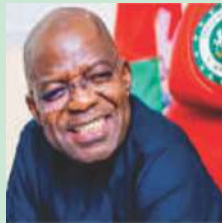


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ABSU Set To Recruit New Vice-Chancellor, Other Principal Officers

By Ofor Okechukwu

The Governing Council of Abia State University (ABSU), Uturu, is set to recruit a new Vice-Chancellor and other principal officers that include the Registrar, Director Physical Planning, University Librarian, Director of Works and Services, Director of Health Services, and Chief Security Officer.

The Governing Council took this decision during the first quarter 2026 statutory meeting, held on 4th to 5th June, 2026, at the Council Chamber of Abia State University, Uturu.

Details of the Abia State University advertised positions is on pages 14, 15 and 16

Abia Mourns As Otti Describes Alexx Ekubo's Death As A Huge Loss

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has expressed deep sorrow over the death of renowned Nollywood actor, Dr. Alexx Ikenna Ekubo Okwaraeke, describing his passing as a huge loss to Abia State, Nigeria's entertainment industry, and millions of admirers across the world.

Governor Otti made the remarks during the funeral service of the late actor, held at the Mary Slessor Technical College Ground in Arochuku Local Government Area and conducted by Streams of Joy International.

Represented by his Chief of Staff, Pastor Caleb Ajagba, the Governor said the deceased was more than a celebrated entertainer, noting that he served as a cultural ambassador whose talent projected the image of Abia State and Nigeria on the global stage.

Continued on P.2

Governor Otti Unveils Aircraft Honouring Chinua Achebe, Igwe Alfred Achebe

By Okechukwu Ubbani

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has officially unveiled two newly bought Boeing 737-800NG aircraft belonging to United Nigeria Airlines. The aircraft were named after the late famous writer, Professor Chinua Achebe, and the Obi of Onitsha, His Royal Majesty, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe.

The event took place at Nesto Aviation Services (NESTAV), Gate 4 Access Road, Lagos Airport, Ikeja. It attracted government officials, aviation experts, traditional rulers, and business leaders.

Speaking at the ceremony, Governor Otti praised the



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (1st L), Founder and CEO of United Nigeria Airlines, Prof. Obiora Okonkwo (2nd R), Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Air Peace, Dr. Allen Onyema (1st R), during the unveiling of the United Nigeria Airlines' two newly acquired Boeing 737-800NG aircraft named after the late globally-renowned literary icon and author of Things Fall Apart, Prof Chinua Achebe and Obi of Onitsha, HRM Igwe Alfred Achebe at the Nesto Aviation Services (NESTAV), Gate 4 Access Road, Local Airport, Ikeja, Lagos

Tinubu Aide Hails Otti's Infrastructure Drive In Abia

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Media and Public Communication, Mr Sunday Dare, has described the ongoing transformation in Abia State under the administration of Governor Alex Otti as "impressive" following an inspection

tour of key federal and state government projects across the state.

Mr Dare, alongside the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Mr Bayo Onanuga, led members of the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team on the tour. He said the pace of infrastructure development

under Governor Otti's administration has positioned Abia among the states recording remarkable progress in critical sectors.

The delegation, comprising editors, senior journalists, media influencers and representatives of the Federal Government, visited several projects being

executed under both President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda and the Abia State Government.

Speaking after the inspection, Mr Dare said he was impressed by the scale of transformation taking place in Abia State within three years of the Otti administration.

Continued on P.2

EDITORIAL: Kidnapping Our Future: Nigeria Must Secure Its Schools Now

News

Abia Health Commissioner Hails Progress At Umunneato Specialist Hospital

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Government has expressed satisfaction with the rapid pace of construction work at the Abia State Specialist Hospital, Umunneato, Alayi, in Bende Local Government Area, barely three weeks after the project was flagged-off by Governor Alex Otti.

The Commissioner for Health, Professor Enoch Uche, recently made the observation during an unscheduled inspection visit to the project site.

The hospital project, one of three specialist healthcare facilities currently being developed by the state government, was officially flagged-off by Governor Otti on May 28, 2026, as part of activities marking the third anniversary of his administration.

The intervention forms part of the Otti administration's healthcare reform agenda aimed at rebuilding critical public infrastructure, expanding access to modern medical facilities, and strengthening healthcare delivery across the state.

Speaking during the inspection, Prof. Uche said he was impressed by the progress achieved within just 21 days of the project's commencement.

He noted that the level of work already completed was remarkable and reflected the administration's commitment to transforming healthcare delivery across the state.

The commissioner explained that the visit was not originally planned, noting that the inspection followed the functionalisation of two Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Bende Local Government Area.

"This is an unscheduled visit. We went to functionalise PHCs. We started with Amaegbuato, Nkpa, and then went to Amaokwe Item. On our way back to Umuhia, we decided to make a brief stop here to see what is going on.

"I mean, I'm surprised, and I'm sure you're also surprised. This place, the Abia State Specialist Hospital, Umunneato, Alayi, Bende LGA, was flagged off by His Excellency during the third anniversary ceremony on May 28, 2026. Today is June 18, which means precisely 21 days later, and you can already see the extent of work done.

"I didn't expect what I've seen here. You can see the number of workers and the scale of activities taking place. It shows that the contractor means business.

"You can see that within a short period, appreciable milestones have already been achieved. So, I'm delighted with the speed of work," he

stated.

According to Prof. Uche, the contractor was mobilized by the state government to deliver the project within 12 months but had indicated a willingness to complete it within nine months.

"With the speed of work going on here, one can actually see that the contractor will meet that target of nine months," the Health Commissioner added.

He noted that the Umunneato facility is the newest among the three specialist hospitals currently under construction in the state, adding that work at the Abia State University Teaching Hospital (ABSUTH) and Amachara General Hospital had reached more advanced stages.

"Of course, this place is an ultra-modern specialist hospital, one of the three projects ongoing simultaneously. This is actually the one we started most recently.

