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Amah, Others Join Labour Party in Abia

By Stephanie Adindu

The Labour Party in Ututu Ward, Arochukwu Local Government Area of Abia State, recorded a major boost on Sunday, September 14, as renowned political consultant and grassroots mobilizer, High Chief Charles Amah, officially declared his membership alongside several others.

The declaration, which coincided with the grand finale of the Iri-ji Ukwu Ututu Festival, drew prominent political figures and stakeholders from within and outside the community. Among those present were the Chairman of Abia Arise, Mazi Nkem Okoro; former Chairman of Arochukwu Local Government and General Manager of Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation (ANPC), Mazi Jones Nnanna Ike; as well as the Labour Party Chairman in Arochukwu LGA, Mazi G.N. Onuoha, and his Abia Arise counterpart, Mazi Machi Okoro.

Also in attendance was a delegation from Umuahia Rich Club, led by Chief Emma Nwabuko, who joined in celebrating their member and friend, Chief Amah, on the occasion of his new yam festival.

Speakers at the event described Chief Amah as a philanthropist of uncommon repute and a political leader who has touched lives in diverse ways.

In his remarks, Chief Amah revealed that for the past 20 years, he had chosen to serve strictly as a political consultant without joining any party. However, he said he resolved to pitch his tent with the Labour Party and the Abia Arise movement because their mission and vision under Governor Alex Chioma Otti align with his conviction that politics should serve as a tool for development.

The ceremony featured rich cultural displays, including a wrestling contest, the Ekpo Obiene masquerade, and the Ekpe masquerade, while guests were well-entertained in a colorful atmosphere befitting the occasion.



Gov Alex Otti (Right) receiving a jersey from Abia-born: Super Eagles International, Kenneth Omeruo (Left), at the Governor's country home Umuohim Nvosi - Isiala Ngwa South L.G.A. Abia State.

FG, Abia Govt Partner To Curb Proliferation Of Arms

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has reiterated his administration's readiness to collaborate with the Federal Government in tackling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons across the country.

Governor Otti gave the assurance when he received the South-East Zonal Director of the National Centre for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCCSALW), Captain Chris Anusiem, who paid him a courtesy visit in Umuahia,

recently.

He stressed that most crimes are perpetrated with small arms and light weapons, making their elimination or drastic reduction

critical to achieving lasting peace and security.

"I want to assure you that the Abia State Government and its people will work

closely with you to ensure you succeed in your assignment. Virtually all crimes are committed with light weapons and small arms, and unless we

eliminate them or reduce them to the barest minimum, peace will remain elusive," the Governor said.

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Labour Party Demands Probe of Rivers Emergency Rule

From Sophina Ovuike

The Labour Party (LP) has called for an immediate investigation into the six-month emergency rule recently imposed in Rivers State.

Interim National Publicity Secretary of the party, Tony Akeni, made the demand in Abuja on Monday, alleging that the sole

administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (rtd), merely executed a political agenda orchestrated by President Bola Tinubu and the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Chief Nyesom Wike.

According to Akeni, the arrangement was designed to give the two leaders access to the state's treasury and

political structure.

"There are two designs by President Tinubu and his South-South ally, Wike—the political and the economic. Admiral Ibas's only achievement was to act as a stand-in for his new masters," he said.

Akeni further claimed that both leaders had succeeded in their short-term

objectives but would eventually face the will of Rivers people.

"In 2027, Tinubu and Wike may wake up to realize that it is God and the 7.2 million reborn citizens of Rivers State who own and will decide their destiny, not two clay emperors riding roughshod over Governor Sim Fubara and the state treasury today," he declared.

EDITORIAL:

Rising Waters, Failing Systems

News

NANS To FG: Protect Dangote Refinery from Sabotage Threats

From Sophina Oruike

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), has called on the Federal Government to safeguard the Dangote Refinery and its facilities from sabotage by individuals and groups allegedly opposed to the company's operations in the oil and gas sector.

In a statement issued on Sunday, NANS, President, Usman Adamu Nagwaza, warned that ongoing tensions between the Dangote Refinery and the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) could trigger a return to fuel scarcity, with dire consequences for the economy.

"If the feud persists, we foresee a likelihood of returning to the days of fuel scarcity. The negative impact on the economy and its injurious consequences are not far-fetched," Nagwaza said.

He cautioned against possible attacks on the refinery's newly acquired

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-powered fuel distribution trucks, citing security reports that alleged plots by oil cartels to destroy the assets.

"Any attack on them, without question, an attack on the future of our nation," he stressed, urging the National Security Adviser and other security agencies to act decisively.

Nagwaza also reiterated the importance of freedom of association, insisting that no individual or group should be coerced into membership of any union. He advised NUPENG to embrace dialogue and avoid being used by "economicsaboteurs."

Highlighting the refinery's role in boosting local fuel production and easing supply pressures, NANS urged the Federal Government to ensure maximum protection for the facility to prevent disruptions that could plunge the nation back into scarcity.

Otti Offers Jobs, Cash Rewards to Abia NYSC Honours Awardees

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has granted automatic employment to nine ex-corp members from the state who recently received National Honours Awards from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for outstanding performance during their National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) year.

Otti made the announcement recently while hosting the honourees at his country home in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South. He also promised them cash rewards, describing their recognition as a source of pride to Abia State.

The Governor noted that though his administration had briefly lifted the embargo on recruitment to create opportunities for youths, the policy was later reinstated. However, he said exceptional cases such as the honourees

deserved special consideration.

He urged the awardees to continue to excel, stressing that dedication and service often open doors to greater opportunities. Otti also cited the example of Abia's Head of Service, Mr. Benson Ojeikere, who rose to prominence through meritorious NYSC service.

Presenting the honourees, NYSC State Coordinator, Mrs. Gladys Adama, said they were decorated by President Tinubu on July 29 for making Abia proud. She commended Governor Otti for his consistent support to the scheme.

Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, Mr. Nwogu Chinonso thanked the Governor for the gesture and assured that they would remain worthy ambassadors of the state.

Abia Assembly's Only APC Member Joins Labour Party

By Chukwuemeka Chijioke

In a dramatic political realignment, Hon. Barrister Anderson Kelechi Akaliro, the sole All Progressives Congress (APC) lawmaker in the Abia State House of Assembly, has defected to the Labour Party.

Akaliro, who represents the Ohuhu/Umuahia North State Constituency, announced his exit from the APC in a resignation letter to the party chairman in Umuahia North. He cited internal rancour, marginalisation, and repeated suspensions as reasons for his decision.

"The atmosphere within the party has become increasingly hostile and toxic. My decision to leave is not taken lightly, but it has become necessary for the



■ Hon. Anderson Kelechi Akaliro

continued effective representation of my constituents," the legislator stated.

His defection leaves the APC without a single seat in the 24-member Abia Assembly, further weakening the party's presence in a state where

politics has largely been dominated by the Labour Party (LP) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Political analysts describe the move as both symbolic and strategic, pointing to the Labour Party's rising influence in

the South-East since its strong showing in the 2023 elections.

A lawyer by profession and an advocate of youth empowerment, Akaliro has championed motions on infrastructure, public health, and education. Reactions from his constituents have been mixed, with some praising the switch as a step toward progress, while others view it as politically expedient.

A Labour Party source confirmed that Akaliro will be formally received into the party structure in Umuahia in the coming days.

With the 2027 elections approaching, his defection is expected to reshape political strategies and constituency alignments in Abia State.

Otti Confirms Resumption Date for 5,394 Teachers, Inspects Road Project

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, has announced that the 5,394 newly recruited teachers in the state will officially resume duties on September 22, coinciding with the reopening of schools for the new academic term.

Governor Otti made the disclosure recently during an unscheduled worship service at Salvation Ministries, Aba. He emphasized that the recruitment process was conducted transparently, based strictly on merit.

"In our recruitment, we hired 5,394 teachers, and they

will all resume on the 22nd of this month. There was no Governor's list, no Deputy Governor's list, no Senator's list. Everything was done transparently—application, test, interview, and selection," he told the congregation, to resounding applause.

The Governor stressed that merit-based appointments would remain the hallmark of his administration, noting that it would be unfair to place unqualified individuals above deserving candidates.

Otti also urged residents to safeguard public infrastructure, maintain a clean environment, and fulfil their civic obligations by paying taxes. He described taxation as "government's share of the prosperity it has created," adding that his administration would continue to apply fairness in revenue collection.

Commending Aba residents for appreciating the government's infrastructural efforts, the Governor disclosed that a grateful citizen recently donated N200 million to the state after a road project

restored access to his community.

Otti further encouraged citizens to participate in the ongoing continuous voter registration exercise, stressing that failure to vote amounts to "voting for the wrong person."

After the service, the Governor inspected the reconstruction of Ovom Street, which had been devastated by gully erosion, causing building collapses and displacing residents. He expressed satisfaction with the pace of work and assured that the project would be completed before year-end.

The Governor was accompanied by senior government officials and aides during the visit.

FG, Abia Govt Partner To Curb Proliferation Of Arms

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Dr. Otti emphasized that security remains central to his administration's policies, noting that regular security council meetings with agencies in the state have helped strengthen strategies against crime. He added that Abia also collaborates with neighbouring states to prevent criminals from finding safe havens after committing offences.

The Governor

commended the Federal Government for setting up the centre and expressed appreciation to President Bola Tinubu for appointing DIG Johnson Babatunde Kukum as its Director-General, expressing confidence in his capacity to deliver on the mandate.

Earlier, Captain Anusiem said his visit was part of a familiarisation tour following his recent posting to Enugu as Zonal

Director. He pledged to work with the Abia State Government to advance crime prevention initiatives and reaffirmed the agency's vision of building an arms-free society.

He lauded Governor Otti's strides in maintaining peace and security in the state and sought his support, stressing that addressing arms proliferation requires a collective effort.

Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Ijeoma Genevieve Nwaiwe, now wish to be known and addressed as SAM IJEOMA MARTIN. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

SAM IJEOMA MARTIN.

News

Dr. Oghonnaya Onu Polytechnic Ends Statements Of Result, Adopts Instant Certificate Issuance

By Chukwuemeka Chijioko

The Rector of Dr. Oghonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, Dr. Christopher Okoro, has introduced a landmark reform in the institution's graduation process by abolishing the issuance of statements of results and replacing them with immediate certificate issuance.

Speaking during a live programme on Don 103.7 FM, Umuahia, Dr. Okoro said the initiative eliminates the stress and financial burden students previously faced in returning to collect their certificates, a system he described as outdated and inconsistent with global best practices.

He disclosed that since assuming office, his administration has signed and issued over 15,000 certificates, averaging about 115 certificates daily.

The Rector further noted that while the reform has been widely welcomed by students and parents, it has disappointed individuals who exploited delays in the old system, describing them as "street urchins" who profited at the expense of graduates.

Dr. Okoro emphasized that the new process underscores his administration's commitment to transparency, efficiency, and student-friendly practices designed to reposition the Polytechnic for excellence.



Dr. Christopher Okoro

Relief To Households As Food Prices Drop In Rivers Market

By Nzeuzor Jane Port-Harcourt

After months of rising costs, residents of Port Harcourt are finally seeing relief as prices of staple foods fall across major markets. A market survey conducted at Mile 1, Mile 3, Slaughter, Crick Road, and Rumuokoro revealed significant reductions in rice, beans, garri, and other essentials.

Traders attributed the decline to improved supply chains and fresh local harvests. A 50kg bag of foreign rice, previously sold for N94,000, now costs N80,000, while local rice has dropped from N64,000 to N50,000. Similarly, beans prices have fallen sharply—from N150,000 to N105,000 per bag—while garri now goes for N55,000–N60,000, down from N90,000.

At Mile 3 Market, trader Mrs. Elizabeth Ukaegbu confirmed the reductions: "Company rice that was N95,000 is now N80,000. Local rice has dropped from N65,000 to N50,000. Iron white beans that sold for N150,000 is now N105,000. Even brown beans, once N200,000, is now N110,000."

Other staples also recorded declines. A bag of crayfish fell from N150,000 to N120,000, while onions dropped from N70,000–N50,000 to N30,000–N25,000. At Rumuokoro Market, palm oil prices slid from N65,000 to N60,000 per container, and groundnut oil fell from N70,000 to N58,000.

Consumers welcomed the change. Mrs. Florence Nwankwo, a resident, said:

"Last month, I couldn't afford beans because of the high price. Now, I can at least buy some for my family. I just pray it doesn't rise again."

Market analyst Dr. Samuel Okafor of the University of Port Harcourt explained that the decline is seasonal. "What we see now is largely due to the harvest period, especially for rice, beans, and garri. However, unless government addresses inflation, transport costs, and forex instability, the reductions may not last," he warned.

He stressed that long-term stability would require greater investment in agriculture, storage, and rural infrastructure.

For now, however, traders and consumers alike are breathing a sigh of relief as food becomes more affordable in Port Harcourt markets.



■ Food Items

Aba Recovers As Fuel Supply Stabilizes After NUPENG Strike

By Chinedu Kelechi and Onyema Chinaza, Aba

Normalcy is returning to Aba, Abia State, following the suspension of the nationwide strike by the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), which had triggered days of acute fuel scarcity.

During the strike, the city experienced skyrocketing pump prices, long queues at filling stations, and severe strain on businesses and transportation.

Mrs. Joy Chimezie, a trader who shuttles between

7Up and New Market, said the crisis took a heavy toll on small businesses. "The petrol scarcity affected everything. We paid more to move goods, and customers could not afford our prices. Now that the strike is over, things are easier for traders like me," she noted.

Transport workers also welcomed the relief. Mr. Dickson Uka, a tricycle operator, said the scarcity nearly crippled his work. "No petrol means no income. Even when we got fuel, it was too costly, and we had to hike fares. The suspension has

been a huge relief," he said.

Business owners were not spared. David, who operates a cybercafé at Obikabia Junction, explained that his services almost ground to a halt. "I run on petrol most of the time. Without it, I could barely function. Now, I can operate normally and keep prices affordable," he said.

With fuel supply easing, transport fares have dropped, businesses are bouncing back, and residents report a gradual return of economic stability. However, many remain cautious about the possibility of future disruptions.

Drug Abuse Crisis Worries Rivers Communities

From Jane Maduadugwo,

Drug abuse is fast becoming a public health and security crisis in Rivers State, sparking alarm among parents, students, and community leaders over its growing grip on young people.

What was once considered a fringe issue has spread into schools, homes, and neighborhoods across Port Harcourt, with visible consequences on education, family life, and public safety.

Mrs. Grace Okoro, a parent in Diobu, described the trend as heartbreaking. "We are losing our children to these things. Some parents don't even know their children are already into it because they hide it so well. Once they start, it affects their education and behavior at home. Parents must wake up before it is too late," she lamented.

Students also admit the lure of narcotics. Chinedu Eze, a Sociology undergraduate at the University of Port Harcourt, said many succumb to peer pressure and easy access. "Sometimes it starts as an experiment. Before you know it, the person is addicted. Some think it helps them study or makes them bold, but in the end, it damages them," he explained.

Community leaders are urging collective responsibility. Chief Baridam Nwinee of Borokiri said traditional institutions and residents must work with authorities. "We cannot leave this fight to NDLEA alone. Communities must expose the dealers and users instead of shielding them. If we keep quiet, tomorrow our community will pay the price," he warned.

Security experts link rising crime, cultism, and robbery in Rivers to drug use. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) confirmed the spread, describing it as a ticking time bomb. Assistant Commander of Narcotics, James Awoji, identified Borokiri—popularly called Abuja Down—as a hotspot.

"They do drugs on the streets and even in their houses. Most users are youths, including students. Men often introduce females, and when women get involved, they consume more because of anxiety," Awoji said.

He also noted traffickers' new tactics, such as using dispatch riders and online platforms. "Some drugs are disguised as food, even wrapped like shawarma. Dispatch riders must be vigilant and not accept suspicious packages," he cautioned.

While assuring that surveillance and enforcement are ongoing, Awoji stressed that the NDLEA cannot win the fight alone. "Parents must talk to their children, schools and communities must act, and religious leaders must speak out. Everyone's hands must be on deck," he said.

Analysts warn that without urgent action, the menace could escalate into a nationwide emergency with dire consequences for public health, education, and security.

News

Rivers Begins Transition To Democratic Governance As Emergency Rule Ends

By Nzezor Jane

The Rivers State Government has announced the commencement of a transition from emergency rule to democratic governance, nearly six months after a state of emergency was declared.

In a statement issued by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Prof. Ibibia Lucky Worika, made available to newsmen, stakeholders were invited to an interdenominational church thanksgiving service to mark the beginning of the transition process.

The service is scheduled to hold on Sunday, September 14, at the Ecumenical Centre, Abonima Wharf Road, Port Harcourt, by 10:00 a.m., with guests expected to be seated by 9:30 a.m.

Those invited include permanent secretaries, local government chairmen, heads of security and paramilitary agencies, traditional rulers, chairmen and members of boards and governing councils, as well as captains of industry. The state's Administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (Rtd), will serve as Special Guest of Honour.

The move comes after President Bola Tinubu, in a nationwide broadcast on March 18, declared a state of emergency in Rivers State at the height of a political crisis between Governor Siminalayi Fubara and the Minister Of The Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike.

At the time, Tinubu accused Governor Fubara of ordering the demolition of the State House of Assembly and subsequently suspended him, along with his deputy, Ngozi Odu, for six months. All elected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly were also suspended, with Vice Admiral Ibas appointed as sole administrator.

Tensions in the state eased in June following a reconciliation between Wike and Fubara during a meeting with President Tinubu in Abuja. Since then, Wike has regained firm control of the state's political structure, further strengthened by the recent local government elections in which his allies swept all available seats.

With the expiration of the emergency rule, the Rivers State Government says the thanksgiving service is part of activities to formally usher in the return of democratic governance.



Wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, with 1000 indigent school children showcasing their learning materials during its Back-to-School Outreach Programme

1,000 Abia Pupils Benefit From Safe Tent Care Back-To-School Outreach

By Chibunna Ikeokwu

The Safe Tent Care Initiative Foundation, led by the wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has distributed learning materials to 1000 indigent school children in the state under its Back-to-School outreach programme.

The beneficiaries received school bags, exercise books, mathematical sets, colour pencils, food flasks, and

water bottles to support their return to school.

Mrs. Otti, who is also the foundation's President, said the initiative was designed to ease the burden on parents and ensure pupils are better prepared for academic activities.

"This is just the first edition of our Back-to-School outreach, and we are committed to expanding it until every school child in Abia is reached. It aligns with Governor Otti's vision of free and compulsory

education for all," she stated.

She commended the Abia State Ministry of Education and the State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) for partnering in the exercise and urged the children to value the materials as tools to improve themselves through learning.

The Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Aglukwa, described the gesture as a demonstration of Mrs. Otti's commitment to education, while ASUBEB Chairperson,

Mrs. Lydia Onuoha, noted that it was a major relief for mothers.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Poverty Alleviation, Mrs. Ngozi Felix, and the Commissioner for Basic Education, Elder Goodluck Ubochi, represented by Mr. Kenechukwu Nwosu, said the outreach went beyond material aid as it restored the dignity of education and renewed hope for children across the state.

Abia Agric Commissioner Meets IDA Umuahia Delegation

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, has assured the Item Development Association (IDA), Umuahia Branch, of the government's commitment to improving rural infrastructure and boosting agricultural productivity in the state.

Dr. Agbaeze gave the assurance when he received a delegation from the association, led by its chairman, Surveyor Ralph Owo, during a courtesy visit to his office.

The delegation congratulated the commissioner on his appointment and pledged their support for his leadership and the agricultural reforms of Governor Alex Otti's Administration. They also highlighted pressing needs in their communities, including the rehabilitation of farm and feeder roads particularly the Amaokwe-Akanu-Okai-Akaze road revitalization of the dormant Veterinary Clinic, and revival of the Abia Golden Chicken Farm

in Okoko Item.

Surveyor Owo noted that restoring rural infrastructure would ease the movement of farm produce to markets and reinforce Item's position as a key agricultural hub. Responding, Dr. Agbaeze thanked the association for its solidarity and assured that government had already initiated plans to address some of the issues raised. He reaffirmed his commitment to the welfare of farmers and urged continued collaboration with community leaders to

achieve the administration's agricultural goals.

The commissioner also encouraged the people of Item and Abians at large to take part in the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise, describing the voter's card as a vital tool for ensuring sustainable development. Prominent members of the delegation included Super High Chief Kingsley Ogba Nwokoro (Ofiaukwu Item), Chief Emmanuel Igwe, and Comrade Sunny Ogele, among others.

Editorial

Rising Waters, Failing Systems

Every year, Nigeria is confronted with the same grim story: heavy rains, swelling rivers, and devastated communities. Flooding has become a recurring nightmare, and 2025 has been no exception. Entire communities in Niger, Kogi, Anambra, and parts of the North have been submerged, families displaced, farmlands destroyed, and critical infrastructure damaged beyond repair. Sadly, this tragedy has now become so routine that we seem almost resigned to it—yet it is precisely this complacency that makes each disaster more painful than the last.

The human and economic toll of these floods is staggering. Farmers who invested their sweat and savings have seen their crops drown, aggravating Nigeria's already fragile food security. Thousands of households have been displaced, with families forced into makeshift shelters where poor hygiene often breeds disease. Children have been pushed out of schools as classrooms double as relief camps, while vital roads and bridges have been cut off, paralyzing trade and transport. Hospitals, already struggling with limited resources, have been overwhelmed. Beyond the immediate suffering, the ripple effects—rising poverty, hunger, and declining productivity—will haunt the nation long after the floodwaters recede.

We must admit a bitter truth: flooding in Nigeria is no longer merely an act of nature. It is, in many ways, a reflection of our collective failure as a people and as a government. Meteorological Agencies regularly issue forecasts, and experts raise alarms, yet year after year we fail to act in advance. Instead of embracing proactive solutions, we respond with sympathy visits, ad-hoc relief materials, and political promises. This reactive cycle has left us unprepared, vulnerable, and perpetually overwhelmed.

We must change course. What Nigeria needs is a comprehensive, dynamic, and coordinated national flood management strategy. This begins with investment in resilient infrastructure—dams, levees, drainage systems, and embankments capable of controlling excess water. Our rivers must be dredged regularly, while drainage channels in urban centers

should be maintained and expanded to accommodate rising volumes of rainfall. We cannot continue to allow gutters clogged with refuse to become death traps during the rainy season.

Equally important is the enforcement of urban planning and land-use regulations. Too many Nigerians build on floodplains, obstruct natural waterways, and occupy areas clearly designated as unsafe. We cannot afford to tolerate this recklessness any longer. Government Agencies must ensure that zoning laws are respected, and violators penalized. When we look the other way, we invite disaster.

Environmental stewardship is another critical pillar of flood mitigation. Deforestation has stripped our land of natural buffers that absorb rainfall, leaving communities exposed. We must commit to aggressive tree planting and reforestation programs while also addressing the menace of indiscriminate waste disposal. Every plastic bag or refuse dump that blocks a drainage system increases the likelihood of flooding. This is why we must embrace public enlightenment campaigns that stress communal responsibility. Each of us has a role to play in protecting our environment.

At the same time, early warning systems must be strengthened. Technology exists to predict rainfall intensity and river overflow with accuracy, but information is only useful if it reaches vulnerable communities in time. We must ensure that citizens are not only warned but also provided with evacuation plans, designated shelters, and adequate relief facilities. Preparation saves lives.

Climate change has worsened the scale and unpredictability of rainfall, and Nigeria cannot afford to be caught unprepared. While the world debates climate policies, we must act locally. A national emergency framework that brings together federal, state, and local governments, alongside civil society, the private sector, and international partners, is urgently required. Flood management is too complex to be left to chance; it requires coordination, planning, and sustained investment.

We must no longer treat flooding as a seasonal inconvenience. It is a national emergency that demands a dynamic, proactive approach. The consequences of inaction are too grave: destroyed homes, ruined farms, wasted investments, and shattered hopes. As a people, we must resolve to now, not tomorrow, not when the next disaster strikes, but today.

If we fail to take bold, coordinated steps, the rising waters will continue to wash away not only our homes and farmlands but also our collective dreams of security, prosperity, and sustainable development.

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

Inflation Easing, But Prices Still High

Dear Editor,

The recent announcement that Nigeria's inflation has eased for the fifth consecutive month, dropping to 20.12% in August from 21.88% in July, no doubt appears encouraging at first glance. On paper, it suggests that government efforts to stabilize the economy are beginning to bear fruit. However, for ordinary Nigerians, the reality remains unchanged: prices of essential goods are still painfully high, and the cost of living continues to squeeze households to breaking point.

While it is true that food inflation is no longer climbing as steeply, the slowdown offers little comfort to families struggling to buy rice, bread, beans, or cooking oil. The average market visit today leaves shoppers spending more but taking home less. Workers' salaries remain stagnant, purchasing power is weak, and many households have been forced into desperate adjustments—reducing meals, cutting back on education costs, or abandoning basic healthcare. For the poor, inflation is not a statistic but a daily battle for survival.

This disconnect between national figures and lived experience highlights the urgent need for policies that address root causes rather than symptoms. The government must step up efforts to support local agriculture, as food production remains key to stabilizing prices. Farmers should be empowered with inputs, affordable credit, and access to modern storage and irrigation facilities. Improved transportation and market linkages are equally vital to ensure food gets to consumers without excessive middlemen costs.

Furthermore, attention must be given to energy and fuel costs, which directly influence the price of goods and services. Stabilizing these sectors would help reduce the ripple effect of rising expenses on households. Equally important is a review of wages and salaries. It is unrealistic to expect workers to cope when incomes have remained stagnant in the face of spiraling living costs.

Inflation easing is good news, but it must translate into real relief for ordinary citizens. Until Nigerians can afford basic necessities without anguish, such statistics will remain hollow victories. The ultimate measure of economic progress is not in percentages but in the dignity and well-being of citizens.

Okenwa, Adaku Jane
Umuahia, Abia State

Special Interview

Abia in Safe Hands Under Gov Otti – Nwokochah

Abia State, 34 years of existence and two years of Governor Alex Chioma Otti's reform-driven leadership have been an issue of public interest as attention shifts to the tier of government closest to the people – the local government system. At the heart of this structure lies the Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), an institution that shapes the efficiency, professionalism, and delivery of services across the 17 Local Government Areas of the state.

Steering this critical engine of grassroots governance is Elder Nwokochah James Ebere (JP), Chairman of the Commission. Known for his calm but firm administrative style, Elder Nwokochah with his team, has brought renewed energy into repositioning the LGSC as a vehicle for accountability, capacity development, and staff welfare. The Commission aligns seamlessly with Governor Otti's "Rebuild Abia" agenda, ensuring that governance is not only seen at the top but also felt at the grassroots. In this exclusive interview with the Editor, *National Ambassador Newspapers*; Deacon Chukwuemeka Egejuru, Elder Nwokochah speaks on the progress so far, the challenges of grassroots administration, and his vision for a revitalized local government system that truly serves the people of Abia State.

Excerpt:

Abia State is 34 years old. Looking back, how would you assess the growth and challenges of the local government system since the creation of the state in 1991?

The local government system in Abia has come a long way since 1991. From very modest beginnings, we have seen gradual improvements in infrastructure, human capacity, and service delivery at the grassroots. However, challenges have persisted particularly issues of inadequate funding, manpower gaps, and sometimes politicization of the system. What is most encouraging is that each administration has contributed in its own way, and today, under the watch of Governor Alex Otti, we are experiencing a holistic reform-driven push to reposition local governments as true engines of grassroots development.

In what ways has the Local Government Service Commission contributed to the overall development of Abia State?

The Commission is essentially the human resource manager of the third tier of government. Our contribution has been to ensure that the right people are recruited, trained, and properly deployed to serve Abians at the grassroots. Beyond personnel management, we have taken steps to instill professionalism, accountability, and welfare support for staff so that they are motivated to deliver quality services. A well-trained and committed workforce is the foundation of sustainable development, and that is where our impact is most visible. Governor Alex Otti's administration in two years has done so much in this direction and workers should reciprocate with more commitment.

Since the assumption of office by Governor Alex Chioma Otti, two years ago, what significant reforms or changes have been introduced in the local government system?

Governor Otti's administration has brought unprecedented reforms. First, there has been a deliberate emphasis on transparency and accountability ensuring that local government funds are utilized for the people. Second, staff welfare has been prioritized, with prompt payment of salaries and pensions. Third, a strong emphasis is now placed on merit, discipline, and professionalism within the system, regardless of where any worker is coming from in line with the unified system. These reforms are changing the narrative of local government administration in Abia.

How has the Governor's "Rebuild Abia" agenda influenced the operations and priorities of the LGSC?

The "Rebuild Abia" agenda is our guiding compass. It emphasizes rebuilding

institutions, not just infrastructure. At the LGSC, this means building a workforce that is efficient, honest, and people-centered. We are aligning our operations to ensure that the local government system reflects the Governor's vision of service delivery, accountability, and grassroots development.

What specific improvements have you observed in staff welfare, capacity building, and efficiency within the local government service under this administration?

The difference is clear. Staff are now more motivated because they receive their



▪ Elder Nwokochah James Ebere (JP)

salaries and pensions promptly.

Also as I speak, the Commission, in line with Gov. Otti's administration vision, have started rolling out structured training programmes, some in collaboration with external partners. There is a renewed culture of discipline and performance monitoring, which is gradually improving service delivery at the grassroots. Local Government Autonomy and Service Delivery.

Local governments are often described as the closest tier of government to the people. How is the Commission ensuring that LGAs in Abia truly deliver grassroots governance?

By focusing on manpower and professionalism. We will ensure that qualified staff are recruited once there is a need for recruitment and deployed where their services are most needed.

There is no doubt that the 17 LG councils are meaningfully being engaged in the transformational agenda of His Excellency, in terms of infrastructure, human capacity development among others.

What is the Commission doing to strengthen transparency, accountability, and professionalism among local government staff?

We have introduced stricter monitoring and evaluation systems, regular audits of staff performance, and disciplinary measures for misconduct. Equally important, we are rewarding excellence to encourage professionalism. Our goal is to create a culture where public servants see themselves as accountable to the people, by changing their awkward orientation.

How are issues of ghost workers, redundancy, and manpower gaps being addressed?

Gov. Otti's administration has taken a firm stand on ghost workers. The Commission has put in place a panel to fish out ghost workers and defaulters of biometric offences from the system. Investigation is ongoing.

We have conducted verification exercises to clean up the payroll. Redundancy is being managed through redeployment and retraining, while manpower gaps are gradually being handled. Capacity Building and Human Capital Development is indeed the Commission's watch word.

What training and retraining opportunities are being provided for local

What are the biggest challenges facing the Local Government Service Commission today, and how are you addressing them?

Funding and infrastructure deficits have been major constraints before now. Resistance to change on the path of the workforce has also been a challenge to the system.

Gladly enough, our Governor, has taken care of all these sufficiently but like Oliver Twist the Commission still expects more.

We are also tackling them head-on through prioritization, partnerships, and continuous sensitization of staff through training and retraining workshops.

How is the Commission collaborating with other government agencies and stakeholders to achieve its mandate?

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. We work closely with the Ministry of Local Government, the Office of the Head of Service, training institutes, and even civil society organizations. These partnerships help us broaden our reach, improve capacity building, and enhance service delivery.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for the LGSC and the local government system in Abia in the next 5-10 years?

The greatest problem the system will have is if there is lack of sustainability and momentum. The strength of every system lies in the quality of her leadership.

That's why Abians at home and diaspora should pray earnestly for our amiable Governor and pragmatic leader so that God will touch his heart to sustain this divine mandate.

My vision is to build a fully professionalized, technology-driven, and people-oriented local government system. In 5-10 years, I want to see our LGAs function as true engines of grassroots development where citizens can feel the presence of government in their daily lives.

If you were to highlight one key legacy you wish to leave as Chairman of the Commission, what would it be?

A legacy of being proactive, accountable, people-centeredness and professionalism oriented.

Also, I want to be remembered as the Chairman, who repositioned the LGSC into a truly modern, people-focused institution that restored confidence in local government administration.

Finally, what's your overall assessment of Governor Otti?

I must sincerely thank God for blessing Abia with a man of vision, integrity, and courage like His Excellency, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR. He came at a time when the state was in dire need of purposeful leadership and has since demonstrated uncommon commitment to rebuilding Abia on the path of transparency, accountability, and progress.

Governor Otti is not only salvaging the state from years of decay but is also laying solid foundations for sustainable development. His emphasis on prudence in managing resources, prompt payment of workers' salaries and pensions, infrastructural renewal, and institutional reforms are clear testimonies of his resolve to make governance truly serve the people.

As we celebrate Abia's 34th anniversary of statehood, I, on behalf of the Local Government Service Commission, extend heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency. I also urge all Abians at home and in the diaspora to continue supporting him in prayers and deeds, so that the good work he has started will be sustained.

Without mincing words, I can boldly say that Abia is in safe hands under Governor Otti.



Abia State Government
Ministry of Power and Public Utilities
No 1 Isama Afara Road • Umuahia, Abia State • Nigeria

REF: MPPU/AD/574/3

Supply of Distribution Transformers

The Abia State Ministry of Power and Public Utilities (MPPU) invite qualified Original Equipment Manufacturers of Distribution Transformers to submit their tender as per the following listed scope and conditions of supply.

Scope of the Tender

Tenderer are invited for the design, manufacture, testing and supply of 11/0.416 Kilovolt & 33KV /0. 416 Kilovolt oil immersed copper winding outdoor type (Directly under the sun) transformers to be supplied with all necessary fittings, accessories off-load tap changer, insulating oil and spare parts . . . etc.

The transformer is to be hermetically sealed (without conservator tank) bolted cover with bushing insulators on both H.T and L.T sides for the following ratings: 300 and 500 KVA. For >1000 kVA should be plug in type (according to the tender requirements), a valid ISO 9001 certificate required.

LOT 1:

S/N	Transformer Capacity	UOM	Quantity	Unit Price (Naira)	Total Price (Naira)
1	300KVA, 11/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	12		
2	300KVA, 33/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	30		
3	500KVA, 11/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	20		
4	500KVA, 33/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	38		
TOTAL			100		

LOT 2:

S/N	Transformer Capacity	UOM	Quantity	Unit Price (Naira)	Total Price (Naira)
1	1MVA, 33/.400KV Distribution Transformer 100% Copper Winding	Unit	1		
2	500KVA, 11/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	5		
3	500KVA, 33/.400KV distribution transformer 100% Copper winding	Unit	10		
TOTAL			16		

General Requirements: Standards IEC 60296

The transformers shall be of first-class quality and design for continuous satisfactory operation as continuity of supply is of prime consideration. The design shall allow all necessary precaution for the safety of operation and maintenance personnel. The transformers shall operate satisfactorily under variations of load, voltage or short circuit or other conditions which may occur on the system provided that these variations are within the assigned rating of the apparatus. All the equipment shall be designed to obviate the risk of accidental short circuit.

Submission of Proposal

All proposals must be submitted by Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) on payment of non-refundable tender fees and received by the office of Head of Planning, Ministry of Power and Public Utilities, Umuahia, Abia State by hardcopies or / and electronic file via email: projects.mppu@abiastate.gov.ng or saved on USB with password of their proposals.no later than 2:00 pm on the 29th of September 2025.

PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

1. All Interested OEM must submit their proposal in two (2) hard copies with company profile based in Nigeria.
2. Evidence of tax payment for 3 years or tax clearance certificate.
3. Evidence of registration with CAC Evidence of Registration with Abia State Government via the Due Process Office.
4. The company must have a functional service workshop in Nigeria with proof.
5. Evidence of Financial Capacity to execute this project (3 years financial statements).
6. Evidence of appropriate insurance coverage for the project, including liability and performance bonds.
7. Bidders must submit the company's Health, Safety and Environment Plan.
8. Letter of Recommendation from the Bank

Yours faithfully,

Engr Ikechukwu Monday
Hon. Commissioner for Power and Public Utilities



Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike
+2348037744514

FIRS, EFCC Deepen Collaboration To Tackle Tax Evasion, Boost Revenue

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration aimed at improving tax compliance and safeguarding Nigeria's public revenue.

The renewed partnership was sealed during a courtesy visit by the FIRS Executive Chairman, Dr. Zacch Adedeji, to the EFCC headquarters in Abuja on Wednesday.

Dr. Adedeji stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation in sustaining financial stability and building public trust in the revenue system.

"We cannot pursue 200 million Nigerians individually to do the right thing, but we want to put a system in place that will aid compliance," he said, urging the EFCC's support in enforcing tax obligations and sanctioning defaulters.

He further noted that voluntary compliance would only improve if citizens saw visible results from tax revenues. "The best advertisement for compliance is when people begin to see what we use the money for," he said, highlighting EFCC's role in supporting FIRS's Department of Fraud Risk, Assessment, and Control.

Adedeji credited Nigeria's ability to meet its revenue targets to preventive strategies and robust partnerships with agencies like the EFCC, describing it as a "collective achievement."

In his response, EFCC Chairman, Mr. Ola Olukoyede, assured Dr. Adedeji of the Commission's unwavering collaboration, stressing that both institutions share a common goal of strengthening Nigeria's financial system through accountability and compliance.

The renewed partnership is expected to drive stricter enforcement, discourage tax evasion, and improve revenue mobilisation nationwide.

Minister Hails Hilda Baci's Guinness World Record Bid

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has applauded Nigerian celebrity chef, Hilda Baci, for her ongoing attempt to set a new Guinness World Record by cooking the world's largest pot of jollof rice.

In a statement on Saturday, the Minister described Hilda's effort as not only a display of culinary excellence but also a bold showcase of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage on the global stage.

"Hilda Baci continues to demonstrate the spirit of resilience, innovation, and cultural pride that defines Nigeria. Her attempt at cooking the largest pot of jollof rice is a unifying moment for our country and a reflection of the creativity of our youth," Idris said.

The Minister further praised Baci for using food as a tool for national identity, noting that jollof rice, one of West Africa's most popular dishes, remains a symbol of unity and celebration in Nigeria.

Hilda Baci, who gained international recognition after breaking the Guinness World Record for the longest cooking marathon in 2023, is once again drawing massive public and media attention with her latest challenge. Supporters, including fans, fellow chefs, and cultural enthusiasts, have gathered to cheer her on as she attempts the feat.

Idris encouraged Nigerians at home and in the diaspora to rally behind Baci, stressing that her effort reflects the country's soft power potential and strengthens Nigeria's place in global conversations about culture and creativity.

If successful, the attempt will mark another milestone achievement for the 28-year-old chef, further cementing her status as one of Nigeria's culinary icons.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Nigeria Records N7.46tn Trade Surplus In Q2, Up 44% – NBS

Nigeria's trade balance improved significantly in the second quarter of 2025, as the country recorded a N7.46 trillion trade surplus, representing a 44.31 per cent increase compared to the first quarter of the year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

In its latest report on foreign trade in goods, the NBS said total merchandise trade stood at #38.04 trillion in Q2 2025. This figure represents a 20.05 per cent increase compared to #31.68 trillion in the corresponding period of 2024, and a 5.59 per cent rise from #36.02 trillion in Q1 2025.

Exports remained the main driver of the improved trade position, accounting for 59.81 per cent of total trade with a value of #22.75 trillion. This marked a 28.43 per cent jump from #17.71 trillion in Q2 2024 and a 10.45 per cent increase over #20.60 trillion in the previous quarter.

Crude oil exports continued to dominate, contributing #11.97 trillion or 52.60 per cent of total exports. Non-crude oil exports were valued at #10.78 trillion (47.40 per cent), of which non-oil products such as manufactured goods and agricultural produce contributed #3.05 trillion, equivalent to 13.39 per cent of total exports.

On the other hand, imports accounted for 40.19 per cent of total trade, valued at #15.29 trillion. This represented a 9.43 per cent increase

compared to #13.97 trillion recorded in Q2 2024, but reflected a slight decline of 0.90 per cent from #15.43 trillion in Q1 2025.

