					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Nominal Voltage (V)					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Depth of Discharge (%)					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Battery Life (Cycles @ % DoD)					
	BATTERY STORAGE	Warranty (Years)					
6	DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	Voltage Level (e.g., 230V/415V)					
	DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	Distribution Length (meters)					
	DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	Number of Connections (HHs, public facilities)					
	DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	Type of Poles (<input type="checkbox"/> Wood / <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete / <input type="checkbox"/> Steel)					
	DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM	Metering Type (<input type="checkbox"/> Smart / <input type="checkbox"/> Prepaid / <input type="checkbox"/> Postpaid)					
7	ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)	EMS Manufacturer / Platform					
	ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)	Monitoring Capabilities (<input type="checkbox"/> Web / <input type="checkbox"/> App / <input type="checkbox"/> Local)					
	ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)	Load Control Capabilities					
	ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)	Data Storage Period					
8	ENVIRONMENTAL & SAFETY	Lightning Protection System Installed? (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	ENVIRONMENTAL & SAFETY	Fire Safety Measures					
	ENVIRONMENTAL & SAFETY	Compliance with Environmental Requirements (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	ENVIRONMENTAL & SAFETY	Type of Mounting Structure (<input type="checkbox"/> Ground / <input type="checkbox"/> Roof / <input type="checkbox"/> Canopy)					
	ENVIRONMENTAL & SAFETY	Corrosion Protection (specify type)					
9	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE (O&M)	Duration of Free O&M (Months)					
	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE (O&M)	Local Technician Availability (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE (O&M)	Training for Local Users Included?					
	OPERATION & MAINTENANCE (O&M)	Spare Parts Availability (Years)					
10	COMPLIANCE & CERTIFICATIONS	Compliance with NERC Mini-Grid Regulations (<input type="checkbox"/> Yes / <input type="checkbox"/> No)					
	COMPLIANCE & CERTIFICATIONS	IEC/ISO Certifications (modules, inverters, batteries)					
	COMPLIANCE & CERTIFICATIONS	Load Estimation Methodology Provided?					
	COMPLIANCE & CERTIFICATIONS	Community Engagement Conducted?					
11	ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST	System Single-Line Diagram (SLD)					
	ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST	Manufacturer Datasheets (PV, Inverters, Batteries)					
	ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST	Gantt Chart / Workplan					
	ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST	Previous Project References					
	ATTACHMENTS CHECKLIST	Company Profile & Relevant Certifications					

Mode of tendering: All application MUST be addressed to the Honourable, Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, P.M.B 7726, 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 14 days from this date of this letter.


Engr. Ikechukwu Monday
Honourable Commissioner
Ministry of Power and Public Utilities

Feature

Critical Review of Reforms and Policies Of President Tinubu's Administration

By Adaku Okenwa

As President Bola Ahmed Tinubu completes two years in office, Nigeria finds itself at a pivotal juncture. With lofty promises to revamp the economy, tackle insecurity, and fight corruption, the Tinubu administration has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda. Yet, amidst modest successes lie deep-rooted challenges that continue to test the government's resolve and capacity.

This critical review examines the multifaceted outcomes of President Tinubu's policies across key sectors — economy, security, governance, and social welfare — revealing a complex tapestry of progress, shortcomings, and the road ahead.

President Tinubu's economic blueprint emphasizes diversification and macroeconomic stability, aiming to reduce Nigeria's heavy reliance on oil revenues. Key initiatives have included fiscal reforms to increase government revenue, regulatory overhauls to attract foreign direct investment, and measures to stabilize the naira and curb inflation.

The introduction of tighter fiscal controls and expanded tax bases has marginally improved government revenues, enabling more sustained public spending.

Regulatory reforms have attracted new investments, particularly in technology startups and manufacturing, sectors critical for economic diversification.

The Central Bank of Nigeria's monetary policies have contributed to modest inflation containment compared to previous years.

The administration has supported infrastructure projects aimed at improving transport and energy sectors, vital for economic growth.

Despite these efforts, inflation remains persistently high, hitting an annual rate exceeding 20%, which continues to erode Nigerians' purchasing power and living standards.