"The others, ABSUTH and Amachara General Hospital, have reached very advanced stages of completion. Amachara is already at roof level," he disclosed.

Prof. Uche also commended the level of supervision at the project site, revealing that officials of the Project Implementation Bureau (PIB) were actively monitoring the construction process to ensure compliance with approved specifications and standards.

"When we came here, we saw PIB staff, which means

there is a high level of supervision to ensure that the standards His Excellency has mandated the Ministry of Health to achieve will be met," he said.

The commissioner assured that Governor Otti would be briefed on the progress recorded and expressed confidence that residents of the state would appreciate the visible transformation taking place in the healthcare sector.

"I know that Ndi Abia will be glad to see that this is not a mirage. It is not a mirage. This is happening in real time. It is not photoshopped or manipulated in any way.

"This is real. It's not AI-enabled, AI-manipulated, or AI-generated. This is real time—real people doing real work and achieving real results for a real state," he stated.

Prof. Uche further lauded Governor Otti for prioritising healthcare through investments in infrastructure, manpower development, and the welfare of health workers.

"We want to thank His Excellency, who has prioritized the healthcare of Ndi Abia by ensuring that not only are the best facilities being put in place, but that skilled medical personnel are being recruited, while other aspects of health workers' welfare are also being addressed.

"This is the best time to be an Abian, and we can only begin to imagine what the healthcare system will be like when all these facilities are fully completed, equipped, and functionalised," he added.

Abia Mourns as Otti Describes Alex Ekubo's Death As A Huge Loss

Continued from page 1

He said Ekubo's life embodied resilience, creativity, and excellence, adding that his journey from Arochukwu to becoming a household name across Africa and beyond remains a source of inspiration to young people.

"Alex possessed that rare gift of connecting with people. Through his performances, he brought joy to homes, inspired young people, and demonstrated that with discipline, dedication, and excellence, dreams can be achieved.

"His success story remains a powerful testimony to the resilience, creativity, and ingenuity that characterize the people of Abia State.

"He carried his roots with pride and never ceased to identify with the land of his birth. In him, the youth of our state found a role model who dared to dream and worked tirelessly to turn those dreams into reality.

"To the Nigerian creative industry, we acknowledge the enormous vacuum Alex's death has created in your midst. Although his voice has been silenced, his work will continue to speak," Governor Otti said. "To the Nigerian creative industry, we acknowledge the enormous vacuum Alex's death has created in your midst. Although his voice has been silenced, his work will continue to speak," Governor Otti said.

"His life reminds us that true greatness is not measured solely by fame or achievement, but by the positive impact we make on the lives of others.

The Governor urged the deceased's wife, the Ekubo-Okwaraeke family, the people of Arochukwu, and members of the Nigerian creative industry to remain strong and take solace in God. He also prayed for divine comfort and strength for all affected by the loss.

Delivering a sermon titled, "Please Forgive God," Pastor Mrs. Eno Jerry-Eze reminded mourners that nothing happens without God's knowledge and permission.

Tinubu Aide Hails Otti's Infrastructure Drive in Abia

Continued from page 1

The presidential aide particularly commended the state's investment in critical infrastructure, including the electrification project in Ohafia and ongoing road construction works across the state.

According to him, the state had lagged behind in infrastructure development for many years, but the

current administration has demonstrated a strong commitment to reversing the trend.

"Impressive, really impressive to see that a state like Abia is experiencing this kind of transformation. From road construction and transportation to housing and other facilities, all within the span of three years under Dr. Alex Otti.

Governor Otti Unveils Aircraft Honouring Chinua Achebe, Igwe Alfred Achebe

Continued from page 1

Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe thanked United Nigeria Airlines for the honour, describing it as very special. He also prayed for the airline's continued success and spoke about his connection with the late Chinua Achebe.

Chairman of Air Peace, Dr. Allen Onyema, said United Nigeria Airlines is growing steadily and has the potential to become one of the top airlines in West Africa. He also called for better cooperation among Nigerian

airlines and more support for local businesses.

The event also included the presentation of awards to people who have contributed to the growth of the airline. Governor Otti and other guests received recognition plaques.

The highlight of the event was the official unveiling of the two aircraft by Governor Alex Otti, marking an important moment for United Nigeria Airlines and the Nigerian aviation industry.

Correction Of Name And Date Of Birth

This is to affirm that Ergo Augustine Obinna, which was wrongly written in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) and Ergo Ugwuanna Augustine are said to be same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as Ergo Ugwuanna Augustine. My date of birth was wrongly captured as 25th August, 1981 instead of 25th August, 1982. All documents bearing my former names remain valid, the general public should please take note.

ERGO UGWUNNA
AUGUSTINE.
25th August, 1982

Change Of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Chinweotuto Victoria Mpaka Amabibi, now wish to be known and addressed as CHINWEOTUTO VICTORIA AGOMOH. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Banks, Abia State Government Offices and the general public should please take note.

CHINWEOTUTO VICTORIA
AGOMOH.

Correction Of Name And Date Of Birth

This is to affirm that Chinenye Irokwe Nzekwe which was wrongly written in my Bank Verification Number (BVN) and Nzekwe Chinenye Stephen are same person, now wish to be known and addressed as NZEKWE CHINENYE STEPHEN. My date of birth was wrongly written as 20th September, 1983 instead of 4th November, 1983. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

NZEKWE CHINENYE STEPHEN.
4th November, 1983

Idris, NSA Push Security Communication Framework

By Sophina Ovuike

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, and the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, have called for stronger collaboration between security agencies and the media, describing strategic communication as a critical pillar in Nigeria's fight against insecurity.

The call was made recently at the National Security Summit organized by the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in collaboration with the Department of State Services (DSS) under the theme, "Media and Security Agencies as Partners in Nation Building."

Speaking at the summit, Idris said the meeting was timely as Nigeria confronts increasingly complex security challenges requiring not only military action but also effective public communication.

