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MOUAU, UNIZIK Approve Amnesty for Stranded Students

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru
& Ikechukwu Chinaza

The Senate of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), has approved a one-year academic amnesty to enable stranded students complete their programmes and graduate, following years of administrative and academic challenges that hindered their completion.

The approval, communicated via a memo dated October 30, 2025, from the Office of the Registrar and signed by Dr. M. A. Agbai for the Registrar, with Reference: MOUAU/R/SEN/26A/VOLI X, followed the institution's 253rd Senate meeting held on October 2, 2025, at the University Senate Chamber, Umudike.

According to the resolution, the amnesty window, covering the 2025/2026 academic session, will allow affected students to regularize their academic records, complete outstanding courses, and process their graduation under the BMAS curriculum through which they were originally admitted, ahead of the full transition to the CCMAS curriculum.

The Senate stressed that the gesture aligns with the university's values of fairness and inclusion, noting that only students with no record of examination misconduct or disciplinary actions will benefit.

A senior Senate member described the decision as "a historic and humane gesture," adding that the university sought to restore dignity to students who had spent years awaiting resolution.

Otti, Umahi Urge Speed On Enugu-Port Harcourt Road

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, and Nigeria's Minister of Works, Sen. (Engr.) Dave Umahi, recently inspected the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway, urging

contractors to accelerate work and ensure timely completion. Minister Umahi also commended Governor Otti for his achievements in Abia State and his effective

collaboration with President Bola Tinubu on infrastructure development.

The inspection followed a Federal Government threat to terminate the

portion of the project handled by China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC) due to slow progress. The threat was later withdrawn after

Governor Otti assured the Federal Government that CCECC would speed up work and deliver a high-quality road.

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■ Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti (left), and the Minister of Works, Engr. Dave Umahi (right), during the inspection of contractors handling various sections of the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway.

G20 Summit: Nigeria Poised to Benefit from Global Economy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to leveraging opportunities across multiple sectors of the global economy during the 2025 G20 Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. Ambassador Bolaji Akinremi, Director of

Reform and Foreign Service Innovation at the Ministry, disclosed this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Sunday, 2nd November, 2025 in Abuja. Speaking ahead of the summit, he highlighted Nigeria's position as a

member of the African Union (AU) and noted the historic significance of the event being hosted on African soil for the first time.

"The Johannesburg G20 Summit will be the first of its kind to take place in Africa, and that holds great significance for us as

Africans," Amb. Akinremi said. "We expect it to be very successful and to bring hope and tangible benefits to the continent. We are eager to see the outcomes in the coming years."

He emphasised that Nigeria's preparedness, including hosting one of the

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EDITORIAL:

Urgent Need To Embrace NELFUND In South-East Nigeria

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Otti, Umahi Urge Speed on Enugu-Port Harcourt Road

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Minister Umahi also briefed Governor Otti on plans to use reinforced rigid pavement in certain sections of the road for improved durability.

Praise for Governor Otti's leadership was high. Minister Umahi said, "This is a time to call Abia the State of God. The people of Abia love their Governor. Politics should be about development, and Governor Otti is bringing real progress to the State. That is why both the President and I support him."

At the CCECC section, Umahi noted, "This part of the road is the worst, but we are strengthening it with concrete and asphalt. Governor Otti helped resolve issues with CCECC, which is why work has resumed fully. Thanks to him, travel time to Onne Port has reduced from hours to just 30 minutes."

The Minister also visited the section managed by an Arab contractor. While commending Governor Otti for attracting federal road projects to Abia, Umahi warned the contractor to speed up work on the remaining 4.5 km or risk losing the contract.

Governor Otti expressed gratitude to Minister

Umahi for listening to his intervention and withdrawing the threat against CCECC. He called on the company to double their efforts and deliver quality work quickly, stressing the importance of good roads for access and economic growth in the State.

The Governor also thanked President Tinubu and the Federal Government for approving the takeover of some federal road projects by the Abia State Government. He highlighted ongoing projects, including the Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene Road, Owerri-Enyima dualization, Onuimo-Tower Road, Ohafia-Arochuku Road, and the recently completed Omenuko Bridge.

Governor Otti concluded by appreciating the people of Abia for their continued support and prayed for God's blessings on them. He emphasized, "Governance comes after elections. Opposition does not mean stopping progress. We are all working together for the benefit of our people."

Abia Government to Honour Prof. Nnennaya Oti for Integrity

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, has announced that his administration will immortalise Professor Nnennaya Oti, Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), in recognition of her integrity and steadfast commitment to upholding standards during the 2023 general elections.

Governor Otti made the announcement at the Enyimba International Stadium, Aba, during a civic reception organised by the Old Bende people under the Old Bende Progressive Union. The union, which represents eight local government areas of Old Bende, including Edda in Ebonyi State, also honoured Professor Oti for her

exemplary courage.

Describing her as a woman of credibility and integrity, Governor Otti praised Professor Oti for refusing to compromise during the 2023 governorship election, noting that her actions earned her nationwide respect.

"Abia people have many awards to bestow on her. At the right time, we will immortalise her. She has set a new example for Nigeria. Whenever people talk about integrity and credibility, they look to her. She may not have received money, but she received something far greater," he said.

Governor Otti urged public officers across the country to emulate Professor Oti's example by standing for

truth and justice, regardless of personal gain.

On the upcoming 2027 elections, he cautioned political actors against premature politicking, stressing that the outcome rests in God's hands.

"The only remark I have about 2027 is that it is in the hands of God. Those who boast should stop. You may not even be here in 2027. Leave it in God's hands," he advised.

The governor also reaffirmed his administration's commitment to service delivery and fulfilling its mandate to the people of Abia State.

"Let us not be distracted. We have a lot of work to do. At the right time, it will be the

people who decide who will lead them," he said.

Earlier, Chief Azubuike UDAH, retired Deputy Inspector General of Police and Chairman of the Old Bende Progressive Union, described the reception as a collective endorsement of Governor Otti's transformational leadership. He praised the governor's achievements across the state and said the Old Bende people remain united in their support for him.

The event was attended by dignitaries from across the state, including Deputy Governor Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu, FNSE, Speaker of the State House of Assembly Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Emeruwa, federal and state lawmakers, traditional rulers, and industry leaders.

G20 Summit: Nigeria Poised to Benefit from Global Economy

Continued from page 1

pre-summit meetings in Abuja on Monday, underscore the country's readiness to actively participate in the summit. Key issues on the agenda are expected to include debt sustainability, reducing Africa's debt burden, climate change, and climate financing—factors that could strengthen the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and boost economic growth.

"Nigeria intends to play a strong role in these discussions," he said. "We want to harness the

potential opportunities, and our preparations have been comprehensive. The pre-summit meeting in Nigeria involves inter-ministerial collaboration, the private sector, and public sector stakeholders. We hope to return with positive outcomes."

Amb. Akinremi also highlighted the benefits of networking and collaboration that the summit would bring. Nigeria and South Africa already maintain a youth dialogue, and

hosting the G20 in Africa is expected to further strengthen ties with other countries.

Describing the G20 as a group of the world's 20 most powerful and economically influential nations, he explained that the summit would address global economic issues, financing, development, and industrialization.

"A significant portion of the discussions will focus on debt sustainability, which could provide relief for many African nations, including Nigeria, whose debt

profile is rising," he noted.

He urged Nigerian private sector operators to take advantage of President Bola Tinubu's policies, emphasizing that the G20 summit provides a unique platform for business growth and international collaboration.

"We are all rallying behind President Tinubu and look forward to a successful outcome and active participation in the G20 in Johannesburg," Amb. Akinremi concluded.

NAN

MOUAU, UNIZIK Approve Amnesty for Stranded Students

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"This is more than a policy decision, it is a moral intervention. We are giving deserving students a second chance to redeem their years of effort," the official said.

For years, several students who completed their coursework were unable to graduate due to missing results, outdated course codes, and other administrative issues.

Some reportedly matriculated as far back as 2005 to 2018, remaining stuck in the system.

Following the approval, the Registrar has been directed to issue detailed guidelines for implementation, while Deans and Heads of Departments will compile and verify the lists of eligible students. The Directorate of Academic Planning will coordinate advisory, registration, and counseling processes to

support returning students.

The development has sparked relief among affected families, many of whom described the move as a "long-awaited miracle."

"We've prayed for this day," one parent said. "Finally, our children can complete what they started. It's hope restored."

The amnesty year, which takes effect in the 2025/2026 academic

session, is considered one of the most student-centered reforms in MOUAU's history, combining compassion with institutional renewal.

In a related development, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Awka, has also approved an academic amnesty programme for students who have exceeded the maximum duration of their studies.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Carol Arinze-Umobi, announced

the decision during the university's 238th Senate meeting held on Friday, October 3, 2025, at the Faculty of Social Sciences Auditorium.

The initiative will allow affected students a final opportunity to regularize their records and complete outstanding academic requirements.

Prof. Arinze-Umobi said the move reflects the institution's commitment to fairness and support for

students who faced delays beyond their control. She emphasized that only students without disciplinary or examination-related offences will qualify.

Guidelines and timelines for the amnesty will be released by the Registrar's office, while faculties and departments will handle verification and academics support.

News

Christian Genocide: Tinubu Set for Emergency Talks With Trump

By Sophia Ovuike

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is expected to meet with United States President Donald Trump in the coming days amid growing global concern over alleged attacks on Christians in Nigeria.

This development was confirmed by Daniel Bwala, Special Adviser to the President on Policy Communication, in a statement released on Sunday.

According to Bwala, the

high-level meeting will focus on recent claims of a "Christian genocide" in parts of Nigeria, as well as broader efforts to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation between the two nations.

He noted that both leaders have previously demonstrated a shared commitment to combating insurgency and extremist violence across West Africa.

"President Bola Tinubu and President Donald Trump share a common interest in the fight against insurgency and all forms of terrorism against humanity," Bwala posted on X.

The meeting follows Trump's recent remarks accusing Nigerian authorities of failing to adequately protect Christian communities from violent attacks. Trump warned that the United States could consider cutting aid to Nigeria and even hinted at possible military action if what he described as "targeted killings" continue.

In response, the Nigerian Presidency reiterated its commitment to addressing insecurity and protecting all citizens, regardless of religion.

Bwala further recalled that during Trump's previous tenure, the U.S. approved the sale of military equipment to Nigeria—a partnership the Tinubu administration continues to leverage in its anti-terror operations.

The planned diplomatic engagement is expected to reinforce security ties, address concerns raised by international observers, and strengthen Nigeria's position against terrorism and sectarian violence.

Eastern Surveyors Forum Holds 3rd AGM, Wokemba Memorial Lecture in Aba

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Eastern Surveyors Forum (ESF) of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS) has successfully held its 3rd Annual General Meeting and the Surv. S.G. Wokemba Memorial Lecture in Aba, Abia State. The event, which took place at Hotel Du Golf, attracted surveyors, academics, and stakeholders from across the South-East. The theme of the conference was "Geospatial Analysis of Igbo Diversity and Its Contribution to National Development."

In his address, the ESF Chairman, Surv. Gabby Okeke, described the gathering as a milestone in the forum's history and a celebration of the life and legacy of the late Surv. Shedrack Gregory Wokemba, a past President of both NIS (1983-1986) and the Surveyors Registration Council of Nigeria (SURCON).

Okeke explained that hosting the 2025 edition in Aba was symbolic, being the hometown of the late Wokemba. He recalled that the first and second editions of the memorial lecture were held in Enugu (2019) and Owerri (2024), respectively. According to him, the 2025 theme reflected the creativity and industrious spirit of Aba, encouraging surveyors to harness geospatial data to strengthen national unity and development.

He lauded Wokemba's pioneering contributions to the profession, notably the introduction of "pillar fees" and "mandatory deposit" systems that secured financial stability for NIS and SURCON. Okeke urged members to sustain his legacy by expanding into specialized fields such as engineering, hydrographic, photogrammetric, and geodetic surveying. The ESF Chairman also appreciated the attendance of the NIS National President, Surv. (Chief) Pius Eze, who he described as a founding leader of the forum. He highlighted the forum's growing impact in national affairs and youth engagement through the Young Surveyors Network, which has

promoted unity among surveyors across the South-East.

Okeke further commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for granting a posthumous pardon to Nigeria's first indigenous surveyor and nationalist, Herbert Macaulay, describing the gesture as a long-overdue recognition of the profession's role in nation-building.

In his remarks, Surv. (Chief) Pius Eze, President of the NIS, said the forum provided an opportunity to celebrate Wokemba's enduring legacy and to reflect on the importance of geospatial science in national growth. He commended the ESF leadership for its commitment and congratulated all participants for sustaining the memorial lecture series. Also speaking, the Abia State Chairman of NIS, Surv. Robert Apanta, described the theme as timely and thought-provoking, urging participants to reflect on the Igbo people's contributions to urban and national development.

Representing the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, the Commissioner for Lands, Mr. Chaka Chukwumerije, reaffirmed the government's commitment to comprehensive land mapping and sustainable infrastructural planning. He lauded the organizers for promoting professionalism and contributing to Abia's transformation agenda.

Other dignitaries, including Hon. Alex Ikwechegh (Member, Aba North/South Federal Constituency), Surv. Isa Funtua Abdulkadir (Chairman, Northern Surveyors Forum), and Surv. Folakemi Abisola Odunewu (NIS Secretary-General), delivered goodwill messages, praising Wokemba's visionary leadership and the forum's dedication to professional excellence.

The highlight of the event was a keynote paper presented by Surv. Prof. Ebele Josephine Emegini titled "Geospatial Analysis of Igbo Diversity and Its Contribution to National Development."