Unemployment, particularly among youth, remains alarmingly elevated, fueling social discontent and migration pressures.

The naira's volatility and foreign exchange scarcity have at times undermined business confidence and import-dependent sectors.

Critics argue that wealth inequality remains stark, with many Nigerians yet to feel the benefits of

macroeconomic reforms. The informal sector, where the majority work, continues to struggle.

Security challenges remain arguably the most critical issue confronting President Tinubu. The government's strategy involves military offensives, intelligence reforms, and community policing initiatives aimed at combating insurgency, banditry, and communal violence.

Military operations in the Northeast have reclaimed significant territory from Boko Haram insurgents, allowing displaced persons to return home.

Enhanced intelligence sharing between security agencies has disrupted several planned attacks.

Initiatives to engage local communities in security matters have seen some success in reducing kidnappings in select regions.

Banditry, cattle rustling, and communal conflicts continue to spread across Northwestern and Middle Belt states, often with devastating humanitarian consequences.

Kidnapping for ransom remains rampant, deeply affecting businesses, schools, and families.

Security reforms have been slow and hampered by funding shortages, poor coordination, and allegations of corruption within security institutions.

Many Nigerians perceive security as worsening, with some areas effectively becoming no-go zones, stalling economic activities and displacing millions.

President Tinubu campaigned vigorously on anti-corruption and governance reform. His administration has taken steps to strengthen anti-graft institutions and promote transparency.

High-profile corruption investigations and asset recoveries have boosted public confidence in accountability efforts.

Digital governance initiatives are improving transparency in tax collection, customs, and public procurement.

The EFCC and ICPC have reportedly intensified their investigations under clearer political backing.

Despite these efforts, corruption remains entrenched at multiple levels of government, with accusations of selective justice and political interference.

Bureaucratic inefficiencies and red tape continue to slow public service delivery and economic reforms.

Some Nigerians remain skeptical about the government's commitment to eradicating corruption,

citing persistent elite impunity.

Addressing widespread poverty and inequality, President Tinubu's administration launched or expanded several social investment programs aimed at vulnerable populations.

The conditional cash transfer program has been scaled to reach millions of poor households, providing crucial financial relief.

Expanded vocational training and educational scholarships aim to empower youth and reduce unemployment.

Health sector initiatives targeting immunization and maternal health have improved key health indicators. Many social programs face funding shortfalls, bureaucratic delays, and uneven implementation across states.

Rising inflation and insecurity undermine social welfare gains, pushing more Nigerians below the poverty line.

Calls for a more comprehensive, sustainable social safety net system remain urgent.

President Tinubu's first two years underscore the enormous challenges Nigeria faces. His administration's reforms display both ambition and partial success, yet persistent structural issues and external shocks limit the pace and impact of progress.

Moving forward, Nigeria's leadership must accelerate inclusive economic growth, deepen security sector reforms with greater accountability, and strengthen governance with transparency and fairness. Expanding and effectively implementing social welfare programs are equally critical to alleviate the hardships Nigerians continue to endure. The Tinubu administration's record so far is a mixture of cautious optimism and pressing challenges. The reforms undertaken mark important steps toward Nigeria's long-term stability and prosperity. Yet, much work remains to transform policy promises into tangible improvements in Nigerians' everyday lives.

For President Tinubu, the next phase of governance will require unwavering political will, strategic partnerships, and sustained engagement with all stakeholders to deliver on the aspirations of millions of Nigerians who placed their hopes in his leadership.

Growing Visa Restrictions And Nigerians' Opportunities Abroad

By Chukwuebuka George

Nigerians are increasingly facing restrictive visa policies from major international destinations such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia. These escalating hurdles pose far-reaching negative effects on Nigerian individuals and the nation's economic, educational, and diplomatic engagements worldwide.

New visa limitations disrupt business activities crucial for Nigeria's economy. The U.S. recently reduced Nigerian non-immigrant visa validity to just three months with a single entry, complicating trade negotiations and professional engagements.