According to him, terrorism, violent extremism,

cybercrime, organized criminality and the spread of disinformation have compelled nations to rethink conventional security strategies.

"The relationship between the media and security agencies must be founded on mutual respect, professionalism, trust and an appreciation of their complementary roles," he said.

The minister noted that the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has prioritized security through military operations, intelligence gathering, technological advancements and community engagement.

He highlighted recent successes recorded by security agencies, including the neutralisation of terrorists and bandits, rescue of kidnapped victims, dismantling of criminal camps, and increased investment in intelligence and surveillance systems.

However, Idris warned that misinformation and unverifiable reports could undermine these gains.

"National security is not

served when misinformation is amplified without verification. Neither is it served when legitimate public concerns are ignored," he said, urging journalists to adhere to ethical standards and responsible reporting, especially on security issues.

Representing the NSA at the summit, his Special Assistant on Strategic Communication, Chido Onumah, disclosed that the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) is developing a National Security Strategic Communication Framework aimed at improving information sharing between security institutions and the media.

He explained that the framework would provide a structured platform that balances transparency with operational security while safeguarding the public's right to information.

"We are all in this together. Journalists must have access to credible information, while security agencies must improve their communication and transparency," Onumah said.

News



Dr. Uloaku Emma Ukaegbu centre Joins Participants for Group Photograph at SACA/LACA Coordination Meeting in Umuahia.

RRIN Honours Dr. K.O. Omokhafa At Grand Send-Forth Ceremony

By Okechukwu Ubani

The Department of Research Operations of the Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria (RRIN) organized a colourful and memorable send-forth ceremony in honour of its most senior Research Director, Dr. Kenneth O. Omokhafa, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to research, leadership, mentorship, and institutional development throughout his distinguished career.

The event, which brought together management, researchers, technical staff, and well-wishers, served as an opportunity to celebrate Dr. Omokhafa's remarkable achievements and years of dedicated service to the Institute. The atmosphere was filled with appreciation, admiration, and heartfelt tributes as colleagues reflected on his immense contributions to the growth of research and human capacity development within RRIN.

In his welcome address, the Acting Head of the Department of Research Operations, Dr. E. Ogidi, expressed profound gratitude to Dr. Omokhafa for his unwavering commitment, hard work, and exemplary service. He described him as a highly respected scientist whose professionalism, discipline, and passion for excellence earned him the admiration of colleagues and stakeholders alike.

Dr. Ogidi noted that throughout his career, Dr. Omokhafa consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and provided invaluable mentorship to younger researchers and staff members. According to him, many scientists within the Institute benefited greatly from his guidance, encouragement, and willingness to share

knowledge and experience. He added that Dr. Omokhafa's contributions have left an enduring mark on the Department and the Institute as a whole.

The Director and Chief Executive Officer of RRIN, Dr. Lelia N. Dongo, also paid glowing tribute to the retiring Research Director. She commended Dr. Omokhafa for his dedication, loyalty, and selfless service, noting that his achievements have significantly contributed to the advancement of agricultural research and innovation in Nigeria.

Dr. Dongo acknowledged the important role he played in strengthening research programmes, mentoring emerging scientists, and promoting a culture of

excellence within the Institute. She described him as a dependable leader whose commitment to duty and passion for scientific development inspired many people throughout his years of service.

Several senior and junior staff members took turns to share personal experiences and testimonies about their relationship with Dr. Omokhafa. They described him as a mentor, teacher, motivator, and role model who always made time to support colleagues and guide younger professionals in their careers. Many speakers highlighted his humility, accessibility, and willingness to assist others whenever the need arose.

Some staff members recalled how his

encouragement helped them overcome professional challenges and pursue higher levels of achievement in their respective fields. Others praised his commitment to teamwork and his ability to create an environment that encouraged learning, innovation, and collaboration.

The ceremony featured goodwill messages, presentation of gifts, photographs, and moments of reflection on Dr. Omokhafa's outstanding career journey. Colleagues and friends expressed appreciation for his numerous accomplishments and the positive impact he made on the lives of many staff members during his years at the Institute.

Ohanaeze Ndigbo Women Wing Holds Conference In Abia, Promotes Peace, Cultural Values

By Onwuka Lovina

The Women Wing of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, Abia State Chapter, has held its maiden conference in Umuahia, calling on women to embrace their roles as ambassadors of peace, custodians of culture, and partners in the development of society.

The conference, themed; "The Woman of Peace in a Noisy World", took place at the JAAC Building, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ogurube Layout, Umuahia, Abia State.

In her address, the Wife of the Governor of Abia State, Mrs. Priscilla Chidinma Otti, commended the women for their wisdom, strength, unity, and vital roles in sustaining peace and stability within their families and communities.

She praised their commitment to nurturing homes and supporting societal development through their various engagements.

The governor's wife, who was represented by Mrs. Eucharina Mmeregini, wife of the Deputy Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, encouraged women to remain active custodians of Igbo culture by intentionally promoting the use of the Igbo Language in their homes and daily interactions.

She further urged them to champion peace, love, and unity in their families and

communities, noting that such values are essential for sustainable development and harmonious coexistence.

The Chairman on the occasion, former MD/CEO of ABS5AA, Chief Mrs. Victoria Onwubiko, thanked God for the grace to attend the conference.

She commended the wife of the governor, Mrs. Chioma Alex Otti, for her support and encouragement of women, noting that her initiatives had inspired greater female participation in politics and leadership. She advised women to remain united, uphold peace, preserve Igbo cultural values, and contribute meaningfully to societal development.

Earlier in her welcome address, the State Leader of Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide Women Wing, Abia State Chapter, Ijeoma Clara Okere, commended Governor Alex Otti, OFR, for his visionary leadership, people oriented policies, and remarkable developmental strides across the state.

She noted that under Governor Otti's administration, Abia State has witnessed significant improvements in infrastructure, education, healthcare, security, and environmental sanitation, restoring confidence, among the people and positioning the state on a path of sustainable growth and development.

Food Security: Abia Rural Women Farmers Adopt Compost, Biochar Technologies

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Rural women farmers in Ikputu Nsulu, Isiala Ngwa North Local Government Area of Abia State, have embraced compost and biochar technologies as part of efforts to promote sustainable agriculture, improve soil fertility, and enhance food security in their communities.

The women benefited from a two-phase capacity-building programme conducted between May and June 2026 by Professor Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka, Director of the Centre for Gender, Youth and Child Development, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), and founder of Hope for Farmers, Women and Girls Initiative.

The programme was designed to encourage rural women farmers to utilize locally available resources for soil improvement rather than relying heavily on costly inorganic fertilizers.

During the first phase of the training held in May, 60 women farmers received intensive training on soil fertility management, compost production, and biochar technology.

Participants were taught practical methods of converting agricultural and household waste into nutrient-rich soil amendments capable of improving soil health, increasing crop productivity, reducing environmental pollution, and supporting a bio-circular economy.

Speaking during the training, Professor Onwuka emphasised the importance of maintaining soil fertility and identified continuous cultivation, erosion, bush burning, nutrient mining, and poor land management practices as major causes of soil degradation.

She encouraged the women to adopt sustainable soil management practices that would improve crop yields while reducing production costs.

A key feature of the programme was the hands-on demonstration of compost and biochar production, which enabled participants to gain practical experience in producing organic soil inputs from materials readily available within their communities.

At the end of the training, food items, including noodles and tubers of yam, were distributed to participants to support their households.

In her vote of thanks, Mrs. Glads Nwoke expressed appreciation to the organizers for bringing the programme to the community. She commended the facilitators for equipping the women with valuable knowledge and assured them that the participants would apply the skills acquired to improve their farming activities.

The second phase of the programme, held in June 2026, trained an additional 10 women farmers on compost production, soil fertility management, and practical soil testing techniques.

Participants were introduced to the use of soil test kits to assess soil pH and nutrient levels, enabling them to make informed decisions on soil management and crop production. They were also taught how to interpret soil test results and apply appropriate soil improvement measures based on the condition of their soils.

As part of the empowerment initiative, the women received planting materials, including vines of Vitamin A-rich UMUSPO 3 orange-fleshed sweet potato, popularly known as "Mother's Delight," and amaranthus seeds. The distribution was aimed at improving household nutrition, food security, and agricultural productivity among rural families.

Professor Onwuka noted that empowering women farmers with knowledge of composting, biochar production, and soil testing would enable them to make better use of local resources, reduce dependence on expensive external inputs, and contribute to sustainable food production systems.

Other members of the training team included Professor Nneoma Elechi Obasi, Dr. Ada Ahamefula, Dr. Chikaodi Orikara, and Mr. Chibueze Onyeguruwa, who provided technical support and guidance throughout the programme.

The training forms part of ongoing efforts by the Centre for Gender, Youth and Child Development and Hope for Farmers, Women and Girls Initiative to improve the livelihoods of rural women through agricultural innovation, environmental stewardship, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and community development.

Participants said the programme equipped them with practical skills to improve soil fertility, increase crop yields, reduce waste, and strengthen food security in their households and communities.

News

ABSACA Ends 2-Day FLHE Training For Abia North Teachers

By Okere Ugochinyere

The Abia State Agency for the Control of HIV/AIDS (ABSACA) in collaboration with the Abia State Government, has successfully concluded a two-day training programme for secondary school teachers in the Abia North Senatorial Zone, aimed at equipping participants with the knowledge and skills required to deliver comprehensive HIV prevention education, promote healthy lifestyles, and support adolescent health and well-being in schools.

The training, themed "Family Life and HIV Education (FLHE)", was held at Mayten Hotel, Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State. It brought together officials of the State AIDS Control Agency (SACA) and HIV/AIDS focal teachers from secondary schools across the Abia North Senatorial Zone.

In her opening remarks, the Director-General of ABSACA, Dr. Uloaku Emma Ukaegbu, commended the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, for his commitment to improving healthcare delivery and supporting initiatives aimed at safeguarding the future of young people in the state.

Dr. Ukaegbu stated that the objective of the training was to strengthen the capacity of teachers to effectively implement the Family Life and HIV Education curriculum in schools, provide accurate information on HIV prevention and reproductive health, and guide adolescents towards making informed and responsible life choices.

She noted that teachers play a critical role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of young people and emphasized the need for participants to apply the knowledge gained during the training in their respective schools.

The training featured intensive sessions on the Family Life and HIV Education concept, basic facts about HIV and AIDS, the overview of adolescent reproductive health in Nigeria, adolescent lifestyle and sexual behaviour, personal health and healthy living, the reproductive system and puberty, as well as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Other topics covered included condom use and prevention strategies, relationships and

friendship, child abuse and child protection mechanisms, the influence of religion, culture and the media on adolescent reproductive health, contemporary social problems affecting young people in Nigeria, drug abuse, drug use and trafficking, harmful traditional practices, gender issues in HIV prevention, and communication skills for effective FLHE teaching.

Participants were also trained on essential life skills such as decision-making, assertiveness, negotiation and refusal skills, values clarification, self-esteem and body image, family resources, record keeping, and reporting tools.

The facilitators, Mr. Chinedu Iro, Mrs. Joy Ihunweze Ugonma, Mrs. Uche Mary, and Mr. Ndubuisi Kanu, delivered detailed presentations on various aspects of Family Life and HIV Education, emphasizing the need for teachers to serve as role models and reliable sources of information for adolescents.

They educated participants on communication skills for effective FLHE teaching, stressing the importance of creating a safe and supportive classroom environment where students can freely discuss issues relating to health, relationships and up personal development. The facilitators also highlighted the significance of life skills such as decision making, assertiveness, negotiation, and refusal skills in helping young people resist peer pressure and make informed choices.

Sessions on values clarification, self-esteem and body image focused on helping adolescents develop confidence, recognize their self-worth and avoid behaviours that may expose them to health and social risks. Participants were further trained on family resources and support systems available to young people, as well as proper record keeping and reporting procedures for FLHE activities in schools.

Otti, Assembly Leadership Attracted Lawmakers to LP – Emeruwa

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka

The outstanding performance of Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, and the effective leadership of the 8th Abia State House of Assembly have been identified as key factors behind the defection of opposition lawmakers to the Labour Party.

The Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Ihuoma Emeruwa, stated this during a media briefing held at the Legislative Complex, Umuahia, on June 16, 2026, to mark the third anniversary of the 8th Assembly.

Emeruwa recalled that at the inauguration of the Assembly in June 2023, the Labour Party had only 10 lawmakers. However, within three years, the number increased to 20 following the defection of opposition legislators to the party.

According to him, the growing strength of the Labour Party in the Assembly reflects the achievements of Governor Otti's administration and the legislative successes of the 8th Assembly.

"The dominance of the 8th Abia State House of Assembly by Labour Party lawmakers is undisputedly predicated on the performance of Governor Alex Chioma Otti and the leadership provided by the legislative arm.

"The landmark bills



Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Ihuoma Emeruwa,

passed into law and the remarkable achievements of the administration have made the Labour Party attractive to opposition lawmakers, inspiring them to join our fold," Emeruwa said.

The Speaker also dismissed insinuations of division among lawmakers, stressing that the Assembly has remained united and focused on delivering quality representation to the people of Abia State.

He noted that the cordial relationship among members is driven by a shared commitment to the interests of the people rather than party affiliations.

"To us in the 8th Assembly, the interest of Abians remains our priority. Before every plenary sitting, we harmonise our positions during executive sessions to ensure constructive deliberations on the floor of the House. This has strengthened our unity and

productivity," he added.

Emeruwa further denied claims that the executive arm had interfered with the activities of the legislature, describing the relationship among the three arms of government as cordial and founded on mutual respect.

He explained that disagreements among the arms of government are normal in a democratic setting but should not degenerate into confrontations capable of undermining governance and development.

Highlighting the achievements of the 8th Assembly, the Speaker disclosed that the House had considered 75 bills and enacted 38 into law within three years.

Among the landmark legislations, he listed the laws establishing the Greater Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia Development Authorities, which he said are contributing to

infrastructure renewal and community development across the state.

Other major laws passed by the Assembly include the Abia State Governor's and Deputy Governor's Pension (Repeal) Law, 2024; Faith-Based and Private Colleges of Nursing Sciences (Establishment) Law, 2024; Abia State Electricity Law, 2025; Abia Senior Citizens Centre Law, 2025; Abia State Economic Planning and Development Board Law, 2025; Abia State Physical Planning and Infrastructural Development Fund Law; and the Abia State Fire Service (Amendment No. 1) Law, 2025. No

The Speaker also revealed that the Assembly is advancing plans to fully digitalise its legislative processes, including bills, records and other official documents, before the end of its tenure in 2027.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Augustine Okezie Meregini, praised Emeruwa's leadership style, describing it as a major factor behind the transformation of the Assembly into a centre of effective representation, transparent lawmaking and sustainable development.

Meregini said the Speaker's previous experience as a local government chairman had helped foster a productive working relationship between the legislature and

Ukwa West Chairman Holds Security Summit, Urges Collaboration To Tackle Insecurity

By Okechukwu Ubani

The Executive Chairman of Ukwa West Local Government Area, Hon. Pst. Dike Nwankwo, has called for stronger cooperation among security agencies, community leaders, and other stakeholders to address growing security challenges in the area.

He made the call during a Security Summit held at the Local Government Headquarters, Oke-Ikpe. The summit was organized to find lasting solutions to insecurity and to promote peace, safety, and unity across communities in Ukwa West.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Nwankwo emphasized the need for unity, alertness, and shared responsibility in handling security matters. He urged residents to live peacefully with one another and support efforts aimed at building a safer society, noting that security can only be achieved when everyone plays an active role.

The council chairman also expressed concern over recent security incidents in the area, describing them as disturbing and unacceptable. He reassured residents that his administration is fully committed to working with security agencies and other relevant

stakeholders to protect lives and property.

Speaking at the summit, the Chief Security Officer to the Government House, Hon. Ken Nwosu, said government is putting measures in place to strengthen security across the state. He also promised continued support for security operations in Ukwa West to ensure peace is maintained.

The summit had in attendance key stakeholders, including Hon. Godwin Adiele, representing Ukwa West State Constituency, and Hon. Engr. A.U. Nwoke, Labour Party candidate for Ukwa Federal Constituency. Also present were security agencies, traditional rulers, religious leaders, women groups, and community leaders, who all contributed ideas on how to improve security in the area.

Participants at the meeting commended the initiative and agreed that strong collaboration, community participation, and information sharing are key to sustaining peace in Ukwa West.

At the end of the summit, Hon. Pst. Dike Nwankwo assured residents that all resolutions reached would be fully implemented to address the security challenges facing the local government area.

Editorial

Kidnapping Our Future: Nigeria Must Secure Its Schools Now

The incessant kidnapping of school children in Nigeria has become one of the most disturbing manifestations of the country's worsening security crisis. What began as isolated attacks on educational institutions has evolved into a dangerous criminal enterprise that threatens the very foundation of our future. Every abduction of a pupil, student, teacher, or school administrator is not merely an attack on an individual; it is an assault on education, national development, and the hopes of generations yet unborn.