The positive trade balance, according to analysts, signals stronger external earnings for Nigeria amid global

demand for crude oil and a gradual rise in non-oil exports. However, they caution that the country remains highly vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices.

The NBS report underscores the Federal Government's ongoing efforts to diversify the

economy. With non-oil exports contributing over 13 per cent of total exports, experts say the figures show gradual progress in reducing dependence on crude oil, though more investment in manufacturing, agriculture, and solid minerals is needed to consolidate gains.

FCT Partners APSON To Strengthen Paediatric Surgical Care

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Chief Nyesom Wike, has pledged the administration's support for the Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Nigeria (APSON) in a bid to strengthen paediatric surgical services across the territory.

Wike, who was represented by the Minister of State for the FCT, Dr. Mariya Mahmud Bunkure, gave the assurance at the opening of APSON's 24th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference held in Abuja on Thursday.

In his remarks, Prof. Philip Mshelbwala, chairman of the local organising committee, raised concerns over the glaring shortage of paediatric surgeons in the region. According to him, the FCT and neighbouring Nasarawa State have only 15 paediatric surgeons catering to a population of 4.3 million people – more than half of whom are children. He stressed the urgency of bridging this workforce gap to meet rising healthcare needs.

Dr. Bunkure acknowledged the challenges confronting the sector, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited manpower, and high costs of care. She said the FCT administration was committed to expanding access to quality healthcare, strengthening referral systems, and ensuring timely surgical interventions for children in

both urban and rural areas.

The Minister commended APSON's role in advancing training, research, and mentorship, and urged stronger collaboration between paediatric surgeons, family physicians, and community health workers to reduce late presentation of surgical cases.

Delivering the keynote address, Dr. Paul Manyo Dogo, called for paediatric surgery to be formally prioritised in Nigeria's Health Sector Strategic Blueprint. He argued that such inclusion would not only secure dedicated funding but also guarantee implementation across state and local levels.

On his part, Dr. Chris Isokpunwu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Steel Development, who chaired the event, urged APSON to focus on grooming young surgeons while continuing to advocate for better infrastructure and financing to improve paediatric care nationwide.

Prof. Mshelbwala expressed optimism that the conference would foster knowledge sharing and capacity building, ultimately strengthening paediatric surgical services across the country.

The three-day conference brings together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to deliberate on emerging challenges and opportunities in paediatric surgery.

Religion

Engaging the Power of Sanctification for Fulfillment of Destiny!

By Bishop David Oyedepo

From scriptures, we understand that every child of God is ordained a global and mountaintop citizen. As it is written: And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:29; see also Matthew 5:14; Deuteronomy 28:1; Genesis 28:14). That means we are ordained to bless and not to be a burden to our world. However, to fulfil that glorious, colourful and enviable destiny, certain things must be in place. Among these is sanctification; which is living to please God. Please understand that sanctification is a spiritual catalyst for the fulfilment of destiny. The Bible says: Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14:34). In other words, it takes sanctification to go up and stay up. Samson went up by sanctification; but came down by desecration (Judges 13:3-5, 16:1-30). Also, remember Solomon loved many strange women and he ended up in a shrine (1 Kings 11:1-6). That establishes the fact that, destiny is at a risk

without sanctification. We must understand that sanctification is the will of God for us. For it is written: For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4).

How, then does Sanctification enhance the Fulfillment of Destiny?

1. It is required for Answered Prayers: To fulfil our glorious destinies, prayers are required. It is important to know that we need sanctification to qualify for answers on the prayer altar (Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18). However, one interesting thing about our God is that, any time we repent of our sins, He forgives us as if we never did it (Psalm 66:19-20).
2. It enhances our access to Revelations: Access to revelation requires sanctification and revelation is buying into the heart of God on the issues of the hour (Psalm 25:14). Joseph had abundant access to the secrets of God and he had an enviable destiny. It was said of him that forasmuch as God has shown him all these

things, he was in another class (Genesis 41:37-40). After he had revealed himself to his brethren, he said, 'But I fear God' (Genesis 42:18). Also, his reverence for God's laws prevented him from sleeping with Potiphar's wife.

3. For Next-Levels of Anointing: Anointing is a requirement for the fulfilment of destiny and access to it is by sanctification. Furthermore, anointing that is not regularly topped up will culminate in loss of impact. This requires daily desperation for sanctification. Also, it takes fresh Oil to command fresh impact (Psalm 92:10; Luke 5:37-38). As we all know, if we don't change the oil in our

car, the engine will soon knock. It is walking in the newness of life that guarantees access to fresh Oil (Proverbs 1:23; Psalm 45:7).
4. For Security of Destiny: Many great destinies in scriptures crashed for lack of sanctification. Think of Achan, who saw a wedge of gold, coveted and took it into his tent, dug the ground and kept it there. That singular act of lack of self-control ended his destiny, and that of his entire family (Joshua 7:19-26). However, there are three forces that truncate destinies (1 John 2:15-17).

- a. The lust of the flesh (1 Kings 11:1-6; Genesis 39:7-12, 41:38-44).

- b. The lust of the eyes (2 Kings 5:22-27).

- c. The pride of life (Proverbs 16:18).

5. For Security of Posterity: Our uprightness is the security of our generation (Psalm 112:1-2). Our walk today determines the blessings that follow our children tomorrow (Proverbs 20:7). So, stop playing games!
6. To Secure Eternity with Christ: We need sanctification, so we can make heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Channels through which the Holy Ghost sanctifies us
1. By the Impartation of the Spirit of Holiness: This impartation could come to us directly, as we crave and thirst for Him (Luke 11:13). We can also access impartation of that Spirit through apostolic and prophetic ministries (Romans 1:11).

2. By the Revelation of the Truth: It is so important to know that revelation empowers for sanctification and the Holy Ghost is our access to revelation. That means He enhances our access to sanctification (John 17:17; Psalm 19:7-9, 119:9-11).

3. By the Release of the Spirit of Prayer and Supplications: Prayer is a channel for overcoming temptations. In Matthew 26:41-44, the

disciples could not pray because their flesh was weak. So, the Holy Ghost empowers us on the prayer altar, so we can overcome temptations, day and night. And He also empowers us to pray the transfiguration prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26-27).

In conclusion, please understand that destiny is at a risk without sanctification. Solomon lost it all. Samson became a toy in the hands of his enemies; they plucked out his two eyes and asked him to dance for them. Judas, a disciple also lost it. Achan lost his entire lineage. Gehazi became leprous. In weakness, they all crashed; but we shall not crash! We shall all fulfil destiny in grand style in Jesus' name!

However, you must be born again to experience sanctification. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You Jesus for saving me! Now I know I am born again!"

After he had revealed himself to his brethren, he said, 'But I fear God' (Genesis 42:18).

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

I will be sharing on, **Enjoying Honour in Marriage**. It is very important for you to know that marriage is the foundation of the family and the family is close to the heart of God.

The analogy between the church and the family in Ephesians 5:22-32 shows the place of the family in the heart of God. Marriage is very close to the heart of God. That is why this end-time, before Jesus returns, there will be perfection of the families of believers that will allow the power of the Word of God to bring them to the place of excellence and honour. I believe your marriage will be a part of it in Jesus' name!

In Hebrews 13:4 the Bible says: Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled, the whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Marriage is honourable not only in some things, but in all things. It is not instituted by God to bring you into a life of misery, but to bring honour to your life - spirit, soul, and body.

SPIRITUALLY

The Bible says in Proverbs 27:17: Iron

sharpeneth iron.... As long as you keep helping each other, your spiritual life will always be better. Personally, I know what my spiritual life was like before I got married and what it is now. The difference is like heaven to earth and that is the same testimony God wants to give to you.

Some Christians say, "When I was single, my spiritual life was better, I was able to concentrate on the things of God but now that I am married, I don't know what is going on". If you are in that condition, I must tell you, that it is not God's will for you. God did not put you into marriage to make your spiritual life suffer. No matter what negative things you have heard about marriage, or even seen around you or read in books, you can count on God's Word which says that marriage is honourable in all. If something is evil, can you say that thing is honourable at the same time? The answer is 'No.' The fact that you have been having ugly experiences in marriage does not cancel the Word of the Lord. Marriage is honourable in all, the devil notwithstanding!

MENTALLY:

Marriage is meant to bring honour in the realm of

your mind. By this, I mean the way you reason, or think, your affections, desires and the kind of choices that you make. That is why Ecclesiastes 4:9-11 says: Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how

even in the realm of your mind, marriage is meant to bring honour to you.

One way to rub your mind with that of your spouse, either your husband or wife, is through communication. If you are living under the same roof like cat and rat, with nothing in common, no discussion of ideas and each one going in different directions, you cannot affect each other. It is possible for two pieces of iron to lie together, but as long as

together, you are not married partners, but mere roommates! If communication has broken down in your home, God will restore it in the name of Jesus. Don't just take decisions on your own, rub your minds with each other for betterment.

PHYSICALLY

Marriage is also meant to bring you honour physically. It is not meant to demote, but to promote you. For instance, when you enjoy your husband's support, it is like a supernatural force giving you the power and the physical strength to succeed. That is the honour that God has designed for marriage, finding effect and fulfillment in your life. Below is a testimony of the proof that marriage is meant to bring honour in all realms:

"When Pastor (Mrs.) Faith Oyedepo taught us the course, Family Life, in the Word of Faith Bible Institute, one would have thought that she had secretly conducted a research on me, because every aspect of the lecture had to do with my life in one way or the other, positively or negatively.

After the second day of the lectures, I got home and saw that my wife had to carry 20 crates of soft drinks down the road, while she was busy preparing dinner. Unknown

to her, I packed all the crates into my car and took them there for her.

When I got to our gate, behold, my wife was at the door, and seeing that I had packed all the crates, she started singing and dancing! For peace to reign, that was all the service I needed to have rendered in my family. Since then, it has been tranquility, joy and peace galore!" David, D.

Honour in marriage is the heritage of every believer. Therefore, if you are not born again and want to be born again, then confess your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour by saying this prayer:

"Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You today as a sinner. Forgive me of my sins. I believe You died and rose on the third day for my sins. I accept You as my Lord and Saviour. Make me a child of God today. Thank You for accepting me into Your Kingdom."

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

Congratulations! You are now born again! All-round rest and peace are guaranteed you, in Jesus' Name.



can one be warm alone?

As a married couple, both of you are expected to rub your heads together, to rub your minds with one another. As you do that, iron is sharpening iron and life is getting better for you. So,

there is no rubbing of one with the other, no sharpening effect will take place.

It is not enough to be married and live together, sleep on the same bed and go to the same church. If there is no avenue to rub your minds

Photos Speak



R-L Chief Leo Okoye; Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti; Senator Darlington Nwokocha; and Member representing Ikwuano/Umuahia at the House of Representatives, Hon. Obi Aguocha — during the Aba Stakeholders Security Trust Fundraising Luncheon held at the Aba Sports Club, Aba.



Governor Alex Otti shares a warm handshake with the resident pastor of Salvation Ministries, located at 135 Okigwe Road, Aba, during an unannounced visit to the church for worship.



Governor Alex Otti (center) joined other worshipers during a church service at Salvation Ministries, located at 135 Okigwe Road, Aba, during an unannounced visit.



Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti (centre); Ide John Udeagbala (2nd right), Chief Leo Okoye (3rd right); Senator Darlington Nwokocha (3rd left); Hon. Obi Aguocha (2nd left); and others, during the Aba Stakeholders Security Trust Fund raising Luncheon held at the Aba Sports Club, Aba.



L-R Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti; Senator Darlington Nwokocha, Hon. Obi Aguocha, Member representing Ikwuano/Umuahia at the House of Representatives during the funeral service of Engr. Chinwendu Chianalam Ememanka, held at St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Umule, Aba.



Governor Alex Otti, seated among mourners, attended the burial ceremony of the late Ezinne Grace Oyidie, who was laid to rest in her hometown of Amuvi, Arochukwu, in Arochukwu Local Government Area. The Governor's presence underscored his respect for the departed matriarch and solidarity with the grieving family and community.



Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, extends his condolences to the Ememanka family during the funeral service of Engr. Chinwendu Chianalam Ememanka, held at St. Augustine's Anglican Church, Umule, Aba. The Governor joined other dignitaries, friends, and well-wishers to pay his respects and offer support to the bereaved family.



A cross-section of distinguished guests and stakeholders during the Aba Stakeholders Security Trust Fundraising Luncheon, held at the prestigious Aba Sports Club. The event brought together government officials, business leaders, and community representatives in a united effort to support and enhance security initiatives across the city.

Photos Speak



Governor Alex Otti (left) and the First Lady of Abia State, Mrs. Priscilla Otti (right), were seated among other attendees during the grand finale of the 2025 August Meeting, a significant gathering organized by Abia women at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia.



Governor Alex Otti (left) and former Senate President, Senator Ken Nnamani, pictured during the recent visit of the Chairman of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and his delegation to the Governor recently.



Abia State Deputy Governor, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (centre), Commissioner for Agri., Dr. Cliff Agbaeze (5th right), Deputy Chief of Staff, Barr. Chijioke Nwankwo (6th right), State Chairman, Cocoa Farmers Association of Nig, Mr. John Kalu (6th left); and others, during the presentation of the 2025 Cocoa Development Programme by the State Cocoa Transformation Committee, held at the Deputy Governor's Office in Umuahia.



Governor Alex Otti (third from right), Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (3rd from left), alongside other distinguished dignitaries, during the Abia Leadership Academy training held recently at Government College, Umuahia.



Some members of the Umuahia branch of the Item Development Association (IDA) during a courtesy visit to the Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Cliff Agbaeze, to congratulate him on his recent appointment and express their support for his leadership and the ongoing agricultural reforms under the administration of Governor Alex Otti.



A large crowd of attendees, predominantly women, gathered for the grand finale of the 2025 August Meeting a landmark event organized by Abia women at the International Conference Centre, Umuahia. The occasion brought together women from across the state and beyond to celebrate unity, culture, and the vital role of women in community development.



Participant beams with joy during the closing ceremony of the 2025 Abia Leadership Academy, marking the rise of a new generation of leaders.



L- R Managing Director of Ultim Limited, Austin Ufomba; former Super Eagles player, Nwankwo Kanu; Honourable Commissioner for Trade and Commerce, Abia State, Kingsley Nwokocho; and Commercial Strategy Director for Africa at Ultim Limited, Patrice Tchoupe at the official trade launch of the Razzl brand in the South-East and South-South regions, held in Aba.

Photos By Chukwu Chidiebere



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News



Abia State Governor Alex Otti

Aba Stakeholders Donate Millions To Security Fund

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The business community in Aba has contributed millions of naira to the Abia State Security Trust Fund, with Governor Alex Otti assuring that every donation will be transparently managed and fully accounted for.

Speaking at the Aba Stakeholders' Security Trust Fundraising Luncheon held recently at the Aba Sports Club, Governor Otti emphasized that security is central to his administration's development agenda.

"Security is at the heart of everything we are doing. Every kobo of this money will

be judiciously used and accounted for. Not one dime will be missing under my watch," he said.

The Governor also dismissed claims of opposition in the state, describing those involved as individuals seeking relevance or negotiation.

He expressed gratitude to Aba stakeholders, friends, and supporters of the "New Abia Project" for their contributions, promising never to take their support for granted.

On infrastructure,

Governor Otti announced that President Bola Tinubu would commission the newly reconstructed Port Harcourt Road in Aba, alongside six other roads, on October 3. He also revealed that the state had finalized a partnership with Radisson Blu for the redevelopment of the Enyimba Hotel, with work expected to begin soon.

The Governor further urged Abians to participate actively in the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise

ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Earlier, Chairman of the occasion, Chief Leo Ike-Okoye, praised Otti for his strides in infrastructure, security, street lighting, and water schemes. Other stakeholders, including Ide John Udeagbala, Mazi Jude Nwosu, and a representative of Owelle Greg Okafor, commended the Governor for restoring Aba's lost glory and stressed the need for collective responsibility in tackling insecurity.

Rivers State Unveils Flood Control Measures Ahead of Heavy Rains

From Jane Maduadigbo, Port Harcourt

The Rivers State Government has rolled out a comprehensive flood control plan as the state braces for peak rainfall and the heightened risk of flooding in the coming weeks.

The measures were announced during a stakeholders' meeting in Port Harcourt by a senior official of the Ministry of Environment, who said the initiative aims to safeguard lives, property, and livelihoods in communities historically ravaged by seasonal floods.

Key interventions include clearing and expanding drainage channels, constructing additional culverts, and introducing a community-based early warning system to alert residents of impending floods.

"The government is deploying modern flood management strategies to mitigate the risks," said a senior ministry official. "This is not just an environmental issue but a public safety priority."

Desilting exercises are already underway in flood-prone local government areas such as Obio/Akpor, Ahoada East, Oyiabo, and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni. The Ministry is also collaborating with the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) to distribute flood response kits, prepare evacuation plans, and intensify sensitization campaigns against indiscriminate waste disposal, which officials say remains a major cause of urban flooding.

Experts have welcomed the initiative but stress the need for sustainable solutions. A hydrologist at the University of Port Harcourt noted that while drainage clearing is useful, "Periodic measures alone are not enough. Rivers State must invest in green infrastructure and modern urban planning to build long-term resilience."

Still, skepticism lingers among some residents. "Every year we hear the same promises, but the floods keep coming," lamented Mrs. Stella Owhor, a trader at Rumuokoro market. "We need action, not announcements."

With the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) predicting above-average rainfall through October, the government has urged residents in low-lying areas to remain alert and cooperate with local authorities.

The Ministry of Environment has also appealed to residents to avoid dumping waste into drainage channels and to promptly report blocked waterways. Monthly sanitation exercises are being reinforced, with local councils directed to ensure strict compliance.

"Flood control is a shared responsibility," the Ministry said in a statement. "We urge all residents to take preventive steps seriously."

Group Feeds 400 Street Children in Abia

By Favour Okorie

In a remarkable show of humanitarian service, the National Association of Seadogs (NAS), Pyrates Fraternity, Umuahia Chapter, fed over 400 children on Monday as part of its quarterly Street Child Project.

The event theme "Feeding the street kids," Provided breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, music, games, and motivational sessions for children aged 3 to 16; was recently held in Ohokobe Ibeku, Umuahia North Local Government Area (LGA), Abia State.

The President of the Umuahia Chapter and Director of Administration at the Abia State Agricultural Development

Programme (ADP), Mr. Eze Nwosu said the outreach was NAS's response to the rising hunger and poverty in the country.

"There is hunger in the land, and we cannot fold our arms," he said. "We've taken it upon ourselves to ensure that these children enjoy three nutritious meals today. Hunger should never be a barrier to a child's hope or future."

Nwosu noted that the event is part of the organization's sustainable quarterly initiatives, which also recently included offsetting medical bills for indigent women at the Federal Medical Centre (FMC),



NAS members entertaining the street kids in the Hall

Umuahia. He further highlighted NAS's global reach, citing international partnerships with its Bunker Bay and Atlantis Decks in Atlanta, USA, to support underprivileged children worldwide.

"This is a wake-up call to government, philanthropists, and well-meaning Nigerians. Humanity should always come first," Nwosu emphasized.

Mr. Nwagbo Uche Godwin, Vice Chairman and Program Coordinator of the Umuahia Chapter, explained the founding mission of the Pyrates Fraternity, established in 1952 at the University College,

Ibadan, by seven undergraduates including Nobel Laureate Prof. Wole Soyinka.

"The poor and the needy have been oppressed for too long," he said. "That's why we focus on children—because hopelessness and starvation must not define their future." He also called on the government to intensify efforts in tackling economic hardship and encouraged parents to raise morally upright children, calling them the "true legacy" of any nation.

Community leaders welcomed the initiative with enthusiasm. The Woman Leader of

Ohokobe Mbaocha Autonomous Community, Mrs. Nwachukwu Gloria Odochi, described it as the first of its kind in the area.

"Feeding a child today is planting a seed for tomorrow's peace," she said.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Ohokobe Mbaocha Ndume Autonomous Community, Comrade Nduka Awomukwu—represented by Pastor Henry Ohaeri—thanked NAS for choosing their community.

"This initiative is timely. With the rising cost of living, we urge the government and others to follow this example," he said.

The NAS has evolved into a

global humanitarian organization with over 60 chapters across Nigeria and abroad. Its key initiatives include medical outreach programs in rural areas, free health screenings, donation of school supplies, and civic engagements like the annual Feast of Barracuda, which addresses pressing national issues such as insecurity and mental health.

Earlier in February 2025, the Ash Montana Deck (Abeokuta) teamed up with Atlantis Deck (Atlanta, USA) to feed over 400 street children, underscoring NAS's unwavering commitment to vulnerable communities worldwide.



NAS members with the street kids



NAS members with the Community Leaders of Ohokobe

Focus

Dr. Alex Otti: Leading A New Chapter Of Leadership In Abia State

By Okechukwu Ubani

When Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, became the Governor of Abia State in May 2023, he came in with a clear mission – to end years of poor governance and bring honesty, service, and vision into leadership. Now, just over two years later, the impact of his leadership is being felt across the state – not only through improved roads and infrastructure but also in the way people think and behave.

One of the key examples of this positive change is the Abia Leadership Academy, a major programme introduced by Governor Otti. The academy was set up to train young people to become responsible and impactful leaders. At the recent graduation ceremony for Cohorts 3 and 4, where 1,000 young Abians completed the programme, Governor Otti gave more than just a speech – he gave a challenge.

"Your success," he told the graduates, "will not be judged by your titles or money, but by how many lives you touch, the courage you show, and the value you bring to your community."

Leading by Example
Governor Otti is not just talking about leadership – he is showing it through action. Since becoming governor, he has proven that good governance is possible when leaders are honest, transparent, and people-focused.

His government has cleaned up the state's finances, paid off long-standing salary debts, and ensured that civil servants and pensioners are paid on time – a major achievement in today's Nigeria.

In the education sector, he has overseen the renovation of schools and provided better support for teachers through training and welfare programmes. After the leadership training programme, he

donated chairs, tables, mattresses, and other materials used during the event to Government College Umuahia. This act reflects his strong commitment to education.

In Aba, the state's major commercial city, Governor Otti's road and infrastructure projects have brought new life to the city. Roads are being reconstructed, streetlights are working again, and businesses are bouncing back. More importantly, he is helping to rebuild something more powerful than buildings – trust in government.

Raising a New Generation of Leaders

The Abia Leadership Academy is more than a training programme – it is a foundation for the future. The aim is to change how young people see leadership, shifting the focus from survival politics to values, vision, and service.

Governor Otti explained that the academy

teaches what real leadership means. Participants receive mentorship and training in civic responsibility, ethics, creativity, and practical problem-solving skills. So far, over 3,000 young Abians have passed through the academy, and many are already making a difference in their communities and workplaces.

"We believe that 1,000 young people can start a movement that changes the future for millions," Otti said. "This is not just training – it's the beginning of a new leadership culture."

To support these future leaders, Governor Otti has directed the creation of a digital alumni platform. This will allow former and current graduates to stay connected, receive ongoing mentorship, and access local and international opportunities. It's a smart move that shows Otti is not just thinking about today – he is preparing Abia for

the future.

A Legacy That Inspires
Governor Otti believes leadership is not just about building roads or paying salaries – it's about inspiring people to do better. He often speaks about important values like courage, compassion, creativity, and service – and he backs up those words with actions.

Many now see Abia as a clear example of what good leadership can do. Governor Otti's inclusive style of governance has given young people a voice, respected traditional institutions, and promoted accountability.

At a time when many Nigerians are frustrated with leadership failures, the Otti model brings hope. It shows that when people are put first, real progress is not only possible – it is guaranteed.

Looking Ahead
For the 1,000 graduates of the Abia Leadership Academy, the ceremony is just the start of their

leadership journey. For Governor Otti, it's a reminder that leadership is not about holding power it's about empowering people.

Abia State is moving forward – not just with better roads and working infrastructure, but with a new way of thinking. A new generation of leaders is rising. And at the heart of this movement is a governor who doesn't just talk about change – he leads by example.

Let me know if you'd like a version of this for a radio script, social media post, or press release.

“Your success,” he told the graduates, “will not be judged by your titles or money, but by how many lives you touch, the courage you show, and the value you bring to your community.”

Opinion

Ukwa West Realignment: How Governor Alex Otti's Performance Is Reshaping Abia's Political Future

The political atmosphere in Abia State is undergoing a profound shift, with Ukwa West Local Government Area emerging as a critical symbol of the growing momentum behind Governor Alex Otti's administration. What unfolded at Obheie Central School yesterday was more than just a reception for defectors from other political parties into the Labour Party. It was a public affirmation that governance backed by tangible results has become the most compelling campaign strategy ahead of the 2027 elections.

The defection of 66 political heavyweights from across different parties including former legislators, ex-government officials, and grassroots mobilizers, alongside hundreds of their supporters, is a

watershed moment in Ukwa West politics. Many of these figures were previously opposed to Dr. Alex Otti, yet their movement into the Labour Party is an acknowledgment that the current administration has altered the political calculus in the area. In 2023, Dr. Alex Otti did not secure victory in Ukwa West.

Today, however, his development agenda has become the rallying point for leaders and communities that once stood on the other side of political divides. Their collective adoption of Governor Otti as the consensus candidate for 2027 is not merely symbolic; it reflects a recognition that performance, not propaganda, has become the new standard for political loyalty in Abia.

Governor Otti's deliberate interventions in Ukwa West have been both

strategic and people-focused. The commissioning of a Civic Centre for Asa people, the renovation and upgrade of healthcare facilities across the LGA, and the launch of new road projects have touched lives in ways previous governments failed to achieve. Even more symbolic is the proposed mini-stadium for Ukwa West, a project that speaks not just to infrastructure, but also to social development, youth empowerment, and community pride. Coupled with the AIIP project and engagement with multinational firms like Inner Galaxy, the Governor is weaving a narrative of inclusive growth, balancing economic expansion with grassroots development.

For decades, Ukwa West had been a story of abandonment despite its resource potential. Under Governor Otti, it is steadily transforming into a hub

where governance and accountability intersect. This deliberate focus has redefined the relationship between the people and the state government, creating an atmosphere where political endorsements naturally flow from visible progress.

Though the 2027 gubernatorial election is still two years away, events in Ukwa West underscore how governance itself has become the campaign. Political heavyweights who defected openly declared Governor Alex Chioma Otti as the consensus candidate of Asa land, signaling a new political reality where opposition is collapsing under the weight of good governance. The Labour Party, once underestimated, is now cementing its dominance, not through political propaganda but through results. The fact that

Ukwa West, an LGA where Dr. Alex Otti lost in 2023, has become a stronghold of support is a telling indicator of how far the pendulum has swung.

The symbolic weight of the event was amplified by the presence of top state officials, including former Deputy Governor, under the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Professor Kenneth Kalu, Commissioner for Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Professor Ogbonna Joel, my humble self, and other members of the Alex Otti administration. Their participation transformed what could have been a local political rally into a declaration of statewide unity around the Governor's leadership.

The unfolding political realignment in

Ukwa West sends a clear message: governance that delivers visible change is the most effective campaign strategy. By investing in infrastructure, healthcare, and youth development, Governor Alex Otti has not only transformed the landscape of Ukwa West but also reshaped its political future.

As 2027 approaches, Ukwa West is no longer a battleground; it is fast becoming a fortress of support for Governor Otti's second-term bid. The once-neglected oil-rich LGA now sees in him a leader who listens, invests, and delivers, and in turn, they are repositioning themselves as loyal stakeholders in the new Abia project.

MY LGA, UKWA EAST LGA IS NEXT!

By Prince Okey Kanu
Honorable
Commissioner for
information

Education

Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic Aba: A Hub of Innovation and Excellence

By Stephanie Adindu

Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, once plagued by decayed infrastructure, irregular salary payments, and loss of course accreditations, has undergone a remarkable turnaround under the leadership of its Rector, Dr. Christopher C.K. Okoro.

Appointed in 2024 by Governor Alex Chioma Otti, Dr. Okoro—an accomplished engineer, academic, and innovator—has repositioned the institution as a hub of excellence in technology, skills acquisition, and career development.

Before his appointment, the polytechnic was in disrepair: dilapidated structures, unpaid staff salaries running into months and even years, cultism on campus, and contractors left unattended. Today, two years into his tenure, the school has been revived, earning recognition as a model of academic innovation and technical advancement in the state.

Breakthroughs:

The Department of Welding and Fabrication Engineering has delivered practical solutions to community and state needs, including ASEPA receptacle buckets for waste management, durable doors for public schools, and agro-processing machines for palm oil and cassava production. These innovations were credited to the enabling environment provided by Rector Okoro and the consistent support of Governor Otti.

Career Services Centre:

The establishment of a Career Services Centre has further distinguished the institution, integrating career development into



the curriculum, training lecturers and representatives, and hosting workshops for graduating students. According to Prof. Harry Obi

Nwosu of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, who facilitated one of the workshops, Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic is now ahead of many Nigerian institutions in preparing students for the future of work.

Infrastructure and Academic Growth:

Key achievements include the construction of a new auditorium—the first in 33 years—delivered in just four

months, a creative arts hub, a fashion/leather works theatre, and a modern CBT centre. New courses such as Artificial Intelligence, Mechatronics, Autotronics, Leather Technology, Journalism, and Film Production have also been introduced. Certificates now carry QR codes to ensure authenticity, while graduates are mobilized immediately for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). **Staff and Student Welfare:**

Dr. Okoro abolished notional promotions, ensuring staff receive financial benefits upon advancement, while salary payments are now regular. In addition, Governor Otti has approved N1 million grants for top-performing students to encourage academic excellence.

With eight new buildings at the Osioma campus set for commissioning at the forthcoming 2025 convocation, Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic is on course to becoming one of Nigeria's leading polytechnics.

News

NLC, Labour Party, Others Demand Senate Reinstate Natasha or Risk Nationwide Shutdown

By Sophina Ovuike

The Labour Party (LP) has called for the immediate reinstatement of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, insisting that her continued suspension violates democratic principles and the rights of her constituents.

LP's National Publicity Secretary, Tony Akeni, in a statement on Saturday in Abuja, condemned the Senate's refusal to comply with a subsisting court order that nullified the six-month suspension of the Kogi lawmaker.

Akeni disclosed that an American diplomat recently drew attention to a letter written by Gambian lawmaker Fatoumata Njai, who sharply criticized the Nigerian Senate for defying the judgment delivered on July 4, 2025. The diplomat described the Senate's disobedience as "shameful for your country." Njai, a member of the Pan-Africa Parliament's Gender and Children's Welfare Committee, in her letter dated September 9, urged compliance with the court ruling, stressing: "In law, one must comply first, then challenge." She warned that silencing Akpoti-Uduaghan sends a disturbing signal across West Africa, noting that she represents the aspirations of millions of women and youths. The LP echoed Njai's position and aligned with prominent voices, including former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and senior lawyers, who have faulted the Senate's stance. Legal luminaries Femi Falana (SAN)

and Egun-Olu Adegboruwa (SAN) separately described the Senate's action as contemptuous and vindictive. Falana accused Senate President Godswill Akpabio of treating court verdicts with disdain, while Adegboruwa said the decision was petty and an affront to democracy.

Civil society and labour groups have also rallied behind Akpoti-Uduaghan. Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) President Joe Ajaero vowed to mobilize workers against what he described as a deliberate attempt to bar her from performing her constitutional duties. Women's rights coalition Womanifesto

similarly demanded her reinstatement.

Akeni urged Senate President Akpabio, House Speaker Tajudeen Abbas, and Justice Minister Lateef Fagbemi to respect the rule of law and restore Akpoti-Uduaghan without further delay, saying, "A word is enough for the wise."

Igbo Town Unions Hail Gov Otti's Leadership

By Richard Okoro

The Association of Igbo Town Unions, Abia State chapter, has congratulated Abians on the 34th anniversary of the creation of the State.

Speaking with newsmen in Umuahia, the President-General of the association, Chief (Sir) George Mgborukwe, expressed gratitude to God for sustaining the state through moments of progress and setbacks since its creation. He urged Abians to remain committed to the peace, unity,

and development of the state, stressing that "when the righteous is on the throne, the people rejoice."

Chief Mgborukwe, on behalf of the association, commended Governor Alex Otti for what he described as an impactful, people-oriented administration. He noted that the Governor's leadership qualities have set him apart as a God-fearing leader determined to leave indelible footprints in the governance of the state.

He added that since Abia's creation

34 years ago, God has used Governor Otti to fulfill the aspirations of the people by restoring hope and delivering democracy dividends. He also called on citizens to continue to pray for God's protection and guidance for the Governor.

The association's leader further encouraged eligible voters—especially those who have just turned 18, relocated, or lost their voter cards—to take advantage of the ongoing registration exercise to obtain their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

Rivers: Motorists, Pedestrians Decry Ikwerre Road

From Bestman Orji, Port Harcourt

Motorists and pedestrians in Port Harcourt have decried the deplorable state of Ikwerre Road, describing it as a "death trap" and urging the Rivers State Administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (rtd), to urgently intervene.

The worst-hit areas include the stretch around the Mile 1 Flyover and the drainage system between Mile 1 Police Station and

Rivers State University of Technology (RSUT), which become submerged whenever it rains, posing grave danger to road users.

A commercial bus driver, Mr. Johnson Imoh, lamented that deep potholes at the Education Bus Stop and under the flyover cause constant vehicle breakdowns. "We change shock absorbers regularly. Pedestrians suffer the most, especially when it rains," he said.

Similarly, Mrs. Joy Obi, a trader under the flyover, recounted how vehicles often veer off course while avoiding potholes, endangering lives and damaging traders' wares. "Even schoolchildren and the elderly are at risk," she stressed. Residents are calling on the state government to urgently rehabilitate the Education axis of Ikwerre Road and repair the drainage from Mile 1 Police Station to RSUT to avert accidents and possible loss of lives.

Entertainment

 BY: AKINRUJOMU
 GIDEON OLUWATOBI


"Satan, You Don Lose O!" -

Ebenezer Obey Sets Record Straight On Fake Death News:

On 21st April, 2025 false reports of Obey's death went viral on social media, sparking mourning messages from fans. However, his personal assistant, Tope Olukole swiftly debunked the claim. Now As at 8th September, 2025, Obey again addressed in another video, reassuring fans of his good health and stating he had travelled to London for personal care. He also condemned those behind the false reports and fabricated images of coffins used to reinforce the false narrative.



The Father Of Nigeria Comedy Meets His Match - Ali Baba's Eviction Saga"-

Ali Baba, a veteran Nigeria Comedian, has been evicted from his luxurious Victoria Island property in Lagos After a Federal High Court Ruling: The property, valued at N220 million, was sold to Ali Baba by the Assets Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) in 2021. However, the sale was contested by Harold Expansion Industries Nigeria Limited, the original owner, who claimed they didn't owe the debt AMCON alleged. The dispute property is located at 324A Akin Ogunlewe Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, and served as the studios for Ali Baba's TV.



Baci Breaks Barriers: Nigerian Chef Sets New Guinness World Record for Largest Jollof Rice Pot.

Hilda Baci successfully cooked the world's largest pot of jollof rice in Lagos, Nigeria, on September 12, 2025, as part of the Gino World Jollof Festival. Here's an update on her record-breaking attempt.

The custom-built pot measured 6 meters in width and height, with a capacity of 22,619 liters. Hilda Baci cooked 4,000 kilograms (approximately 200 bags) of basmati rice, instead of the initially planned 250 bags, due to resource and material considerations.

Guinness World Records acknowledged Hilda Baci's attempt, wishing her luck on social media. The organization will review the evidence submitted before formally recognizing the record.

The jollof rice was distributed to attendees and local communities, with portions still being shared with the public on September 13, 2025. Hilda Baci's record-breaking attempt not only showcased her culinary skills but also highlighted Nigerian cuisine and culture



Tyla Dethrones Wizkid, Burna Boy: Wins Best Afrobeats Award at 2025 VMAs



Tyla, the South Africa songstress, has made history by winning the Best Afrobeats award at the 2025 MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) for her hit single "Push 2 Start". This prestigious award is a testament to the global dominance of Afrobeats, with Tyla emerging victorious over Nigerian superstars Wizkid and Burna Boy.



Joseph Jacob
EDITOR
07036169871

Creative Writers Hangout

Uche and the Sword (6)

Sandra smiled as both of them concentrated on their books. It was Uche who broke the silence.

"Senior, sometimes I dey tire to read only my school books."

"Yes, naturally it's very good to sometimes read for pleasure." She paused thoughtfully, "I know you love football, I'll bring you one of my father's soccer magazines, if you return that one, I'll give you another one."

Uche nodded and faced his books while Sandra did the same. It was around after five that they started walking home. Sandra remembered Nkeiru's words about Uche, so she asked, "Uche, why is your uniform so old and dirty while this is just your third term in school?"

Uche felt ashamed and dumbfounded.

"Talk to me Uche." Sandra urged.

"Senior, my uniform was not buying new. It is olden uniform."

"Say after me, 'my uniform was not newly bought, it is an old one.'"

Uche repeated after Sandra severally.

"I hope that was what you wanted to say?" Sandra asked.

Uche nodded.

Kate had stitched one of the white rags they used at home, washed it and gave it to Uche as a school uniform.

Sandra asked Uche to tell her about his family. After Uche finished his story Sandra was left with eyes and mouth widely opened.

"Why not go back to your mum in the village?" Sandra asked with a sad tone.

Uche tackled the question from the death of his father to that of his only brother and to what Eunice said about him.

"My mother go say what the woman say don happen if I run go village and if that woman see me, she go happy say I no fit stay for where I dey before. But as I dey here dey suffer my mama go think say as I never come back say here good and she go dey happy. Na true say I no sabi anything I no say one day I go take first for my class if I just continue to do my best."

Sandra did not know when she took Uche's hand and squeezed it consolingly.

When they got to Sandra's house, she asked him to wait for her as she ran into their house. She came back later with two tablets of medicated soap, "Use it for bathing twice a day all those eczema will vanish". Sandra said as she put the soap into Uche's bag.

Before he could express his gratitude she had ran into their house.

One Monday morning Uche came late to school as usual. Five prefects were at the gate flogging latecomers. Nkeiru the Sanitary Prefect was there. The Labor Prefect, Kalu was also there. Uche saw Sandra also but did not look towards her as he quickly went to Nkeiru to receive strokes of cane.

"Nkeiru make it hot." Kalu, said happily.

"Uche come here", Sandra ordered. The harsh tone of her voice turned Uche and he quickly walked towards Sandra.

Nkeiru started towards him, but Sandra came and stood between Uche and Nkeiru, "You will not flog him." Sandra said.

Other prefects have been letting their friends and relatives in without being flogged against the wish of Sandra. She felt that she would use Uche, whose late coming was not his making to take her own pound of flesh.

"Sandra, that boy must be flogged." Kalu snarled.

"I am the Senior Prefect" Sandra said, "You should receive orders from me." She turned to Uche, "Go in."

As he was running in, Uche heard Kalu say that Sandra would regret her action.

After school, Uche joined other members of the school team in training for the Shell Cup final that was to come up on Wednesday. Uche thought about Sandra who was in one of the classes reading her books. But quickly concentrated on the training so that he would not make mistakes that would deny him the opportunity to be the first choice goalkeeper.

After three hours of rigorous

started pulling out his belt but stopped and stepped backwards when Uche stormed in.

"Senior, him beat you" Uche asked as he bent down and picked Sandra's books. He gave them to her and started pulling his shirt. Uche would not want blood to stain his shirt again.

Sandra remembered how the principal flogged Uche for fighting the same prefect in first term, "He did not beat me please don't fight him." Sandra pleaded with Uche as she took his shirt he hung on a cassava stem and offered it to him.

"You small rat that have never passed any subject in this school..." Kalu started.

"He doesn't even know how to read" The other boy chipped in.

"E be like say you don forget the day wey I break your mouth" Uche said as he ignored Sandra and itched closer towards the boys. Sandra ran and stood on Uche's way, "Please, Uche leave him. The Principal will expel you. Just leave him"

As soon as Uche heard 'Principal' he came to his senses and stopped.

The boys who had been walking backwards away from Uche also stopped. "You will surely regret this. I'll set you up" Kalu said and left with his friend.

Uche collected his shirt from Sandra and started donning it while Sandra packed her books into her bag.

"How did you know I'm here?" Sandra asked with a smile of relief on her face.

"I see that big head when him dey come this place, after I find you around, I suspect say you go dey this place."

"Thanks for coming" Sandra said as she tapped Uche's shoulder, "Tuck in your shirt."

"No, senior I like am like this."

"No Uche, it is bad boys that fly their shirt. So tuck in."

Uche obeyed as he wanted to be a good student even though many people thought he was a bad boy.

When they got to the school gate, they saw Trouble, the gateman pushing in snuff into his big flat nose. They greeted him and left him.

"Senior, I learn two words from the first page of the Nigerian Soccer magazine you gave me."

"What are the words?"

"One na, no one is-", he changed his words trying to speak good English as Sandra had urged him to, "One is hat trick, the other is aggregate."

"So what are their meanings?" Sandra asked smilingly as she felt elated that Uche was learning fast.

"If a player scores three goals in a match it is called a hat trick. Aggregate is like combining two matches."

"Uche I don't understand what you said about aggregate."

"What I mean is if a team plays two matches home and away, if you combine the two scores it becomes aggregate score..." Uche went on trying to explain.

Sandra brought out her dictionary and asked him to look for aggregate. Uche took sometime before he found it.

"It Says! A total number or amount made up of smaller amount that are collected together." Uche read from the dictionary.

"Now I understand what you were trying to explain." Sandra said.

"I remember one more thing, there is a sentence..."

"There was a sentence" Sandra corrected.

"OK. There was a sentence that said 'Rooney is a lethal striker' let me check the meaning of lethal." Uche said as he flipped through the dictionary.

"What of striker?" San "A striker is somebody that his work in a team is to score goals"

Sandra felt very happy that she was learning from Uche, especially matters that have to do with football.

"I don see lethal, it says, 'Causing or able to cause death'. Senior, I don't understand. Rooney don't kill people he score goals."

Sandra smiled and said, "Check very well there is another definition."

"Yes. It says, 'causing or able to cause a lot of harm or damage.' OK!" Uche exclaimed nodding his head. "It means that Rooney damages opponents with his goals."

"That's very good of you", Sandra said happily.

"Senior, it has similar, Deadly" Uche read from the dictionary.

"Use it to replace lethal in the first sentence you made." Sandra urged.

"OK, Rooney is a le-no Rooney is a deadly striker. It's very sweet. Chai! Senior, if no be you na watin I for do. Thank you very much."

Sandra felt flattered, "Don't worry Uche I'll always help you when you need my help. Goodbye." Sandra waved and entered their compound.

On Wednesday, Kate said that Uche would not go to school. She had overheard Uche telling Ifeanyi how he would man the post for his school team on that day. Kate instantly became envious and wanted to stop Uche from achieving his aim.

In the school that morning, The Principal mobilized all students to the Township Stadium to cheer their team to victory.

Mr. Godwin called his players together for a light walk out and realized that the first choice goalkeeper was absent.

"Uzo did you hear from Uche."

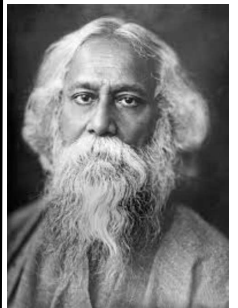
"Sir, I saw him when he came to fetch water this morning. He told me that his aunty is saying that he will not be coming to school. But he assured me that he will come." Uzo replied.

Mr. Godwin did not know what to do, the time was 9:30 and the match will kick off by 11 O'clock. Students had started heading to the match venue and the school bus was ready to take the team to the stadium.

As the team traveled to the stadium, Mr. Godwin kept sighing and clenching his fist out of sadness.

Will Kate succeed in stopping Uche from playing this important match for his school? find out in our next publication.

AUTHOR OF THE WEEK



Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861 in Calcutta, India.

He was the son of the religious reformer Debendranath Tagore, he early began to write verses, and, after incomplete studies in England in the late 1870s, he returned to India. There he published several books of poetry in the 1880s and completed *Manasi* (1890), a collection that marks the maturing of his genius. It contains some of his best-known poems, including many in verse forms new to Bengali, as well as some social and political satire that was critical of his fellow Bengalis.

He is widely considered one of India's, and indeed the world's, most significant literary figures. He was a polymath – a poet, novelist, playwright, philosopher, musician, painter, and social reformer. Tagore is particularly renowned for his reshaping of Bengali literature and music, and for his profound influence on Indian art. He was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913).

His works, like the collection of spiritual poems "Gitanjali", explore universal themes of humanism, nature, and cultural unity, resonating with readers of all backgrounds.

Tagore's contributions to Bengali literature and music are unparalleled, and he played a crucial role in shaping India's cultural identity.

His writings are staples in Indian education systems, and his works continue to inspire young readers exploring questions of identity and purpose.

Tagore's wide range of talents, from poetry and drama to music and painting, demonstrates his immense creative power.

He died in August 7, 1941 in Calcutta at the age of 80.

Feature

Beneath The Surface

By Dakuku Peterside

Brazil is often described as the world's second-largest African nation, and this is evident everywhere—in the rhythms that move a crowd, in the devotion of Candomblé (a religion with roots in West African Yoruba culture), and in the language that carries West African echoes across the oceans. Yet Brazil also shows how a country can celebrate the symbols of its Black heritage while turning away from the people who keep that heritage alive. The myth of “racial democracy” makes for a beautiful poster; the streets tell a different story. Brazilian society remains shaped by a system of social exclusion, where the darker-skinned segments of the population are controlled through force and systematically marginalized from public life. It is a paradox with familiar contours, and it invites Nigerians to look in a mirror we might prefer to avoid.

Into this landscape stepped Jair Bolsonaro, and with him a promise that the old, punishing certainties could be restored: discipline in the place of debate, loyalty in the place of law, force in the place of reform. This gave him the presidency of Brazil October 2018 election. He preached a politics of the clenched fist—shoot your way through crime, sneer your way past dissent, mock your way past the poor. Evangelical megachurches offered pulpits and media reach, reactionary elites found a champion who would roll back the tide of inclusion, and digital disinformation did the quiet work of turning neighbours into suspects.

But after his presidency and re-election shenanigans, Bolsonaro faces five allegations: attempting a coup, participating in an armed criminal group, attempting to violently dismantle the democratic rule of law, and two charges related to the destruction of state property. It felt, for a while, like a past Brazil had chosen to bury was climbing back upstairs and trying on the keys again. Electoral malfeasance and dogged hold on to power at all costs was demonstrated by Bolsonaro and his supporters. However, something else also happened, something less dramatic yet more consequential: democracy held on to transparency and free and fair election. Institutions remembered their purpose. Courts drew lines. Electoral authorities defended the count. Journalists and civic groups kept receipts. Elements of the state refused to be dragooned into overturning results. Democracy bent, which is what democracies do under stress; it did not snap. This resilience, this refusal to be broken, is a beacon of hope for Nigeria and all democracies facing similar challenges.

For Nigeria, the lesson lands with the weight of a warning and the texture of hope. Judicial independence is not an ornament for ceremonial days; it is the oxygen line that keeps constitutional life breathing when the room grows thin. A court that can try the powerful is a shock

absorber against the worst political instincts, but only if its budget cannot be manipulated and its appointments cannot be influenced. We must learn, too, to speak about due process in a language that the street can understand, because accountability without public comprehension curdles into grievance and then into conspiracy. When political losers start to call judges' enemies of the people, what stands between a nation and the cliff is trust, well-earned and plainly explained.

Elections are the other hinge. Confidence in the vote is not a device; it is a chain of events. Technology helps, but the moral force of the results comes from the links surrounding it: transparent tabulation, auditable trails, open data, and independent observers who are not treated as tolerated nuisances. Disputes should be resolved in courts that are fast, credible, and final—so that politics can grieve its losses and move on. The alternative is not only uncertainty; it is the creeping normalisation of threats, the flirtation with soldiers, the quiet logistics of mischief—fuel here, a convoy there, a

powers with clear sunsets; and oversight that cannot be wished away. Populists ask us to trade law for resolve; the bill always arrives, and it is always expensive.

Civil-military relations deserve candour. Coups in this era rarely kick down doors at dawn; they creep. Statements first, then escorts, then the withholding of logistics, then a hint that someone knows better than the ballot. The line must be bright: soldiers defend the republic; they do not referee its politics. Parliamentary scrutiny, career penalties for anti-constitutional flirtations, civic education inside the ranks—these are the kinds of quiet investments that keep uniforms where they belong when tempers flare outside the barracks.

Legitimacy also lives or dies in the encounter between a citizen and a police officer. Use-of-force policies mean little if not enforced; body-worn cameras without independent oversight are expensive jewellery. Every unlawful killing that passes without consequence empties another cup of trust. Protecting minority rights and cultural expression



that prevents yesterday's corruption from setting tomorrow's terms. Security cooperation, where sensible, should borrow from best practice in de-escalation, not the choreography of militarised crowd control that both our societies must unlearn.

If we need a dashboard for danger at home, it is not hard to assemble. Watch budgets and tenures for signs of an axe hovering over courts and election bodies. Listen for the “stop the count” chant hiding in different words. Track the botnets and WhatsApp chains that turn rumours into rage. Read proposed laws for the quiet ambition to muzzle NGOs and journalists—especially those painted as “foreign-funded,” as if patriotism were a matter of bank accounts. Notice when lethal policing is shrugged off as the acceptable price of order. Notice when a religious bloc treats rights as negotiable. And build coalitions that can move when red lines are crossed—bar associations, media, student unions, labour, business—because institutions are only as brave as the people who stand up for them.

In the near term, lock in budgets for courts and the electoral commission by formula rather than favour. Force transparency in political advertising—who paid, how much, to whom—and open election data to the public eye. Establish an independent police oversight authority that not only recommends but also refers cases for prosecution. Over the next few years, scrub party finance with real-time disclosure and hard ceilings. Over the longer arc, complete the arduous work of professionalising police and prosecution; and remember the past by memorialising victims of unlawful state force, so that the future knows where the line is.

Reform becomes a press release if not enforced and measured. Count how long it takes to resolve election disputes and whether orders are enforced. Count the use-of-force incidents and how many lead to prosecution. Count the rights cases that are upheld when it is difficult, not only when it is easy. Numbers do not save democracies, but they help us know if we are saving them.

Brazil teaches a quiet moral. Democracy is not a feeling; it is a habit. When truth-telling, lawful constraint, and equal dignity are practised daily, they develop muscle memory. When they are neglected, strongmen step into the slack and sell us certainty. We do not have to learn these lessons in the heat of our own crisis. We can now build the scaffolding: courts that breathe freely, elections that persuade both winners and losers, security that protects as much as it deters, and a political culture that treats opponents as rivals, not enemies. The mirror across the Atlantic offers both a warning and a promise. What we do with the reflection is still up to you

 Reform becomes a press release if not enforced and measured. 

rehearsal of “escort” that is not an escort at all. Transparency in governance is not just a buzzword; it's a shield against uncertainty and a promise of a fair and just system.

Then there is the fog that settles over any democracy under stress: polarisation that turns rivals into traitors, and disinformation that makes the truth feel like just another opinion. Brazil's lesson is that this is not merely a media problem, but a governance problem. You attack it with rules for transparent political advertising, with consequences for coordinated inauthentic behaviour, with independent fact-checking that has real reach and is not captured by anyone's patronage. And you create habits of cross-party dialogue that feel tedious when times are calm, so they can be lifesaving when tempers rise.

Authoritarian shortcuts will always be marketed as a sign of courage. They are seductive because they are fast, and it is tempting to mistake speed for effectiveness. But the “tough” solutions that work are the dull ones: professional prosecutors with insulation from political pressure; procurement that is transparent rather than opaque; internal controls that actually bite; emergency

is not an indulgence; it is fidelity to the promise written on our national paper.

Religion, finally, asks for a wise state. Evangelical blocs are organised, well-funded, and global. They are not going away, nor should they be treated as intruders in public life. The answer is principled engagement under a secular compact: transparent lobbying rules, curricula grounded in rights and critical thinking, equal protection for those most easily offered up to the fires of a culture war—women, LGBTQ citizens, dissenters. When policy is smuggled through pulpits, the constitution shrinks. Civic education is not just a tool; it's a responsibility we all share to ensure a fair and just society.

Beyond the cautions, Brazil also offers a map of opportunity. We can insulate Africa-Brazil ties from ideology and electoral weather. Cultural exchanges that are more than a spectacle—shared archives of Yoruba-Candomblé history, residencies that travel, and festivals that return—can deepen the bridge. Universities can establish joint chairs in public health, agrotech, and energy transition, with scholarships protected from the fluctuations of politics. Trade can grow, anchored by transparency

Sporting Ambassador

AMBASSADOR
With Jacob Joseph



UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Combatants Return to Trenches

The group phase of this season's UEFA Champions League kicks off this midweek with familiar foes going for each other's jugular.

PSV will open their campaign at home to Union Saint-Gilloise, who are making their first appearance in the competition proper as the champions of the Netherlands and Belgium fight to finish. PSV's last match against a Belgian team came in the 2013/14 third qualifying round, when they defeated Zulte Waregem 2-0 at home and 3-0 away. The Dutch club have lost only one of their five home matches against Belgian teams, winning three.

Union SG have won their two matches away to Dutch teams, both in last season's UEFA Europa League: 1-0 at Twente in the league phase and 2-1 at Ajax in the knockout phase play-off second leg, although they went out 2-3 on aggregate after losing 0-2 at home.

PSV are Dutch champions for the 26th time – and the second season in succession. Peter Bosz's side were 14th in last season's league phase to reach the knockout rounds for the second successive season. They beat Juventus in the knockout play-offs – their first victory in a knockout tie since 2006/07 – but were then defeated by Arsenal in the round of 16.

Union SG were Belgian champions in 2024/25, their 12th title overall and first since 1934/35. This is Union SG's debut in the Champions League proper. They are the eighth Belgian team to appear.

Athletic Club's first UEFA Champions League game in 11 seasons brings Arsenal, semi-finalists in 2024/25, to Bilbao. Athletic have lost only two of their nine home matches against English clubs, although one of those defeats came in the most recent fixture – 0-3 against Manchester United in last season's UEFA Europa League semi-final first leg.

Arsenal have won their last five games against Spanish teams, including all three in the 2024/25 Champions League: 2-1 at Girona on Matchday 8 and home (3-0) and away (2-1) against holders Real Madrid in the quarter-finals. Wins at Girona and Madrid made it six victories in Arsenal's 20 away fixtures against Spanish sides. They have four victories – and five defeats – in their last nine visits.

Having not featured in the Champions League proper between 2016/17 and 2023/24, Arsenal are making their third successive appearance. The Gunners reached the semi-finals last season – their best run since 2008/09 – before a 1-3 aggregate defeat by eventual champions Paris Saint-Germain.

Real Madrid kick off their latest UEFA Champions League campaign at home against a Marseille side returning to the competition for the first time since 2022/23. Madrid have won all four matches between the teams – all in the group stage. They have lost only one of their 17 home matches against French teams, with six wins in the last seven.

Marseille have won only one of their eight games away to Spanish teams. This is their 12th Champions League campaign, but only their third in the last 12 seasons. They have not progressed to the knockout rounds since reaching the quarter-finals in

2011/12.

Madrid are in the Champions League proper for the 30th time, a competition record they share with Barcelona. They last missed out in 1996/97 and have qualified for the knockout rounds in all 29 campaigns. They have won on Matchday 1 in 16 of their last 18 campaigns, losing only two. Madrid have also won 199 matches in the Champions League proper and scored 698 goals – both competition records. They will be looking for their 200th victory when they host the French side.

Qarabag return to the Champions League proper with a trip to competition regulars Benfica, both sides having reached the 2025/26 league phase via the qualifying rounds. This is the teams' first meeting and Benfica's first game against a club from Azerbaijan.

Qarabag have twice faced Portuguese teams. They lost 0-2 away and 1-6 at home against Sporting CP in the 2018/19 UEFA Europa League group stage, but defeated Braga 6-5 on aggregate in the 2023/24 Europa League knockout play-offs courtesy of a Nurihan Akhundzade goal in the final seconds of extra time.

There will be a repeat of the 1997 UEFA Champions League final when Juventus welcome Borussia Dortmund to Turin. This is the first meeting between the teams since the 2014/15 round of 16, when Juventus won 2-1 at home and 3-0 away. Juve have won six of their nine games against Dortmund – although the German side were 3-1 winners in Munich in the 1997 final.

Juventus have lost only two of their last 12 matches against German teams, winning seven, although one of those defeats came in the most recent fixture – 0-1 against Stuttgart on Matchday 3 last season. That ended a five-game winning run against Bundesliga clubs, home and away.

Last season's UEFA Europa League winners Tottenham Hotspur will tread tackles with their 2020/21 predecessors Villarreal. This is the first European match between the teams. Tottenham have won only two of their 14 games against Spanish teams – including only one of seven at home. Having been victorious in their first three games against Premier League opponents, Villarreal have won only two of their subsequent 20. They have one victory and six defeats from their ten matches in England.

Olympiacos return to the UEFA Champions League after four seasons away with a home game against competition debutants Pafos. This is the first European fixture between the teams – and Pafos' first against a team



UEFA Champions League trophy

from Greece. Olympiacos have lost only three of their previous 12 matches against Cypriot clubs, although they have drawn each of the last three.

Slavia Praha's first game in the UEFA Champions League proper for six seasons pits them against Bodo/Glimt, who are making their competition debut. This is the teams' first meeting and the first Champions League group stage/league phase fixture between teams from Czechia and Norway.

Slavia Praha's only previous match against a Norwegian team was a 2-2 draw at Viking in the 2005/06 UEFA Cup group stage. Bodo/Glimt have played two previous European fixtures against a Czech team, beating Bohemians Praha 3-0 at home and 4-2 away in the 2023/24 UEFA Conference League second qualifying round.

Paris Saint-Germain kick off their UEFA Champions League defence at home to an Atalanta side who are fast becoming competition regulars. The teams' only previous match was a 2-1 Paris victory in the 2019/20 quarter-finals, a one-off fixture in Lisbon in which Marquinhos scored a 90th-minute equaliser, Mario Pašalić having given Atalanta a first-half lead. Paris have lost only one of their last 12 matches against Italian teams, winning five of the last six. Atalanta's 2020 defeat by Paris is their only loss in five matches against French teams, both their previous games in France ending 1-1.

World champions Chelsea return to the scene of their first UEFA Champions League triumph when they travel to Bayern München on Matchday 1. This is a repeat of the 2012 final at the Fußball Arena München, when Chelsea lifted the trophy for the first time with a 4-3 penalty shoot-out victory after full and extra time had

ended 1-1. The teams' most recent encounters were in the 2019/20 round of 16, Bayern winning 3-0 in London and 4-1 in Munich on their way to lifting the trophy. This is the first time the teams have met in the group stage/league phase. Bayern have won eight of their last ten home matches against English teams.

Liverpool and Atlético de Madrid meet again as they kick off their UEFA Champions League campaign at Anfield. This is the third time the sides have

been paired together in the last six Champions League seasons. Liverpool won the last two games in the 2001/22 group stage, having had their title defence ended by Atlético in the 2019/20 round of 16. The Reds have won their last four Champions League group stage/league phase games against Spanish teams, beating Real Madrid and Girona in 2024/25. Atlético have won only one of their last eight Champions League matches against Premier League opponents and have never won a group stage/league phase game against an English team.

Former European champions Ajax and Inter will fight to finish in their opening match in Amsterdam. This is the sides' first meeting since the 2005/06 round of 16, when Inter won 3-2 on aggregate. The teams also met in the 2002/03 first group stage, Inter winning 1-0 at home and 2-1 away with Hernán Crespo scoring all three of their goals. This fixture is a repeat of the 1972 European Cup final, two Johan Cruyff goals giving Ajax a 2-0 victory in Rotterdam.

Club Brugge's seventh UEFA Champions League campaign in eight seasons begins with a home game against Monaco, who also reached last season's knockout rounds. The teams' last meetings were in the 2018/19 group stage, when a 1-1 draw in Belgium on Matchday 3 was followed by a 4-0 away win for Club Brugge on Matchday 4. Their only other encounters were in the 1988/89 European Cup second round when Monaco overturned a 1-0 away defeat with a 6-1 home victory in the second leg.

Copenhagen return to the UEFA Champions League with a home game against Bayer Leverkusen. The teams' only previous meeting came in the 2014/15 play-offs, Leverkusen

winning 3-2 in Denmark and 4-0 in Germany. Copenhagen recorded their first-ever victory against German opposition in their most recent encounter, 3-1 at Heidenheim in the second leg of last season's UEFA Conference League knockout phase play-offs to complete a 4-3 aggregate triumph.

Manchester City kick off their campaign at home to Italian champions Napoli as Kevin De Bruyne makes a speedy return to the City of Manchester Stadium. The previous four matches between these teams were in the group stage. In 2011/12 a 1-1 draw in Manchester was followed by a 2-1 home win for Napoli. City won both fixtures in 2017/18, 2-1 at home and 4-2 away. Pep Guardiola's side are hosting an Italian team on Matchday 1 for the second season in succession, having drawn 0-0 against Inter in 2024/25. Napoli are without a win in their ten away matches against English teams.

Eintracht Frankfurt and Galatasaray are both making their returns to the UEFA Champions League as they meet in Germany on Matchday 1. The only previous matches between the teams came in the 1992/93 UEFA Cup second round, Galatasaray winning 1-0 on aggregate. That second-leg loss is Frankfurt's only defeat in eight matches against Turkish teams, their most recent encounter a 3-1 win at Beşiktaş on Matchday 2 of the 2024/25 UEFA Europa League.

Sporting CP's bid to reach the UEFA Champions League knockout rounds again kicks off at home to competition debutants Kairat Almaty. This is the teams' first meeting, and Kairat's first game against a Portuguese club. Sporting's only previous matches against a team from Kazakhstan were a 6-4 aggregate defeat of Astana in the 2017/18 UEFA Europa League round of 32.

Memories will be stirred of a famous UEFA Champions League hat-trick when Newcastle United take on Barcelona at St James' Park on Matchday 1. The teams have met four times in UEFA competition, Barcelona recording three wins to Newcastle's one.

Faustino Asprilla's hat-trick gave Newcastle a 3-2 home victory on Matchday 1 of the 1997/98 Champions League, Barça winning the return leg 1-0 on Matchday 5. The Spanish team won 3-1 at home and 2-0 away in the 2002/03 second group stage.

Fixtures at a Glance

PSV vs Union
Athletic vs Arsenal
Real Madrid vs Marseille
Benfica vs Qarabag
Juventus vs Dortmund
Tottenham vs Villarreal
Olympiacos vs Pafos
Slavia Praha vs Bodo/Glimt
Paris vs Atalanta
Bayern München vs Chelsea
Liverpool vs Atlético
Ajax vs Inter
Club Brugge vs Monaco
Copenhagen vs Leverkusen
Man City vs Napoli
Frankfurt vs Galatasaray
Sporting vs Kairat Almaty
Newcastle vs Barcelona

Para Badminton Championships: Abia State Hosts Fundraising Dinner

By Charles Oghonnaya



Abia State Deputy Governor, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu speaking during the dinner

In a landmark move to promote inclusivity in sports, the Abia State Government hosted a high-profile fundraising dinner in support of the upcoming First Abia Para Badminton International Championship and the All-African Para Badminton Championships, scheduled to take place in Umuahia in September and October 2025.

The event, held at the Banquet

Hall of the Government House, brought together dignitaries, stakeholders, and sports enthusiasts for what was described as "a night of purpose, partnership, and mission."

Governor Alex Otti, represented by Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, welcomed guests and shared the state's vision for para sports.

Reflecting on Abia's journey in para badminton, Governor Otti noted:

"For nine years, we hosted the Match Pass Para Badminton Championship with limited support and visibility. But under this

administration, the narrative has changed."

He highlighted the impressive progress made in just two years, including Abia athletes participating in six national competitions and successfully hosting a national tournament. These achievements, he said, have laid the foundation for the state to assume a global role.

Governor Otti proudly announced that Abia has secured the hosting rights for two major international events: the **Abia Para Badminton International Championship**, scheduled for September 30 - October 5, and the **All-African Para Badminton Championships**, to be held October 6 - 12, 2025.

Both events will take place at the International Conference Center and the Township Stadium in Umuahia, which have been upgraded to meet international standards. The state has also invested in modern equipment and ensured the availability of accessible facilities for athletes with disabilities.

"These championships go beyond competition," the Governor stated. "They represent empowerment, inclusion, and the bold message that persons living with disabilities can excel and inspire."

He described the fundraising dinner as an opportunity for public-private collaboration. While the government provides foundational support, he called on the private sector to partner in creating a legacy

for Africa through inclusive sports.

"Every pledge tonight is more than a donation. It is an investment in human capital, a statement of inclusion, and a legacy for Nigeria and Africa," he said during the unveiling of the event's logo and mascots.

In his remarks, Mr. Kingsley Anosike, Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning and Chairman of the Organizing Committee, emphasized the economic benefits of hosting the championships. He stated that the events would boost the tourism, hospitality, and transport sectors, while also promoting youth engagement and social inclusion.

Also speaking, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba, Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, praised Governor Otti's commitment to sports development. He highlighted the logistical support provided by the government, including wheelchair-accessible transport, and commended the Badminton Federation of Nigeria (BFN) for its technical partnership.

The President of the Para

Badminton Federation, Mr. Francis Orbih, lauded the Governor's support, including his sponsorship of Abia's team to the World Para Badminton Championships. He reaffirmed the Federation's full backing and described the upcoming events as a defining moment for badminton in Nigeria and Africa.

Mr. Samuel Ekeoma, National Coordinator for Para Badminton and 2nd Vice President of the BFN, spoke on Abia's growing reputation on the continental stage. He urged stakeholders to rally behind the events to further promote inclusion and excellence in African para sports.

Ekeoma noted that the championships aim not only to spotlight elite para badminton talent but also to position Abia as the continental hub for inclusive athletic excellence.

The highlight of the evening was the official unveiling of the championship logo and mascots — symbolizing Abia's hospitality, the resilience of para-athletes, and the unifying spirit of the sport.



The championship mascots

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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