Similarly, the UAE's ban on tourist visas for Nigerians aged 18 to 45 traveling alone restricts access to a vital commercial hub, undermining investment and

networking opportunities.

"These visa policies increase operational costs and introduce uncertainties that weaken Nigeria's global economic competitiveness," notes an industry analyst. Student visa rules have tightened considerably. The U.S. and Canada now demand enhanced screening and financial proof, while shortening visa validity periods. This curtails Nigerian students' ability to study abroad, affecting skills development critical for national progress.

According to recent data, Nigerian students in the U.S. declined by over 10% following new visa restrictions.

The Nigerian government has formally criticized these policies as disproportionate and contrary to principles of reciprocity and mutual respect. Ongoing diplomatic efforts seek to ease these restrictions, but

tensions risk damaging vital international partnerships.

Visa restrictions disrupt family reunifications and cultural exchanges. Shortened visa durations and single-entry rules hinder Nigerians' social connections abroad and may prompt irregular migration, increasing vulnerability to exploitation.

The UK's planned rollout of digital eVisas for Nigerian students and workers on July 15, 2025, promises a faster, more convenient process but remains a small relief amid tightening global visa regimes.

The combined effects of escalating visa restrictions jeopardize Nigerians' access to education, business, family reunification, and international cooperation. Urgent diplomatic engagement and informed travel preparations are essential to mitigate these challenges.

Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph

COUNTDOWN TO 2024 CHAN: Focus on the Venues

After one year delay, the eighth edition of the African Nations Championship is set to hold across three East African countries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, between August 2 and 30, 2025. Sporting Ambassador brings you the first in a series of countdown to this competition.

Six stadia have been earmarked to host the CHAN matches across four cities of the three host countries.

The cities are the capital of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, the semi-autonomous Zanzibar City, Kampala, the capital of Uganda, and Nairobi, the capital of Kenya.

Moi International Sports Centre

This Stadium is located in Nairobi Kenya. It is locally referred to as the Kasarani Stadium. It is a multi-purpose stadium. It was built in 1987 for

located at the square of Mombasa Road, Langata Road, and the Aerodrome Road. It is approximately two kilometers from the City Center, directly opposite Nairobi Mega Mall. It is currently mostly used for football matches hosting AFC Leopards Football Club.

Other facilities at the stadium include a gymnasium and a 50-metre swimming pool. The stadium houses the headquarters for the Football Kenya Federation and Athletics Kenya.

It will host the second group stage match between Morocco



Moi International Sports Centre Polina Isop



Benjamin Nkapa Stadium

the All-Africa Games held in Nairobi. The facilities include a 55,000-seat stadium with a running track and a pitch used for football and rugby union, a competition size swimming pool, an indoor arena and a 108-bed capacity hotel. The stadium is located at 1,612 metres above sea level in altitude.

The main arena is used by the Harambee Stars of Kenya, for most of its home games, as well as Kenyan Premier League sides Mathare United and Tusker F.C. Since 2013 the Safari Sevens rugby union tournament has been hosted at the Kasarani Stadium.

The final of this competition will take place in this stadium on August 30.

Nyayo National Stadium

Nyayo National Stadium is an 18,000-seater multi-purpose stadium in Nairobi, Kenya. It is

and Zambia.

Mandela National Stadium

The Mandela National Stadium is a multi-purpose stadium in Uganda.. It is named after the former South African President and anti-apartheid icon, Nelson Mandela. The stadium's record attendance of 50,000 was set in 2004, in a football match between the national football teams of Uganda fondly called the Cranes and the Bafana Bafana of South Africa.

The stadium is located on Namboole Hill in Kira Municipality, Wakiso District. The stadium is approximately 11 kilometres, by road, east of the central business district of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city.

This stadium among other matches will host the third-

place match.

Benjamin Nkapa Stadium

It is also known as Tanzania National Main Stadium, a multi-purpose stadium located in Miburani ward of Temeke District in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It hosts major football matches such as the Tanzanian Premier League and home matches of the Taifa Stars of Tanzania.

With 60,000 seats it is among the 20 largest stadiums in Africa and the largest stadium in Tanzania. It is owned by the Tanzanian Government. The stadium was built by Beijing Construction Engineering Group at a cost of \$56 million.