Since the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, Borno State, on April 14-15, 2014, Nigeria has witnessed a disturbing pattern of attacks on schools across several states. More than a decade after that tragedy, reports indicate that over 2,000 schoolchildren have been kidnapped from educational institutions nationwide. While many regained freedom through rescue operations, negotiations, escapes, or releases, dozens have lost their lives in captivity, and nearly 90 of the Chibok girls remain unaccounted for. From Chibok and Dapchi to Kankara, Kagara, Jangebe, Greenfield University, Kuriga, and the recent abduction of dozens of pupils and teachers from schools in Oriire Local Government Area of Oyo State, the cycle of fear and uncertainty has persisted with alarming regularity. The Oyo incident, which claimed the lives of two teachers and a pupil according to reports, underscores the troubling expansion of school-targeted attacks beyond their traditional strongholds and serves as a stark reminder that no region can afford complacency in the face of this growing menace.

The consequences are devastating. Children who survive captivity often return with deep psychological scars that may last a lifetime. Many lose interest in schooling, while parents increasingly fear sending their children to school. In some communities, schools have been shut down indefinitely following attacks, leaving thousands of children stranded at home. This situation is particularly dangerous in a country already battling one of the world's highest numbers of out-of-school children, presently at 18.3 million.

The saying that "once the schools are shut, our prisons will become overcrowded" is not mere rhetoric. Education remains one of the most effective tools for combating poverty, ignorance, extremism, and crime. When children are denied access to safe learning environments, society inadvertently creates fertile ground for delinquency,

criminal recruitment, substance abuse, cultism, and violent extremism. A nation that fails to educate and protect its young people risks producing future generations trapped in cycles of insecurity, unemployment, and underdevelopment.

Unfortunately, the security situation in many Nigerian schools remains fragile. Although some progress has been made through the Safe Schools Initiative and related interventions, many primary, secondary, and even tertiary institutions still lack perimeter fencing, surveillance systems, emergency communication facilities, trained security personnel, and rapid response mechanisms. Schools in rural communities remain particularly vulnerable because of their remote locations, poor road networks, and limited security presence.

Government at all levels must therefore move beyond reactive measures and embrace a proactive security architecture. Federal, state, and local governments should prioritize school security infrastructure, strengthen intelligence gathering around educational institutions, and ensure the full implementation of the National Safe Schools Programme. School administrators, traditional rulers, community leaders, parents, and civil society organizations must also play active roles in identifying threats and safeguarding learning environments.

Equally important is the need for security agencies to upgrade their operational capabilities to match the changing dynamics of crime and criminality. Kidnappers and bandits are becoming increasingly sophisticated, exploiting technology, difficult terrains, and intelligence gaps. Our security agencies must therefore respond with modern surveillance drones, artificial intelligence-supported monitoring systems, satellite imagery, biometric databases, advanced communication equipment, geospatial intelligence tools, and real-time intelligence-sharing platforms. Security personnel should also receive specialised training in school protection, hostage-rescue operations, and counter-kidnapping strategies.

Furthermore, stronger coordination among the military, police, intelligence services, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and community-based security outfits is imperative. Criminals thrive where institutions work in silos. Effective collaboration can help prevent attacks before they occur and ensure swift responses when threats emerge.

Nigeria's children are not bargaining chips. They are the nation's greatest asset and its most precious posterity. Every child deserves to learn in an environment free from fear, violence, and uncertainty. Every parent deserves the assurance that a child sent to school will return home safely.

The time has come for government, security agencies, development partners, communities, religious institutions, and citizens to unite against this monster. Let us synergise to tackle this menace before it inflicts further damage on our educational system and national psyche. We must secure our schools, protect our children, and defend the future of our nation.

The cost of failure is simply too high.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
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Urgent Appeal For Government Intervention In The Rising Cost Of House Rent In Umuahia, Abia State

Dear Editor,

I write through your widely read newspaper, to draw urgent attention to the fast and worrying increase in house rent in Umuahia, the capital city of Abia State. This situation has become a serious concern for many residents who are finding it very difficult to cope with the rising cost of accommodation.

In recent times, landlords and agents have increased rent sharply in many parts of the city. The increment is not matched by any clear improvement in roads, housing conditions, or general living standards. At the same time, salaries and business incomes have remained the same, making it very hard for ordinary people to manage.

This situation is putting a lot of pressure on civil servants, traders, students, and low-income families. Many residents are now struggling to renew their rent, while others are being forced to leave their homes because they cannot afford the new prices. This is causing worry and uncertainty among families.

The problem is also leading to overcrowding in cheaper areas. Some families are now sharing small apartments, and in some cases, many people are living in spaces that are too small for them. If this continues, it may make the housing situation in Umuahia worse and affect the growth of the city.

I therefore respectfully appeal to the Executive Governor of Abia State, His Excellency Dr. Alex Otti, to urgently look into this matter. The government can find out the reasons for the sudden increase in rent and take steps to control it. This may include talking with landlords and agents, setting clear rules on rent increases, and providing more affordable housing for residents.

A quick response from the government will help reduce hardship, protect citizens from unfair treatment, and make Umuahia a better place to live for everyone.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express this concern.

Ifeanyi Ogidi
Write from: Umuahia, Abia State

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Abuja Digest
with Sophina Ovuike
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AIT Pledges Live Coverage, Strategic Media Partnership for WINSEC Summit

The African Independent Television (AIT) has pledged robust media support, including live coverage, for the maiden edition of the Women in Security Summit and Awards (WINSEC) 2026, reaffirming its commitment to promoting initiatives that advance national security and gender inclusion.

The commitment was made during a courtesy visit by the leadership of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), led by its National Chairperson, Hajija Aisha Ibrahim, who also serves as Chairperson of the WINSEC Central Planning Committee, to the management of Daar Communications Plc, owners of AIT, in Abuja.

Welcoming the delegation, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of AIT, Chief Marcel Anyananyi, commended NAWOJ for initiating a platform dedicated to celebrating the courage, sacrifice and outstanding contributions of women in Nigeria's security architecture.

He described the Women in Security Summit and Awards as a timely and impactful initiative capable of inspiring patriotism, excellence and renewed commitment among security personnel and other stakeholders involved in safeguarding the nation.