Ex-Minister Ogah Pays Final Respect To Late APC Chieftain in Abia

By Okereke Kate

The former Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development, Dr. Uchechukwu Sampson Ogah, has paid his final respects to Hon. Lady Christie Uche Nwoke, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Abia State, who passed away at the age of 69. The late Lady Nwoke, a former APC House of Assembly aspirant for the Umuahia East State Constituency, was also a prominent leader of Abia Rejoice, a pro-APC group in the state.

Speaking at her funeral service held over the weekend at her Dozie Way residence in Umuahia, Dr. Ogah described her as "a strong pillar of support who will be remembered for her dedication, faith, and service to humanity."

He praised her as a dependable and trustworthy party member who carried out every assignment with commitment and excellence. Ogah noted that Lady Nwoke was passionate about the growth and unity of the APC both at the state and national levels, describing her death as a huge loss to the party.

"She led her children to

Christ, and when you have solace in Christ, you don't fear death," Ogah said. "The pain we feel is because she was a loving mother, but as Christians, we know there is hope beyond this life. We must live each day as if tomorrow may never come." He urged the bereaved family to remain steadfast in their faith, emphasizing that "commitment to Christ is the only way to succeed on this earth."

Delivering the sermon, Pastor Abundance Chika of Living Faith Church, Umuahia, described death as an inevitable mystery and urged everyone to live in readiness, as every human being has an appointed time to die.

In their tributes, the Traditional Ruler of Ndume Ibeku, Eze Donatus Aguiyi, and the Traditional Ruler of Azuke Autonomous Community, Eze Emmanuel Onwubuariri, mourned the late political icon and commended her selfless service to humanity and her community.

Her son-in-law, Engr. Munachi Ikedum, recounted the strong bond he shared with the deceased and lauded her enduring legacy, praying for her peaceful repose.

Similarly, the Abia State Chairman of the Police

Community Relations Committee (PCRC), Chief Iheanyi Igboanulam, along with other members, expressed deep sorrow over her passing. They noted that Lady Nwoke served diligently as the State Organizing Secretary of the group until her death, and prayed for God's comfort upon her family.

In an interview, her daughter, Dr. Chika Ikedum, said she would miss her mother's peaceful spirit and guidance. She also revealed plans to immortalize her by establishing a foundation in her honour to care for children and the less privileged.

Her first son, Mr. Chinedu Nwoke, described his late mother as a major influence in his life and vowed to uphold her political ideals. He hinted at joining active politics, saying Abians should "look out for him by 2031."

The event attracted several dignitaries, including APC stalwarts, members of the Abia Rejoice family, business associates, clergymen, traditional rulers, friends, and well-wishers who gathered to celebrate the impactful life of Hon. Lady Christie Uche Nwoke.

Azumini School Receives Desk and Chair Donation from ASUBEB

By Okechukwu Uban

Azumini, Abia State The Abia State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) has donated 80 school desk lockers and chairs to Azumini Secondary School, a move aimed at enhancing the learning environment and overall academic experience for students.

The handover ceremony was attended by school administrators, community leaders, and local education

officials, who welcomed the donation with enthusiasm. ASUBEB representatives highlighted their ongoing commitment to providing quality education and ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary tools for effective learning.

During the event, community leaders and school management expressed heartfelt gratitude to ASUBEB for the contribution. They noted that the new

desks and chairs would help reduce classroom overcrowding, create a more comfortable learning space, and allow students to concentrate better on their studies.

The initiative is regarded as a strong example of how government agencies, schools, and community stakeholders can collaborate to support education. Attendees expressed hope that similar

interventions would continue, providing students at Azumini Secondary School with opportunities to reach their full potential.

Community members were also encouraged to remain actively involved in supporting the school through teaching, learning, and infrastructure development, ensuring that every student has access to a quality education.

News

Abia Government Committed To Nurturing Talents

By: Ofor Okechukwu Stephen

Youths in Abia State have been encouraged to actively participate in the state government's flagship programs through the Ministry of Arts, Culture & Creative Economy and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Development.

Speaking at the grand finale of the "Abia Beyond Creativity Talent Hunt" held at the Nnamdi Azikiwe Secretariat, Umuahia, the Governor, represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Prof. Kenneth Kalu, said that Governor Alex Chioma Otti's administration has created an environment that supports artistic excellence and promotes cultural heritage. He added that the initiative also helps diversify the economy through creative industries, creating wealth and adding value. The program provides a platform for showcasing Abia's arts and culture while discovering and nurturing the state's creative talents.

The Commissioner for Arts, Culture & Creative Economy, Hon. Matthew C. Ekwuribe, said that Governor Otti is dedicated to nurturing talents where imagination meets innovation. He added that Abia's young people show great potential and are proof that the state's future is secure.

The Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Hon. Nwaobilio Ananaba, also noted that creative minds drive societal progress. He emphasized that those who embrace creativity can turn challenges into opportunities through innovation and artistic expression.

Contributing to the discussion, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Mr. Ikechukwu Oriuwa, described creativity as one of humanity's greatest gifts. He said it thrives on imagination and helps build confidence and identity through artistic expression.

The talent hunt featured artworks from students of Abia State University, Uturu; Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba; and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umuahia. The event was attended by Deans, Heads of Departments, and other distinguished guests from various institutions across the state.



The SSG, Professor Kenneth Kalu and Other Dignitaries During The Abia Beyond Creativity Talent Hunt

Adamawa, Malaria Consortium To Give Medicine To 1.1 Million Children

The Adamawa State Government has teamed up with the Malaria Consortium to start a programme that will give medicine to children to protect them from deadly diseases.

According to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), the plan aims to reach about 1.1 million children across the state.

Mr. Benjamin Gubi, the Programme Manager of the Adamawa Malaria Elimination Programme, shared the details on Saturday in Yola during a meeting on the training of health workers for the exercise.

He explained that the medicine, Azithromycin, is a commonly used antibiotic in Nigeria. It helps treat and prevent illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria-related infections, which are the main causes of death among children under five years old. The event, themed "Strengthening Communication and Collaboration for Effective Azithromycin MDA," focused on the importance of community awareness, partnerships, and media support to make the programme successful. The programme targets children aged one month to 59 months and aims to reduce deaths from pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria. "The campaign will take place in all 21 local government areas, 226 wards, and communities in the state. It will be carried

out house-to-house using the state's existing health structures." About 1,500 trained health workers and 6,500 community volunteers will take part in the four-day exercise from November 21 to 25," Gubi said. He added that the goal is to reduce child deaths and improve child health by preventing common infections. The programme was first tested in six states in 2021 and is now being expanded to 11 states across Nigeria.

Gubi noted that there were very few side effects during earlier rounds. Mr. Abubakar Isa from the Malaria Consortium said the project is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, and other partners. He added that the programme fits into the state's Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC) plan and will use syrup forms of the medicine for easier use by children. Dr. Lucky Daniel, Adamawa Coordinator for

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), said the project is called SARMANA 2, meaning Safety and Antimicrobial Resistance of Mass Administration of Azithromycin in Children in Nigeria. He stressed the need for media and community involvement to build awareness and support. He also said the programme will monitor how bacteria respond to the medicine to make sure children don't develop resistance to it. Dr. Daniel emphasized that

the project belongs to the people and government of Adamawa, while partners will provide technical and logistical help to ensure success. The NAN reports that the community-based child health project is jointly carried out by the Malaria Consortium, the Adamawa State Ministry of Health, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

Former PDP Financial Secretary, Others Join Labour Party in Ukwa East

By Okechukwu ubani

The Labour Party in Ukwa East Local Government Area has welcomed another prominent political figure the pioneer PDP Local Government Chairman and former PDP State Financial Secretary, RSHC I. N. Ahunanya (popularly known as Bekee Ukwu) along with his many supporters.

The defection ceremony took place at the residence of Chief Chima Ekeke, the Ward Chairman of Ohuru/Mkporobe.

Speaking at the event, RSHC I. N. Ahunanya said he decided to officially join the Labour Party after a productive meeting with the Executive Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti. According to him, Governor Otti has shown genuine interest in developing Ukwa East, as seen in the ongoing fast-tracked construction of the Ukebe Ohanku Link Road, with more

projects set to begin before the end of the year.

Chief Ahunanya said it would be morally wrong not to support the Executive Chairman of Ukwa East, Hon. Chibunna Akara, whose leadership has transformed the local government. He promised to give Hon. Akara his full support, just as he had done for other leaders from the area in the past.

Bekee Ukwu expressed his joy at seeing his political associates, Hon. Osy Nwamuo and Chief Uche Aja, already in the Labour Party. He pledged to use his political experience to help re-elect Governor Otti in 2027.

Receiving the defectors on behalf of the State Party Chairman, the LG Labour Party Chairman, Mr. Maraizu Nwankwo, praised Bekee Ukwu as a political force respected across parties. He assured him of special recognition and respect within the Labour Party.

Speaking on behalf of the Labour Party caucus, the Executive Chairman of Ukwa East, Hon. Chibunna Akara, praised his uncle, Bekee Ukwu, for joining the visionary leadership of Dr. Alex Otti. He said this move would inspire more people to join the Labour Party.

Hon. Akara announced that in addition to the Ukebe Ohanku Link Road, the ongoing Aba - Obohia Road reconstruction will reach the Ndoki area before the end of 2026. He also mentioned several other major projects currently ongoing in Ukwa East.

He urged the people of Ukwa East to appreciate Governor Otti for his continuous support and love, assuring them that more development projects are on the way through the efforts of the Labour Party leadership in the area.

Representing the Governor at the event, the Commissioner

for Information and Strategy, Prince Okey Kanu, described Bekee Ukwu as a valuable asset to the Labour Party. He confirmed that more development projects would be brought to Ukwa East under Governor Otti's administration and promised to brief the Governor on the day's political developments.

Among those who defected with RSHC I. N. Ahunanya were:

Barrister (Amb.) F. W. Ezenwosuagwu, a legal luminary

Mrs. Comfort Walmate, former State Welfare Officer of PDP

Mr. Enyinnah Emenike, former PDP Ward Chairman

Hon. Kenneth Ahunanya, former Deputy Leader of Ukwa East Legislative Council

Nze Alozie Edede, former PDP Ward Vice Chairman and over 300 other supporters.

Editorial

Urgent Need To Embrace NELFUND In South-East Nigeria

Education is the backbone of any thriving society. For decades, students in Abia State and the broader Southeast region have shown a deep hunger for knowledge, producing some of Nigeria's brightest minds across professions. Yet, access to quality tertiary education continues to be marred by one persistent challenge—funding. It is against this backdrop that the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) presents a transformative opportunity that students in the Southeast must not ignore.

NELFUND was launched by the Federal Government as a long-overdue solution to the financial barriers hindering young Nigerians from accessing and completing higher education. It offers interest-free loans to indigent students in Public Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education. The Scheme is designed not only to support tuition but also to cover essential costs like accommodation, textbooks, and upkeep—allowing students to focus on their studies rather than worry about financial survival.

The Southeast is historically known for its emphasis on education as a pathway for personal and communal development. However, many families in Abia, Ebonyi, Anambra, Enugu, and Imo states still struggle to afford tuition fees amidst rising inflation and economic instability. For too long, brilliant students have been forced to abandon their dreams, defer their admissions, or rely on unstable financial sources. NELFUND provides a sustainable and structured solution to this crisis.

Abia State, in particular, has a high youth population with a strong academic inclination. With institutions such as Abia State University,

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic etc, a lot of students have access to tertiary education—but their challenge has often been funding. The NELFUND scheme eliminates the financial uncertainty that too often stands between a student and graduation.

However, some students and parents often express skepticism about government loan programs, fearing bureaucratic traps or future debt burdens which often limits enrollment into the programme.

However, NELFUND is unique as its structure; repayment only begins two years after the beneficiary completes the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and secures employment. This repayment plan is tied to income, making it fair and manageable. There are also legal safeguards to ensure transparency.

It is against this background that we urge our needy students to embrace the scheme.

School Administrators, Traditional rulers, Youth Organizations, Churches, and Community Leaders in the Southeast should assist to raise awareness about the NELFUND loan scheme. Guidance counselors should help students understand the application process, and local governments must work with institutions to ensure no eligible student is left out due to ignorance or misinformation.

Parents must also see this loan not as a burden but as an investment in the future of their children. Students, especially those from low-income backgrounds, should seize the opportunity of NELFUND with both hands. The days of dropping out due to tuition difficulties can finally come to an end—if we act.

NELFUND is not just a policy; it is a chance to rewrite the story of education in Abia State and the entire Southeast. It is a chance to equip the next generation with the knowledge and skills to lead, innovate, and transform our region and nation. Let no student be left behind. Let no dream be deferred because of poverty. The time to act is now.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
THE EDITOR
NATIONAL AMBASSADOR
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E-mail: nationalambassador@gmail.com

Combating Domestic Violence And Abuse

Dear Editor,

Sir, I write to draw your attention to domestic violence which remains a significant societal issue, with recent data from 2024 and 2025 indicating persistent high rates and, in some areas, an increase in reported cases.

Overtime, family and domestic violence is a common problem in recent time, affecting an estimated ten million people globally every year; as many as one in four women and one in nine men are victims of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, each form of family violence begets interrelated forms of violence. The "cycle of abuse" is often continued from exposed children into their adult relationships and finally to the care of elderly. Healthcare professionals will at some point evaluate or treat a patient who is a victim of domestic or family violence.

Dating from the past records, domestic and family violence includes a range of abuse, including economic, physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological, toward children, adults, and elders.

By and large, intimate partner violence presents stalking sexual and physical violence, and psychological aggression by a current or former partner.

Globally, domestic and family violence is difficult to identify, and many cases go unreported to health professionals or legal authorities.

Finally, with the prevalence of domestic and family violence in societies, the healthcare professionals including psychologists, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and physicians, are to join hands to evaluate and possibly treat a victim or perpetrator of domestic or family violence.

From Offor Okechukwu

Religion

Keys To Divine Direction!

By Bishop David Oyedepo

Today, we shall focus on **Keys to Divine Direction!** From scriptures, we understand that God is ready to guide our paths in life. It is written: And I will bring the blind by a way [that] they knew not; I will lead them in paths [that] they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them (Isaiah 42:16).

However, God does not just lead anybody on the earth. He leads only His sheep who are willing to be led (Isaiah 55:8). Therefore, there are certain conditions that must be met before we can be divinely directed; they are:

What then, are the keys to Divine Direction?

Be His Son: The first key is that we must be born again. We must be covenant children of God before He can lead us. As it is written: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). This implies that, for God to be committed to directing us, we must first be His children. (Romans 8:14). Thus, by accepting Jesus as our

Lord and personal Saviour, we have secured the ticket for divine direction.

Meekness: We need a meek spirit to be guided and directed by God. David said in Psalm 25:9: The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. This means meekness of heart must be in place before God can show us His ways; which are higher than ours. The Bible describes Moses as the meekest man in the earth; as a result, he had access to the ways of God (Numbers 12:3; see also Psalm 103:7). Thus, there cannot be meekness without the fear of the Lord (Psalm 25:12).

Faith: We need faith to be directed by God. Paul said: For we walk by faith, not by sight: (2 Corinthians 5:7). Divine direction is not for those that walk by sight but for those who will trust God to lead them aright. It is faith that makes a man seek God for divine direction (Hebrews 11:6).

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit: A continuous fellowship with the Holy Spirit is another requirement that must be met if we desire divine direction. As it is written: But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1 John 2:20; see also John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is to show us the things to come but before He can do that, we must first have to know Him and enjoy communion with Him. We also have to be conscious of His indwelling presence in us because the Holy Spirit is a Person we can talk to, ask questions and seek His help.

The Holy Spirit is to show us the things to come but before He can do that, we must first have to know Him and enjoy communion with Him.

Quietness: We need quietness to enjoy divine direction. Not just a quiet outer environment but much more a quiet spirit. Avoid a rowdy spirit for God is a Spirit and He communicates with our Spirit. The Bible says: God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Since our fellowship with God is in the spirit, we need to create quietness around us so that we can have a sweet fellowship with the Father where He can instruct us in the way to go (Isaiah 30:15).

Walk in Love: This is a condition in which we live without malice, anger

and being relaxed with others, by loving them unconditionally. We also need to embrace liberty of the spirit and one of its manifestations is walking in love. As it is written: Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17). Our conscience must be free from all manner of entanglements; including disobedience which quenches the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

Be Open: We need openness of heart for divine direction. This connotes, we should not be set or rest in our own ways like concrete. We must be willing to adjust to God's instructions; even if they contradict our actions. (Matthew 18:3-4). Therefore, we should keep a sensitive and tender heart before God as we allow Him direct our paths, because He knows everything better than us ((2 Chronicles 16:9; Proverbs 16:9).

Worship/Praise: If we

must enjoy constant direction, then praise must become our lifestyle. As it is written: But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel (Psalm 22:3). Thus, His voice of direction will come clearly to us when we give Him the praises that His heart loves.

In conclusion, these keys will manifest in your life if you are born again. Are you born again? If you are not, this is an opportunity to do so. Simply say the following prayer: Lord Jesus, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. Cleanse me with Your precious Blood. Today, I accept You as my Lord and personal Saviour. Thank You Jesus, for saving me! Now I know I am born again!

For further reading, please get my books: In pursuit of Vision, Following The Path Of The Eagle, The Breakthrough Power of Vision and Understanding Divine Direction.

Family Matters

By Pastor Faith Oyedepo

Loving Your Wife the Bible Way. We saw from scriptures that if a man would love his wife without conditions, he must lay hold on light from God's Word, as seen in Ephesians 5:25.

This week, I shall be teaching on what I have captioned: Love Expression! Everyone wants to be loved, and everyone needs love. Jesus showed this to be a healthy desire when He asked: Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? (John 21:15).

Love is not love until it is expressed. Even God Almighty did not just assume He loved man; He expressed it by giving His most precious possession - His Son. The Word of God says: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son... (John 3:16). You don't just love in your heart or thoughts; you must go one step further by giving it an expression.

Husband, until you comply with this commandment to love your wife the Bible way, you may never taste fulfilment in marriage. You make it automatically easy for your wife to response in total submission to you, when you exhibit unconditional love to her. Remember, no woman resists love or hates to be loved. As you begin to love her wholeheartedly, not minding her errors, she will begin to

respond to you, and your family harmony will be kept aflame, radiating the glory of God.

If only husbands could learn to give their wives more attention and more time, their situation will brighten up. Some men can give a lot of money to their wives; but to give their time is the problem. They claim that their time is too precious to be wasted.

Does spending quality time with your wife equal time wasting to you? To give a listening ear to what your wife is saying, thinking or going through should be of greater value to you than the physical or material things you may be privileged to give her. If only you can do this, your discussions with her will not always end in physical combat. I know I'm communicating to someone right now.

Husband, attempt to be 100% patient with your wife, as you may seem to know better than her. Allow her make her mistakes and lovingly

intervene. By so doing, she will be more careful next time, so as not to make the same mistake.

It is throbbing to know that most men find it difficult to say, "I love you." Well, it could be a cultural hang-up; but Jesus, Who, though is God and is a man among men, set the pace when He told His disciples that He loved them and asked them if they loved Him (John 15:9).

Saying the words, "I love you" to your wife, may be just what you need to do, to cause a transformation in your home. It doesn't portray weakness like others conclude, but strength. Also, action speaks louder than words, they say. So, if you are confessing love for your wife, but you act selfishly by not giving money for her upkeep and that of the children (1 Timothy 5:8); screaming, "I love you" at the top of your voice, would have no meaning to her. This is because your actions are disproving your love.

To sum up, God is love! To bring God, Who is righteousness, peace and joy personified into your marriage and

home, you must love your wife unconditionally. Remember, love is not love until it is expressed. As you express your love to her in particular, and the family in general, great shall be your peace in every aspect of your life.

Moreover, you need God's help in expressing love to your wife, and that begins with you accepting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of your home. Say this prayer with me and Jesus will come into your heart, and your home: "Dear Lord Jesus Christ, I come to You today. I am a sinner. Forgive me of my sins and cleanse me with Your Blood. Deliver me from sin and satan to serve the living God. 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.

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





Kalu Urges Stronger Parliament-Judiciary Collaboration

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Benjamin Kalu, has called for closer cooperation between the National Assembly and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) to improve Nigeria's justice system and restore public trust.

Kalu made the call recently when he received an NBA delegation led by its President, Mazi Afam Osiowe (SAN), at his office in Abuja.

He said the 10th House of Representatives has made justice reform a key priority, using bills, motions, and oversight to promote transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the judiciary.

"The House is working to rebuild public confidence through inclusive, evidence-based reforms," Kalu said. "We are engaging stakeholders on bills that ensure timely justice, expand court capacity, improve pay for judges, and strengthen trust in the system."

As Chairman of the House Committee on Constitution Review, Kalu said the ongoing constitutional amendment process will include input from legal experts, the judiciary, and civil society. He praised the NBA for defending constitutional rights, promoting human rights, and upholding the rule of law.

He referenced the World Justice Project's 2024 Rule of Law Index, which ranked Nigeria 120th out of 142 countries, saying it shows the urgent need for sustained reforms through strong collaboration between the Bar and Parliament.

Kalu listed several reform bills before the House, including:

High Court of the FCT (Amendment) Bill - to add more judges.

Judicial Office Holders (Salaries and Allowances) Bill - to ensure fair pay for judicial officers.

Amendments to Legal Aid Council and National Legal Education Acts - to improve access to justice and modernize legal training.

Harmonization of the Constitution (Fifth Alteration) Bill - to strengthen separation of powers and accountability.

"The rule of law is not upheld by courts alone; it depends on a culture of justice that flows from Parliament to the people. When justice works, society thrives," he said.

Kalu emphasized that effective governance relies on cooperation among the legislature, judiciary, and executive. "The legislature makes the law, the judiciary interprets it, and the executive enforces it all guided by one goal: serving the people," he concluded.



Hon. Benjamin Kalu



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Reps Approve Tinubu's \$2.35bn Loan, \$500m Sovereign Sukuk for Infrastructure Development

The Nigeria House of Representatives has approved President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's request to borrow \$2.35 billion to finance part of the 2025 budget deficit, alongside plans to issue a \$500 million debut sovereign sukuk in the international capital market.

The approval came recently following the consideration and adoption of the report by the House Committee on Aids, Loans, and Debt Management during plenary in Abuja.

According to the committee's report, the green chamber endorsed the implementation of a new external borrowing of N1.84 trillion (equivalent to \$1.23 billion) at the approved exchange rate of N1,500 per dollar, to part-finance the N9.28 trillion deficit in the 2025 Appropriation Act.

Earlier this month, President Tinubu sought legislative backing for the borrowing plan in accordance with Sections 21(1) and 27(1) of the Debt Management Office (Establishment) Act, 2003, which require National Assembly approval for all new loans and refinancing arrangements.

The President explained that the funds would be sourced through one or a combination of instruments, such as eurobonds, syndicated loans, or bridge financing, depending on prevailing market conditions.

Tinubu stated that the pricing of the proposed eurobonds would align with yields

on Nigeria's existing international bonds, which currently range between 6.8 and 9.3 per cent, depending on maturity.

On the proposed \$500 million sovereign sukuk, the President said the initiative would help diversify Nigeria's investor base, broaden funding sources, and deepen the domestic government securities market.

He recalled that the Federal Government had successfully raised over N1.39 trillion through domestic sukuk issuances between 2017 and 2025, which funded major road and infrastructure projects

nationwide.

The proposed international sukuk, he added, would complement domestic efforts by attracting global investors.

"It is imperative to open new sources of funding for the Federal Government and to deepen the FGN securities market," President Tinubu said in his letter to the House.

He further explained that 25 per cent of proceeds from the sukuk would be used to repay high-cost existing debt, while the remaining 75 per cent would be channelled into critical infrastructure projects

across the country.

The President maintained that the borrowing plan formed part of his administration's fiscal strategy to strengthen foreign reserves, stabilise the naira, and drive sustainable infrastructure development amid rising debt obligations.

With the House's approval, the Federal Government is now positioned to implement the external financing component of the 2025 Appropriation Act, marking a major step in Tinubu's economic recovery and growth agenda.

Reps Push for Digital Civil Registration

The House of Representatives has called for a modern, technology-based system to register births, deaths, marriages, and other important life events across Nigeria. The goal is to improve national planning, social services, and security.

The call was made by the Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, during a public hearing on a new bill to update the Births, Deaths, etc. (Compulsory Registration) Act. The Speaker was represented by Hon. Godwin Offiono (PDP-Cross River). He said the new law would modernize Nigeria's civil registration system using digital tools to collect and manage data.

"Accurate and timely registration of births, stillbirths, deaths, marriages, and other important events is very important for national planning and good governance," Abbas said. "The current law was made for a time before digital tools and modern data systems existed."

He added that Nigeria's growing population and the need for data-based decisions make a digital registration system necessary. The new system would reduce fraud,

prevent duplicate records, improve identity management, and make it easier for people to get certificates anywhere in the country.

Hon. Odimayo Okunjimi, Chairman of the House Committee on Population, said the current system is outdated and not suitable for today's technology-driven world.

"Without reliable registration and data, the country cannot plan properly or provide social services," he said. "This bill will create a modern, unified system that meets today's needs and prepares for the future."

The bill aims to create one national system for registering births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions, and other important events. It will also clarify the roles of the National Population Commission (NPC), state registries, local governments, and relevant ministries.

Okunjimi said modernizing the registration system is very important. "It will strengthen identity management, improve governance, enhance national security, and provide a solid foundation for data-driven development," he said.

Feature

Biya, Okpebholo And The New Service Chiefs

By Reuben Abati

// They say President Paul Biya has been declared winner of the presidential election in Cameroon. The man has been in power since 1982. At 92, he is the oldest president in the world. Now that the Constitutional Court has given him another tenure of seven years in office, it means he will be president till almost 100. What exactly is wrong with us in Africa?"

"It means Paul Biya is likely to die in office. What you have in Cameroon is not a democracy. It is a monarchy. It is a mockery of democracy. You asked the right question. Truly, something is wrong with us in Africa. We are not okay at all. Do you know that Paul Biya only showed up once to campaign? African dictators have adopted a new style. They campaign with effigies. Biya did it in Cameroon. Museveni has done the same in Uganda. It was his effigy going about waving to the people. He is so sick, so big, so disoriented he even says it is the Gen Z youths that want him in power. You can be sure he too will be declared winner. In Cameroon, how can a man who never campaigned for votes win 53.66% of the votes?"

"Will he get away with it? Where are the people?"

"Paul Biya has been getting away with impunity since 1982. He is likely to get away with it. But this may also be the beginning of his end. On Sunday, the people took to the streets in Yaounde, Garoua, Maroua, Douala, Mainganga, Yagoua, Kaele, and Bafoussam. Four persons were killed. About 30 opposition politicians and activists have been arrested and detained. There is tension in Cameroon. Tchairoama Bakary, leader of the main opposition party who leads the Front for the National Salvation of Cameroon party and the Union for Change, has threatened that he would not accept a stolen vote and that his party won the election. He has called on the people to defend their mandate."

"That is a familiar response. If Bakary is not careful, he will be arrested and detained for challenging the Constitutional Court. Bakary used to be the spokesperson and spin doctor for this same Biya. He was Communications Minister for ten years, 2009 to 2019. He helped to create the Cameroonian monster. The establishment will find an excuse to arrest and jail him."

"But the people. Democracy is about the people."

"They have started killing the people. Maybe there will be sustained protests in the separatist Anglophone regions and heightened Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North. But Biya will have his way."

"We pray that God should intervene and save the people of Cameroon from Biya's bondage."

"Whatever happens, I think we should worry more about the future of Cameroon. After Paul Biya, what next? The country is already on its knees. Corruption. Violence. Bad governance. Biya does not want peaceful change. He seems to be stoking the fire of violence. It is just unfortunate that most adults in Cameroon have never known any other leader."

"I don't think the Nigerian government should congratulate him. President Tinubu must stay away from his inauguration. Nigeria must show leadership by sending a strong message to Paul Biya. The African Union and ECOWAS must condemn the theft of the people's vote."

"I beg, leave matter. Nigeria will congratulate. Nigeria will attend. Even Trump will send a delegation. Are you not aware that Trump wants to do a third term in 2028? His strategists are working hard at it. And Trump, who says he is the chief peacemaker in the world, would rather rule the United States forever. This thing is not just in Africa. Trump is the dictator in the United States."

"There is God. Of that, I am sure."

"Stop blaming God. It is all about power. Most leaders have learnt not to take chances. Look at our own President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. He has learnt to seize the moment when he can."

"He will not dare try tenure elongation in this country. It will not work here."

"You can't be too sure. We used to say America is the bastion of democracy. Look at what Trump is doing, and he is getting away with it. The US Government has been shut down for about a month, simply because it is either what Trump wants or nothing else. Canada runs an

advert featuring Ronald Reagan and condemning Trump's tariffs. Canada gets slammed with an additional 10% tariff, bringing the total amount of tariffs against Canada to 45%. I am not even talking about that. I am talking about how President Tinubu has swiftly changed the service chiefs, leaving behind only the Director of Military Intelligence."

"Nobody saw that coming."

"That is power. There was some rumour and speculation about some elements in the military toying with the idea of a coup. Whether it is a rumour or whatever it is, Tinubu has acted swiftly. He has refused to allow what happened in Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea Conakry, and Madagascar to happen under his watch. No time for nonsense."

"I understand many senior military officers are going to lose their commission on account of the appointments, especially officers from Courses 38 and 39, and a few from Course 40, about 60 generals in all."

"Yes. That is expected. It happens whenever there is a change of guards."

"Do you think changing service chiefs will make any difference? General Buhari changed his service chiefs. It was same of the same. These new service chiefs have been part of the system. What new magic can they perform? And besides, the Chief of Defence Intelligence, who has been retained, could he be the one who snitched on his colleagues and got rewarded?"

"I don't know about that. I guess that must be a

☞ The opposition can say what they like. When it is their turn, and they hear rumours of a coup, let them sleep on it. The new service chiefs should tackle banditry, insurgency, and terrorists with renewed vigour. ☞

classified state secret. What I can state is that changing the service chiefs is a smart move by President Tinubu. He has applied the shock and surprise strategy in a very deft manner. And I do not share the view that it would be same of the same. Give General Christopher Gabwin Musa his flowers. As Chief of Defence Staff, he made a lot of difference. We should urge the new chiefs to prove that they deserve their elevation and that they can make even better difference. I have looked at their profiles. They are all battle-tested. General Oluyede used to be Chief of Army Staff. He provides a sense of continuity. He has to show us what he's got. The President says he wants to strengthen the country's security architecture. Fine. We want to see results."

"The opposition says the President acted out of fear, cowardice, and panic."

"The opposition can say what they like. When it is their turn, and they hear rumours of a coup, let them sleep on it. The new service chiefs should tackle banditry, insurgency, and terrorists with renewed vigour. They must clear all the spaces that have been taken over by criminals. It must be possible for the people in Nigeria's food basket zones to go to the farm. They have a duty to restore hope."

"But you know nobody can try a coup in this country. Democracy has come to stay."

"I don't know what you know. My strong view is that those in positions of authority should pay more attention to good governance and lead the people right. I don't like what is going on in Edo State, for example. If I were from that state, I would hide my face in shame. But I don't know

whether they have enough people in Edo State who are capable of shame."

"I have friends from Edo State, and they are responsible, decent people. What is the matter?"

"Their governor is the matter. Governor Senator Monday Okpebholo has given a new definition to the art of sycophancy. He has directed all his commissioners and advisers attending the State Executive Council Meeting, if they are dressed in native attire, to wear the Tinubu Emilokan cap. Whoever flouts the order will be suspended."

"Wonderful."

"He says he owes his election to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and that he is determined to deliver 2.8 million votes to the president in the 2027 election."

"So, it is the president who voted for him. Where are the people of Edo State? He even knows the exact number of votes that he will deliver to President Tinubu. God, the people of Edo State have suffered. A dress code for commissioners and advisers. I have never heard of that."

"The way that governor is going, he will soon issue the same directive to all traditional rulers in Edo State. Whoever does not comply will have his staff of office withdrawn!"

"Nice one. Let him try that. I actually do not understand why he is being more Catholic than the Pope. There are four APC governors in the South-West. I have not heard them dictating that their commissioners should wear the Asiwaju cap. Not even in Lagos, the main stronghold of Tinubu's politics. But in Edo State, Okpebholo is erecting Tinubu billboards across Benin. I hope he is using his personal funds and not state resources to fund that ugly sycophancy. Roads are in bad shape in Edo State. He is not repairing roads. He is erecting billboards for Tinubu."

"I hear the presidency has rejected those billboards as a violation of the nation's electoral laws, either in Edo State or anywhere else across the country."

"But nobody has removed the billboards. Every governor is looking for one way or the other to curry favour from President Tinubu ahead of the 2027 elections. But the law is clear. Section 94(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 states that 'the period of campaigning in public by every political party shall commence 150 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day.'"

"Keep quoting the Electoral Act. You are on your own."

"We have a new INEC Chairman. He is a Professor of Law. He should wield the big stick against whoever flouts the law."

"He should arrest persons who are campaigning for President Tinubu. Is that what you are saying?"

"Yes. The reign of impunity must stop. This is why civil society is asking for an Electoral Offenders Commission. Professor Amupitan should insist on that."

"Very good. Very good."

"I mean it."

"I know. Except that I do not know who you want the authorities to arrest. Definitely not Okpebholo, who has immunity."

"His agents do not enjoy any immunity."

"They are obeying their governor's directives."

"That is no defence. No right-thinking man should obey an unlawful order."

"So, if you were a commissioner in Governor Okpebholo's cabinet, you would argue with him and disobey him."

"This is about integrity."

"I know. We are saying the same thing. Just imagine yourself getting fired, and you will go and live with integrity in your house."

"No integrity anywhere. And yet, members of the National Assembly want to create six additional states, one in each geopolitical zone, which would now mean 42 states of the federation."

"More bureaucracy. More local governments. More trouble. More governors. More first ladies. There will be no end to it."

"We do not need more states. We need good persons in government who will serve the people, and not their personal interests. We need our states to become viable centres of productivity, not new centres of conspicuous consumption."

Opinion

The Blatant Falsehood Against Otti That Ended Ben Kalu's Cosmetic Affection

By Eagle Okoro

The abrupt but welcome end to the display of false affection by the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chief Benjamin Okezie Kalu (BOK), towards Gov. Alex Otti of Abia and his administration, certainly did not come to many as a surprise. This is because there was already some scepticism concerning the real intention behind the romance, which was deemed pretentious, to say the least.

For political analysts and social scientists, such a fraternity across partisan lines is usually ephemeral. So, his recent scathing attack on the governor, only unwittingly signalled an end to his deception, which proved pundits right.

The only person that might be taken aback or rather disappointed by BOK's sudden volte face, may be the governor himself. This is not because he probably anticipated a long-lasting, sincere political affiliation with him but because it came too sudden - after both had dined and wine several together clicking wine glasses to celebrate their successes at the 2023 polls and the good tidings his governorship portends for God's Own State.

Bothered by the development, political watchers in Abia and the country at large are analysing the reasons for BOK's imbecilic anti-Otti poise, coming on the heels of Gov. Otti's huge political gain from the recent Aba event, where the President, represented by the Minister of Works, Sen. Dave Umahi, showered profound encomia on him, describing him as "a miracle worker". This is coupled with the massive turnout of Aba residents for the memorable inauguration of the Port Harcourt Road and six other economically strategic roads in Enyimba City. Analysts see the outpouring of genuine admiration and love for the governor by the people during the event as the likely source of BOK's envy, given his rumoured ambition "to take over Abia in 2027".

It was largely believed that BOK's caustic shot at the State Government was a futile attempt to puncture and deflate the governor's fame and also neutralise the far-reaching impact of his massive organic following as lavishly showcased by Aba and Umuahia residents, when the President visited.

That BOK's governorship ambition was heavily threatened by the massive turnout of the admirers of good governance by Gov. Otti's government is not in doubt. Therefore, the only way to shake the table and upset the apple cart for the governor was to blackmail him and his government. That was exactly what BOK and his

fellow treacherous Abians in the All Progressives Congress (APC) had tried to do.

The political implication of the positive outcomes of the President's visit left him not only befuddled and dumbfounded but also depressed and uncomfortable.

Hence, rather than expect a retreat, the governor's media team should gear up and expect more venoms from him, going forward - a ceasefire may actually not be in sight.

Those who have followed his political trajectory say that he only acted true to his chameleonic character of changing his colour to suite any situation or circumstance any time, any day.

This is why it may be necessary to do a brief retrospect on BOK and his political metamorphosis. He was a young inexperienced lawyer, when former Gov. Orji Uzor Kalu, popularly known as OUK, now representing Abia North Senatorial District, picked him to groom him politically for the future - which is today.

For more than two decades, he underwent political tutelage and had his teeth clinically cut under the watch of OUK and his mother, Mrs Eunice Kalu, aka "Odiukonamba". BOK was a keen and enthusiastic follower of the Kalu's political structure, called Reality Organisation International.

And for his loyalty, he was adequately rewarded with political appointments, serving in various positions as aide to both OUK and his successor-godson, former Gov. Theodore Ahamafula Orji, alias "Ochendo", who represented Abia Central in the Senate for eight years. That was the brief political journey of the Deputy Speaker enroute national limelight.

In the African setting, BOK's meteoric rise to fame politically is worth celebrating, which was the reason Gov. Otti, in spite of the difference in their political leanings, organised a state reception in his honour shortly after he emerged the Deputy Speaker of the green chamber of the National Assembly.

It was such a colourful, well-attended ceremony, held at the International Conference Centre. But little did anybody envisage that BOK would suddenly balloon and turn around so soon to behave like the "nza", the tiny bird which, in Chinua Achebe's classical novel, "Things Fall Apart", after feeding to its full, would turn around to challenge its "chi" (god) to a wrestling contest.

It is curious that his ascension to the exalted

office of the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly has become nemesis to his political mentors and god-fathers, who he has branded his political adversaries in Abia.

He is presently taunting everyone with his new found political power as the "No. Six Citizen", after the President, Vice President, Senate President, Deputy Senate President, and Speaker. This is like a badge he flaunts and brandishes at every public event East of the Niger.

And the first victim of the presumed power and influence that the office confers on him, unfortunately, is his political godfather, OUK, who mentored and gave him life politically.

In his overblown ego, he expects OUK to now pay homage and obedience to him. This is currently the bone of contention between the two prominent sons of old Bende bloc and their different political camps in Abia.

Today, he has wittingly or otherwise extended the list of his victims to include Gov. Otti, whom he claimed to call "De Alle".

So, if the governor feels betrayed by BOK, he should visit OUK and his mother to hear their stories and lamentations about the person and character of the Deputy Speaker, as well as his weird idiosyncrasy that is deeply rooted in haughtiness and ingratitude.

during his October media chat at the Government House, Umuahia, the governor formally responded to the attack. And in his characteristic manner, he spoke in measured and firm language that conveyed a simple message, which should expectedly humble and lower BOK from his Olympian height.

The governor said that he had forgiven him as a younger brother but warned that anybody planning to write the 2027 result of the Abia Governorship Election "should first write his will". Simpliciter!!!

No doubt, the No. Six Citizen, who ought to know better, scandalously shot himself in the foot with his callous and careless spread of falsehood on the finances of Abia. He should, therefore, be ready to bear the full consequences of his unconscionable action.

Already, he is being hounded and pummeled from different quarters and presently unsettled by the stern reactions trailing his shamelessly uninformed comment. Thus, he now watches helplessly as he crashes from fame to shame, grace to grass and has become isolated and snubbed as a leper in his home State.

Different individuals and groups, including his colleagues in the National Assembly from Abia, have sounded him a note of warning to refrain from his malicious attacks against the governor. The lawmakers described his comments against the Otti-led government as unguarded, unhealthy, careless, unintelligent and "unbecoming of a public officer, who ought to embody humility and emotional intelligence".

It will be in his own interest that he gives heed to those words of wisdom, otherwise he will have his fingers burnt well ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

Abians of means and men of good conscience are unshakably united behind Gov. Otti, who has so far demonstrated an unwavering commitment to transform and bring Abia at par with its neighbouring sister-states, in terms of infrastructure development, after 24 years of suffering and gross underdevelopment.

The people are ever determined to take up the fight on his behalf because they have tasted and are extremely satisfied with him and his governance style and cannot afford again to gamble with their future in the hands of selfish, unreliable, deceptive and mercantile politicians that mutated from the shredded and decimated Peoples Democratic Party into APC.

Obviously, the likes of BOK, with such haughty and arrogant personality, bestriding the entire Igboland with the swagger of an Ijele masquerade, would never ever smell the seat of power in Abia.

I advise that BOK should shed the air of self-importance around him and learn from history that his position as Deputy Speaker is not tenured. He should remember the story of the "banana peel" in the National Assembly and realise that retaining his position is at the instance of his fellow parliamentarians and/or the President.

He should also do well to visit his Abia brother, Chief Adolphus Wabara, a one-time President of the Senate during the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, who was parading the towns and cities of Nigeria with the same air of arrogance as the No. Three Citizen, when the carpet was surreptitiously pulled off his feet and he returned to the red chamber derobed, unclassified, and as an ordinary lawmaker. This has always been the fate of arrogant, rude and impudent rulers, who masquerade as leaders in Nigeria, nay Africa. And I dare to say that such a colossal fall may await BOK, should he continue in this same pompous trajectory. A word is enough for the wise.

Eagle Okoro is a public affairs commentator and writes from Umuahia

Focus

When Failures Complain: The Irony of Abia PDP Critics

By Okechukwu Uban

People often say that those who cannot build are the first to find faults in the work of others. This saying clearly describes what is happening in Abia State today, where former leaders of the PDP, who once ruled the state, are now loudly criticising Governor Alex Otti's government.

Everyone in Abia knows that the PDP, after eight years in power in Abia State, has no moral right to criticise anyone especially Dr. Alex Otti about good governance. Their record in office speaks for itself: broken promises, failed projects, and neglect of the people's welfare.

For many years in the past Abia PDP government, Abians watched their state fall into decay. Roads that were once passable became dangerous and full of potholes. Workers went for months without salaries, pensioners were forgotten, and schools and hospitals were left in poor condition. Those in power simply looked away.

The pain from those years is still fresh in the minds of Ndi Abia. Families struggled to survive, businesses closed down, and Aba

once a proud industrial city lost its shine. Many people lost hope and stopped believing that government could make a difference. That is why it feels both surprising and funny to hear the same people who caused the suffering now criticising Dr. Alex Otti's administration. How can those who failed to serve the people suddenly act like experts on good governance? The irony is too clear to ignore.

Governor Alex Otti met a state that was broken in every way financially, morally, and structurally. From his first day in office, he started the tough job of rebuilding. Roads that had been abandoned for years are now being repaired. Workers and pensioners are being paid regularly. For the first time in a long while, Abians can feel that their government truly cares about them.

Of course, criticism is a normal part of democracy. It helps keep leaders accountable and reminds them to serve the people honestly. But such criticism only matters when it comes from people with clean hands and sincere intentions. Those who failed in leadership cannot now pretend to be moral

judges.

The PDP in Abia, burdened by its poor record, has not earned that right. The signs of their failure are still everywhere from unpaid workers to unfinished projects and neglected communities. Before pointing fingers, they should first accept responsibility for the pain they caused. Until they apologise and admit their mistakes, their words will continue to sound empty and selfish.

Ndi Abia have made up their minds never to return to those dark days of unpaid salaries, abandoned pensions, and empty promises. They have suffered enough under leaders who only remembered them during elections.

Today, Abians are seeing a new kind of leadership under Dr. Alex Otti one that is transparent, accountable, and focused on meeting the real needs of the people. The message is clear: Ndi Abia will no longer settle for talk without results. They want progress, honesty, and a government that delivers.

It is funny that the very people who mismanaged Abia for many years are now the loudest critics of Dr. Otti's efforts to rebuild the state. For a long time, they had the chance

to make things better but instead left behind a legacy of poor governance, unpaid workers, and broken infrastructure. Now that real change is finally taking place, they act as though they suddenly have the solutions. How can those who caused the problems claim to know how to fix them? True leadership means taking responsibility and supporting progress, not standing in the way of it.

The truth is simple: moral authority is not inherited it is earned. Those who buried Abia in debt and underdevelopment have no right to lecture the man working hard to rebuild it. True leadership is shown through honesty, dedication, and service to the people not through empty words. Abians know where they have come from, and they can see the difference today. The days of deceit, empty promises, and failed leadership are over. The people now demand action and results.

Today, the voice of the people is louder and stronger than the noise of failed politicians. Abians are alert, informed, and ready to hold their leaders accountable so that the mistakes of the past are never repeated.

Photos Speak



L-R: Ugandan High Commissioner to Nigeria, Amb. Philip Ochen Odida; and Gov. Alex Otti of Abia State, as the Ugandan High Commissioner visits the Abia Governor at his office in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA.



L-R: Abia Deputy Governor, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu; Branch Controller of WAEC, Abia State, Mrs. Mary Chima; and Gov. Alex Otti of Abia State, as a delegation led by the WAEC Branch Controller visits Gov. Otti at his residence in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA, Abia State.



R-L: Senator Darlington Nwokocho; Gov. Alex Otti of Abia; Chief Judge of Abia State, Hon. Justice Lilian Abai; Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Barr. Ikechukwu Uwanna, SAN; and others, during the commissioning of the newly constructed Court Complex at Umuene in Isiala Ngwa South LGA.



R-L: Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti; and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Mr. Ikechukwu Oriuwa, during the presentation of 28 brand-new Geely Emgrand cars to Permanent Secretaries in the Abia State Civil Service, at the newly commissioned Michael Okpara Auditorium, Umuahia.



R-L: Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti; and Permanent Secretary, Abia State Ministry of Information, Sir Chris Onwuegbu, during the presentation of 28 brand-new Geely Emgrand cars to Permanent Secretaries in the Abia State Civil Service, at the newly commissioned Michael Okpara Auditorium, Umuahia.



Gov. Alex Otti of Abia (C); new State Controller, Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, Dr. Mrs. Helen Okpara; Abia Head of Service, Mr. Benson Ojeikere (3rd R); and others, as the new State Controller of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment visits Gov. Otti at his residence in Nvosi, Isiala Ngwa South LGA.



R-L: Senator Darlington Nwokocho; Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti; Deputy Governor, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu; and others, during the official flag-off ceremony of the reconstruction of the 25-kilometre Umuahia-Ikot Ekpen Road, held at the Timber Market, Ahieke Ndume, Umuahia.



L-R: Member Repr. Aba North/South in House of Reps, Hon. Alex Ikwechegh, Dr. Chima Anyaso and Member Repr. Isiala Ngwa North/South in House of Reps, Hon. Ginger Onwusibe, during a grand civic reception organised in honour of Gov. Otti by the Old Bende Progressive Union, Abia South Chapter at the Enyimba Int'l Stadium, Aba.

Photos by: Chukwu Chidiebere

Photos Speak



Gov. Alex Otti of Abia (C); Most Rev. Dr. Chibuzo Opoko, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Umuahia, Methodist Church Nigeria (3rd L); Very Rev. Nnaemeka Ndubuwa, Ph.D. (3rd R); Rev. Emeke Eboh (2nd R); and others, as Abia Governor worships at the Methodist Theological Institute (MTI), Mission Hill, Umuahia.



L-R: Gov. Alex Otti of Abia; Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu; and Chief of Staff to the Abia Governor, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, Ph.D., as Abia Governor worships at the Methodist Theological Institute (MTI), Mission Hill, Umuahia.



L-R: Assistant Controller General, NDLEA, Zone 12, Owerri, Imo State, Mrs. Florence Ezeonye; and Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, during a working visit by the Assistant Controller General, NDLEA, Zone 12, covering Imo, Abia, and Anambra States Commands of the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).



Sen. Darlington Nwokocho and Former Abia State Deputy Governor, Sir Ude Oko Chukwu, during the official flag-off ceremony of the reconstruction of the 25-kilometre Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene Road, held at the Timber Market Ahieke Ndume, Umuahia.



L-R: Sir Okey Kanu; Deputy Chief of Staff to the Abia State Deputy Governor, Barr. Chijioko Nwankwo; and others, during the official flag-off ceremony of the reconstruction of the 25-kilometre Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene Road, held at the Timber Market, Ahieke Ndume, Umuahia.



L-R: Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu (Governor's Representative); and Abia Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon. Mathew Ekwuribe, during the Abia Talent Hunt organized by the State Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy at the State Secretariat, Umuahia.



A student, Jabuikem Ajunwa, displays his artworks while Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu (Governor's Representative) (2nd L); Abia Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, Hon. Mathew Ekwuribe (1st L); and others look on during the grand finale of the Abia Talent Hunt at the State Secretariat, Umuahia.



R-L: Mr. Ikechukwu Oriwa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment; Mrs. Chibuzo Ehiemere, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy; Abia SSG, Prof. Kenneth Kalu; and Hon. Mathew Ekwuribe, as they present a cheque to the winner, Kelechi Kelvin (1st Position), during the grand finale of the Abia Talent Hunt at the State Secretariat, Umuahia.

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Discourse

We Truly Can Do Better

By. Alex Otti

Every society thrives or falls on the strength of the ideas developed and propagated by its thought leaders the individuals whose opinions direct the ebbs and flows of public conversation, morality and values.

The development gap that exists between nations is clearly not about the quantity of mineral resources buried beneath its soil or the presence or absence of other natural body of advantages. After about 100 years of development studies, it has been proven that natural resources, when not paired with the requisite human intellect to make the most of it, can in itself become an albatross to a society's development aspirations.

Everyone in this room knows perhaps a dozen countries around the world that developed with minimal income from crude mineral extraction. In the same vein, I am also certain that all of us know another dozen countries or more that are blessed with abundant natural resources, and yet, genuine development remains elusive.

It then follows that prosperity requires more than just huge deposits of raw minerals. Long-term progress is initiated and sustained by the discipline of leadership, the power of ideas and the courage of execution. Development is therefore a human function — a rigorous intellectual exercise and the end product of blistered hands.

It is not for nothing that societies that seek progress prioritise education and human capital development for without a critical mass of individuals committed to making the most of the natural resources found within their environment, the largest deposits of precious minerals will only amount to little and could actually trigger undesirable outcomes. The good news, however, is that no matter how far off a society may have strayed from the path of progress, there is always a way back; for no destiny is final and no course is irreversible. Today we have gathered for what is effectively a rich festival of ideas and harvest of brilliance in the diverse frontlines of human commitments. I am impressed with the general sense of gratitude in acknowledging that we are a blessed people. It is also noble that even in our gratitude, we have clearly not lost sight of the fact that on several scores, we have betrayed the lofty dreams that inspired our fathers to fight for an independent Nigeria. It is my considered view that we are still not too far gone to rediscover the promise of Nigeria and rise collectively to take our place in destiny.

Let me on this note, thank the founder of the Oxford Global Think Tank one of our country's brightest exports — Prof Arunma Oteh, for convening this event and for the excellent use of her platform to consistently point us to the right path. May I use this auspicious occasion to specially appreciate this revolutionary amazon for her brilliant and peerless contributions to the holistic development of the human community, especially in Nigeria and across Africa. While it is beyond dispute that the former Treasurer and Vice President of the World Bank has distinguished herself through decades of active leadership and service in development finance, capital market regulation, academia and humanitarian pursuits, her recent gift of a wonderfully-written book, *All Hands on Deck: Unleash Prosperity through World Class Capital Markets*, reflects, more than anything else, her generosity and belief in the power of ideas to transform nations and



recover what may have been lost. I was delighted to read through the very critical insights shared in the pages of my sister's new book on how to develop and leverage the capital market to address much of the economic challenges we face as individuals and even more importantly, in the larger society.

I like the emphasis on knowledge — understanding how the system works and how nations, organisations and households can master the flow of the market to grow and preserve wealth across generations. What makes this book truly exceptional is that it was written from a place of experience with important anecdotes that break the technical elements of the discussion down for readers without extensive knowledge of economics and finance. I am particularly glad that the book offers us a clear path to resource mobilisation without the sneers that come from borrowing. I consider the book an excellent treatise on economic freedom, preservation of national sovereignty and integration of domestic financiers into the development matrix.

The new book by Arunma, beyond sharing very incisive thoughts on the pathways to prosperity through the capital market, also presents important leadership lessons and new paradigm for national development. I am glad that this book is coming at a time when our nation appears to be at a crossroad with millions of people uncertain about the future. This is exactly the point where the author's leadership philosophy anchored on the 4Cs of character, compassion, competence and courage has to be adopted as a national template for leadership. At the heart of our challenge is the dysfunctional leadership recruitment template that promotes chaos and mediocrity. The setbacks we have encountered in recent decades are the natural consequences of treating leadership development as a distant concern. We have ultimately become victims of a system that places scant regard on character, treats compassion as evidence of weakness, mistakes arrogance for competence and promotes the noisy over the truly courageous.

As someone who has sat on very important tables in her long career as a development professional and policy maker, Prof. Oteh appreciates the pains of missed opportunities, the misery of unrealised potential and the frustrations of lost momentum. While it would be untrue to suggest that it has been all doom and gloom, one would expect that from the interactions that would take place today and the lessons of the new book, we can do much better with the abundance of human and material resources that our country is blessed with. We live in a new era where wealth is tied to

knowledge and there is a lot of advantage for us in this regard. Our people are amongst the most brilliant, innovative and enterprising individuals in very demanding fields of science, technology and academia. The human goldmine that you find in Nigeria can effectively transform the social and economic experiences of present and future generations and ultimately lead the African development renaissance. It does not speak well of our kind that most times, the best of us only finds the right environment to unleash their brilliance outside our shores. Our route to recovery could actually be found in creating an environment for all of us to thrive — right here in our land. This we can do by rebuilding the system to reward excellence, offer equal opportunity to everyone and create multiple spaces for individuals to live out the full expression of their talents.

We may not all agree but on the evidence of what we have seen in the last 65 years of Independence, genuine social and economic development have their foundation in the human mind; without creating spaces where the mind is nurtured and exposed to noble thoughts, bold ideas and a higher philosophy of living, all models of development become illusory. This is where education and the structures of learning come into play. Prof Oteh is an excellent proof that quality education, especially at the foundational level, can make a world of difference in what a child becomes. I would, therefore, insist that the key to unlocking our rich but largely dormant human potential is the restoration of standards and values in the education sector. Beyond recruiting quality teachers, upgrading infrastructure and instilling a strict culture of discipline in the learning environment, we also have to pay attention to curriculum development.

I would like to specially thank the Federal Ministry of Education for the recent changes in basic and secondary education curriculum but as I have learnt in my interactions, developing an excellent body of curriculum is one thing, effective implementation is another, all together. To achieve the outcome that we seek, we have to be prepared to cover the entire nine yards.

The learning process in our schools must be structured to prepare the next generation for the challenges of the environment they are going to live in — not tie them to the world of their forefathers except of course as lessons in history. The products of our school system should embody excellence, capacity for independent thinking and of course, be made

to appreciate that education is only valuable when it is applied to a higher objective.

Prof Arunma Oteh at 60 remains a shining light and a brilliant example of what we are capable of becoming when leadership is driven by the commitment to make an impact. I am immensely proud of what she has achieved in her long career but even then, I know that her best years are still ahead. As the Governor of Abia where she hails from, I often find myself under a lot of pressure to build systems and institutions that would produce more Arunma Otehs.

This is partly the reason we have continued to commit the largest share of our annual budget to the education sector. For the past two consecutive years, 20% of our budgetary provision has gone to the education sector and we are likely to going to remain on that route for the foreseeable future. We have also made education free and compulsory in the whole state. This resulted to a spike in enrollment, which more than doubled in 3 months. We recently recruited more than 5,000 teachers for the public school system and preparations are in place to recruit another batch of 4,000. We are also committing enormous resources to infrastructure upgrades, security of pupils and teachers and welfare packages to keep the staff motivated.

At the tertiary levels, we are also making diligent efforts to support the holistic development of our students. In the light of the competitive nature of the 21st century environment, the focus in our tertiary institutions has shifted from producing graduates that will be dependent on the system for survival to building leaders who will shape the future of their industries.

Another priority area in our governance outlook is healthcare delivery because it is tied to our broad programme of human capital development. Leaning on the 2001 Abuja Declaration, we have consistently set aside, 15% of our projected annual public expenditure outlay to healthcare development and I am happy to report that the results are beginning to show with improved access to healthcare for everyone, especially rural dwellers. The target is to have a properly equipped and staffed medical facility within a walking distance in all parts of the State.

My expectation will be that all of us will leave here with a new consciousness and a resolute commitment to model excellence in our individual undertakings. May I also encourage us to get copies of Prof Arunma Oteh's wonderful book and digest the important lessons it holds in sustainable wealth creation through knowledge of the capital market and the new leadership paradigm it invites us to.

The truth is we have stayed in the difficult place of mediocrity and for too long. At 65, we should be able to stand firmly on our feet and march forward in an unyielding resolve to pay whatever price is required to actualise the great destiny that our nation has been called to.

Thank you for listening and may God bless all of us.

Being the text of a keynote address presented by Governor Otti, at the Oxford Global Think Tank Leadership Conference on Better Leadership for a Better Nigeria and Public Presentation of the Book: *All Hands on Deck: Unleash Prosperity through World Class Capital Markets* on Tuesday, October 28, 2025 in Abuja

News

Over 2,000 Benefit From Seadogs' Free Medical Outreach

By Lovina Emole

More than 2,000 poor residents of Afaha Atai in Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, have received free medical care from the National Association of Seadogs (NAS), also known as the Pyrates Confraternity.

Members of the group, who were in Uyo for their 2025 First-Quarter Pyrates Working Council Meeting, also handed over a solar-powered borehole to the community. The project was meant to solve the problem of unsafe drinking water and reduce waterborne diseases.

Speaking at the event, held at Afaha Atai Primary Health Centre, on Friday, the NAS Cap'n (national president), Dr. Joseph Oteri, said the outreach was part of activities marking their quarterly meeting.

He explained that the group chose Afaha Atai because of the high rate of waterborne and communicable diseases there.

"Each of our quarterly meetings is an opportunity to help people in a real way," Oteri said. "We usually visit different communities to find out what illnesses are common and how many people live there. That helps us decide how many drugs to buy and how many medical workers to bring."

Oteri added that NAS started its medical missions in 2011 and has made a big impact in many states. He said their website contains many stories from people who have benefited from the programme.

Also speaking, Dr. Eshiet Ekanem, the Medical Mate of the Sancta Riviera Deck, said his team first visited Afaha Atai and nearby villages – Afaha Etim and Mbietebe – to study their health needs before the outreach.

He said the outreach was planned for about 2,000 to 3,000 people and offered treatment for malaria, typhoid, skin infections, and diseases common among the elderly.

"We found that water

scarcity here has caused more waterborne diseases," Ekanem said. "We brought enough medicine for malaria, typhoid, and skin infections like scabies. We also noticed that around 35% of residents are elderly, with many above 70 years old, so we prepared drugs for arthritis, poor eyesight, and other age-related problems."

He added that the medical team included eye doctors (optometrists), who carried out eye tests and referred serious cases to hospitals approved by the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health.

The Chairman of Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Area, Evang. Edidiong Inyang, thanked the Seadogs for their kind gesture, describing it as a big help to people who cannot afford healthcare.

While commissioning the renovated solar-powered borehole, Inyang noted that the water facility had been abandoned for years, forcing residents to depend on unsafe water sources.

"This borehole has been abandoned for a long time. Its repair today brings great relief not only to Afaha Atai but to nearby villages too," he said.

One of the beneficiaries, Mr. Edet Edem, thanked NAS for the free treatment.

"I am very happy because I could not afford hospital treatment. The Seadogs have brought healing and hope to us," he said.

Another beneficiary, Mrs. Ekaette Udo, a 65-year-old widow, said the outreach was a blessing.

"For years, I've been suffering from arthritis and poor eyesight, but I couldn't afford hospital care. Today, the doctors checked me and gave me eye drops and medicine for my joints. I thank the Seadogs for remembering people like us," she said, emotionally.

The outreach is part of its ongoing commitment to humanitarian service, public health, and community development, especially in underserved rural areas across Nigeria.



Bende People Honour Gov Oti, He Promises More Development

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Oti, has reaffirmed his administration's commitment to massive infrastructure development and institutional reforms across the state.

Speaking at a grand civic reception organized in his honour by the Old Bende people at the Enyimba Stadium, Aba, Governor Oti said the event had renewed his resolve to deepen good governance and speed up development in all sectors of the state's economy.

"I thank the Old Bende people for this initiative.

Some of our modest achievements are captured in your brochure, but I must say this is still early morning. We have just completed 29 months in office, and there's still much work to do," Oti said.

The governor highlighted Abia's improved fiscal record, noting that the state ranks fourth nationally in fiscal discipline and first in capital expenditure ratio.

"Seventy-seven percent of our 2024 expenditure went into infrastructure. In 2025, we plan to raise it to 85%. That is good governance – investing in what benefits the people, not in individuals' pockets," he stated.

Governor Oti said his administration is prioritizing healthcare, citing the restoration of accreditation at Abia State University Teaching Hospital (ABSUTH) as a milestone. He also announced that by June next year, facilities at the Abia State Specialist Hospitals in Umuahia and Amachara would be upgraded with world-class equipment.

He cautioned politicians against early politicking ahead of the 2027 general elections, stressing that the focus should remain on governance.

"The 2027 elections are in God's hands. Those who boast should stop; you may not even be here by then. Let's focus on the work before us," he warned.

Responding to requests by the Old Bende Progressive Union for the construction of key agricultural roads such as the Bende-Igbere-Ozuiem-Akaeze, Alayi-Item-Nkporo, Umuhu-Isiegbu, and Umuchieze-Uturu roads, Oti said he had directed the Commissioner for Works to begin immediate assessment.

In his remarks, Minister of Works, Senator Dave Umahi, praised Governor Oti for his achievements in infrastructure, noting that President Bola Tinubu had approved the handover of several federal roads to the state for reconstruction.

Umahi added that the contractor handling the Aba-Port Harcourt section of the Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway had returned to site, with Governor Oti authorized to supervise the project's completion.

Earlier, Chief Azubuike Udah, Chairman of the Old Bende Progressive Union and former DIG of Police, described the event as an endorsement of Oti's transformational leadership.

He said the people of Bende, known for their industriousness and unity, had passed a vote of confidence on the governor and assured him of their continued support.

The event also featured goodwill messages from former Deputy Governor Sir Ude Okochukwu, Eze Linus Nto Mbah, (Chairman, Abia State Council of Traditional Rulers), Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, and Hon. Alex Ikwecheghi, among others.

Fubara Partners Nde To Boost Jobs For Women, Youths

By Nzeuzor Jane

Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has pledged full support for the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to boost job creation and empowerment for women and youths in the state.

The governor gave the assurance when the NDE Director-General, Mallam Silas Ali Agara, and his team paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House, Port Harcourt.

Fubara praised President Bola Tinubu's administration, for its efforts to tackle unemployment, saying such programmes are important for sustainable development.

He explained that because Rivers State is a major economic hub with oil activities, seaports, and an international airport, it attracts people from neighbouring states, increasing pressure on jobs and infrastructure.

"The only way to help both our people and those who come here for opportunities is to create more jobs," Fubara

said. "When people have meaningful work, insecurity reduces and the economy grows."

The governor said he was happy that Rivers youths are already benefiting from NDE programmes. He revealed that the state has three NDE farm centres and has directed the Ministry of Employment Generation to inspect them and recommend ways the state can offer more support.

He also called for special empowerment programmes for rural women, noting that many are left with extra responsibilities as young people move to cities for work.

Fubara highlighted some of his administration's investments in infrastructure, including the new road linking Ngo in Andoni Local Government Area to the Atlantic Ocean, which he said will open up the blue economy, attract tourism, and investment, and create lasting jobs.

"We might not be here in 20 or 30 years, but I'm confident this project will benefit our people and the country," he added.

The governor assured that

Rivers State would continue to work closely with the NDE to expand job opportunities and align with national employment programmes.

In his remarks, NDE Director-General Silas Agara commended Governor Fubara for his focus on infrastructure and economic development.

He said the agency is seeking stronger partnership with the state to grow employment schemes and explained that registration for NDE programmes is done transparently through its online portal.

"Rivers State is a key hub in the blue economy, and we are here to strengthen collaboration," Agara said. "Through the Renewed Hope Employment Programme, many Nigerian youths – including those from Rivers – have been empowered."

Agara reaffirmed NDE's commitment to its role as Nigeria's main job creation agency and expressed readiness to work more closely with the Rivers State Government for greater impact.



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October, 30, 2025.

The Managing Director/Editor,
The Punch Newspaper,
KM 14,
Lagos-Ibadan,
Expressway, Pakuro,
Ogun State.

Dear Sir/Madam,

FALSE, DEFAMATORY AND MALICIOUS PUBLICATION AGAINST DR. SAMUEL OGBUKU, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION [NDDC], REGARDING THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT COUP D'ETAT AGAINST PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU GCFR.

DEMAND FOR RETRACTION AND APOLOGY.

We act as counsel to **Dr Samuel Ogbuku**, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC], who is hereinafter referred to as our client, on whose behalf and instructions this letter is written to you.

Our clients' attention has been drawn to your online Newspaper publication of **Wednesday, 30th October, 2025**, with a front head line: **"Coups Controversy: Military tracks N45bn in NDDC. Detained soldiers linked in NDDC top shots' probe, Sylva out country, denies links with alleged coup"**.

At page 2 of the said Newspaper, in a story edited by your correspondents' / News editors: Messrs. **Adelani Adepegba, Dennis Naku and Samuel Eke**, it was falsely, maliciously and wrongly stated concerning our client and Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC] amongst other libelous statements, as follows:

"Military investigation into alleged coup plot has reportedly uncovered a trail of N45billion disbursed from the bank accounts of the Niger Delta Development Commission to some politically exposed persons and the soldiers detained in connection with the rumoured conspiracy to topple President Bola Tinubu's administration... Sequel to the discovery, Defence Intelligence agency investigators grilled some top NDDC officials about the sources of the fund, beneficiaries and how it was utilized. The development has set panic alarms at the NDDC headquarters over links to the financing of subversive activities"

Our client who is the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Accounting Officer of the Niger Delta Development Commission has categorically denied the above libelous statements against him and other top officials of NDDC, while maintaining that he knows nothing about the alleged coup plot and that, neither him nor any other top official of the NDDC has been invited or interrogated by any authority in relation to any alleged coup plot, against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR. He has also vehemently denied any alleged fraudulent money transfer by himself or any top official of NDDC in pursuance of the execution of an alleged coup plot or any other illicit activities.

By your publication under reference, our client who is a highly responsible and respected Nigerian, family man and a top NDDC official was portrayed as a coup plotter, a criminal and an irresponsible public officer who uses public funds to finance criminal activities, such as coup d'etat, against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, an offence which carries capital punishment under the Nigerian law.

Our client informed us that, your publication which has gone viral, has greatly embarrassed him and his family members. Friends and associates have inundated his telephones with calls, some expressing disappointment in him, while others have expressed concern and anxiety over his whereabouts.

There is no gain saying that your publication has greatly injured the character of our client, tarnished and lowered his esteemed image in the eyes of the public.

Having regard to the fact that your publication was false and coupled with the fact that, you did not ensure balancing in your report, by reaching out to our client to hear from him, as enjoined by the ethics of journalism, our client has instructed us to demand the following:

- An immediate retraction of your defamatory publication on all your news platforms and in at least four (4) other Nigerian Newspapers, circulating nationally.
- The retraction shall be accompanied by an apology which must be published in at least five (5) editions of your Newspaper, and on all your news platforms, including all the social media handles to which your media House has its presence.

Please note that, should you fail, to comply with the above demands within a period of seven (7) days after the delivery of this letter to you, we shall, on behalf of our client, seek redress by pursuing both civil action against your organization and the said legal action shall be commenced without further reference to you.

Yours faithfully,



CHIEF AYODEJI ADEDIPE, SAN
08033383650
aadedipe@adedipeadedipe.com



ADEDIPE AND ADEDIPE

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

PORT HARCOURT: No.1 Isaac Boro Street, Old G.R.A, P.O.Box 13686, Port Harcourt.	LAGOS: 4th Floor, Right wing, Adekunle Fajuyi Court, 22 nd Lord Lugard Avenue, Ikoyi Lagos.	ABUJA: Nusaiba Towers, 5th floor Suite 3, Plot 117, Sector A, Mabushi, Abuja.	AKURE: 4th Floor, Bank of Industry Building, Ado/Owo Road, Akure Ondo State.
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E-mail: ifedayoadedipe@yahoo.com

October, 30, 2025.

The Managing Director/Editor,
 The Daily Times Newspaper,
 108, Kwame Nkrumah Crescent,
 Asokoro,
 Abuja.
 FCT.

Dear Sir/Madam,

FALSE, DEFAMATORY AND MALICIOUS PUBLICATION AGAINST DR. SAMUEL OGBUKU, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION [NDDC], REGARDING THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT COUP D'ETAT AGAINST PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU GCFR

DEMAND FOR RETRACTION AND APOLOGY.

We act as counsel to Dr Samuel Ogbuku, the Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC], who is hereinafter referred to as our client, on whose behalf and instructions this letter is written to you.

Our clients' attention has been drawn to your online Newspaper publication of **Wednesday, 29th October, 2025**, via a link: <https://dailytimesng.com/nddc-md-ogbuku-arrested-over-alleged-n20bn-coup-plot-financing/>, edited by Awwal Owolabi, with a caption: "NDDC MD Ogbuku Arrested Over Alleged 20bn Coup Plot Financing" wherein our client's picture was conspicuously displayed. In the said publication, it was falsely, maliciously and wrongly stated, amongst other

"Samuel Ogbuku, managing director of the Niger delta Development Commission [NDDC], has reportedly been arrested by military intelligence for allegedly co-sponsoring a failed coup plot against President Bola Ahmed Tinubu"
 According to military intelligence sources, Ogbuku, who is known to be a nominee of former Bayelsa State Governor Timpre Sylva, was arrested for allegedly transferring a 'huge sum of money' to the ex-Minister of state for Petroleum Resources.
 Investigators are reportedly working on the theory that the funds originated from a recent NDDC contract.
 The commission just awarded a shoreline protection contract valued at over N54 billion, paying out approximately N20 billion in mobilization fees.
 Sources claim this N20 billion payment is the suspected source of the funds allegedly funneled to Sylvia, who was 'allegedly fingered as one of the financiers of the purported move to change government'.
 The reports said investigators believe the funds were meant to finance the coup in order to overthrow president Bola Tinubu.
 According to a Punch report, the MD transferred a huge sum of money to Sylvia. Investigators are working on the theory that the fund transfer was connected to the coup. He is currently answering questions about what the money was meant for"

Our client has categorically denied the above libelous statements and maintained that he knows nothing about the alleged coup plot and has not been invited or interrogated by any authority in relation to any alleged coup plot against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, or in relation to any alleged fraudulent money transfer in pursuance of the execution of an alleged coup plot.

By your publication under reference, our client who is a highly responsible and respected Nigerian, family man and a public officer was portrayed as a coup plotter, a criminal and an irresponsible public officer who uses public funds to finance criminal activities, such as coup d'etat, against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Our client informed us that, your publication which has gone viral, has greatly embarrassed him and his family members. Friends and associates have inundated his telephones with calls, some expressing disappointment in him, while others have expressed concern and anxiety over his whereabouts. There is no gain saying that your publication has greatly injured the character of our client, tarnished and lowered his esteemed image in the eyes of the public. Having regard to the fact that your publication was false and coupled with the fact that, you did not ensure balancing in your report, by reaching out to our client to hear from him, as enjoined by the ethics of journalism, our client has instructed us to demand the following:

- a. An immediate retraction of your defamatory publication on all your news platforms and in at least four (4) other Nigerian Newspapers, circulating nationally.
- b. The retraction shall be accompanied by an apology which must be published in at least five (5) editions of your publication, on all your news platforms, including all the social media handles to which your media House has its presence.

Please note that, should you fail, to comply with the above demands within a period of seven (7) days after the delivery of this letter to you, we shall, on behalf of our client, seek redress by pursuing both civil and criminal actions against your organization, as your conduct also runs contrary to the provisions of the Nigeria's Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc) Act of 2015, as amended in 2024. The legal actions shall be commenced without further reference to you.

Yours faithfully,



CHIEF AYODEJI ADEDIPE, SAN
 08033383650
 aadedipe@adedipeadedipe.com



Entertainment

Femi Kuti Reveals Secret Of Longevity In Music Industry

Afrobeat legend, Femi Kuti, has revealed that the secret of longevity in the music industry is making substantial music.

The 63-year-old veteran singer explained that the reason he has remained relevant for over four decades is because he composed purposeful music.

He challenged young artists to humble themselves and learn how to make proper music, warning that failure to do so would lead to dwindling fame and fortune in old age.

Speaking in a recent episode of the Afropolitan podcast, Kuti advised young artists to be mindful of their old age when making music.

The interviewer asked: "What do you think is killing the Nigerian music industry now?"

Kuti replied: "When the head is not correct, nothing can be correct. I like what young artists are doing, but what would they do when they are 50?"

"The reason, probably, I'm respected is, I will still show dexterity, energy. I'm committed. If I pick up my sax, you will know that this guy is working. I composed everything. You (young artists) buy your songs, and you don't want to learn. Music is like medicine. The likes of Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder and a few others are renowned because they are working. They are practicing.

"But young artists just rush into making music to get hit songs. You might make two or three. You are young so you are not seeing the danger — the next generation will have their star and then you will fade away.

I can proudly tell you I'm still touring. It's because my fans will still introduce me to their children and their children's children. So you will see very old people and children at my concerts. There are people that have followed me for 15, 20 years and are still bringing my albums to sign. But why? Consistency. And I have something to offer. If you are not writing your music and you are buying, and you are jumping, would you still be doing that at 40?"

Ibrahim Chatta Tops Nollywood Pay Chart, Charges N5m – Otolo

Versatile Nigerian actor, Ibrahim Chatta, is currently making headlines after a report of his earnings surfaced on social media.

Veteran actor, Mustapha Bakare Otolo, disclosed the details in a trending interview online.

Otolo made the disclosure in a now trending video while discussing why it's difficult for veteran actors to produce cinema movies.

He explained that while many of the veteran actors are earning N250,000 to appear in a movie, Chatta's value has risen to N5 million.

"If Ibrahim Chatta appears on a movie set, he has been paid N5 million. That's the amount he currently charges. He is the highest-paid actor presently. So, my point is that he can do up to 20 jobs in a month. I brought him to my movie 'Jigi' set in Ogbomoso recently.

You can't compare him and other young actors to some of us that are being paid between N250,000 – N300,000 and appear in just one or two films in a month. So, that is the reason it's difficult for some of us, the veterans, to produce cinema movies," he stated.



I've Lost Every Iota Of Respect For You – Odumodublvck Calls Out M.I.

Controversial music artist, Odumodublvck, has called out veteran rapper, M.I, for being a fenceit in his ongoing rift with Blaqbonez.

He claimed that M.I was aware of the conspiracy against him but chose to be a fenceit.

O d u m o d u b l v c k declared that he had lost every iota of respect for M.I, stressing that he no longer regards him as a legend.

He accused M.I of pretending to be the "good guy" to maintain a good public image.

On his X handle, he wrote, "MI_Abaga, as for you. The whole world is going to be shocked that I am talking to you like this, and I know they will come for me because you are very good at portraying the 'good' guy.



"One thing they did not tell you is that I don't care about public opinion, unlike you.

You stood in front of a blatant lie and decided to sit on the fence like

Abuchi. I have lost every iota of respect for you.

"Short man devil, you no be my OG. You are nothing but a rat. I bet you won't reply because I am saying the truth."

Odumodublvck's post earned backlash, with many condemning him for "disrespecting a legend."

M.I is yet to react to O d u m o d u b l v c k ' s outburst.

I Almost Quit Music After Mo'Hits Ended – Don Jazzy

Nigerian producer and music executive, Don Jazzy, has revealed that he almost quit music and moved abroad after Mo'Hits, the record label he co-founded with D'Banj, ended abruptly in 2012 due to disagreements between them.

In a recent interview with Rolling Stone, Don Jazzy disclosed that it was his friends who encouraged him to stay and start again, and Mavin Records was born.

The 'Dorobucci' crooner stated that the experience made him stronger, adding that since then, nothing has ever been able to break him."

When Mo'Hits ended, I thought that was it. I almost packed up to move abroad. But friends encouraged me to stay and start again, and Mavin Records was born. Since then, I've learned not to let anything break me," he said.



Don Jazzy

Sources recalled that following Mo'Hits' split, Don Jazzy founded a new record label, Mavin Records, which became home to many of the former Mo'Hits artists (Wande Coal, Dr SID, D'Prince)

and new stars like Tiwa Savage, Reekado Banks, Korede Bello, and Di'ja.

Its current roster includes artists such as Rema, Ayra Starr, Ladipoe, Crayon, Magixx, Boy Spyce,

Bayanni, Johnny Drille, and DJ Big N.

In 2024, Universal Music Group announced a majority investment in Mavin Global, further accelerating its expansion.

Foreign News

Trump's Unusual Tariff Strategy Puts America's Allies in a Near-Impossible Situation



President Donald Trump has made it clear that his favorite method to gain leverage over opponent countries on the other side of a negotiating table is to raise tariffs. It doesn't matter whether the offense is trade-related or not.

If there had been any lingering doubt (and I doubt there was), it was erased when Trump announced last week that he was increasing tariffs on Canada by 10% because he didn't like an anti-tariff commercial Ontario aired across the United States. Ontario Premier Doug Ford's TV ad quoted the late former President Ronald Reagan, who in 1987 criticized the use of general tariffs as a weapon of trade policy.

It might seem obvious that there is no direct causal trade link between Ontario's and, by extension, Canada's action and Trump's threat of raising Canada's tariffs by 10%. Nevertheless, Trump's response was hardly a surprise.

The Canadian incident shows countries on the other side of the negotiating table with the United States face a near-impossible situation.

First, they must negotiate trade deals by coming to Washington with a transactional mindset: "What can we offer up?"

Second, they must, at the last minute, be prepared for the US president to want more — so they better have something else up their sleeve they can give as an offering.

And there's a third wrinkle: Never mind reciprocal tariffs — the United States is in the business of retaliatory tariffs for seemingly unrelated issues. It means no country can know what decision, policy, or indiscretion will offend

Trump, who may retaliate at virtually any time with further tariffs.

This is uncharted territory, and it is not the normal way of doing business. Traditionally, tariffs have been used to correct a perceived trade imbalance and to protect the home market by making imports more expensive.

What seems clear is that Trump's love of tariffs will ensure they remain at the heart of US economic policy. I see no scenario in which the president, even after having negotiated a trade deal, doesn't reserve to himself the right unilaterally to change his mind, threaten, and then launch a fresh tariff.

Some of Trump's tariffs contain at least a scintilla of geopolitical logic. For example, his decision to punish India with 50% tariffs came because the country is still buying oil from Russia. One could — just about — argue the tariff was supporting some wider, strategic goal in halting the Russia-Ukraine war.

With others, it remains difficult or impossible to understand the trade purpose of tariffs. Take Brazil's case: Trump thinks it's wrong to prosecute the former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro for allegedly plotting to overturn an election. Describing the prosecution as "a witch hunt that should end immediately," Trump raised the tariff to 50%, "in part due to Brazil's insidious attacks on Free Elections and the fundamental Free Speech Rights of Americans." (The previous tariff had been around 10%.)

According to the Brazilian Specialty Coffee Association, exports of special coffees are now down 70%, and the IMF is warning of a more general slowdown in Brazil's economy

because of the tariffs. The tariff weapon has hit its mark.

Then there's Colombia. After Colombian President Gustavo Petro criticized Trump's bombings of alleged drug smugglers off the Caribbean coast, Trump called Petro "an illegal drug leader" who is "low-rated" and very unpopular. The punishment: cutting off foreign aid and an unspecified increase in tariffs.

For a country where democracy is often fragile at best, the economic disruption from increased tariffs could have devastating political effects.

Trump also imposed steep tariffs on South Africa for its perceived ill-treatment of White farmers and land reforms.

The list goes on. Last week's threat against Canada only confirmed the trend.

After the last few weeks and months, countries have been warned. No one should be surprised if and when the weapon is fired.

So far, the only country that has stood up to Trump and won is China. Xi Jinping has mastered the careful art of letting Trump appear to win while quietly claiming victory at home. Xi played his hand perfectly and came away from their meeting this past week with a reduction in tariffs.

But there's one final wrinkle: The US Supreme Court next week will hear Trump's appeal of two lower court rulings that found his use of tariffs as leverage to be an illegal use of his emergency powers. If the Supreme Court upholds those rulings, Trump's favorite tool could be significantly blunted.

Source: CNN.

Disney Channels Go Dark On Youtube TV After Media Giants Fail To Resolve Carriage Dispute

Disney's channels have been removed from YouTube's pay-TV platform after the two media giants failed to reach a new carriage agreement before the deadline passed.

The blackout will leave subscribers unable to watch content from Disney networks, including ESPN, ABC, Disney Channel, FX, National Geographic, and Freeform.

The two companies remain in talks, although neither indicated when customers can expect programming to resume.

"Unfortunately, Google's YouTube TV has chosen to deny their subscribers the content they value most by refusing to pay fair rates for our channels, including ESPN and ABC," a Disney

spokesperson told CNN.

"Without a new agreement in place, their subscribers will not have access to our programming, which includes the best lineup in live sports anchored by the NFL, NBA, and college football, with 13 of the top 25 college teams playing this weekend."

In its own statement, Google said the decision "directly harms our subscribers while benefiting their own live TV products, including Hulu + Live TV and Fubo."

"We know how disruptive it is to lose channels you enjoy, and we're committed to continuing to work with Disney to reach an agreement," YouTube TV said on X late Thursday.

The blackout should come as little surprise to

YouTube TV subscribers, who for the last week have seen a number of announcements warning of a stalemate. Since last Thursday, Disney has run public messages notifying YouTube TV customers of a possible blackout.

At its core, this has been a showdown over financials.

Disney wants higher carriage fees to reflect the value of its networks, such as ESPN. "We invest significantly in our content and expect our partners to pay fair rates that recognize that value," a Disney spokesperson told CNN.

Meanwhile, YouTube has said Disney's demands would "raise prices on YouTube TV customers and give our customers fewer choices."

Source: CNN

Israel Receives Remains Of Two Deceased Hostages Held In Gaza

Israel received the remains of two deceased hostages held in Gaza. The remains were transferred to Israel via the Red Cross and taken to the country's national forensics laboratory for identification.

The deceased hostages were identified as Amiram Cooper and Sahar Baruch, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

Cooper, 84, was one of the founders of Kibbutz Nir Oz near the border with Gaza. He was kidnapped by Hamas on October 7, 2023. His family was notified in June 2024 that he was killed in captivity. The circumstances of his death remain unclear, but the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said he was killed in captivity around February of last year.

Cooper was the last remaining hostage from Nir Oz, one of the communities hardest hit during the initial attack two years ago, whose body had not been returned. "We will always remember Amiram as a man of people and of words, a pioneer with values, a person of initiative and ideas who so deeply loved the kibbutz and its members," the kibbutz said in a statement.

Baruch, 25, was also taken hostage during the October 7 attack from his mother's home in Kibbutz Be'eri. Baruch's brother

and grandmother were killed in the attack. Two months later, Baruch was killed in Gaza during a failed rescue attempt. "In this difficult and painful moment, we hope the family can find a measure of comfort in the closing of a horrific circle of 755 days and nights," the kibbutz said in a statement.

The transfer leaves the bodies of 11 deceased hostages remaining in Gaza.

"The effort to bring back our hostages continues uninterrupted and will not cease until the return of the last hostage," the Israeli Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

The transfer of the remains comes just two days after Israel carried out punishing strikes in Gaza in response to the Hamas killing of an Israeli soldier in Rafah on Tuesday afternoon. The Israeli strikes killed more than 100 Palestinians, including at least 46 children, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, marking by far the deadliest day in Gaza since the ceasefire went into effect nearly three weeks ago.

Even so, Hamas and Israel said they were still committed to the US-brokered ceasefire agreement. The transfer of two more sets of remains from Hamas to Israel on Thursday marked the strongest indication yet that the deal had not collapsed, despite the

severe test it faced just days earlier.

US President Donald Trump said that "nothing's going to jeopardize" the Gaza ceasefire. He threatened to "take out Hamas very easily."

The latest transfer appeared to proceed without the issues that have plagued recent attempts to return the remaining deceased hostages from Gaza. Hamas announced it was set to hand over one set of remains before saying under Israeli bombardment hours later that it would not transfer them.

Hamas handed over remains of deceased hostage Ofir Tzarfat, whose body had been recovered by Israel in Gaza two years earlier. Tzarfat was not among the remaining deceased hostages to be returned under the ceasefire, prompting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to accuse Hamas of a "clear violation" of the deal.

The IDF then released video it said showed Hamas staging the discovery of the remains in Gaza City and turning over the remains to the Red Cross. In a statement, the Red Cross said, "It is unacceptable that a fake recovery was staged when so much depends on this agreement being upheld and when so many families are still anxiously awaiting news of their loved ones."

Sporting Ambassador



UCL: Liverpool Battle Madrid As PSG Host Bayern



Defending champions PSG are still proving to be a team to beat in the competition.

The UEFA Champions League returns this mid-week with 18 interesting matches spread across Europe. Top of the fixtures will take place at Anfield and Parc des Princes.

At Anfield Liverpool and Real Madrid will rekindle their age long rivalry. Liverpool ended their winless run against the Los Blancos in their 2-0 Group Phase win on match day 5. Before then, the English had lost seven times and drawn only once. The Reds will hope to sustain their new found form over Real Madrid and their 2-0 victory over Aston Villa last weekend which ended their four match losing run in the league, will give them the boost they need.

Trent Alexander Arnold will be returning to Liverpool for the first time since his summer move after playing 354 times for Liverpool.

In Paris, defending champions will welcome German champions, Bayern Munich to the Parc des Princes. PSG have lost only two of their last 41 home Champions League group stage/league phase matches, they will be hoping to add Bayern to their casualties this season after they defeated Barcelona 1-2 in their last match.

However, Bayern have won 13 of their last 15 matches against French teams and their goal machine Harry Kane has scored 11 goals in his last ten



Trent Alexander-Arnold will be playing against his former club, Liverpool for the first time since his summer transfer.

home and they last time both teams met was in the round of 16 of the 2022/23 season. Napoli defeated the German side 2-0 away and 3-0 at home.

Slavia Prague will have their hands full when they host high flying Arsenal. The last time the Gunners visited was in the second leg of their quarter final of the 2020/21 Europa League. Despite securing a 1-1 draw at the Emirate Stadium, Arsenal crushed the Prague side 4-0.

Slavia have a little chance as they have won only two of their previous 15 UEFA competition matches against English teams

Atletico Madrid will welcome Union Saint-Gilloise to the Wanda Metropolitano Stadium in their first ever meeting and the first time the Belgian side id meeting a Spanish side.

Boda/Glint will host Monaco in their first ever meeting. Boda's only previous match against a French team was a 1-1 draw away against Nice in last season's Europa League.

Juventus will take on Sporting hoping to sustain their recent form over the Portuguese side. In their last four meetings, Juventus have won two and drew two.

Olympiacos will lurk horns with PSV Eindhoven. The only meetings between these teams came in the 2020/21 Europa League round of 32, Olympiacos advancing with a 5-4 aggregate victory. Olympiacos are unbeaten in their last seven home games against Dutch teams and will hope to sustain the momentum.

Struggling Tottenham Hotspurs will take on Copenhagen hoping to continue their unbeaten run in their last 21 UEFA competition matches at home

Pafos and Villarreal will battle for supremacy in their first meeting. It will not be a stroll in the park for Villarreal. Pafos have lost just one of their nine Champions League matches this season. The Cypriot side have kept clean sheets in five of their last eight Champions League games.

Qarabag will take on world champions, Chelsea, who are expected to take all three points. These two teams met in the group stage of the 2017/18 Champions League, Chelsea following up a 6-0 home victory on Matchday 1 with a 4-0 success in Azerbaijan on Matchday 5. Qarabag have also lost all their previous seven matches against English teams, the last six without scoring a goal. Anything less than a victory for English side will be a disappointment.

Victor Osimhen will hope to sustain his goal scoring form when Galatasaray storm Amsterdam to take on Ajax. He has scored in seven consecutive

Champions League appearances. It will be a cracker indeed.

In other fixtures, Italian champions Napoli will take on Frankfurt. Records favour the Italians. Napoli have lost just once in their last 18 Champions League matches at

European matches dating back to last season, a total of nine goals overall.

Benfica will host Bayer Leverkusen in a match the German side are expected to win because their host have won only one of their last eight home Champions League group stage/league phase matches

Barcelona will take on Club Brugge as they hope to bounce back to winning ways after that painful 1-2 defeat to PSG. Barcelona won the two previous meetings between these sides in the Champions League, claiming a 3-2 victory at home and 1-0 triumph away in the 2002/03 first group stage.

Inter Milan and Kairat will be meeting for the first time and this is the first time either club has faced opponents from the other's country. Inter are in top form in Europe as they are unbeaten in their last 17 Champions League home matches. They have kept 11 clean sheets in their last 12 Champions League group stage/league phase games.

Manchester City will welcome Dortmund to the Etihad Stadium. They have won their last 11 matches against German teams in Manchester and they will be



Victor Osimhen is on fire for Galatasaray.

counting on their hit man Erling Haaland, who scored 86 goals in 89 games for Dortmund before joining City in summer 2022. The Norwegian striker had faced his former club twice in the 2022/23 group stage winning one and drawing the other. He scoring the winning goal in Manchester in the first of those encounters. The Norwegian forward has 37 goals in his 33 Champions League group stage/league phase appearances.

Marseille will take on Atalanta at the Orange Velodrome in Marseille. The clubs' only previous meetings came in the semi-finals of the 2023/24 Europa League. After a 1-1 draw in the first leg in France, Atalanta reached the final with a 3-0 home win. Unfortunately, Marseille are without a win in their last nine matches against Italian teams since a 1-0 home victory against Inter in the first leg of the 2011/12 Champions League round of 16.

Newcastle United and Athletic Bilbao will fight to finish at the Saint James' Park. Nevertheless, the English side need to be very careful as they have lost six of their last nine games against Spanish teams

NVBF Hails Abia's Successful Hosting of 2025 National Volleyball League Finals

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State has received glowing commendations from the Nigeria Volleyball Federation (NVBF) for the successful hosting of the 2025 National Division I and II Volleyball League Finals.

President of the NVBF, Mr Musa Nimrod, gave the commendation during the closing ceremony of the tournament, describing the event as "a resounding success" and a strong testament to Abia's growing reputation as a safe and welcoming destination for national sporting events.

Represented by the NVBF's Second Vice President, Mr Adamu Tanimu, Nimrod lauded the conducive atmosphere provided by the Abia State Government and expressed appreciation to the Governor, Dr Alex Otti for his administration's support towards sports development.

"It is time to prove one big thing, that Abia State is an environment where it is safe and beautiful to play national sports.

"It has been a huge success; you can see everybody is happy, especially with the ambient environment provided by the Governor of Abia State.

"We have fully confirmed that Abia is one of those states where you can properly engage in sporting activities in the country", he said.

Mr Nimrod described the tournament as "a great task" and an important step in the development of volleyball



Mr Musa Nimrod, President of the NVBF, during a press briefing with journalists nationwide, noting that sports continue to play a significant role in global diplomacy and politics.

"This league is very important to the development of volleyball in the country, which is fast becoming an important sport, considering how sports have become important in the politics of the world today.

"I want to send this message to the whole country that the NVBF is doing everything possible to make Nigeria proud in the international arena so that Nigeria stands firm and counted.

"This is just the beginning, and we pray for the wherewithal and wisdom to sustain this particular project", he said.

The NVBF President noted that the Federation was eager to sustain its collaboration with Abia State for even larger sporting events, including the elite Volleyball Premier League.

"We have the Premier League, which is at a higher level than this. So we are at all times ready to partner with Abia State to host such events," he assured.

In his remarks, Abia State Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Mr Nwobilor Ananaba, attributed the successful hosting of the competition to the unwavering support of Governor Alex Otti.

He noted that beyond promoting sports, the event had boosted the local economy through

increased patronage of hotels, restaurants, and transport services. "The volleyball league has significantly boosted the local economy, as participants' spending on hotels, restaurants, and transportation has provided a substantial stimulus to local businesses," Ananaba stated.

He further stressed that hosting national tournaments in Abia has reinforced the State's reputation for safety while creating opportunities for youth engagement and crime prevention.

Also speaking, the Director of Sports in Abia State, Mr Obioma George, described the competition as "competitive, tight, and tough," and expressed optimism that the

volleyball league would return to Umuahia next year.

The 2025 National Division I and II Volleyball League Finals featured clubs from all six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, competing in both male and female categories with Abuja-based teams emerging dominant across several categories.

In the Division II Men's category, Light Volleyball Club of Abuja clinched the championship title, followed by Bayelsa Volleyball Club in second place and Rhino Volleyball Club of Plateau State in third.

The Division I Women's title went to VIP Volleyball Club, another Abuja-based team, while the Fire Service Volleyball Club placed second and Abia's Excelsior Volleyball Club secured third position.

In the Division I Men's category, Defence Spiker Volleyball Club from Abuja emerged champions, Ajase Ipo Volleyball Club finished second, while Lifecamp Volleyball Club came third.



Action during the Volleyball League in the KanuNwankwo Indoor Sports hall in Umuahia.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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9								4
	3		4			6	5	
	7	9	2					
5				6				
		6		4			2	

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