It has five main entrances, a car park for 600 vehicles, 114 closed-circuit television cameras, a VIP lounge and an extendable roof.

In late July 2020, the stadium was renamed after the late

former president Benjamin Nkapa.

This stadium will host the opening match between Tanzania and Burkina Faso. It will also host Nigeria's last group match against Congo Brazzaville.

Amaan Stadium

The 15,000 capacity stadium is also known as the Amani Stadium. It is located in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

The stadium was built with Chinese government aid and opened in 1970. This was China's first stadium project in Africa.

The stadium underwent refurbishment again with Chinese assistance, reopening in 2010.

Nigeria's opening match against Senegal will take place in this stadium.



Amaan Stadium

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July 20, 2025

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Sunset At Dawn: DIOGO JOTA (1996-2025)

The beauty, O Portugal lies dead upon the street of Zamora. How the mighty have fallen! Do not tell it to Liverpool. Do not announce it in streets of Portugal. O! Diogo Jota was beloved and cherished during his life, swifter than the eagle and mightier than the lion.

In the early hours of last Thursday morning, the Lamborghini he was travelling in with his brother Andre Silva, who was also a professional footballer with Portuguese second-tier club Penafiel, spun off the road and caught fire.

One of the car's tyre blew out while overtaking another vehicle on the A-52 around 70 miles west of Valladolid, causing it to veer off the road around 12:40 AM.

Firefighters extinguished the blaze, which spread to surrounding vegetation, and collaborated with emergency services and the Civil Guard. Medical personnel confirmed the deaths of the two occupants of the vehicle shortly after arriving at the scene. A judicial investigation into the crash has been launched.

Diogo Jose Telxeira da Silva commonly known as Diogo Jota was born on December 4, 1996 in Porto, Portugal.

Jota started his career with Pacos de Ferreira before signing for La Liga club Atletico Madrid in 2016. After two seasons he was loaned to Portuguese side FC Porto and later to Championship side Wolverhampton Wanderers in 2017, when he helped them gain promotion to the Premier League. Wolves splashed €14 million to keep him permanently. He

made 131 appearances for them and scored 44 goals.

In 2020 he signed for Liverpool for a fee reported to be in the region of £41 million.

He scored 65 goals in 182 appearances during five seasons at Anfield.

His honours with the Reds included one FA Cup in 2022 and two EFL Cup in 2022 and 2024.

On the international scene, Jota scored 14 goals in 49 appearances for Portugal.

Diogo Jota reached the pinnacle of his football career for both club and country this season, winning the Premier League title with Liverpool and helping Portugal to victory in the final of the Uefa Nations League.

Jota married his long-term partner Rute Cardoso, with whom he had three children, just last month.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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.

Tributes

Doesn't make any sense. Just now we were together in the national team, just now you were married, To your family, to your wife and children, I send my condolences and wish them all the strength in the world. I know you will always be with them. R.I.P. Diogo and Andre. We will all miss you.

- Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal teammate.



Jota & Rute

Devastating news about Diogo Jota & his brother Andre this morning. Thoughts are with everyone of their family & friends, especially his wife Rute & their three lovely kids.

- Jamie Carragher, Liverpool legend

There are no words of comfort for so much pain. I will always remember you with your smile, as a good companion on and off the field. I send all my strength to his family, from where he is I'm sure he will always be with you, especially his wife and three children. May he rest in peace. Diogo and Andre.

- Darwin Nunez, Liverpool teammate.



Jota & family

Let me start with Jota because this is devastating news. I am sure I speak for everyone in saying our first thoughts are going to be with his family and his friends in particular. There are millions of Liverpool fans but also football fans and non-fans who will also be shocked by this. It is devastating and really important we bear in mind just how difficult a period this will be for his friends and for his family.

- Sir Kir Starmer. UK Prime Minister.



The accident scene

The news of the death of Diogo Jota, an athlete who greatly honoured Portugal's name, and his brother is unexpected and tragic. It is a sad day for football and for national and international sports,

- Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro