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# NATIONAL Ambassador

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"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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## S'East Governors Rally for Nnamdi Kanu's Release

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

**S**outheast Governors are working in unison to secure the release of the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu.

Abia State Governor, Dr.

Alex Otti, disclosed this during the September 2025 edition of his monthly media parley, "Governor Otti Speaks", held at the Banquet Hall of Government House, Umuahia.

Dr. Otti revealed that the governors of the region have been engaging relevant authorities at various levels to ensure Kanu regains his freedom.

The Abia governor, however, declined to

provide specific details of the engagements, warning that making such sensitive discussions public could jeopardize the process.

"We have been engaging on the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu. But the

level at which we are engaging, the discussions that have taken place, and the assurances we have received are not for public consumption, since they may derail the process," he explained. *Continued on P.2*

## Osun Moves To Commit N678m On Shrine Project

From Sophina Ovuike, Abuja

**T**he Osun State Government's decision to commit N678 million to the reconstruction of the Sango-Timi Shrine and Grove in Ede, hometown of Governor Ademola Adeleke, has triggered widespread criticism from civil groups, analysts, and community leaders across the state.

Critics argue that the project reflects misplaced priorities at a time when the state is grappling with pressing economic challenges, unpaid worker entitlements, and abandoned infrastructure in other major towns.

Public affairs analyst, Adebayo Adedeji, faulted the government's decision, stressing that the allocation to the shrine nearly doubles the N376 million released as education subsidies for the entire state in the first half of 2025, according to the Q2 Budget Implementation Report.

He also noted that despite promises to workers, only N500 million—about 11.1 percent of the N4.5 billion budgeted for gratuity arrears—has been paid so far this year. The Contributory Pension Scheme, he added, remains severely underfunded, with just ₦998 million (14.3% of the N7 billion allocation) disbursed.

"It is disturbing that the government finds it convenient to pour such huge funds into a shrine project when pensions, salaries, and education are underfunded. This raises serious questions about governance priorities," Adedeji said.

Adedeji further decried what he described as a lopsided concentration of development in the governor's hometown.



■ Governor Alex Otti (right), shares a cheerful moment with the European Union Head of Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Gautier Mignot, during the launch of the EU-funded Support to the Sustainable Social Protection System project at the Government House, Umuahia, Abia State, recently.

## Abia Govt. Mandates Fire Extinguishers In Homes, Workplaces

By Chinedu Kelechi

**T**he Abia State Government has introduced a new safety policy, mandating the installation of fire extinguishers in all homes, offices, and business premises across the state.

The initiative, rolled out by the Abia State Orientation Agency, follows a three-day sensitization campaign in Aba that used radio broadcasts, market outreaches, and community meetings to educate

residents on fire safety.

Chief Fire Officer of the Abia State Fire Service, Arch. Arua Nnanna, said the measure is aimed at improving emergency readiness.

"Preparedness is the strongest defense against fire disasters," Nnanna noted, saying, "A fire extinguisher within reach is more effective than a firefighter arriving from miles away. The governor's policy is about readiness—the first responder to any fire outbreak is

you."

The campaign was partly motivated by recent incidents, including the fire outbreak at Enyimba FM in Aba. According to Director General of the Abia State Orientation Agency, Ure Abazie, Governor Alex Otti issued an executive order after concluding that many tragedies could have been minimized with the availability of fire extinguishers.

"Fire cannot be stopped by panic or shouting—it requires immediate

action with the right equipment," Abazie said. According to him, certified vendors are already in place across the state.

This policy is not only about compliance but about safeguarding lives and investments.

Officials said, the directive is designed to make residents the first line of defense in emergencies and to set a new benchmark for fire safety awareness in Nigeria. achi Uzoukwu and Ebere Tasie

**EDITORIAL:**

**Time To End The Era of Fake Degrees In Nigeria**

## News

### Osun Moves To Commit N678m To Shrine Project

Continued from page 1

"In 2025 alone, at least seven road projects worth over N70 billion have been awarded for dualisation in Ede. Meanwhile, vital projects in Ife, Osogbo, and Ilesa have remained abandoned nearly two years after they were flagged-off," he said.

He also questioned why the state would invest so heavily in the Ede shrine in the name of tourism while leaving other globally significant sites in neglect.

"If the objective is to promote tourism and protect cultural heritage, why is Ede the focus? What about Ile-Ife, the cradle of Yoruba civilization, or the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that attracts global visitors?" he asked.

The Osogbo Development Action Group (ODAG) joined the chorus of disapproval, describing the shrine allocation as a "reckless expenditure" with little long-term benefit for the state's economy.

In a strongly worded statement, ODAG's co-ordinator, Omosola Olabode, insisted that the government should channel such huge

funds into developing the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, which is internationally recognized and has the capacity to generate steady revenue and jobs through tourism.

"Governor Adeleke campaigned on a promise to upgrade the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove. That site remains a cultural jewel of Yoruba land and a global tourist attraction. Directing nearly N700 million to a local shrine while neglecting a UNESCO-listed heritage site is wasteful and unjustifiable," Olabode said.

The development has since sparked heated debates on social media and in community forums, with many Osun residents accusing the administration of focusing on symbolic projects in Ede while leaving more pressing needs unattended.

Observers warn that the backlash could erode public trust in Adeleke's government if concerns over uneven development and misplaced priorities are not urgently addressed.

### S' East Governors Rally for Nnamdi Kanu's Release

Continued from page 1

Otti emphasized that as the Governor of Kanu's home state, he has taken the responsibility personally and is actively leading the efforts.

"As his Governor, I am at the forefront of ensuring that he comes back home. All the South East governors are in

tandem, and discussions are ongoing," he assured.

The demand for Kanu's release has remained a key concern for stakeholders across the Southeast, many of whom believe it will help de-escalate security tensions and restore peace in the region.

## Gov Otti wants Ministry of Agric relocated to Umudike

By Amarachi Uzoukwu and Ebere Tasie

**T**he Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has announced plans to relocate the State Ministry of Agriculture from its current site at Bank Road, Umuahia, to Umudike, in a bid to create a more conducive environment for staff and improve productivity in the sector.

Governor Otti disclosed this recently, during an unscheduled visit to the Ministry's headquarters in

Umuahia, shortly after swearing-in two new commissioners and a Special Adviser on Agriculture, as part of a minor cabinet reshuffle.

He was accompanied on the inspection by the Commissioner for Lands, Hon. Chaka Chukwumerije and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, who took him round the dilapidated facilities.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the state of the buildings, Governor Otti told the

workers that their relocation to Umudike was part of government's broader efforts to create a functional and result-driven agricultural system capable of boosting food production for Abia and Nigeria.

The governor explained that Umudike, which already hosts the Abia State University Faculty of Agriculture, offered a more suitable environment. He also revealed that the state government had concluded plans to move the university's Faculty of

Law back to Uturu, the institution's permanent site.

Otti directed the Commissioner for Agriculture to immediately assess facilities at Umudike in preparation for the relocation.

The announcement was greeted with excitement by staff of the ministry, who openly expressed their joy at the governor's visit and the prospect of working in a more enabling environment.

## Abia Governor Swears-in 2 Commissioners, Special Adviser

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

**A**bia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has sworn in two new commissioners and a Special Adviser, with a charge on them to bring fresh energy, commitment, and integrity to the service of the State.

The Commissioners are; Dr. Mrs Salome Obiukwu, who now assumes office as Commissioner for Trade and Commerce, Architect Chiemela Uzoiye as Commissioner for Housing and Prince Christian Enweremadu as the Special Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony held at Banquet Hall, Government House Umuahia, Governor Otti who announced cabinet adjustments said that the former Commissioner for Trade and Commerce, Mr Kingsley Nwokocho will now serve as the Commissioner for Labour and Productivity.

Governor Otti also revealed that the Ministry of Lands and

Housing has been split into two separate portfolios to improve efficiency noting that Mr. Chaka Chukwumerije now becomes the Commissioner for Lands.

Governor Otti described the appointments as part of his administration's strategy of periodically injecting fresh ideas to enrich the quality and broaden the scope of his administration's performance.

The Governor who congratulated the trio for scaling through the rigorous nomination and screening process, reminded them of his administration's zero-tolerance policy on corruption and warned that government will not hesitate to sanction those found wanting.

He emphasised the need for the new officials to quickly settle into their roles, stressing that "there is practically no time for

honeymoon. We expect that you will quickly invite and welcome support from every available channel so that it can hit the ground running.

"You have been found to possess the important leadership qualities that we seek in our team and we are glad that you honour the call to serve your state at this devout moment in our history. Thank you for offering to be part of the new Abia Project.

"I do not expect that you will find it easy, but you have the peculiar advantage of working with colleagues who will be willing to share their experiences and the steps taken to keep their heads above water.

"Let me repeat, a charge I will never get tired of giving at functions like this. Our administration has zero tolerance for corruption and practises that take away from the public tier.

"We shall not hesitate to do what has to be done whenever credible evidence

of compromise and bad behaviour is presented to us. You are all required to live above board as public officers with the understanding that this is a call to serve, not an invitation to a banquet.

"You have so much to do, especially now that we have gone past the halftime mark in the first term of this administration.

The highlighted some of his administration's achievements in the last 28 months, including improvements in road infrastructure, security, education, and healthcare.

He urged all appointees to work as a team to deliver quality leadership and measurable improvements in the lives of Abians.

In a vote of thanks on behalf of the newly sworn in appointees, the Commissioner for Trade and Commerce Dr. Mrs Salome Obiukwu, expressed gratitude to the Governor for finding them worthy to serve the State.

She assured that they would discharge their duties to the glory of God and the good of Abia state.

## Youths Charged to Embrace Leadership Roles

By Onwuka Lovina

**Y**ouths have been recognized as vital agents of societal transformation and development, with a call for them to stay focused and build a purposeful future.

This charge was given by Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Matters, Apostle KC Wiper, during the 75th anniversary celebration of Pathfinders under the Adventist Youth Ministry,

held at the Seventh Day Adventist Church Unity Chapel, Government House, Umuahia.

Apostle Wiper urged young people to set clear goals, prioritize their values, and channel their energy into positive pursuits. He highlighted the administration's dedication to youth empowerment, noting that Governor Alex Otti's creation of the Abia Leadership Academy underscores this commitment. The academy, he explained, is designed to

equip young people with skills, reduce youth involvement in crime, and prepare them for leadership.

He encouraged youths to seize available training and skill acquisition opportunities, stressing that these initiatives are essential for building a stable and prosperous future. He also extended congratulations to Mr. Wisdom Ibe and his wife, Favor, on their wedding anniversary, offering prayers for their continued blessings.

In his sermon, titled

"Judea and His Son's Wife: From Scandal to Redemption," Dr. Ndubis Odikwa addressed the moral decline in marriages, urging couples to remain faithful to their vows. He emphasised that disobedience to God's design for marriage leads to broken homes, immorality, and societal instability.

Church leaders, including Elder Orji Obinwa, Elder Okechi Aguwamba, and Dr. Nelson Ubani, praised the Adventist Youth Ministry for its strong impact on spiritual and personal development.

They called on youths to apply the lessons learned in church to all aspects of life.

Some youths, including Deacon Emmanuel Onyebuchi and Mr. and Mrs. Ibe, expressed gratitude for God's guidance and pledged to uphold values that honor their faith and community.

The event featured intercessory prayers for youths, families, the state, and the nation, culminating in the cutting of the anniversary cake.

### Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Kalu Emmanuel Eke, now wish to be known and addressed as **EKE KALU EKE**. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

**EKE KALU EKE.**



## News



Chief Magistrate Nnenna Grant Osu during the One-Day Sensitization and Training Programme for Children with Intellectual Disabilities, organized by the Abia State Disability Commission at Rapha Hotel.

# Abia Disability Commission Rallies Support for Children with Intellectual Disabilities

By Ihuoma Egbeogu

**C**hildren with intellectual disabilities deserve love, patience, and opportunity—not stigma, discrimination, or neglect.

This was the resounding message at a one-day sensitization and training programme organized by the Abia State Disability Commission held recently in Umuahia, Abia state.

The programme, attended by teachers, health workers, education secretaries, local government officials, and permanent secretaries, sought to deepen understanding of intellectual and learning disabilities while promoting inclusive policies and practices.

Chief Magistrate Nnenna Grant Osu, a certified brain trainer and CEO of Brain Activate Initiative, emphasized that every child is a gift to society.

She explained that conditions such as Down Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, and Prader-Willi Syndrome—alongside learning challenges like autism, cerebral palsy, and dyslexia—do not define a child's worth. "With the right environment and support, these children can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society," she said.

She further identified genetic, environmental, and hereditary factors as common causes of intellectual and learning disabilities, stressing the need for early intervention, professional support, and public awareness.

In his address, the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. David Anyaele, called for the removal of barriers that hinder persons with disabilities in Abia State. He urged government, faith-based groups, and civil society to make public facilities accessible and prioritize inclusive budgeting. "We must create awareness, enforce disability rights, and ensure no child is excluded. Persons with disabilities deserve the highest respect and care," he declared.

Education was

highlighted as a critical tool for empowerment. Experts at the training advocated for inclusive classrooms, individualized learning plans, and teaching approaches that accommodate diverse needs. Such interventions, they noted, not only aid learning but also foster peer acceptance and reduce stigma.

The event underscored the role of families and communities in supporting children with intellectual disabilities. Organizers stressed that beyond caregiving, the broader

society must provide systems of empowerment, counseling, and advocacy to ensure inclusion.

Governor Alex Otti was commended for backing the initiative through the Disability Commission, with participants urging the state to sustain awareness campaigns and policy interventions.

The Speakers maintained that children with intellectual disabilities are not less human, and when given opportunities, they can enrich the communities around them.

## SSG Urges Atani Abam People To Protect Health Facilities

By Ndubueze Ngozi

**T**he Secretary to the Abia State Government, Professor Kenneth Kalu, has urged the people of Atani Abam in Arochuku Local Government Area to take full responsibility for protecting and preserving the newly installed health facilities at the Atani Abam Primary Health Center, Ovukwu Ward.

Speaking during the official functionalization of the centre, Professor Kalu emphasized that Governor Alex Otti's administration remains committed to bringing quality healthcare services to the grassroots. He noted that the

governor, being a health conscious leader, has prioritized access to healthcare as a fundamental right for all Abians.

The Abia chief scribe, called on residents of Atani to make full use of the facilities for their medical needs and to ensure that the infrastructure is not vandalized but well maintained for the benefit of all.

The Commissioner for Health, Prof. Enoch Ogbonnaya Uche, in his remarks, revealed that the Atani Abam facility is the 27th health centre made functional by the present administration with a target of over 200

by year-end. He added that the centre is fully equipped with modern medical equipment, urging the community to ensure its security and sustainability.

Earlier, the Health Authority Secretary, Mrs. Peace Okorie, and the chancellor representing Ovukwu Ward, Hon. Ikeogu Ukpabi, expressed appreciation to the governor and reaffirmed the community's commitment to supporting his developmental strides.

The event was well attended by traditional rulers, health officials, community stakeholders.

## Abia State Validates Guidelines For Alternative Child Care

By Omwuka Lovina and Ebere Tasie

**N**igeria Stakeholders in Child Welfare and Protection have unanimously endorsed the domestication and validation of the Abia State Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children, marking a major step forward in safeguarding the rights and welfare of vulnerable children across the State.

The endorsement took place during a high-level validation meeting held at the Ministry of Women Affairs Headquarters in Umuahia. The event was convened by the Abia State Government to review and formally adopt the policy document, which outlines standardized procedures for the care and protection of children without parental care.

Participants at the meeting included representatives from the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the National Children's Parliament, the traditional institution, and media organizations, among others.

Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Aguhkwa, called for the formal endorsement of the guidelines during the meeting. The motion to validate the document was moved by Comrade Victor Orji, Director of NOA in Abia State, and seconded by CSP Ngozi Kanu, Officer in Charge of Gender at the Nigeria Police Force, Abia State Command.

Delivering her keynote address, Dr. Aguhkwa said the guidelines would serve as a legal and policy framework to protect children who are unable to live with their biological families due to abandonment, abuse, or other crises. She emphasised that the document aligns with national legislation and international standards, including the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

"The true measure of these guidelines will be seen in the smiles of children who find love, care, and stability in alternative family settings and in the reduction of child neglect, abuse, and exploitation," she stated.

Presenting a summary of the guidelines, Abia State Coordinator of the Child Protection Network (CPN), Ambassador Onyinyechi Joy Nwosu, said the document outlines procedures for assessing, placing, and supporting children in alternative care arrangements. These include kinship care, foster care, adoption, residential care, and emergency placements, with a clear preference for family-based and community-driven solutions over institutional care.

She noted that the validation marks the culmination of several years of collaborative work between the Ministry of Women Affairs, the Child Protection Network, and development partners, particularly SOS Children's Villages Nigeria.

"This process is not just about producing a document; it is about ensuring that every child in Abia State grows up in a safe, caring, and supportive environment," she said.

Earlier in the programme, Director of the Child Department in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Goddy-Onulaka Josephine, welcomed stakeholders and commended their dedication to strengthening child protection systems across the state.

The newly validated guidelines are expected to reduce unnecessary institutionalization, reinforce family and community care structures, and establish uniform protocols for child placement and ongoing monitoring.

With this milestone, Abia State joins a growing number of Nigerian states leading the way in child welfare reform—ensuring that no child is left without love, safety, and dignity.

## Govt Set To Revive Abia Hotels

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

**T**he Abia State Government has announced that plans are at an advanced stage to revitalize the Abia Hotels Limited in Umuahia, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring that no state-owned asset is allowed to waste.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, made this known during a press briefing on the outcome of the previous Executive Council meeting, chaired by Governor Alex Otti.

"In line with the state government's agenda to revive moribund companies and safeguard public investments, we are pleased to inform you that efforts to bring Abia Hotels Limited back to life have reached an advanced stage," Kanu stated.

He added that further details of the recovery process would be shared in due course but emphasised that the Otti-led administration is resolute in its commitment to transparency and accountability in the management of state assets.

"Under Governor Otti's watch, no government property will be allowed to waste or be misappropriated by public officials, as was unfortunately the case in the past," the commissioner said.

The move is part of a broader initiative to rejuvenate abandoned or underperforming public assets and boost economic development in the state.

## News

### Abia Sets Up Emergency Committees In Council Areas

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Abia State Government has created Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs), in all 17 local government areas, to improve disaster response and preparedness at the community level.

The official launch took place at the Aguiyi Ironsi Conference Centre in Umuahia. It was done on behalf of the Secretary to the State Government, Professor Kenneth Kalu, by the Executive Secretary of the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Dr. Sunny Jackson.

Dr. Jackson explained that each committee will have 14 members, and the local government mayor will serve as the Chairman.

He said the goal is to ensure faster and more effective emergency responses, especially with the increasing risks caused by climate change.

"This is a timely move. As disasters become more frequent, we must bring emergency co-ordination closer to the people," Dr. Jackson said. He also promised that the government will support the committees with what they need to work properly.

Also speaking at the event, the Commissioner for Environment, Mr. Philemon Ogbonna, represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Ikechukwu Oriuwa, praised the government's effort. He said, the committees would act as first responders in emergencies and promised full support from the ministry.

On behalf of all LGAs, the Mayor of Aba North, Mr. Timothy Iheke, stressed the importance of involving local communities in disaster management. He also suggested that dedicated offices should be set up for the committees in each council for quick response.

During the event, Dr. Jackson gave presentations on how to build and strengthen the LEMCs, as well as strategies for local preparedness and resilience.



Dr. Chima Desmond Anyaso (Middle) with Officials of the Nigerian Correctional Service during his recent visit to the Umuahia Centre, Abia State recently.

### Chima Anyaso Revives Umuahia Correctional Centre, Feeds 843 Inmates, Sponsors Exams

By Kene Chikaodi

The Umuahia Medium Security Custodial Centre witnessed a remarkable act of philanthropy as businessman and philanthropist, Dr. Chima Desmond Anyaso, donated millions of naira worth of food, clothing, educational support, and logistics to the facility's inmates.

Arriving with what many described as a life-changing intervention, Dr. Anyaso ensured that three grounded prison vehicles were restored to full use after he provided brand new tyres and five heavy-duty batteries. The gesture, according to officials, will ease the movement of inmates to and from court, a process that had faced delays for months.

The philanthropist, who recently marked his 45th birthday, also supplied several bags of rice to improve the feeding conditions of the over 843 inmates, alongside quality wrappers and clothing to restore their dignity.

Beyond immediate needs, Dr. Anyaso unveiled a far-reaching educational intervention. He pledged to renovate the National Open University (NOUN) study centre within the facility and personally sponsor NECO registration fees for 16 inmates currently pursuing secondary education while serving their terms.

Encouraging the inmates during his visit, Anyaso said their present condition did not define their future.

"God never ordained anyone to live in trouble. This is not your final destination. Hold on to faith, keep hope alive, and you will rise again," he assured.

He further announced plans to partner with the Nigerian Correctional

Service through the prison ministry of his church, House on the Rock, to provide sustained support, mentoring, and spiritual guidance.

The Deputy Controller in charge of the Custodial Centre, DCC Mabia Ojiakor Michael, commended the gesture, describing it as the true definition of leadership and service.

"Choosing to invest

millions in those society has forgotten shows love, compassion, and commitment to service," he said.

The inmates, represented by their General Provost, Mr. Chikadi Dick, expressed deep appreciation, noting that the visit restored their hope for a second chance in life.

With the facility

grappling with overcrowding—housing 843 inmates, 95 percent of them youths—Dr. Anyaso's intervention was described as both timely and transformative. Stakeholders hailed it as a model of impactful philanthropy capable of changing lives and strengthening rehabilitation efforts.

### Abia Govt Commissions Materials Testing Lab, Vows to Tackle Substandard Construction

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has announced the full installation and beginning of operations at its newly established Materials Testing Laboratory, aimed at enforcing quality standards in construction across the state.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, disclosed this recently, stating that the lab is now fully functional and equipped to carry out a wide-range of critical testing services.

"We are happy to announce that the laboratory is fully installed and operational. It offers services, including concrete testing, soil testing, aggregate testing, asphalt pavement testing, steel reinforcement testing, non-destructive testing, and various field tests," he said.

Kanu explained that the

facility was established to ensure high standards in engineering and building projects across the state.

He emphasised that this initiative aligns with Governor Alex Otti's commitment to improving infrastructure quality and reducing the risks of structural failure and building collapse.

Speaking on youth empowerment, the commissioner revealed that the Abia TechRise ICT Training Cohort 2 is nearing completion of the applicant verification stage, with 850 individuals screened across all local government areas. He announced that training for successful candidates started on September 25, 2025.

"This programme is part of the state government's agenda to equip our youth with ICT skills for relevance in the 21st Century. It will grow Abia's digital

workforce, boost youth empowerment, and enhance job creation opportunities," he said.

Kanu also recalled that during the first cohort, 19 graduates received automatic employment from the state government — a gesture likely to be repeated in the second cohort.

In another development, the commissioner disclosed that the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, in collaboration with local councils, had begun implementing the East Agricultural Intervention Project. The scheme aims to improve food security and create employment across rural communities.

He also announced plans for the construction of four prototype markets across the 17 LGAs. Each market will feature 40 open stalls, solar-powered lighting, boreholes, conveniences, and solar

phone charging points.

"This initiative will boost local trade, expand rural economic opportunities, and promote women and youth entrepreneurship. "It will also help curb rural-urban migration by providing sustainable livelihoods," he said.

Also speaking at the briefing, the General Manager of the Umuahia Capital Development Authority (UCDA), Mr. Kingsley Agomoh, confirmed that the Materials Testing Laboratory is located at the UCDA Headquarters in Ogurube Layout, Umuahia.

He noted that the facility was established in response to the rising cases of building collapse in the state.

Mr. Ferdinand Ekeoma, Special Adviser to the Governor on Media and Publicity, was also present at the briefing.



# Editorial

## Time To End The Era of Fake Degrees In Nigeria

**T**he Federal Government's decision to enforce a compulsory nationwide credential verification system, beginning October 6, 2025, marks a historic turning point in Nigeria's long struggle against academic fraud, certificate racketeering, and the cancer of fake degrees. For too long, fraudulent qualifications have compromised the integrity of our education system, infiltrated our public service, and corroded confidence in Nigeria's intellectual capital. This decisive reform anchored on the National Education Repository and Databank (NERD) and implemented through the National Credential Verification Service (NCVS) offers a credible pathway to restore sanity.

The service-wide circular signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, is clear and unequivocal. All Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), alongside private and public tertiary institutions, must now comply with a structured verification process that makes every certificate digitally traceable. Employees and prospective job seekers alike will require clearance through NCVS before their appointments can be confirmed. Each certificate will be tagged with a National Credential Number (NCN) and secured with digital codes, ensuring instant verification at any point in the country or indeed, the world.

This is not merely another bureaucratic measure. It is the first time Nigeria is instituting a federated, independent quality assurance mechanism that stands above individual institutions, many of which have historically failed to detect, or even abetted, certificate fraud. The legal foundation rests firmly on the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act of 1985, ensuring that this policy is not only enforceable but binding on all tiers of governance.

The urgency of this reform cannot be overstated. For decades, fake universities, diploma mills, and syndicates trading in fraudulent degrees have flourished, aided by weak verification procedures. The consequences are staggering: unqualified individuals occupying sensitive offices, erosion of meritocracy, and the cheapening of the hard work of genuine students and scholars. Worse still, the presence of such fraudsters in critical sectors health, engineering, security—directly endangers lives. By digitising and centralising verification under NERD, the government

has struck at the very root of this national embarrassment.

Encouragingly, the NCVS is fully operational. As confirmed by Ms. Haula Galadima, Executive Director of Communication and Cybersecurity for NERD, the infrastructure is ready, and focal officers in MDAs and schools are being onboarded. The system is more than a database: it integrates the National Student Number (NSN), National Credential Number (NCN), and National Document Number (NDN), creating a holistic web of accountability that will feed into a National Database of Resource Persons. With this, Nigeria will, for the first time, have a single, verifiable pool of qualified individuals across disciplines.

The message is loud and clear: come October 6, fake degrees and forged honours will no longer slip through the cracks.

But while this is a bold federal initiative, we advocate that it must not stop at Abuja. State governments must embrace, domesticate, and actively enforce this policy across their civil and public services. Too often, states have looked the other way, tolerating the presence of unqualified staff in their workforce. Governors and state legislatures must move swiftly to align with the federal standard, ensuring that every teacher, health worker, engineer, or administrator employed within their jurisdiction holds verifiable qualifications. Anything less would amount to sabotage of the national reform effort.

In addition, tertiary institutions themselves; universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education must view NERD not as an intrusion on their autonomy but as a collective safeguard. The Governing Council of NERD already includes key regulatory bodies: the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). Their participation underscores the collaborative ownership of this initiative. Academic leaders must therefore shed the temptation to protect fraudulent insiders and instead embrace this transparency tool as a shield for their institutions' integrity.

Nigeria's reputation in the global knowledge economy depends on the credibility of its certificates. Genuine students who toil to earn their degrees should not have their achievements diluted by the proliferation of fakes. Employers, both at home and abroad, deserve the confidence that a Nigerian certificate stands for competence, not corruption.

This is why state governments cannot afford to treat this reform as optional. To defeat the scourge of fake degrees, Nigeria requires a united front federal, state, institutional, and private sector. Only then can we restore respect for merit, ensure fairness in recruitment, and build an education system worthy of the nation's aspirations.

With the NCVS, the Federal Government has laid a firm foundation. The states must now follow suit. The era of fake degrees must end.

**LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:**  
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## A Welcome Development for Drivers Licence

Dear Editor,

**T**he recent proposal by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) to make drug testing compulsory for all applicants and renewals of driver's licences is both timely and commendable. Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (retd.), is right in pointing out that reckless driving, rising cases of avoidable accidents, and violent behaviour on our roads have direct links to psychoactive substance abuse. For too long, Nigerians have suffered needless loss of lives and property due to impaired drivers who operate vehicles while under the influence.

Drug abuse is not only a criminal act; it is a serious public health and road safety threat. The driver of a vehicle holds the lives of passengers, pedestrians, and other road users in his or her hands. Allowing individuals whose judgment and reflexes are compromised by drugs to obtain licences is akin to legalising danger on our roads. Mandatory drug testing would therefore act as both a deterrent to potential abusers and a safeguard for the commuting public.

However, for this measure to succeed, it must be strictly enforced without bias or compromise. Nigeria is a society where regulations often falter at the altar of corruption, selective enforcement, or class privilege. If drug testing for licences is to make an impact, it must cut across all strata: the influential and the ordinary, the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural. There should be no sacred cows. A commercial driver in Aba should be subjected to the same standard as a senior government official in Abuja. Anything less will defeat the noble objective of this initiative.

Furthermore, designated testing centres must be adequately equipped, accessible, and affordable. The process should be transparent, with results verifiable and protected from manipulation. It is also important that those who test positive are not merely denied licences, but referred for appropriate counselling and rehabilitation, in line with the NDLEA's War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign. This way, the policy will not only protect road users but also contribute to national healing from the scourge of drugs.

Several countries have adopted similar policies with measurable success in reducing road accidents. Nigeria must not lag behind. The Federal Executive Council should approve this proposal without delay, and implementation should begin in earnest. Our nation can no longer afford to treat road safety casually. Every Nigerian life matters, and ensuring drug-free driving is one sure way to protect it.

**Okenwa, Adaku Jane**  
**Umuahia, Abia State**



## FCTA Launches Clearance Operation At Kpakuma Kobi Village

**T**he Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), has launched a clearance operation at the Cashew Plantation in Kpaduma-Kobi Village, along the Asokoro-Guzape corridor, following an attempted kidnap on September 15.

Secretary of Command and Control, Dr. Peter Olumiji, said the exercise is aimed at eliminating criminal hideouts and preventing further incidents. He confirmed that police swiftly responded during the attack, rescuing both victims, although a vigilante lost his life in the operation.

Olumiji disclosed that drones will be deployed to monitor the area, working alongside hunters and conventional security operatives. He added that a 24-hour police post and solar-powered streetlights will also be installed to strengthen security.

Director of Development Control, Mukhtar Galadima, described the move as part of a broader strategy to reclaim ungoverned spaces across the FCT. "Similar operations have been carried out in Apo Resettlement, Guzape, and last year in the Mabushi scavengers' colony," he said.

Community leaders have endorsed the clearance, insisting that the forest had become a danger to residents. Iliya Iwadagba, a resident of Kobi Village, said criminal elements began invading the area about five years ago, making the route unsafe, especially at night.

The FCTA urged residents to co-operate with security agencies, assuring that it remains committed to ensuring the safety of lives and property in the territory.

## Association Congratulates Senator Tinubu at 65

**T**he Youth Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (YOWICAN), has congratulated the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, on her 65th birthday, describing her as a role model for young Nigerians.

In a statement signed by its National Chairman, Ambassador Belusochukwu Michael Enwere, YOWICAN commended the First Lady's commitment to youth and women empowerment, her legacy of public service, and her devotion to faith and nation-building.

"On behalf of YOWICAN, we celebrate our quintessential role model and Grand Patroness, not only for your life but also for the grace, wisdom, and unwavering dedication you have consistently shown in service to God, humanity, and our nation," Enwere stated.

The group urged young Nigerians to emulate Tinubu's values of discipline, responsibility, and selfless service as the country works to overcome current challenges.

During her 12 years in the Senate representing Lagos Central, Tinubu sponsored several bills on social welfare, education, and women's rights. She also founded the New Era Foundation, which promotes youth development, community service, and public health awareness.

According to YOWICAN, Tinubu's leadership exemplifies humility, resilience, and consistent service. "Her Excellency has shown that leadership is not about titles but about devotion to the well-being of others," Enwere added.



Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

## Senator Natasha's Return To National Assembly Turned Ugly

**F**ollowing the expiration of her six-month suspension, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan was met with unexpected resistance upon her return to the National Assembly recently, as security operatives dispersed a peaceful crowd of supporters and constituents gathered to welcome her.

The lawmaker representing Kogi Central arrived at the National Assembly complex accompanied by a large number of supporters, including women and youth from her constituency.

Despite earlier reports indicating the reinstatement of her office and anticipated return to legislative duties, Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan was reportedly denied entry into the complex.

Security agents on ground allegedly used tear gas and other crowd-control methods to disperse the crowd, resulting in injuries to several attendees who were subsequently rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Eyewitnesses described the atmosphere as tense, citing a heavy presence of security personnel.

The peaceful procession, intended to mark her symbolic return, quickly turned chaotic, drawing concern from onlookers, staff members, and fellow lawmakers.

"It was supposed to be a historic return for her, but it turned into a nightmare," said a National Assembly staff member who witnessed the event.

In her official reaction, Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan expressed deep disappointment over the handling of the situation.

"These are steps to prevent innocent Nigerians who came in peace to show support for their elected representative.

They deserved respect and protection, not intimidation. This incident undermines the very democratic values we are sworn to uphold," she stated.

The Senator called for calm among her constituents and urged the leadership of the Senate and relevant authorities to investigate the incident and take responsibilities in full.

## NCoS Stops Drug Smuggling Attempt At Kuje Custodial Centre

**T**he Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command, has thwarted an attempt to smuggle psychoactive substances into the Medium Security Custodial Centre (MSCC), Kuje.

The incident occurred recently, around 12:45 p.m., when a visitor, identified as Njimogu Ikedi, was caught with items suspected to be cannabis sativa and other substances concealed in his shorts.

Public Relations Officer of the Command, DSC Samson Duza, said the items were detected during a routine search on visitors. "The suspect disguised as a visitor to one of the inmates but had drugs hidden in his clothing, worn like a

diaper," Duza explained.

Controller of Corrections, FCT Command, Christopher Peter Jen, ordered Ikedi's immediate arrest and his transfer to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), for further investigation and prosecution.

Jen warned that the Service would not tolerate any attempt to compromise security within custodial centres. He also cautioned visitors with "ulterior motives" to desist, stressing that vigilante officers would always foil such plots. He further appealed to the public to support the Service's efforts in reforming and rehabilitating inmates to enhance public safety.

## Feature

# 2027 Coalitions And Collisions

By Festus Eriye

**T**he undeclared kick-off of the 2027 general election campaign is something of a false start. It's a start nonetheless – one laden with boasts, bluster and outright threats. To be fair, the stuff isn't just coming from one direction: the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and those who would love to oust it, are giving as good as they get.

Last weekend, the party's high command descended on Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, to formally receive Governor Umo Eno, who had finally executed his oft-threatened exit from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Everyone from Vice President Kashim Shettima to the party's entire slate of governors was present.

The state is home turf for Senate President Godswill Akpabio who was once its governor. Naturally, he was in his element celebrating the bloodless coup that further enfeebled the main opposition party. Akwa Ibom, like most states in the South-South zone, was until recently died-in-the-wool PDP territory. So, it was no mean feat that the entire structure of the governing party would dissolve overnight into enemy camp without resistance.

While applauding Eno for making the right political choice, Akpabio suggested governors of Bayelsa and Rivers would soon follow. It wasn't the appeal of a suitor; it was a statement delivered with the certainty of a prophet. Were his prophecy to be fulfilled, not too many would be surprised given that stranger things have been happening lately.

The punch-drunk PDP didn't have much of a response to the loss of another heavyweight from within its ranks. It was probably too preoccupied trying to identify which of many claimants was its rightful National Secretary to worry about the rising number of rats fleeing its listing ship.

With its 10 governors, 36 senators and 118 members of the House of Representatives, it remains, on paper, the preeminent opposition party. But it's a measure of how low its stock has sunk that some of its leading lights like former Vice President Atiku Abubakar and ex-Senate President David Mark are among sponsors of the yet-to-be-registered All Democratic Alliance (ADA).

By their actions and utterances, the two men have written off PDP as a viable vehicle for prosecuting the 2027 election. Atiku has been arguing for months that the only way President Bola Tinubu and APC can be defeated at the next polls is for all opposition platforms to come together. Mark has been less voluble but no less committed to the cause.

Unfortunately for Atiku, his passion for defeating his one-time ally by all means necessary is not shared by PDP governors who have declared they won't touch his coalition with a ten-foot pole. This is a significant disagreement which suggests that those who now control the party are unlikely to make the former VP flag bearer given he's lost faith in the platform. It's also a pointer that he could yet exit to actualise his ambitions elsewhere.

Although it remains very much work in progress, what the coalition, or a likely new party, lacks in terms of membership or office holders, it makes up for with bluster and threats. In the face of every setback dealt the opposition by way of high profile defections to the ruling party, its boosters head for television talk shows to offload incendiary interviews.

Former Kaduna State Governor, Nasir El-Rufai, was at it again this week, regurgitating the same talking points. Apparently, he and his confederates had been conducting opinion polls which claim Tinubu had less than 10% approval in every corner of the country.

For a man of his intellect and sophistication, this faith in his "scientific" polls is touching. Beyond offering comfort to he and his co-conspirators, El-Rufai should treat polls and pollsters with a healthy dose of caution. For one thing, their reputation isn't what it used to be after they misfired badly in the 2016 Hillary Clinton versus Donald Trump presidential contest.

For months last year they predicted a tight race between Kamala Harris and Trump – only for Election Day to reveal a chasm in support between the two candidates. What's more, today's polls may be meaningless in two years when actual voting would be taking place.

Truth is wise men don't rush to conclusions on the strength of dodgy opinion polls – especially in a country as unpredictable as Nigeria. If tough economic conditions were the only determinant of electoral success or failure in these parts, then Tinubu wouldn't be president given the state of the nation between January and February 2023.

Another noisy figure in the nascent opposition platform is one-time Foreign Minister and former Jigawa State Governor, Sule Lamido. What can be gleaned from his regular utterances is his readiness to join any grouping that can remove the incumbent from office.

The focus of these individuals is clear, how to transit from dreaming to reality has become a giant obstacle. For all their hot air, the would-be coalition hasn't done much to inspire confidence about their project within the political class and in the wider polity. They can't even agree on how to proceed.

At the onset, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was touted as their platform of choice. El-Rufai announced his defection there with much fanfare. But their ardour for the arrangement cooled rapidly. The party's National Secretary, Dr. Olu Agunloye, now describes his would-be collaborators as "confused people" who are only interested in taking over. Former presidential adviser turned critic, Hakeem Baba-Ahmed, has been equally unsparing, describing the coalition's promoters as only concerned with being the face of project. Just as many had predicted, a collision of egos and ambitions is already playing out. Baba-Ahmed laments that even before getting out of the starting block, Nigeria's latest set of would-be saviours have blown the opportunity of offering a credible challenge to the administration.

The most important thing they're doing wrong is putting themselves forward," he said on Arise TV. "It's a coalition of a few politicians who hope that they can arrive at some understanding and then open the door and say, 'ok, fellow Nigerians, we've agreed. This one will be this, and this one will be that, and you cannot come in.'"

It's the wrong way about it. None of these people should lead or be seen in a position where they're determining who should be in that coalition. They can work behind the scenes. What they need is a generational shift and a political shift away from who they are, what they've done, what they want to do, to a different set of Nigerians who can give Nigerians hope.

These are not the people who are saying, give us trust. Trust us again to solve the problems that the APC is creating. This is the wrong thing. And it's very difficult to convince politicians that Nigerians can see through you. They don't have faith that you actually represent a future, a different future from this government. You just want to replace President Tinubu."

Put differently, those offering change are as stale as they come, laden with all sorts of unattractive baggage. Virtually all have been active participants in making Nigeria what it is today. That's why their project is having difficulty scaling the credibility hurdle. It's often said you don't get a second chance to make the first impression. What those who claim to be speaking for the coalition have succeeded in doing so far is projecting vengeance and retribution, as well as the promotion of the interests of a section of the country, as their agenda.

Bitterness and outpouring of venom against the incumbent president is no alternative to providing voters an alternative governance vision. All we hear is "we must remove Tinubu." If that's all Atiku, El-Rufai and company have to offer, they are set for a rude collision with reality in the not-too distant future.

## Opinion

# Governor Fubara Returns To Duty, Reaffirms Commitment To Development

By Okechukwu Ubani

**G**overnor Siminalayi Fubara has officially returned to office after being away for several months. His absence followed the President's declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State, which led to the appointment of a sole administrator to manage the affairs of the state.

His return has brought a fresh wave of hope to people across the state. For many residents who had been waiting for leadership, stability, and progress, this marks a new beginning. Governor Fubara is known for his focus on development and good governance. But during the six months he was away, the sole administrator took over. While day-to-day governance continued, many key development projects were paused or delayed. Roads, hospitals, schools, and other public services suffered. This created anxiety among the people, who feared the state was falling behind.

After returning to office, Governor Fubara addressed the people through a live broadcast. He thanked President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory for helping to maintain peace during the transition period.

His message was calm and focused on unity. He called for peace and cooperation, and promised to continue the development projects that were put on hold.

The people of Rivers State have shown deep loyalty to Governor Fubara. Many stood by him during his absence. This trust must now be repaid with visible action and real

results.

The state still faces major challenges. Youth unemployment remains high. Many roads and infrastructure projects are incomplete. Several rural areas still lack access to clean water, electricity, and healthcare. People are expecting real change not just promises.

To move forward, Governor Fubara must focus fully on development. This means creating jobs, investing in education, improving public services, and making sure that no part of the state is left behind.

**To move forward, Governor Fubara must focus fully on development. This means creating jobs, investing in education, improving public services, and making sure that no part of the state is left behind.**

battle.

Now is not the time for another fight with his former political godfather or any political rivals. Such fights will only slow down progress and divide the state even further. Political distractions can drain energy, time, and resources that should be used for development. The people of Rivers State are tired of political wars. What they want now is peace, growth, and a better quality of life. If Governor Fubara engages in political conflict, it could lead to more instability, scare away investors, and make it harder for the state to attract federal support. It could also weaken his image as a leader focused on the people.

By staying away from political drama and focusing on unity, Governor Fubara will earn more respect not just from his supporters, but from the wider public and political stakeholders across Nigeria. True leadership is not about revenge or proving points it's about putting the people first, even when it's hard. Governor Fubara now has a rare opportunity to build a lasting legacy. He can be remembered as the governor who rose above personal battles and chose development over division. The people of Rivers State are watching. They are hopeful, but they are also looking for proof that their loyalty was not wasted.

If Governor Fubara focuses on peace, progress, and delivery, he has the opportunity to lead Rivers State into one of its most successful periods in history. Now is the time to heal, not fight. Now is the time to build, not break. Now is the time to lead, not quarrel.



## Opinion

# Go on, Fubara, Become a Hero

By Simon Kolawole

**W**e made so much noise and raised plenty of eyebrows, but Sir Siminalayi Fubara was successfully sent packing from office for six months in a controversial display of federal might and presidential powers by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. On Wednesday, Fubara was officially restored to office. In summary, he lost the battle for supremacy with his predecessor and benefactor, Chief Nyesom Wike, who is a minister in Tinubu's cabinet. When the war broke out, I was never in doubt as to who the president would support. Tinubu is not just a godfather who does not take kindly to rebellion, we also know Wike played a major spoiler role to help Tinubu win the 2023 presidential election.

Therefore, my money was on Wike winning the derby with Fubara. And win he did. That does not mean I was not surprised, or even disappointed, that Tinubu imposed emergency rule and sent Fubara on suspension. In another life, Tinubu would have argued vigorously that the constitution does not empower anyone else but the House of Assembly to sanction a governor. Tinubu did oppose the abuse of power to which President Olusegun Obasanjo subjected us to for eight years. Obasanjo suspended governors and appointed retired military officers as administrators. Tinubu did exactly the same thing, naming Vice Admiral Ibok Ibas, a former chief of naval staff, as administrator.

One of the most telling things that happened in Rivers state under the emergency was the recent council elections. How can you hold elections during a state of emergency? That must be a global first. The idea behind a state of emergency is that there is chaos and disorder during which things cannot run their normal course, so you have to suspend certain aspects of the constitution to allow for extraordinary measures to be applied. That is certainly not the time to hold council elections. If the governor and legislators are not functioning — as important as they are in the hierarchy — what is the urgency to install council chairpersons and councillors? Only a few people are fooled by this.

All said and done, Fubara is now back in office. As Wike boasted during an interview with Channels TV, "If we don't want this state of emergency to be lifted, we would have done one or two things to ensure that it continues." He has demonstrated how powerful he is in this government, and I don't think anybody should fool with him. If Tinubu decides to extend the emergency rule for another six months, all we will do is make more noise and raise more eyebrows but Wike will have his way. Let's not kid ourselves. The National Assembly will approve it via WhatsApp or do voice vote again. Heavens will not fall. Obasanjo and Tinubu have really done us a "strong thing" in this country.

We can only hope that peace will now return to Rivers in its true meaning. Wike has openly promised to give the governor his space. He said: "I cannot go and impose anything on the governor. Why would I? Assuming I go to the governor and say, 'I want this,' will the state collapse? I will not. I have no candidate (for commissioner), and I will not [have]," Wike said. As a form of affirmation on their new relationship, he said emphatically: "I have already said that we've been speaking. I will not engage with a man I have not forgiven. Everything is over. We must move forward." It must be noted, however, that most members of the House of Assembly are still loyal to Wike, so he still has the rope.

On his part, Fubara has promised to pursue peace. In his broadcast, he said: "In the course of the six-month period, Mr. President graciously brokered the peace process with all the parties successfully. Our Leader, His Excellency, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, CON, all members of the Rivers State House of Assembly and I, as your Governor, have all accepted to bury the



Governor Siminalayi Fubara.

hatchet and embrace peace and reconciliation in the best interest of our dear Rivers State." In what should be re-assuring, Fubara concluded: "We believe the political crisis is now behind us and that peace and stability have once again returned to Rivers State, though not without the hard lessons learnt from the emergency rule."

For peace to reign in the political arena of Rivers state, all the key actors must keep to their words. Wike, in his role as the "Our Leader" (as the governor described him), should stand by his public statements that he would let the governor be. He has every reason to protect his political structure if the governor was indeed chipping away at it — but there is a thin line between safeguarding your territory and diminishing or humiliating a governor, even if you are the one that installed him. Every human being wants some respect. Indeed, respect begets respect. When someone feels unduly disrespected, it is just a matter of time before he or she begins to show resistance. That is a fact.

Fubara should also genuinely embrace peace. He said the right things and made the right gestures in his broadcast. I am hoping this came from the bottom of his heart. He must acknowledge that the story of his life can never be written without a huge space devoted to the role Wike played. He became governor using Wike's umbrella, although Wike just nearly swept him away. When he anointed Fubara, many of those who opposed it later showed up to instigate the governor against his Wike. Nigerian politics is full of crisis entrepreneurs known in Yoruba as "arije ninu modaru". Fubara must be careful with those posing as allies simply because he was fighting Wike. They are dangerous.

Now that he is back in the saddle, he can decide what he wants to use power for: to serve the people of Rivers state with "heart and might" or engage his godfather in another game of wits. He can choose to become a hero to his people. He can choose to serve his people faithfully by touching their lives for the remainder of his tenure. He can focus on making sure every village has electricity, every primary health care centre has personnel and drugs, every school has teachers and desks, and every community has water to drink. He can choose to make every senatorial district and every local government much better than they are. These are easy wins. And his people will love him to death.

Alternatively, he can choose to engage his godfather in another round of the battle for supremacy. I don't think he can win that fight. He has just been worsted. The president has shown clearly to all of us where he pitches his tent. He has the security agencies at his beck and call and will not fail to deploy them as he deems appropriate. One legacy Obasanjo left behind in 2007 is that if you have presidential power in a third world country, you must

**For peace to reign in the political arena of Rivers State, all the key actors must keep to their words. Wike, in his role as the "Our Leader"**

know how to use, misuse and abuse it. The fact that Presidents Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari were somewhat restrained in their use of presidential powers does not mean every other president will follow suit.

Finally, I really would want this issue of emergency rule conclusively sorted out. Can an elected governor be suspended from office by the president? The 1999 Constitution clearly spells out how a governor can be removed: it is only by the House of Assembly after an impeachment process. There is no constitutional provision whatsoever that empowers the president to remove a governor under any circumstance. My understanding is that what a law does not provide for, you cannot import into it. I would instinctively conclude, therefore, that a governor cannot be removed by the president. In a federation, the president is not superior to a governor except in matters listed on the exclusive list.

But here is the catch. Tinubu did not remove Fubara — he only suspended him. Suspension is not the same thing as removal. The one is temporary, the other permanent. And section 305(d) of the constitution says he can take "extraordinary measures" to avert "a clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the Federation or any part". If the president determines that the governor is a danger to the community, he can claim that suspending him is an extraordinary measure that needs to be taken. It is a loophole that a clever lawyer can explore to justify the suspension. When you create a loophole like this, you can't blame people for exploiting it.

The Supreme Court has always failed to make a pronouncement on this emergency rule controversy, specifically on the issue of sanctioning a governor with suspension. Since Obasanjo started the game with Plateau state in 2004, the Supreme Court has tactically avoided making a definitive pronouncement on the legality of suspending a governor. It chose the technical ground in the Plateau issue,

ruling that the plaintiff, Governor Joshua Dariye, did not have the locus as he was no longer in office. The unwritten explanation is that in matters of national security, the apex court does not want to interfere so as not to impede the president's ability to maintain peace, law and order.

I would suggest that an amendment be made to the laws to remove any doubts about the powers of the president in emergency rule. We should not leave such an important matter hanging. With sincerity of purpose, we can address our political and constitutional challenges in a decent way. Our democracy is evolving and our constitution is being fine-tuned regularly to address emerging issues. We should not waste the Rivers crisis. As Fubara said, it has been a teachable moment for everyone. I welcome Fubara back to office with these words: go on, create a legacy of good governance and let your people remember you as one of the greatest governors ever. Against such, there is no law.

I commiserate with those who lost their loved ones in the fire tragedy at the Afriland Towers, Lagos, on Tuesday. It is so devastating! However, without first investigating and establishing the cause of the incident, the Federal Fire Service has announced plans to conduct a "nationwide fire safety compliance audit". Sadly, we make policies on impulse in Nigeria. We usually start from the solution before researching the problem. Otherwise, we should first investigate what went wrong at Afriland Towers and then conduct an audit based on the findings in order to address the challenges robustly. How can policies be effective when they are based on conjectures and assumptions? Commonsense.

For those who believe the removal of history from school curriculum is the root of our problems, they now have an opportunity to prove it. The federal government has restored the subject, 16 years after it was removed. To be clear, I am fully for history to be taught — although I learnt the history of Nigeria by research as I did not take the subject in secondary school. I am happy history is back: I am tired of reading on social media that "it is because history is no longer taught in schools" that someone has just spewed some nonsense. I want to monitor how this will impact discourse in the years ahead. My hunch is that teaching history does not give sense to the senseless. Observing...

Nigerian celebrity chef, Ms Hilda Baci (pronounced as "Bassey"), has entered the Guinness World Records (GWR) again, this time for preparing jollof rice over a nine-hour period, cooking 8,780 kilograms of our favourite dish. While this generated a lot of excitement among Nigerians, some eternal cynics insisted that we should be celebrating only nuclear feats and Nobel prizes. Pouring water on the jollof feat is in bad taste. God that gives people talents in different spheres of life knows what he is doing. No gift should be despised. Our footballers and artists are doing us proud all over the world. Nigerians have a right to be excited in this season of gloom and doom. Distasteful!

We see plenty nonsense in Nigeria every day, including those appointed as special assistants also appointing special assistants. Nasir Ja'oji, the senior special assistant (SSA) to the president on citizenship and leadership, has taken it to another level. There is the little matter that he has named three media aides. Just imagine an SA having five media aides. How many would he have if he were a minister or governor? For you to know the joke that we have turned governance to in Nigeria, Ja'oji has also appointed two directors-general — a title used by heads of some parastatals. What next? All things equal, he will soon appoint permanent secretaries and commanders-in-chief. Hmnn?

*Culled from ThisDay Newspaper.*



## Religion

# The Benefits Of Divine Direction

By Kene Chikaodi

**O**ne of the greatest advantages of walking with God is the assurance of direction. God never leads His children into confusion. When He guides, He guides with purpose—toward peace, progress, and fulfillment.

The Bible reminds us in 2 Timothy 3:16 that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... for instruction in righteousness." In other words, God's Word is a map for your life. His instructions are not meant to restrict you—they are designed to lead you into victory and profit.

**Why Divine Direction Matters**

When you allow God to lead you, you're not guessing through life. You are being divinely positioned for the best possible outcomes. His leading takes you away from destruction and places you into flourishing.

Sometimes, His instructions may seem difficult or uncomfortable, but they are always for your protection. What you call delay might be God's way of saving you from disaster. What you call "denial" may be divine redirection.

God's corrections are not punishments—they are proofs of His love.

As believers, we must learn to welcome His instructions, even when they challenge us. His principles are not suggestions—they are life-

saving truths.

**It's Not Enough to Hear—You Must Follow**

It's one thing to hear God's voice, but it's another to actually obey it.

Many Christians pray for divine direction but struggle with obedience. They want to hear what God is saying but don't want to follow through when it's not convenient. But the power is not just in hearing—it's in obeying.

When you walk in obedience, you activate divine backing and supernatural help. On the other hand, when you ignore the voice of God, you block your progress and delay your breakthrough.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." — Romans 8:14

"If you fully obey the Lord... all these blessings will come on you." — Deuteronomy 28:1

Divine direction is like a compass. It won't force you to take the right path, but it will clearly show you where to go. You still have to make the choice to follow.

**Don't Try to Change God's Word**

God's Word is not open to debate or editing. It is unchanging, eternal, and final.

The Bible says, "His Word is yea and amen." (2 Corinthians 1:20)

Trying to twist Scripture to suit your preferences doesn't make you mature—it reveals spiritual pride.

You don't grow by challenging God's truth—you

grow by submitting to it.

No matter your title, experience, or age in the faith, the Word of God remains above you. True maturity is marked by humility, obedience, and full surrender to the will of God.

**The Benefits of Divine Direction**

When you walk in alignment with God's will, several life-transforming benefits follow:

### 1. Supernatural Authority

Luke 10:17, Isaiah 45:2

When God sends you, He equips you. You don't walk in your own strength—you walk in His authority. Divine direction empowers you to take dominion wherever you are sent. You become a carrier of influence and power.

### 2. Access to Divine Blessings

Deuteronomy 28:1

When you're where God wants you to be, blessings naturally follow. You don't have to chase after them. Goodness, mercy, and divine provision will begin to chase after you, because you're in the center of God's will.

### 3. Strength for Your Assignment

Judges 6:14, Deuteronomy 34:7

Whatever God calls you to do, He also gives you the strength and capacity to fulfill it. Divine direction doesn't just show you

where to go—it equips you to succeed there.

### Breaking Invisible Barriers

Invisible barriers are real. They are spiritual forces that try to delay, distract, or destroy the destiny of a believer. But through Christ, you have the authority to break every barrier.

"Shake off your dust... rise up... free yourself!" — Isaiah 52:1-2

These barriers may not be seen with the physical eyes, but they manifest in stagnation, constant failure, delay, or cycles of hardship. However, through the power of God, every invisible wall can be pulled down.

### Avoid Spiritual Emptiness

One of the greatest dangers for a believer is spiritual emptiness. A dry, prayerless life becomes a breeding ground for attacks and confusion.

Don't let your spiritual tank run dry. Stay filled with the Word of God. Spend time in prayer. Feed your spirit daily so that you can discern and destroy barriers before they rise.

### How to Crush Invisible Barriers

#### 1. Be Truly Born Again

Ephesians 1:20-21; 2:6

Salvation is your foundation. You must first be spiritually positioned in Christ before you can exercise dominion.

### 2. Walk by Faith

1 John 5:4, 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith is your shield. Speak the Word boldly and believe God's promises, no matter how things look.

### 3. Stay in Love With God

1 John 4:16

Loving God opens doors that no man can shut. Love draws His presence and favor into your life.

### 4. Honor God-Sent Prophets

Luke 4:26-27

Prophets are divine messengers. When you believe them, you position yourself to prosper and be guided correctly.

### 5. Take Personal Responsibility

Matthew 12:43-45

Keep your life spiritually clean. Don't open doors to darkness through compromise or disobedience.

**What's Inside the Holy Anointing Oil?**

The anointing oil is not just a symbol—it is a spiritual tool, empowered by God when applied in faith.

**Here's What the Oil Represents:**

#### 1. Breakthrough Power

Acts 4:13-14

God opens doors that no man can shut when the anointing is released.

#### 2. Yoke-Destroying Power

Isaiah 10:27

Chains, addictions, and oppressions are broken by the anointing.

#### 3. Exemption Power

Psalms 105:13-15

The oil marks you as untouchable—no evil can

prevail over you.

### 4. Healing Power

Mark 6:13

The anointing carries healing virtue—spirit, soul, and body.

### 5. Miracle-Working Power

Matthew 10:1

Miracles are activated when the oil is used with faith.

**How to Use the Anointing Oil**

Apply it on your forehead for direction, protection, and spiritual alertness.

Rub it on any part of your body that is afflicted or in pain.

Take a small shot by faith when led, especially during special ministrations or deliverance.

Always remember: The power is not in the oil itself—but in your faith in God. Use it with understanding, not superstition.

### Final Word

God is still speaking today—and He wants to speak to you.

He desires to guide you through every decision, season, and situation in your life.

But it's not enough to want His direction—you must follow it fully.

Obedience is the key that unlocks divine help, supernatural strength, and generational blessings.

So stay rooted in the Word. Be sensitive to His voice. Honor His guidance. And most of all, follow where He leads.

When you follow God's leading, you can never end in loss.

God bless you richly and grant you grace to walk daily in divine direction!

**God's Corrections are not punishments — they are proofs of His love.**

## Family Matters

By Nueoma Stephanie

**B**eing in a relationship or marriage doesn't have to feel like a struggle. Many of the fights, stress, and confusion couples face can be avoided—if only more men would take time to understand the women they love.

Some men think women are naturally difficult to live with. But that's not true. Most of the problems come from lack of knowledge, emotional immaturity, and expecting too much. When a man doesn't understand his partner, the woman he once loved can start to feel like a stranger—or worse, an enemy. But she's not a witch, or your problem. She's human—emotional, complex, and beautifully made.

Here are some common things women do that may confuse you. But once you understand them, they'll make perfect sense.

### 1. She Gets Moody Before Her Period

Many women go through PMS (premenstrual syndrome). This causes emotional changes like irritation, sadness, or even anger. She might yell, cry, or seem off.

You are not the reason—her hormones are.

Don't fight with her. Don't call her names. Just be gentle. Hold her. Comfort her. A mature man stays calm and supportive, especially during this time.

Physical touch is for married couples only.

### 2. Sometimes She Feels Sexually Attracted to No Clear Reason

Her body and hormones can make her feel aroused at certain times in the month. If you're dating, and she suddenly becomes touchy or affectionate—step back. Help both of you stay

strong.

If you're married, this is the moment to be there for her. Some women won't say, "I want sex," but they'll show it with body language—hugs, kisses, or touching you more. Understand the signal. Respond with love. She needs that closeness.

### 3. She Gets Frustrated When You Keep Hurting Her

If you keep doing the same wrong things after promising to stop, she'll get angry. Whether it's lying, not listening, or not keeping your word—her frustration means:

"I love you, but please change."

### 4. Her Mood Changes a Lot

She can be happy in the morning, sad in the afternoon, and loving at night. It doesn't mean something is wrong. Women are more emotional than men—it's normal. Be patient. Don't take it personally. It will pass.

### 5. She's Affected by What You Say

Words matter—a lot. That's why sweet-talking women is powerful. If you're not married, be careful not to say things that turn her on. Keep your words respectful.

But in marriage? Please, be romantic. Loving words make her feel special—and even excited. Sometimes just a few kind sentences from my husband completely changes my mood.

### 6. She Wants to Be Cared For

Even if your woman is rich and independent, she still wants to be treated with love and care. That doesn't mean she's greedy. It's just the way women are built—they love to receive love, protection, and attention.

### 7. She Loves When You Help With Housework

Even if she's traditional, she will respect and love you more when you help out—whether it's with dishes, the kids, or laundry. It shows you care. To a woman, love means partnership.

### 8. She Says, "I Have No Shoes" Even With 10 Pairs in the Closet

When she says this, she doesn't mean she has zero shoes. She means she doesn't have the right pair for the outfit she wants to wear.

Men can wear one pair of shoes anywhere. Women think differently. It's not waste—it's style and self-expression.

### 9. She Takes Time to Dress Up

If you're going out together, plan ahead. While a man might dress in 10 minutes, a woman might need 30-40 minutes to do her makeup, fix her hair, and pick matching accessories.

If you're leaving at 10 a.m., tell her it's 9 a.m. That way, you both get out on time—without stress or shouting.

### 10. She's Insecure About Her Body—Be Kind

Never make fun of her looks. What you

**Even if your woman is rich and independent, she still wants to be treated with love and care...**

tease, someone else will admire. If you want her to feel confident and beautiful, compliment her often.

I once hated my teeth until my husband told me he loved my smile. Now, I smile proudly.

### 11. She Hates Lies

Lying, cheating, or keeping secrets will break her trust—and that can kill the love in a relationship.

Be honest. Be real. Even if the truth is hard.

### 12. She Has Strong Instincts—Listen to Them

Women often sense when something isn't right. She may not have all the facts, but she can feel it. Maybe it's a risky business move or a bad friendship—don't ignore her warnings.

Many men have avoided danger or loss by listening to their wives' advice. Take it seriously, and pray before making big decisions.

**Final Thoughts: Learn to Love Her the Right Way**

You don't have to be rich or perfect to make a woman happy. You just need to be willing to learn and grow. Ask questions. Pay attention. Read helpful books.

The Bible says, "Live with your wife in understanding." That means you need to treat her with care, wisdom, and patience.

Every woman is different, but one thing is the same:

She wants to be seen, heard, loved, and understood.

When you take the time to know her, love her, and grow with her, you'll discover that she's not difficult at all—she's simply waiting for you to understand her better.

Thanks for reading.

## Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti (right) shares a cheerful moment with former Super Eagles player and current manager of Enyimba International Football Club, following Enyimba's heartwarming victory over Bendel Insurance at the Aba International Stadium.



Governor Alex Otti (centre), former Super Eagles captain Kenneth Omeruo, OON, MON (left), and a member of his team (right) share a cheerful moment during a working visit to discuss collaboration with the Abia State Government on Omeruo's talent hunt initiative.



Governor Alex Otti (right) in a warm handshake with Captain Chris Anusiem, who led a delegation that included the new South East Zonal Director of the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, during a recent familiarisation visit to the Governor's Office.



His Excellency Atiku Abubakar is seen seated and warmly exchanging greetings with Mr. Peter Obi at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre in Abuja. The interaction took place during the Night of Tributes and Service of Songs held in honour of the late Chief Audu Ogbah, a respected statesman and former Minister of Agriculture.



Governor Alex Otti (right) and Brother Emma Okoria (left), General Overseer of Living Word Ministry International and Chancellor of Rhema University, pictured with his beloved wife as he prepares to cut his 50th wedding anniversary cake with the Governor at the ministry headquarters in Aba.



Former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar left received Nafisa Abdullahi the winner of the 2025 TeenEagle Global Competition held in the United Kingdom at his residence in Abuja.



Governor Alex Otti shares a warm handshake with Sister Chinyere Emma Okorie, wife of Brother Emma Okorie, General Overseer of Living Word Ministry International and Chancellor of Rhema University, during their 50th wedding anniversary celebration at the ministry headquarters in Aba.



President Bola Tinubu (right) and Governor Sim Fubara (left) share a warm handshake during the governor's courtesy visit to the Presidential Villa, days after his reinstatement.

Photos by: Chukwu Chidiebere and  
James Nzubechi Sunday





## Abia State Government Office of the Governor Public-Private Partnership & Investment Promotions Office **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

Abia Public-Private Partnership and Investment Promotions Office (PPP&IPOffice) invites qualified professional firms, and organizations to submit proposals towards providing consulting services as the Office collaborates with the private sector to execute projects aimed at promoting economic growth, and sustainable development in the State.

We seek partners in: Estate Valuation & Surveying, Architectural Designs, Project Management, Strategy & Management Consulting, Marketing/Advertising, Recruitment, Training & Capacity Building, Legal Services, Civil, Electrical & Structural Engineering, and Accounting/Auditing Services.

### Eligibility

- Applicants must be registered businesses with:  
Valid professional Licenses or Certifications (e.g., NIESV, PMI, APCON, COREN, etc.)
- Minimum of 10 years' experience and track record of performance
- Compliance with Applicable Regulations and Corporate Governance Practice

### Application Requirements

- Interested companies are invited to submit the following documents:  
Company Profile (must include – profile of key Personnel, Office Address,

- list of Key Projects executed, Official phone lines and email address)
- CAC Registration Documents or equivalent
- Audited Accounts for the past three (3) years
- Recent Tax Clearance Certificate
- Two Recommendation Letters or Client References

### Submission

Hard copy applications should be submitted to the physical address and soft copies to the email address:

### Address to:

The Director-General/CEO, PPP&IPOffice  
3rd Floor, Wing B, New JAAC Building, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia, Abia State

Email: info.pppipo@abiastate.gov.ng

Phone No: 0706 973 3081,

0808 660 8448 (WhatsApp Only)

**Deadline:** September 23rd - October 6th, 2025. Both hard and soft copies required. Late applications will not be considered.

### Signed By:

Chinedum Chijioke  
Director-General/CEO

## Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti addressing worshippers with words of congratulations, while Brother Emma Okoria, General Overseer of Living Word Ministry International and Chancellor of Rhema University, sits beside his beloved wife during their 50th wedding anniversary celebration at the ministry headquarters in Aba.



Governor Alex Otti (6th from right) and Captain Chris Anusiem (7th from left) in a group photograph with members of the delegation during a recent familiarisation visit by the new South East Zonal Director of the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons to the Governor's Office.



Governor Alex Otti (4th from right), former Super Eagles captain Kenneth Omeruo, OON, MON (2nd from left), and other dignitaries during Omeruo's courtesy call and working visit to the Governor to discuss collaboration with the Abia State Government on his talent hunt initiative.



Governor Alex was seated as Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu addressed the INNOV Power Solutions team, led by its President, Engr. Mohammed Konate, during their courtesy visit to the Governor's Office.



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## News

### Abia SSG Urges Church To Pray For Leaders

By Ndubueze Ngozi

The Secretary to the Abia State Government, Professor Kenneth Kalu, has asked the Church to keep praying for leaders at all levels. He said they need God's grace and wisdom to lead the state and the country well.

Professor Kalu made this request at the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Aba Synod, during the Investiture and Inauguration of Chief Jerry Kalu as the Chairman of the Aba Synod Brigade Patrons Forum.

He also talked about the good work the current government, led by Governor Alex Otti, OFR, is doing. One major project he mentioned is the Abia Leadership Academy, which has already trained 1,000 young people in leadership, ethics, and innovation. He said the

government wants to build a better Abia based on strong values, clear goals, and service to others.

The SSG congratulated Chief Kalu (Osimiri), on his new role and said it is a special responsibility to serve both God and the people.

Earlier in the service, the Moderator of the Aba Synod, Rev. Ngozi Iro, spoke about the importance of teaching children Godly values. She said children are the future leaders of the church and society.

In his speech, Chief Kalu thanked God for the opportunity to serve. He promised to work hard and stay committed to helping the youth grow spiritually and morally.

Many important guests, church leaders, and brigade members from across the synod attended the event.

### Abaribe Organizes Business Programme For Over 200 People In Abia South

From Chinedu Kelechi, Aba

Over 200 people from Abia South Senatorial District have taken part in a four-day business training programme organized by Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe.

The workshop was held at Nobik International Event Centre in Aba and was organized by the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre (CLTC), in partnership with ARIF Global Resources Limited. It was part of Senator Abaribe's 2024 constituency projects aimed at supporting small businesses.

During the training, a data analyst and business expert from ARIF Global, Dr. Emmanuel Ochalifu, spoke on sales and marketing. He explained that sales mean exchanging goods or services for money, while marketing is about finding and meeting customer needs in a profitable way. He said both work together and that referrals from happy customers help grow businesses.

Head of Procurement at CLTC, Mr. Monday Kurah, spoke on entrepreneurship risks and resilience. He encouraged participants to be creative, take smart risks, and look for business opportunities that can lead to growth.

A finance expert from ARIF Global, Mr. Abiodun Oyeabanjo, taught the session on banking and finance. He explained how banks help

with funding, managing cash, and investing. He also talked about the five key things banks look at before giving loans: character, capacity, capital, collateral, and conditions.

On the topic of Tax Compliance, Managing Director of ARIF Global, Mrs. Toyin S. Olahinro, advised business owners to pay their taxes and keep good records. She explained different types of taxes such as Value Added Tax (VAT), Company Income Tax (CIT), Personal Income Tax (PIT), and Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE).

Liaison Officer for Abia South, Mr. Emeka Waribo, said the training was specially designed for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). He urged participants to use what they learned to grow their businesses and increase profits.

The training covered eight key areas, including: Business feasibility studies, Business needs assessment, Business registration and compliance, Sales and marketing, Record keeping, Banking and finance, Tax compliance, Business planning.

Those present at the event included Mrs. Olahinro, Dr. Ochalifu, Mr. Oyeabanjo, and Mr. Kurah along with his team from the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre.

The programme ended with the presentation of certificates and group photographs.



A group of women during a street march in Abuja, calling on the National Assembly to pass the proposed Special Seats Bill.

### Women Demand Passage Of Special Bill to Boost Female Political Development

By Adindu Stephanie

Hundreds of women from across Nigeria marched through the streets of Abuja recently, calling on the National Assembly to pass the proposed Special Seats Bill, which seeks to create reserved legislative seats for women in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

The bill, which requires a constitutional amendment, proposes the addition of one women-only seat per chamber in each of Nigeria's

36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Supporters said the legislation would mark a critical step towards addressing Nigeria's longstanding gender imbalance in political representation.

The protest, described by organizers as one of the largest in recent years for women's political rights, featured more than 1,000 participants, according to activist Dorothy Njemanze, who helped coordinate the march.

Demonstrators arrived in

buses, vans, and trucks—some blasting Afrobeats music—as they moved through major routes in the capital before submitting a petition with thousands of signatures to the House Committee on Constitutional Review.

"We want the legislature to work for women. This bill is not about handouts—it's about access, fairness, and correcting deep-rooted systemic inequality," Njemanze said.

Currently, women hold only four of 109 Senate seats

and 16 of 360 House seats, according to figures from the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)—making Nigeria one of the lowest-ranked countries globally in terms of female legislative representation.

Proponents argue that special seats would provide a necessary entry point for women who face structural barriers, including limited access to campaign financing, entrenched gender norms, and male-dominated political networks. They also point to successful quota models in countries such as Rwanda, Senegal, and Tanzania, where gender-inclusive policies have led to significantly higher female representation in government.

Minister of Women's Affairs, Hajiya Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, has expressed support for the bill, aligning with President Bola Tinubu's broader pledge to increase gender equity. However, PLAC cautions that the road ahead is steep: constitutional amendments require approval by two-thirds of both chambers of the National Assembly and ratification by at least 24 of the 36 state assemblies. Despite the challenges, demonstrators remained optimistic.

"I want that seat—because tomorrow, I may be the one contesting for it," said Onu Ihunania, a 50-year-old civil servant from Enugu State, echoing the hope many women carried into the day's march.

As momentum builds, advocates said the real test will come in the political will of lawmakers to translate public outcry into legislative action.

### Osisioma Ngwa Mayor Advises Agalaba Landlords To Pay Taxes

From Nwokoma Blessing, Aba

The Mayor of Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area, Hon. Chidi Chris Agu, has called on landlords in Agalaba Street, Aba, to pay their government-approved taxes and levies, to help the government provide essential services.

He made this appeal during a meeting held at the Executive Council Chambers of the local government headquarters. The meeting was part of a courtesy visit by the Agalaba Landlords Association.

Mayor Agu encouraged landlords in Agalaba and across Osisioma Ngwa, to co-operate with the government's approved revenue consultants and tax collectors to ensure smooth and timely

payment of levies.

He praised the landlords for their peaceful conduct and reminded them of the progress Governor Alex Otti has made, like roads, education, agriculture, and more. He also explained that both state and local government revenues are managed through a single account with Access Bank PLC.

The Mayor urged all eligible residents, especially those aged 18 and above, to register and collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), while the INEC registration window is still open. He emphasised that voting is the most powerful tool citizens have while choosing.

Highlighting some of his achievements in one year in office, Mayor Agu listed. Construction of 4 mini community markets, each with boreholes, toilets, and

solar lights and purchase of a new caterpillar for grading rural roads across the LGA.

He also promised to address the ongoing issues between the landlords and revenue agents.

Earlier, Chairman of the Agalaba Landlords Association, Comrade Godwin Ukwu, said the visit was to show support for the mayor's administration and to raise key concerns. These included high property, levies and poor road conditions in the area.

He appealed for quick government's intervention.

In a vote of thanks, Chief Okey Onuorah appreciated the Mayor for the warm welcome and promised to share the message with other members of the association.

## Focus

# Alex Otti And The Voices Of Babylon

By Chidi Amuta

**T**he current class of state governors, Alex Otti of Abia stands conspicuous over most of his contemporaries. He is showcasing good governance and enlightened politics. This remarkable progress has got him into "good trouble". He has become a favourite of both good media and toxic voices from our political Babylon. Those who appreciate the progress in Abia are praising the governors. The most remarkable thing about this category is that they are mostly common people for whom Mr. Otti has brought government to mean something positive to them. For this group, democracy and good governance mean the same thing: meeting the people halfway on the road to progress.

On the contrary, Otti is getting undue negative attention from partisan media and commentators from the other side of the partisan divide. It does not matter how many roads he builds, how many new schools he rehabilitates, how many pensioners he pays arrears or how promptly he now pays salaries. Those politically opposed to his political position and very incumbency cannot see them. These voices of incurable negativity are dripping from the bile tanks of Abia's political Babylon, a place of incurable "bad belle".

The well meaning social and traditional media have their job mostly done by Mr. Otti's sterling performance. Even among the ordinary people in the villages and the urban centres of Aba and Umuahia, the publicity is self-defining. Even then, the Otti phenomenon is beginning to suffer a typically Nigerian handicap in terms of discourse and public opinion. The political opposition is digging up and padding up a mixture of falsehood and mangled narratives to score points preparatory to the 2027 campaigns. That of course is in the nature of political exchanges. More dangerously, the favourite Nigerian game of unbridled sycophancy has encroached into the Otti narrative. Professional partisan sycophants and hirelings have been joined by new recruits in the form of "town criers" in the social media. While most are showcasing Governor Otti's more obvious infrastructure achievements and magnifying them for obvious partisan reasons, the voices of Babylon are singing old tunes of finding faults in every place. Between pro government sycophants and their equally feverish opponents, the road ahead is littered with media landmines.

But so far, Mr. Otti is one clear step ahead of his traducers and opponents. He has raised the stakes of his incumbency beyond the Government House in Umuahia. He has raised the meaning of government above blaring of sirens to disturb the peace of the poor and innocent. He has also gone beyond the usual landscape decoration of roads, bridges, and empty buildings. The dividend of democracy is not a decorated landscape. It is the transfer of political power back to the people to whom it rightfully belongs. For the first time since its creation, Otti has bridged the tragic divide between government and the people. He has given back government to the Abia people by making it accessible and meaningful to their daily lives. He explains to them the policies of government. He accounts periodically to them for his actions and the expenditure of government money. Those who used to vote and go home to be forgotten for another four years are now recalled from their villages and their accrued arrears of salaries and pensions paid as and when due. The people now have a stake and a say in how they are governed.

The basic principle for the existence of the state is the social contract which binds government the people. A state that conducts its affairs indifferent to the desires and aspirations of the people is not a democratic state. It is at best a feudal fiefdom or autocracy. Abia, along with most Nigerian states came into existence as pseudo feudal enclaves created by military fiat with a democratic nomenclature but in essence autocratic.

Unfortunately, it took 24 years and three consecutive two-term governorships for Abia to struggle free from this feudal origin and

authoritarian orientation. In essence, the real history of a democratic Abia State began in May 2023. Only since then was the Abia Leviathan born and the social contract of an enlightened state inaugurated. It is perhaps since then that we can accept valid criticisms of government action in an atmosphere of free expression.

The basic outlines of feudal rule in Abia can be briefly outlined to understand what happened over the past 24 years.

The long-standing bad reputation of Abia was not just because the roads were bad, Aba was rotten and neglected and government was populated by too many small and big thieves. It was rather in the more imperceptible fact that the government in Umuahia and the majority of Abia people travelled separate ways for a whole 24 years.

What obtained in Abia for the first 24 years was a feudal Babylonian captivity of the state and its people and resources.

Government was indifferent to the plight of the people. Those in authority collected votes at election time and turned the other way for years on end. The light of the people meant nothing to the successive governments. Politicians were in government for and

imperial rule to a feudal oligarchy, from one depressing season of exploitation to a more humiliating fanfare of deception in the name of governance.

All manner of miscreants have come and gone, claiming electoral mandates that remain unverified. Extremely poor people have been frightened off the bad roads by authorized hooligans blaring sirens with accompanying goons with horsewhips and assault rifles.

We need to put in context what the state witnessed for a whole two and half decades prior to 2023. In the period between 1999 and 2023, Abia state was an unusual political experience among the states of the federation. While it was guided and governed by the Nigerian constitution, Abia operated more like a feudal enclave and unregulated extractive colony with peculiar characteristics.

Its most enlightened and illustrious citizens were consciously excluded from its governance and mostly lived and earned their living outside the state. The state economy was so privatized that the commanding heights were controlled by the imperial governor, his family and cult of friends.

Over the 24 year period under reference, the quantum of resources that accrued to the state

and emoluments could not be guaranteed.

The governor was more of an emperor ruling above criticism and reproach. In 24 years, no Abia governor was taken to court by a citizen on account of rights infringement or acts of misgovernance. Like feudal emperors, our successive governors were more of imperial feudal overlords.

The machinery of state was 'privatized' as the separation of powers was observed mostly in default. The legislature ran the errands of the executive governor and seemed to have a duty to pass legislations 'for' the governor routinely. The legislations that rolled out of the State House of Assembly were more of feudal decrees and imperial edicts than debated laws of a democratic assembly.

The judiciary had no independent voice as judges owed their appointments, promotions and general welfare to the benevolence of the imperial governor. Officials of the state judiciary were selected and hired on the basis of loyalty to the governor and the party cabal in power.

Quite routinely, the imperial governor set up and empowered an assortment of task forces and mobile courts to collect sundry revenues and levies in the name of the state but account to no institution of public accountability. Public accountability was mistaken for creative accountancy.

From available records, between 1999 and 2007, the Governor's Office issued and signed off on newspaper full page advertisements of the state's financial statement compiled and "audited" by the same Governor's Office. In other words, the governor authorized expenditure, spent the money, 'accounted' for it, audited the expenses and informed the public accordingly that the audit had been certified!

It failed as an organized criminal cartel. It failed its people, failed itself as an organized syndicate of enlightened thieves ("there is honour even among thieves", it failed the nation and failed the concept of democratic sovereignty.

In terms of tenure and power the thieves of Abia had no honour. Some of them toyed with self-succession, that is succession from within the family of the incumbent. One governor so empowered his mother that a new terminology was coined for the system of government that gave the mother of the governor virtual executive authority over some government decisions. It was called - "Mamacracy". Another governor attempted to be succeeded by his son whom he had manipulated into the position of Assembly Speaker. It was attempted hereditary monarchy.

Therefore, the question that Abia needed to answer with the outcome of the 2023 governorship election was simple: would the state correct course and return to the path of responsible democratic governance or continue as a feudal enclave under the captivity of a political oligarchy and Babylonian overlords?

The picture of the state on the eve of the governorship election in 2023 was sad and almost tragic. Abia was easily the most indebted state in the federation with a debt portfolio of over N189.9 billion.

Abia was the state with the longest period of default in the payment of the salaries of staff in the public sector especially education and health. Doctors and teachers were owed anywhere between 24 to 30 months in salary arrears. System was unheard of. Aba was literally an inhabited refuse dump. Mounds of refuse greeted the eyes at nearly every inch of the city which had a permanent stench of something dead. Most roads in the town were in desperate disrepair.

The media rhetoric about Abia today is merely an exchange between spokespersons of a dying feudal political culture and a nascent democratic and republican order. Those in the vanguard of defending and protecting what Governor Otti is doing must understand what they are up against. Of course, the defenders of the feudal order have a right in a democratic space to do what they have always done - spew lies and spatter blackmail. Gladly, Abia people have left the Babylonian captivity of feudalism behind for all time. There is no going back.



Governor Alex Otti.

**For the first time since its creation, Otti has bridged the tragic divide between government and the people.**

because of themselves. Workers were unpaid for months on end. Teachers, doctors, university lecturers, pensioners shared a common plight of collective condemnation to a life time of penury. What has changed in Abia since the onset of the 2023 Otti administration is a decisive reversal of the focus of government from a conclave for itself to a service assembly for the people.

Perhaps the successive administrations may be termed Babylonian overlords. This is unlike other democratic federations that came into being as a result of popular will and mandate from below to the top, the Nigerian federal structure was created by an all conquering federal might from above. This is unlike the United States in which it was the states that voluntarily joined the federation for collective security and grandeur. In Nigeria, it was the central military of Nigeria that created the states and imposed an administrative structure on the entire nation.

Abia state has had a tortuous encounter with formal democracy. On the contrary, Abia people have for over 24 years tumbled from one season of state capture to another. Democratic transitions have been for these people more of ritual migrations from one

from both the Federation Account and Internally Generated Revenue was not matched in any way by the volume or tempo of development in the state.

In the same period, an annual Google search of the economy of the state indicated that in each of those years, of the five richest people in Abia State on a year-on-year basis, three at the top of the list coincided with the most prominent political figures.

The inevitable conclusion therefore is that for whatever reason, Abia was essentially a feudal enclave for 24 years (1999 to 2023) and has only been struggling to free itself from feudal captivity since after the 2023 governorship election. Between 1999 and May 2023, the state does not qualify as a democratic sub sovereign part of the Nigerian federation. Politics and the democratic process were only deployed as instruments for state capture by different factions of the Abia political elite. Once captured, the state in each of these years was run more like either a private feudal enclave or an unregulated extractive colony.

The rights of the citizens to fair treatment were grossly violated. The entitlement of the people to good government in terms of healthcare, education, security, infrastructure



## Foreign News

### Police Arrest 474 at Palestine Action Ban Protest

**P**olice have arrested 474 people at a demonstration in London in support of banned group Palestine Action.

The Metropolitan Police said 466 protesters were arrested for supporting the group, five for assaults on police officers, two for public order offences, and one for a racially aggravated offence.

Scores of people simultaneously unveiled handwritten signs with the message "I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action" at the protest, organised by Defend Our Juries at Westminster's Parliament Square.

It was the biggest protest since the government proscribed the group in July under the Terrorism Act of 2000, making membership of or support for it a criminal offence, punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

No officers were seriously injured, and the Met Police said the number of arrests was the largest made by the force on a single day in the last 10 years.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper thanked police for their response, while charity Amnesty International described the mass arrests as "deeply concerning".

Footage from the square showed officers moving among the protesters, who were mainly seated on the ground, and speaking to them before leading them away.

Protesters whose details could be confirmed at temporary prisoner processing points nearby were bailed with conditions to return to a police station at a future date and to not attend any further protests in support of Palestine Action.

People who refused to give their details or whose identities could not be verified were taken into custody.

Many of the protesters didn't want to speak to media who came to cover the protest, but one - who didn't give her name - told the BBC: "If they ban Palestine Action, what other group is next? Until we're just no longer allowed to protest anything. That's the opposite of democracy."

Another, Claudia Penna-Rojas, 27, said: "I don't think anyone wants to get arrested, but I'm more concerned with what is happening to people in Palestine right now, and I refuse to be a bystander."

Jacob Ecclestone, 86, said: "I believe in freedom of speech. What this government is trying to do is deeply authoritarian. And it's extremely dangerous."

Earlier, the Met Police had said about 500 to 600 people were in Parliament Square when the protest began, but that "many were onlookers, media or people not holding placards in support of Palestine Action".

At 13:00, when Big Ben chimed, hundreds of people sat on the square pulled out their placards, at which point the police started making multiple arrests at a time, working their way through the crowds.

Protesters patiently waited their turns. Some chose to walk out quietly. Those who refused to move, lying on the ground, were carried out by police to chants of "shame on you" directed at the officers.

The protest comes just days after the first three people to be charged with supporting the group in England and Wales were named.

Yvette Cooper thanked police for their work handling Palestine rights protests across the UK on Saturday, saying there had been a "very small number of people whose actions crossed the line into criminality".

She defended the banning of Palestine Action, which she said was based on "strong security advice following serious attacks the group has committed" as well as "plans and ideas for further attacks, the details of which cannot yet be publicly reported due to ongoing legal proceedings".

Many people may not yet know the reality of this organisation, but the assessments are very clear - this is not a non-violent organisation. UK national security and public safety must always be our top priority."

Shadow home secretary Chris Philp said protesters supporting Palestine Action "should feel the full force of the law."

Chief executive of Amnesty International, Sacha Deshmukh, said people outraged by the "ongoing genocide" in Gaza were "entitled under international human rights law to express their horror".

"The protesters in Parliament Square were not inciting violence and it is entirely disproportionate to the point of absurdity to be treating them as terrorists," he said.

"We have long criticised UK terrorism law for being excessively broad and vaguely worded and a threat to freedom of expression. These arrests demonstrate that our concerns were justified."

Security expert Lizzie Dearden told the BBC that the laws the protesters were arrested under "were not designed for a group of this nature or a group of this size".

"When (the Terrorism Act) was drafted in the late Nineties, the kind of terrorist group that was really being envisaged were groups like the IRA, al-Qaeda, armed militant groups that were operating often abroad."

"So the law is being applied in a completely new way."

Organisers Defend Our Juries claimed there were more than 1,000 "sign-holders" at the protest - and a large number had not been arrested.

Responding, the Met Police said: "That claim simply isn't true."

Defend our Juries said the turnout "shows how repulsed and ashamed people are about our government's ongoing complicity in a livestreamed genocide".

It added that "Palestine Action and people holding cardboard signs present no danger to the public at large".



### Trump Asks Supreme Court To Limit Passport, Sex Marker Choice For Trans And Nonbinary Americans

**T**he Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to let it limit passport sex markers for transgender and nonbinary individuals, its latest effort to get the justices to intervene in a fight over restrictive policies targeting LGBTQ+ Americans.

Just after taking office in January, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that said it's the policy of the federal government to recognize only two sexes and that those sexes "are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality."

The State Department later suspended its processing of passport applications seeking the gender marker of "X".

The move reversed changes made during the Biden administration that were meant to accommodate non-binary, intersex and gender non-conforming persons. Beginning in April 2022, Americans had been able to select X as their gender marker.

Lawsuits quickly ensued, and earlier this year, a federal judge in Massachusetts blocked the government from enforcing the policy on a

nationwide basis via a class-action lawsuit.

Private citizens cannot force the government to use inaccurate sex designations on identification documents that fail to reflect the person's biological sex — especially not on identification documents that are government property and an exercise of the President's constitutional and statutory power to communicate with foreign governments," Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote in the emergency appeal to the high court.

In her ruling, US District Judge Julia Kobick, a Biden nominee, ruled that the policy on its face classified "applicants on the basis of sex" and therefore warranted higher judicial scrutiny.

Noting that passports are often used for non-travel purposes, like renting a car or opening a bank account, the judge said that absent a ruling halting the policy, individuals who would be affected by it would experience "irreparable harm ... from their inability to use their passports anywhere without outing themselves."

Those individuals, Kobick explained, are

likely to face a heightened risk of "anxiety, psychological distress, discrimination, harassment, or violence any time they use their passports, not simply because they face these risks when using their passports for international travel."

A federal appeals court in Boston earlier this month denied the administration's request to block that order. Though it wasn't central to its decision, the court said that the government had failed "to engage meaningfully" with the lower court's claims that the policy might run afoul of the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause.

Sauer argued on Friday that lower courts erred when it scrutinized the policy under a heightened level of judicial review, and said the rulings blocking the policy conflict with a major Supreme Court ruling issued in June that bolstered efforts by conservative state lawmakers to pass and preserve divisive laws targeting transgender Americans.

That 6-3 ruling from the court, he wrote, "makes clear that the challenged policy does not discriminate based on sex."

### Ethiopia Opens Africa's Largest Hydroelectric Dam To Egyptian Protest

**E**thiopia officially inaugurated Africa's largest hydroelectric dam a project that will provide energy to millions of Ethiopians while deepening a rift with downstream Egypt that has unsettled the region.

Ethiopia, the continent's second most populous nation with a population of 120 million, sees the \$5 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on a tributary of the Nile as central to its economic ambitions.

The dam's output has

gradually increased since the first turbine was turned on in 2022, and it reached its maximum 5,150 MW of power on Tuesday. That puts it among the 20 biggest hydroelectric dams in the world, at about one-quarter of the capacity of China's Three Gorges Dam.

At a ceremony at the site in Guba, an Ethiopian fighter jet flew low over the mist from the dam's white waters, which plunge 170 meters (558 feet). Beneath the canopy of a giant Ethiopian flag, Prime Minister Abiy

Ahmed addressed a crowd of dignitaries including the presidents of Somalia, Djibouti and Kenya.

"To our (Sudanese and Egyptian) brothers; Ethiopia built the dam to prosper, to electrify the entire region and to change the history of black people," Abiy said. "It is absolutely not to harm its brothers."

Abiy has said the dam will improve access to electricity for the almost half the population who had none as recently as 2022, and export the surplus to the region.

### Trump issues An Ultimatum For NATO Countries On Russia Sanctions

**P**resident Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to NATO allies in a letter, saying the US will issue "major" sanctions on Russia only when they agree to do the same and stop buying oil from Russia.

Meeting Trump's demands would mark a major shift among the alliance, and there are major questions as to whether there would be collective interest in taking these steps.

"I am ready to do major Sanctions on Russia when all NATO Nations have agreed, and started, to do the same thing, and when all NATO Nations STOP BUYING OIL FROM RUSSIA," he said in a post to social media, quoting what he said was a letter sent to his NATO counterparts.

He continued, "As you know, NATO'S commitment to WIN has been far less than 100%, and the purchase of Russian Oil, by some, has been shocking! It greatly weakens your negotiating position, and bargaining power, over Russia. Anyway, I am ready to 'go' when you are. Just say when?"

The president also called on NATO countries to significantly ramp up tariffs on China in a show of force.

"I believe that this, plus NATO, as a group, placing 50% to 100% TARIFFS ON CHINA, to be fully withdrawn after the WAR with Russia and Ukraine is ended, will also be of great help in ENDING this deadly, but RIDICULOUS, WAR," he said.

Trump added that Russia's war in Ukraine would end "quickly" if those steps were taken.

CNN has reported that the European Union imposed a ban on maritime Russian oil imports and refined oil products like diesel, but many countries continue to import Russian fossil fuels and liquefied natural gas.

The president has repeatedly previewed the possibility of additional sanctions on Russia, telling Fox News' "Fox & Friends" on Friday he's considering "hitting very hard with sanctions to banks and having to do with oil and tariffs also."

He has already doubled tariffs to 50% on India, which purchases oil from Russia, and acknowledged the move "caused a rift" with the country. India has argued that it's being unfairly targeted with the tariff increase, calling it "unjustified" given that other nations also do business with Moscow.

It remains unclear whether NATO countries will take these steps, which would mark a dramatic departure from their existing tariff policies.

Earlier when the president spoke with a European delegation from the EU, he pushed them to put 50-100% tariffs on both China and India, according to people familiar with the conversation. But notably, Trump's missive to his NATO counterparts on did not mention India. The EU is in final stages of negotiating a trade deal with India, so it was unlikely they would go along with that.

Russia was the largest supplier of petroleum to the EU prior to Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The EU has since imposed a ban on maritime Russian oil imports, as well as refined oil products, like diesel. As a result, oil imports to Europe fell to \$1.72 billion (1.48 billion euros) for the first quarter of 2025, down from \$16.4 billion (14.06 billion euros) in the same quarter of 2021, according to the most recent data from Eurostat.

The EU has slightly reduced Russia's market share of liquefied natural gas imports since 2021 - from 22% down to 19% in 2025 - while also greatly increasing the US market share.

And the bloc - which has been the Americans' partner in sanctions against Russia - imported \$41.9 billion (36 billion euros) of goods from Russia in 2024, data from the EU's statistics agency shows.

European officials said last week after the Trump meeting that new tariffs on China or India were unlikely, since that's not how they approach the use of tariffs and the Europeans have generally been more cautious in trade wars, in particular with China.

By issuing his Russian oil ultimatum to NATO instead of the EU, Trump is including Turkey, which is the third largest purchaser of Russian oil after China and India, in those demands. The EU has largely cut off oil purchases, with exceptions for Hungary and Slovakia, but Turkey is still a customer, underscoring the steep demands.

Momentum to end the war around Trump's August 15 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska has largely stalled from Russia's latest demands risk prolonging the conflict even further. Time is a valuable commodity for Putin, giving Russia the ability to make more gains on the battlefield and shore up control over occupied areas.



# Entertainment

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## Nkechi Blessing Breaks Silence On Health And Gym Photo Scandal

**N**kechi Blessing Nollywood actress is embroiled in controversy after a gym photo of hers was leaked online without her consent. Here's what's happening.

Someone allegedly took Nkechi's picture at the gym and shared it on social media, sparking widespread ridicule and online commentary.

The actress took to Instagram to express her anger and frustration, questioning the motive behind the leaked photo and warning the person responsible of consequences. She hinted at health challenges, stating that every single reason she went to the gym and every health-related issue she'd faced would be transferred to the person who leaked the photo and their future generations.

Nkechi went further, issuing a stern curse on the person who shared the picture, saying they'd cry out for help but find none. She concluded by saying, "I have so many questions, but then again, let me allow GOD do his thing unstoppable".

Fans and fellow celebrities have reacted to the incident, with some defending Nkechi and others criticizing her. Media personality Daddy Freeze weighed in, blasting the gym's management for not protecting Nkechi's privacy and advising her to ignore the mockery.

While Nkechi didn't specify her health issues, her posts suggest she's dealing with some physical challenges that prompted her to work out at the gym. Some online users have questioned the authenticity of her health claims, with one commenter saying, "She wan gaslight which one be health issues, the controversy highlights the importance of privacy and consent in the digital age, especially for public figures like Nkechi Blessing."



Nkechi Blessing

## "Tiwa Savage: Humility Is Key To Afrobeats"

**T**IWA SAVAGE recently advised Afrobeats artists to stay humble, emphasizing that their success is not guaranteed and can be taken away at any moment. In an interview with Hot 97 FM in New York, she reminded artists that they are merely ambassadors of the Afrobeats movement, and their roles can be filled by others if they let fame corrupt them.

Tiwa Savage stressed that humility is essential for artists to maintain their success and integrity. She warned that fame can be taken away instantly, and falling from grace can be more devastating than never achieving fame.

Afrobeats: Artists should recognize their roles as representatives of the genre and remain grounded.

Tiwa Savage praised colleagues like Ayra Starr for her confidence, Tems for her mysterious persona, and Diamond Platunz for his talent and community promotion.

As for Mr Eazi's experience of losing N19 million in a failed diesel business venture, there isn't more information available on this specific topic. However, Tiwa Savage's advice serves as a reminder to artists and entrepreneurs alike about the importance of staying humble and grounded, regardless of their level of success.

## Nollywood Stars Speak Out On Second Wives



Funke Akindele



Rita Edochie



Toyin Abraham

### Rita Edochie on Second Wives

Rita Edochie recently made headlines for her comments on second wives, labeling them as immoral. She expressed her views while throwing shade at Judy Austin, Yul Edochie's second wife, suggesting that Judy entered Yul's life by pretending to be his best friend and colleague. Rita Edochie advised men to

prioritize their wives and avoid deceitful relationships

In another instance, Rita Edochie praised Yul's first wife, May Edochie, calling her "hotter even after 4 kids". This praise was accompanied by a subtle shade towards Judy Austin, further fueling the drama surrounding Yul Edochie's marital life. Funke Akindele and Toyin Abraham have

addressed rumors of a feud between them, dismissing the speculation. According to reports, both actresses have shown maturity and mutual respect for each other, despite their past professional rivalry. Toyin Abraham has even publicly celebrated Funke Akindele's box office successes.

### Funke Akindele's Views on Feminism

Funke Akindele has

shared her thoughts on feminism, stating that she's a feminist but doesn't support women disrespecting their husbands. She believes women should be treated with respect and not confined to traditional roles. In a video, she advised women to maintain their economic power and support their husbands while being strong and bold.

## Portable's Pledge: "I'll Support Highest Bidder In 2027"

**P**ORTABLE, a Nigerian singer, has made headlines with his 2027 general election stance, declaring he'll support any political party or candidate that pays him the most. In a viral video, he stated, "I can't be campaigning around and be hungry," emphasizing that his decision is driven by survival. He claimed he'll endorse the highest bidder, regardless of party affiliation, and even urged his fans to do the same, saying "Vote for anyone who gives you money. Vote for your helper".

He cited widespread hunger and personal financial needs as reasons for his stance.

Portable emphasized that his voter's card is a personal



Habeeb Okikiola Badmus

right to be exchanged for tangible support.

He stated he'll support APC, PDP, or Peter Obi based solely on who pays him first.

The video sparked debate about vote-selling and political accountability in Nigeria, with some criticizing his stance as an endorsement of corruption, while others relate to his economic struggles.

Portable's comments reflect broader public cynicism toward political promises and economic hardship in Nigeria.

Celebrity Influence: His statement highlights the intersection of celebrity influence, politics, and public survival concerns





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## Creative Writers Hangout

# Uche and the Sword (7)

**M**eanwhile, Kate had gone to gossip with a neighbor as usual. Uche quickly took his bath, put on his uniform and left for school without breakfast.

When he got to the school, the gate was locked. Trouble, told him that everybody had gone to the stadium. Uche started running to the stadium, which was five kilometers away.

"Hey! Uche are you not going to the stadium," the boy, who came with the Labor Prefect on Monday to beat up Sandra asked.

"That's where I'm going to."

"Come let's go together."

Uche joined him on the bicycle.

"I'm sorry for what happened day before yesterday," The boy started as they rode along, "I'm sorry."

"No problem", Uche said absent mindedly as his mind was at the stadium.

"I've told Kalu, my friend, not to disturb you again."

That was the first time Uche heard the Labor Prefect's name, "What did he say?"

"He refused. He's very envious of how you're close to Sandra. I'll advise you to be very careful."

"Thank you," Uche said.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere in the stadium was supersaturated. The stadium was filled to its brim.

The Commissioners of Youth and Sports and Education and other top government officials were present. There was also the national under 17

coach scouting for players that would make up his team for the Meridian Cup.

Just eleven minutes into the match, Uzo mesmerized the crowd when he dribbled past three defenders in a row and drove home a low shot to give his team the lead.

Their opponents, the Afatara Boys woke up and started mounting pressure on them. Uzo and his teammates were smaller, so their opponents used their size advantage to win and keep possession easily. Just ten minutes after conceding the goal, the Afatara Boys equalized when a deflected shot sent Aham the Games Prefect, who was standing in for Uche, the wrong way.

Within five minutes, the Afatara Boys scored two more goals. The Wellington Junior High School boys were forced to remain in their own half for the rest of the first half.

It was ten minutes into the second half that Uche and his friend got to the stadium. Mr. Godwin was very elated; he immediately replaced Aham with Uche. Three minutes later Uche was facing an opponent, the attacker thundered a shot that everybody thought should be in the back of the net but Uche caught the ball with a remarkable aplomb. He received a great applause.

Mr. Godwin's new tactics of blocking space rather than marking man for man and keeping the ball on the turf paid off 20 minutes into the second half. His boys made a textbook move that left Uzo having only the goalkeeper to beat. He calmly rounded the goalkeeper and blasted home his second for the day.

Five minutes to the end of the match, the Afatara Boys made one of those dangerous crosses that resulted in two of their goals, Uche ran out of the goal area, jump to cut the ball off from a prowling attacker. He caught the ball, but the opponent's elbow hit him on his eyelid and tore it. As Uche landed another opponent mistakenly stepped on his hand. Yet he held on to the ball.

The U-17 coach jumped to his feet and joined almost everyone in the

stadium in applauding Uche's bravery.

Uche stood up kicked the ball into touch and slumped. Mr. Godwin raised both hands to his head as he feared that if Uche could not continue they would have to play ten against eleven and an outfield player would be converted to a goal keeper as they had completed their three substitutions.

"Uche please continue." That was what his teammates, his coach and every Wellington High School student

### CITATIONS INSPIRANTES

"A book is a dream  
that you hold in  
your hand."

- Neil Gaiman, English writer.

felt that he could not continue. Suddenly he heard his name; the voice was different from those of all others calling him. It was a voice that meant a lot to him.

He raised his eyes and saw Sandra in the midst of other students. "Uche please, try", she pleaded. A wave of courage enveloped him, he could not think of disappointing Sandra.

Uche got to his feet and told the referee that he could continue. The match that had been interrupted for twenty minutes resumed. At the dot of ninety minutes nobody could believe it, the Wellington boys made it three all.

Uche stopped three kicks during the penalty shootout to give his side a 7-5 victory. "Uche" was the song on every one's tongue.

After the post match formalities and ceremonies, it was time to go home and that was when Uche remembered what awaited him at home. But he had one thousand, five hundred naira in his pocket, which people gave him for his heroic display.

Asonye and Kate gave Uche a joint beating and send him out of the house. Uche thought of where to spend the night, but nowhere came to his mind except the school.

He bought some bean ball, bread and sachet water, which he took for dinner. He got into the school through the fence, as Trouble would never let him in through the gate. But he did not know that a meeting was holding in the school that night and that he was the agenda.

He got into one open classroom, brought two benches together and laid down on them. When next Uche became conscious it was already daybreak. He saw a group of students looking at him with surprise written all over their faces.

Uche tried to get up, but he could not as his hands and legs were tied.

Uche saw the Principal come into the classroom with some teachers and the Vice Principal. The students that were looking at him scurried out of the class.

"Sir, I caught him in the middle of the night he had already broken into your office and was about to jump out when I caught him. He had something, which he threw to another man, who ran away," Trouble said.

"It's a lie, it's a lie" Uche protested. The Principal hushed him and asked the vice Principal Mr. Ukpai to get Uche's parents quickly.

The Principal's office was opened, but nothing was touched except for the Principal's stamp. "That must be what he threw to the other man that was accompanying him," Trouble said.

After Uche's legs were untied, he was led out of the class, his eyes met

with that of Sandra who was just coming to school but had heard from Nkeiru at the school gate that Uche had broke into the Principal's office. She stopped, turned and covered her face with her hands.

Uche dissolved into tears as Trouble led him to the principal's office where he knelt down

When Asonye and Kate came into the Principal's office Uche hung his head in shame.

"Whom am I seeing? Is this not Aso the Rock", the Principal said as he stood up and shook hands with Asonye.

"Ah! Mr. Emeka, you remind me of those good old days in school". Asonye said excitedly.

When they took their seats, the Principal started, "Is Uche Obi your son?"

"No, he's my nephew"

"But he lives with you?"

"Yes of course"

"Incredible! So Aso Uche comes from your house everyday but looks like a pig. His uniform is old and tattered"

Asonye shamefully looked at his wife, Kate looked away unconcerned. Asonye had given her money to buy new school uniform for Uche, but she was then he realized that Kate did not do as he had told her.

"Well, that is by the way", the Principal said, "I sent for you people to ask where your ward slept last night".

"Actually he did not sleep at home. I flogged him for not doing what I asked him to do, so he ran out of the house," Asonye said.

"Look at this broken ceiling" the Principal indicated with his hand "it was your ward that broke into my office and stole my official stamp".

Kate and Asonye looked at Uche simultaneously with wide opened eyes and mouth.

"I would have expelled him and hand him over to the police. But, the school coach, had pleaded with me I'll give him till the end of this term, which is in two weeks time. If he fails to return the stamp I'll bring in the police".

Before Asonye and Kate left with Uche they paid N7,000 which would be used to repair the damaged ceilings in the principal's office. When they got home, the couple beat Uche for more than three hours, but Uche maintained that he had done nothing wrong.

Uche was in school the following day. Everybody avoided him. It was only Uzo that asked Uche what happened. He told Uzo the little he could remember. He was so tired that he did not even know when his hands and legs were tied.

After school, Uche took his books to Sandra's class for their lessons but Sandra quarreled him, "Uche, you disappointed me. So after doing very well on the pitch you came back to break into the Principals office".

"Senior, it's not true..."

"Don't even call me. I don't want to have anything to do with you."

"Senior I know how you feel. But, I thought that even if everybody doesn't want to hear my own side of what happened, you'll hear me out."

"Get out from here, what story will you tell?" Sandra shouted

Uche left with tears. He felt lonely. Nobody cared to hear his own side of the story except Uzo.

Sandra felt bad as she watched Uche walk away. She wept, but was resolved to avoid Uche. Afterall, it is popularly said that "tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are." That was how Uche's lesson with Sandra stopped. But, he continued studying on his own.

## AUTHOR OF THE WEEK



## Amos Tutuola

**A**mos Olatubosun Tutuola Odegbami was born on June 20, 1920, in Wasinmi, a village just a few miles outside of Abeokuta, Nigeria, where his parents, Charles Tutuola Odegbami and Esther Aina Odegbami, who were Yoruba Christian cocoa farmers, lived.

Amos was the youngest son of his father; his mother was his father's third wife. When Amos was seven years old, in 1927, he became a servant to F. O. Monu, an Igbo man, who sent him to the Salvation Army primary school in lieu of wages. At age 12, he attended the Anglican Central School in Abeokuta. His brief education was limited to six years (from 1934 to 1939). When his father died in 1939, Tutuola left school to train as a blacksmith, the trade he practised from 1942 to 1945 for the Royal Air Force in Nigeria during WWII.

He subsequently tried a number of other vocations, including selling bread and acting as messenger for the Nigerian Department of Labour.

In 1947, he married Victoria Alake, with whom he had four sons and four daughters; he would also marry 3 other wives. He was the uncle of the Nigerian footballers Segun Odegbami and Wole Odegbami

Despite his short formal education, Tutuola wrote his novels in English. In 1956, after he had written his first three books and become internationally famous, he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Ibadan, Western Nigeria as a storekeeper. Tutuola also became one of the founders of the Mbari Club, the writers' and publishers' organization. In 1979, he held a visiting research fellowship at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) at Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and in 1983 he was an associate of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. In retirement he divided his time between residences Ibadan and Ago-Odo

Tutuola's most famous novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* and his *Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Deads' Town* was first published in 1952 in London by Faber and Faber, then translated and published in Paris as *L'Ivrogne dans la brousse* by Raymond Queneau in 1953.

Tutuola died at the age of 76 on 8 June 1997 from hypertension and diabetes.

### POEM OF THE WEEK

#### GOOD TIME HAS COME

By Ihueze Peter Emenike

As winds with melody are ringing  
And a little bee near my window is humming  
Birds are singing out from tree to tree  
To Abia State, good time has come  
Governor Alex Otti is building the state like Rome

Turning the state to a land of hope and glory  
Many are now very happy  
Education the best legacy is free,  
Roads are being built  
People, from his good work, a growing strength gain  
Foes who want to mar his administration will try in vain

News of his good work is spreading everywhere  
Especially agriculture and healthcare  
Like scents of flowers carried by the wind  
Workers receive salaries as at when due  
His good work is a goldfish that can't be hidden

Every street  
Everywhere is clean and sweet  
Abia State's flag is great  
It's dancing in the breeze, among the flags of great states  
Thus arousing my patriotism

Tyranny is gone; no one is now less than gold  
Or in bondage sold  
The sad are now drying their tears  
Peace now dwells in the state people rest to sleep  
They no longer look so pale and so sad

His love for Abia State is like the love of bird for its nest  
Enemies can't help but love him  
His good work are transforming foes to friends  
He came prepared and is delivering  
Giving Abians dividends of democracy in many ways

Fair smile lightens up my face  
I hope this smile will last long  
Yes! for eight years  
I can't find a leader who can beat his record  
To lose him as governor, Abians can't afford

## News

### NYSC, Group Champion Market Clean-up In Abia

By Daniel Ogidiole

In commemoration of World Cleanup Day, corps members of the NYSC Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Community Development Service (CDS) group in Umuahia North joined forces with environmental nonprofit Sustvibes have carried out a sanitation exercise at Oriegba Market, Umuahia, Abia State.

The initiative, held last Saturday, combined physical waste removal with community sensitization. Corps members engaged traders, shoppers, and passersby on proper waste disposal practices and the health benefits of a clean environment. Their efforts drew active participation from market stakeholders and residents, creating a vibrant atmosphere of collective responsibility.

Speaking during the exercise, the Sustvibes Community Manager and Team Lead in Abia State, Odewole Heritage Toluwani, described the project as a true reflection of the group's vision. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness. You don't need to donate millions or build town halls; simply volunteering to clean your community is a powerful way to give back," she noted.

The NYSC SDGs CDS President, Daramola Olaoluwa Emmanuel also highlighted the significance of youth-driven sustainability efforts. "World Cleanup Day shows how vital young people are in achieving the SDGs. As corps members, we represent the energy and passion of Nigerian youth mobilizing communities, protecting the environment, and driving change," he stated.

Organizers confirmed that the Oriegba Market cleanup will become a recurring program in Umuahia North, with plans to extend similar exercises to other local government areas. Sustvibes further announced plans for follow-up education campaigns and opportunities for residents to volunteer in future initiatives.

World Cleanup Day is observed globally as a call to action against waste pollution. Umuahia edition stands as a compelling example of youth-led environmental advocacy, underscoring the impact of collaboration between civic organizations and the NYSC in advancing sustainable development.

### Govt Moves Against Fake Degrees In Nigeria

From Sophina Ovuike, Abuja

The Federal Government has intensified its crackdown on certificate racketeering and academic fraud, directing the compulsory enforcement of a new credential verification system across the country from October 6, 2025.

The directive, contained in a service-wide circular signed by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, mandates all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), as well as public and private tertiary institutions, to adopt structured academic checks under the National Policy for the Nigeria Education Repository and Databank (NERD).

Under the scheme, both existing and prospective employees must obtain clearance through the National Credential Verification Service (NCVS) before their appointments can be confirmed. Each verified certificate or diploma will be issued a National Credential

Number (NCN) and a set of security codes, making every qualification traceable and instantly verifiable.

The SGF stressed that the reform departs from past ad-hoc measures by establishing a nationwide quality assurance mechanism that operates independently of any single institution. The policy draws its legal backing from Section 10(1) of the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act 1985.

The NCVS was formally launched in March 2025 by the Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, following approval by the Federal Executive Council (FEC). At the launch, Alausa described the scheme as a decisive step to curb fake degrees, forged honours, and diploma mill operations that have undermined the integrity of Nigeria's education system.

Confirming the readiness of the system, Ms. Haula Galadima, Executive Director of Communication and Cybersecurity for NERD, said all services are now fully operational. She urged MDAs,

schools, and private employers to enrol their NERD Focal Persons and Records Officers via the official onboarding portal.

"NERD is a federation initiative and the national standard for higher education digitisation. It is designed to protect national security, safeguard education integrity, and boost the global competitiveness of Nigeria's academic system," Galadima said.

She explained that NERD manages the National Student Number (NSN), National Credential Number (NCN), and National Document Number (NDN), which together ensure that every legitimate certificate or award is digitally identifiable. These records will also populate a National Database of Resource Persons, enabling instant verification of academic honours.

According to her, fake degrees thrive because verification processes are often cumbersome and open to compromise. The new platform

provides a federated one-stop digital system linking decentralised institutional databases while preserving their autonomy.

The NERD Governing Council, chaired by the Minister of Education, includes key regulators and stakeholders such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the National Library, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors, the Committee of Rectors, the Committee of Provosts, and the Nigeria Data Protection Commission.

Galadima emphasised that the reform is a collective effort, jointly owned by all tertiary institutions and regulatory bodies.

"By October 6, fake degrees and unearned honours will no longer slip through the cracks. Every credential presented in Nigeria must be verifiable at the click of a button," she assured.

### Editors' Guild Sets Agenda on Democracy, Cohesion at 2025 ANEC

By Kene Chikaodi

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has announced that its 2025 All Nigeria Editors Conference (ANEC) will hold from November 3 to 6, 2025, in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

According to a statement jointly signed by NGE President, Eze Anaba, and General Secretary, Onuoha Ukeh, the conference—Nigeria's largest gathering of editors and media executives—will be declared open by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

This year's theme is "Democratic Governance and National Cohesion: The Role of Editors", with a sub-theme on "Electoral Integrity and Trust Deficit: What Nigerians Expect in 2027."

The Guild said the annual conference will provide a platform for over 500 media professionals from within and outside the country to interrogate national issues with social, economic, and political implications.

"The 2025 ANEC will examine the role of editors in promoting democratic governance, addressing challenges to national cohesion, and identifying strategies for inclusive development," the statement noted.

Dignitaries expected at the opening ceremony include President Tinubu, FCT Minister Barr. Nyesom Wike, Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, governors, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of the organised private sector.

The four-day conference will also feature keynote presentations and panel sessions on topical issues, including:

Election Disputes and Judicial Integrity: Navigating the Thin Line Between Law and Politics

The State of the Nation: Imperative of Economic and Political Reforms in a Challenged Nation

The Evolving Face of Journalism: Battling Misinformation, AI Disruption, and the Credibility Gap

Media, Terrorism, and National Security: Addressing the Complexities

Wealth Beyond the Newsroom: Investment Opportunities for Editors After Call of Duty

The Guild emphasized that in light of Nigeria's socio-economic challenges, there is a greater need for unity in diversity, shared values, dialogue, and inclusivity to strengthen the bonds holding the country together.

The 2025 conference comes four months after the Guild's biennial national convention in Enugu, where new executives were elected. It will be the second time in 12 years that the event is hosted in the FCT.



World Cleanup Day, SDG Corps members carrying out a sanitation exercise in Oriegba Market, Umuahia, Abia State recently.

### Gates Foundation, Indian Firm To Roll Out Affordable HIV Prevention Injection

By Daniel Ogidiole

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has partnered with Indian pharmaceutical company Cipla Ltd. to produce a low-cost, long-acting injectable drug designed to prevent HIV infection, in a move described as a major breakthrough for global public health.

The injection, which costs around \$40 per dose and is administered twice yearly, offers a more convenient and reliable alternative to daily oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) pills. Medical experts say this innovation could dramatically cut

down new HIV infections, particularly in Africa, where the burden of the virus remains disproportionately high.

Under the collaboration, Cipla will manufacture the drug at scale while the Gates Foundation provides funding support and technical expertise to ensure affordability and widespread access, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

Health advocates note that adherence to daily HIV-prevention pills has been a challenge for many at-risk populations. The injectable shot, by requiring only two doses a year,

addresses compliance issues and could become a game-changer in HIV prevention strategies.

A statement from the Gates Foundation said the initiative reflects its broader commitment to expanding access to life-saving medicines and reducing health inequities. "Ensuring that cost is not a barrier is at the heart of this partnership. The twice-yearly injectable will make prevention easier, more discreet, and more effective for millions of people who need it," the foundation noted.

Global health experts have hailed the move, but stressed the need for strong

distribution frameworks, education, and awareness campaigns to ensure that communities at high risk of HIV transmission fully embrace the innovation.

The injectable prevention therapy is currently undergoing regulatory approvals in several countries, with pilot rollouts expected in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia within the next year.

If widely adopted, the breakthrough could accelerate the global target of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).



## Sporting Ambassador

**AMBASSADOR**  
With Jacob Joseph

# UCL: Liverpool, Chelsea, City in Action, Osimhen Return for Galatasaray



Victor Osimhen © getting ready to battle Liverpool

**M**atch day 2 of the UEFA Champions League holds across Europe this mid-week. Here are all the fixtures.

The Almaty Ortalyk Stadion in Pavlodar, will be hosting one of its biggest matches when 15 time champions Real Madrid storm Kazakhstan to take on debutants Kairat.

Match day one produced contrasting fortunes for both clubs. While Real Madrid dug deep to defeat Marseille 2-1, Kairat Almaty were whitewashed 4-1 by Sporting CP. Anything less than all three points for Real Madrid will be a disappointing result for the Spaniards.

Brothers when Ademola Lookman's Atalanta welcome Raphael Onyedika's Club Brugge to the Gewiss Stadium. The Belgians started their campaign with a comprehensive 4-1 demolition of Monaco with the Nigerian mid-fielder scoring the second goal while Lookman did not feature in Atalanta's 0-4 demolition by defending champions PSG. While the Italians will want to bounce back to winning ways, the Belgians will want to sustain their winning momentum.

Two sides that lost their first round of matches, Marseille and Ajax will hope to bounce back to winning ways when they clash at

lost 0-2 to Inter Milan, Marseille lost 2-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu to Real Madrid.

Basking in the euphoria of their 2-0 victory over Ajax, Inter Milan will welcome Slavia Praha to the San Siro with the aim of pocketing another three points. However, Slavia Praha will give it their all after securing a 2-2 draw with Bodo Glin in their first match.

Wobbling Chelsea who followed their 3-1 loss to Bayern Munich with a 2-1 loss to Manchester United in the Premier League will have to work extremely hard to take all three points when they host Benfica now coached by their former manager, Jose Mourinho.

Victor Osimhen's Galatasaray will be searching for their first points this season when they host English champions Liverpool. The Turkish side threw away a lone goal lead to lose 5-1 to German side Frankfurt. Liverpool have lost a match in all competitions this season and will definitely be a hard nut for Victor Osimhen and his teammates to crack.

Debutants Pafos secured a goalless draw with Olympiacos on matchday one but will have their hands full when they host Bayern Munich, who defeated World Champions Chelsea 3-1 in their first match.

After their 2-2 draw with Slavia Praha on matchday 1, Bodo Glin will be aiming for their first win when they host Europa League champions Tottenham Hotspur, who secured a narrow lone goal

victory over Villarreal on match day one.

Athletic Madrid will take on Eintracht Frankfurt at the Wander Metropolitano Stadium in search of their first win after suffering a 3-2 defeat at Anfield on match day 1. Frankfurt are riding on a high morale after coming from behind to crush Galatasaray 5-1.

Qarabag and Copenhagen will lurk horns at the Tofiq Bahramov Stadium. After defeating Benfica 3-2 away from home. Qarabag are hoping to sustain the momentum while Copenhagen, who settled for a 2-2 draw with Leverkusen will be hoping for their first victory.

After defeating PSV 3-1 at the Philips Stadium, debutants, Union Saint Gilloise will host Newcastle United hoping to sustain their winning run. However, the English side cannot afford to lose again after their painful 1-2 loss to Barcelona on match day 1. It will be a tough battle.

After falling 4-1 to Club Brugge on opening day, Monaco will have a chance to redeem their image when they confront Manchester City, who defeated 10-man Napoli

1, Arsenal will be hoping to continue in their winning ways when they welcome Olympiacos to the Emirate Stadium. After securing a 1-1 draw with Manchester City in a league match, Arsenal is gradually repositioning for a better outing this season and a victory at home over Olympiacos will underline that fact.

Perhaps the biggest clash this midweek will take place at the Camp Nou where Barcelona will take on defending champions, Paris Saint Germain. Both sides have already shown how prolific they are on match day 1 with remarkable victories.

Barcelona conquered Newcastle United 2-1 while PSG whitewashed Atalanta 4-0.

In Germany, Bayer Leverkusen and PSV will lock horns at the BayArena as both sides search for their first win. PSV did not start their campaign in a way they would have wanted after they lost 1-3 to debutants Union Saint Gilloise while Leverkusen settled for a 2-2 draw with Copenhagen.

### MATCHDAY 2 FIXTURES

Kairat vs R. Madrid



The Special One, Jose Mourinho returns to the Stamford Bridge



Alexander Isak is ready for the Reds

It is going to be a War of the Stade Velodrome. While Ajax

Borussia Dortmund will host Athletic Bilbao at the Signal Iduna Park as both sides continue their search for their first victory. On match day 1, Dortmund secured a 4-4 draw with Juventus while Athletic Bilbao lost 2-0 to Arsenal.

Italian champions, Napoli, who lost 2-0 to Manchester City will host Sporting CP who are basking in the euphoria of their 4-1 demolishing of Kairat. Napoli need to win this match to bring their campaign back on track.

Villarreal and Juventus will clash in Spain as both sides search for their first win this season. The Yellow Submarines lost their opening match 1-0 to Spurs while Juventus played out a thrilling 4-4 draw with Dortmund.

After securing a 2-0 victory over Athletic Bilbao on match day

Atalanta vs Club Brugge

Marseille vs Ajax

Inter vs Slavia Praha

Chelsea vs Benfica

Galatasaray vs Liverpool

Pafos vs Bayern Munich

Bodo Glin vs Tottenham

At Madrid vs E. Frankfurt

Qarabag vs Copenhagen

Union SG vs Newcastle

Monaco vs Man City

Dortmund vs Bilbao

Napoli vs Sporting

Villarreal vs Juventus

Arsenal vs Olympiacos

Barcelona vs PSG

Leverkusen vs PSV





Badminton court

## Int'l Para Badminton Championships: All You Need To Know

Stories by Joseph Jacob

The best international Para-Badminton athletes have converged on Umuahia the capital of Abia State for the Abia Para Badminton International Tournament and the All-African Para Badminton Championship.

Nigeria will thus become the first West African country and third African country after Egypt and Kenya to host an international badminton championship courtesy of Abia State hosting both competitions.

The twin events are sanctioned by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and the Badminton Confederation of Africa (BCA) will take place at the refurbished International Conference Centre from September 30 to October 12, 2025.

A total of 368 players from 32 European, Asian, American and African countries will vie for honours in the competition.

South Africa's Karim Bester will be the referee assisted by Hong Kong's Chaw Yat Kwong. Carmen Martinez from Spain is the Technical Delegate while Ilorin George Adebayo will be the Local Deputy Referee.

Players will compete in men and women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles.

All arrangements are in place to fly international athletes from Lagos to Owerri from where wheelchair-accessible buses will transport them to Umuahia.

There is no doubt that these competitions will be very successful as the state successfully hosted the National Para Badminton Championship, which served as a test-run for the hosting of the Abia Para Badminton International Tournament and the All-African Para Badminton Championship.

## Nigeria Premier Football League: Enyimba Confront Rivers United

Enyimba International of Aba will have a difficult encounter when they host Rivers United this weekend in one of the week 7 matches of the Nigerian Premier Football League. Fans from Portharcourt are expected to troop out in their numbers as the distance between both cities is about 60km.

When both sides met in this

fixture last season, Enyimba International had a 1-0 victory while the Portharcourt based side won 2-0 in the reverse fixture. The People's Elephant have shown intent to contest for the title this season with outstanding performance including securing a 2-0 victory over Bayelsa United in Yenegoa.

In other fixtures, Bendel Insurance will confront Nasarawa

United at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium while Kwara United will host Abia Warriors who will be coming with the experiences they acquired from playing in the CAF Confederation Cup. When they met last season Abia Warriors left Ilorin with a point as they secured a goalless draw.

Shooting Stars will aim to gun down Plateau United at the Lekan Salami Stadium while the Nnamdi Azikiwe Stadium will come alive when Enugu Rangers confront Katsina United.

Barau FC will hope to tame Warri Wolves at the Sani Abacha Stadium as Bayelsa United battle Ikorodu City at the Samson Siasia Stadium in Yenegoa.

Niger Tornadoes will attempt to blow away Kun Khalifat as El Kanemi Warriors and Kano Pillars battle in the Emirate Derby.

Defending champions, Remo Stars will attempt to outshine Wikki Tourists when they welcome them to the MKO Abiola Stadium.



Enyimba International dazzling their fans recently

## EPL: Chelsea, Liverpool Battle for Supremacy

Enzo Maresca and his Chelsea side will welcome Liverpool to the Stamford Bridge in the biggest encounter in this weekend's English Premier League.

While Liverpool have been consistent in collecting three points in every game this season, Chelsea have stumbled in crucial matches like their 2-1 loss to Manchester United. However, Chelsea will be hoping to re-enact their performance last season which saw them defeat Liverpool 3-1.

Elsewhere, Nigerian trio of Calvin Bassey, Alex Iwobi and new signing Samuel Chukwueze will storm the Vitality Stadium alongside their Fulham teammates to take on Bournemouth while Leeds United welcome Tottenham Hotspurs to the Eland Road.

Manchester United will aim to sustain their recent home form when they take on Sunderland at Old Trafford as Arsenal seek to harm West Ham United.

Everton will clash with Crystal Palace as Newcastle United battle Nottingham

Forest.

Tolu Arokodare and his Wolves teammates will seek to devour Brighton at the Molineux as Aston Villa confront Burnley.

The Bees, Brentford will attempt to sting Pep Guardiola and his Manchester City side when they clash at the Gtech Community Stadium.



Cole Palmer of Chelsea

## SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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.