Chief Anyananyi stressed that addressing Nigeria's security challenges requires collaboration among the media, security agencies, government and citizens, emphasizing that national security remains a shared responsibility.

Speaking on behalf of the Board, Management and Staff of AIT, he assured the WINSEC team of the station's unwavering support towards the successful hosting of the event.

According to him, AIT will provide live coverage of the awards segment of the programme to enhance national visibility and audience engagement. The station will also deploy news crews for comprehensive coverage of the summit and awards ceremony.

Other areas of support include the airing of promotional materials across AIT platforms, scroll message announcements ahead of the event to boost public awareness, as well as technical assistance and professional guidance in producing broadcast-quality promotional content.

"We will work with you, partner with you and collaborate with you to ensure that the ceremony comes out successful. Those who are making sacrifices for the peace and security of our nation deserve to be recognized and honoured," Chief Anyananyi stated.

He further reiterated AIT's commitment to promoting national security awareness, public enlightenment and responsible journalism, noting that initiatives such as WINSEC contribute significantly to building a safer and more inclusive society.

Women Launch BWI-RHA in Abuja, Advocate Inclusion, Economic Empowerment

Prominent women leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, and advocates of social inclusion recently gathered in Abuja for the official launch of the Business Women of Influence for the Renewed Hope Agenda (BWI-RHA), a platform established to advance women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, leadership, and national development.

The event, themed "Together We Are Driving a New Hope," attracted notable personalities from across the country, including the organisation's Matron, Chief Dr. Mrs. Bintu-Fatima Tinubu, the Yalode of Lagos; former First Lady of Kano State, Mrs. Fatima Shekarau; representatives of the Presidency; women leaders; and political stakeholders.

Speaking at the launch, the Founder and Convener of BWI-RHA, Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Oyewole, FITD, described the initiative as a transformative movement aimed at equipping women with the skills, opportunities, and networks required to contribute meaningfully to national development.

She said the organisation would focus on mentorship, leadership development, business support, skills acquisition, and strategic partnerships to enhance the socio-economic wellbeing of women across Nigeria.

According to her, the platform will champion women-owned enterprises, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, promote greater participation of women in governance and leadership, and advocate policies that improve the welfare of women, children, and vulnerable groups.

"Women are not merely beneficiaries of development; they are key drivers of progress and nation-building," she



Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Oyewole, FITD
Founder and Convener of BWI-RHA

stated.

Dr. Oyewole reaffirmed the organisation's support for the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, expressing confidence that ongoing reforms would stimulate economic growth and expand opportunities for Nigerians.

She also commended Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, for her commitment to advancing the cause of women through the Renewed Hope Initiative.

In her remarks, Chief Dr. Mrs. Bintu-Fatima Tinubu described the launch as a significant milestone in the collective effort to empower women, strengthen businesses, and promote family and community development.

She praised the founder and members of the organisation for bringing together accomplished women from diverse sectors to pursue a shared vision of national progress.

According to her, women occupy a strategic position in society and must be actively involved in

shaping the nation's future.

"Women are builders of homes, communities, and economies. When women thrive, families prosper, communities become stronger, and nations achieve sustainable development," she said.

The Yalode of Lagos paid tribute to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, describing him as a visionary leader committed to repositioning Nigeria for growth and prosperity. She also applauded Senator Oluremi Tinubu for her longstanding contributions to women, youth, and national development.

Chief Tinubu urged members of the platform to move beyond celebrations and become active partners in nation-building, peacebuilding, and economic development.

She emphasized the need to extend opportunities to women at the grassroots, stressing that rural women should not be left behind in development efforts.

"Our mission must be to connect opportunities to every woman, irrespective of

her location or background," she said.

She pledged her continued support for the organisation and encouraged members to remain committed to its vision and objectives.

Representatives of the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) also commended the establishment of BWI-RHA, describing it as a significant step towards advancing the interests of women across Nigeria.

The council reiterated its call for increased female participation in governance, noting that women's representation in elective and appointive positions remains considerably low.

It urged women to support one another, strengthen family values, and continue contributing to national peace, unity, and development.

A former member of the National Assembly and leader of the APC Female Aspirants Network also called for greater inclusion of women in politics and leadership.

Media, CSOs Push For Credible, Peaceful Elections

Media practitioners, civil society organisations (CSOs), election observers, broadcasters and communication experts have called for stronger collaboration, enhanced security for journalists and improved transparency in Nigeria's electoral process as part of efforts to guarantee credible, peaceful and inclusive elections.

The call formed the central resolution of a media-CSO roundtable held last recently at the United Nations House in Abuja.

The event was jointly convened by the Journalists for Human Rights (JHR) and the United Nations Office of

the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Participants examined the challenges and opportunities surrounding election coverage in Nigeria, with discussions focusing on strengthening partnerships between the media and civil society, addressing structural and operational gaps in electoral reporting, and promoting a more coordinated, transparent and secure information environment during elections.

At the end of the deliberations, participants adopted a communiqué containing key resolutions and recommendations.

On information access and transparency, participants called for the establishment of a verified central platform to

provide timely electoral information accessible to both media organisations and CSOs.

They also urged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct mandatory mock tests of election technologies before elections and formally recognise the media as a critical stakeholder in the electoral process.

The communiqué further recommended that post-election reports should document cases of journalist harassment, denial of access to information, polling units and collation centres.

To strengthen collaboration between the media and civil society, participants proposed the

creation of a joint platform for sharing verified information, resources and content.

They also recommended mapping CSOs according to their thematic expertise to support media sourcing, encouraging CSOs to share information directly with media organisations and deploying CSO field personnel as correspondents in areas with limited media presence.

On funding and resource mobilisation, participants advocated structured funding support through CSOs to enhance election coverage and called for transparent external partnerships aimed at strengthening media

capacity.

They also endorsed the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) proposal for a shared resource pool for information, photographs, footage and other editorial materials.

Security and protection of journalists featured prominently during the discussions.

Participants recommended the establishment of a Security Accord involving the media, CSOs, security agencies and other stakeholders to provide a formal framework for protecting journalists during election coverage.

They further proposed the creation of an Inter-Agency

Consultative Security Committee with media and CSOs serving as embedded members, while urging regular engagements among INEC, security agencies, media organisations and civil society groups ahead of elections.

The communiqué Media practitioners, civil society organisations (CSOs), election observers, broadcasters and communication experts have called for stronger collaboration, enhanced security for journalists and improved transparency in Nigeria's electoral process as part of efforts to guarantee credible, peaceful and inclusive elections.

Opinion

Otti And The Igbo Renaissance

By *Emenike Vincent Onyembi (EVO)*

There are leaders who govern with their eyes fixed only on visible projects that will give them immediate gratifications such as roads, hospitals, housing schemes, and also go ahead to name some of these projects after themselves because posterity is easy to claim. Then there is another kind entirely. The rare kind who seems to understand that governance is not just administration. It is memory. It is culture. It is the deliberate act of reminding a people who they are, where they came from, and how high they have always been capable of reaching. Alex Otti, the Governor of Abia State, belongs to this second and far rarer category. And what he is quietly building in Abia, through concrete and culture, through naming and honoring, through inclusion and vision, is nothing short of an Igbo renaissance.

To understand what Otti is doing, you must first understand what was lost. The Igbo people carry one of the most remarkable civilizational stories in African history, a people of extraordinary enterprise, intellectual energy, and democratic tradition long before democracy became fashionable anywhere. Yet in the decades following the Nigeria Biafra Civil War, something slowly dimmed. Leaders rose and fell without ever truly honoring the giants who came before them. Institutions crumbled. Monuments to Igbo achievement fell into disrepair. The young began to forget. And Abia State, which sits at the very heart of Igboland and should have been the custodian of this proud heritage, became instead a symbol of what can go wrong when governance loses its soul. Otti inherited that broken inheritance in May 2023. What he has done with it since assumption of office is a story worth telling.

Before Alex Otti became governor, he was already a man shaped by a Pan Igbo consciousness that went far beyond where he was born. His career as one of Nigeria's most respected bankers, rising to become Group Managing Director of Diamond Bank, brought him into close contact with the finest minds across Igboland and Nigeria at large. It was in that boardroom world that he built relationships with people like Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, the Obi of Onitsha, who chaired Diamond Bank while Otti led it as CEO. That relationship was not merely professional. It was the beginning of a deep mutual respect between two men who understood each in their own way and what constitutes Igbo excellence. When Otti eventually won the governorship of Abia State in 2023, he did not leave those relationships behind. He brought them with him into governance, and the results have been quietly breathtaking.

One of the earliest and most telling signals of what kind of governor Otti would be came through his relationship with the Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Alfred Achebe. In May 2024, barely a year into his administration, Otti invited Igwe Achebe to Aba, not for a political rally, not for a government function, but to commission three newly reconstructed roads. The gesture was elegant in its symbolism. Here was an Abia governor saying, in the most public way possible, that the most revered traditional ruler in Igboland was welcome in his state as a respected elder and partner, not merely as a visiting guest. Igwe Achebe, deeply moved by what he saw in Aba, responded with the kind of words that carry weight coming from a man of his measured character. He called Otti "God sent" and described him as not just the pride of Abia, but of Nigeria as a whole.

The relationship did not stop there. In March 2026, when Southeast and South South traditional rulers gathered in Abia, Otti publicly acknowledged the Obi of Onitsha as a mentor and father figure, and announced plans to host his 85th birthday celebration in Abia State. That celebration took place on May 15, 2026, at the Michael Okpara Auditorium in Umuahia, organized by the Abia State Government, with ministers, senators, and leading Igbo voices in attendance, including former Minister of Education Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, who described Igwe Achebe as having become an institution. I sat in that auditorium that evening as Otti made his speech. There, Otti said something that captured his worldview perfectly, "We want our young people to know that it pays to be diligent. Honour pays." A sitting governor of Abia organizing a public birthday celebration

for the Obi of Onitsha, at state expense, in Umuahia, that is not protocol. That is a philosophy.

No survey of Otti's Pan Igbo consciousness would be complete without a proper reckoning with his relationship to the legacy of Chief Sam Mbakwe, the revered former governor of old Imo State, whose jurisdiction once included much of what is today Abia. Long before Otti became governor, he spoke of Mbakwe with the kind of reverence you reserve for a man who shaped your entire understanding of what public service should look like. In his first major speech flagging off the reconstruction of Port Harcourt Road in Aba in October 2023, Otti reminded his audience that it was "our revered leader, Dee Sam Mbakwe, Governor of Old Imo State" who originally built that



Governor Alex Otti

road, and that the commercial energy it once generated was a direct product of Mbakwe's vision. He did not have to say that. Most politicians would have simply cut the ribbon and moved on. Otti chose instead to situate his own work within a longer story of Igbo



Among the boldest and most consequential of Otti's ambitions is his push for an Abia seaport.



achievement, to say, in effect, that what he was doing was a continuation, not a creation.

Mbakwe had also been the man who took the long stalled Enyimba Hotel project in Aba into its most advanced stage before the military terminated his government in 1983. Otti honored that connection too, when he flagged off the reconstruction of the same Enyimba Hotel in February 2026, publicly paying tribute to Mbakwe as one of the original pathfinders of the project. That gesture of attribution, naming the debt, is something rare in Nigerian politics. And it did not go unnoticed.

The story of the Enyimba International Hotel in Aba is, in miniature, the story of the Igbo condition since the civil war, a people full of vision, interrupted repeatedly, never quite allowed to finish what they started. First conceived in 1972 by Ukpabi Asika,

Administrator of the defunct East Central State, as a symbol of hope and reconstruction after the war, the project moved forward, then stopped. Sam Mbakwe revived it in the early 1980s, taking the seven storey structure to a considerable stage before the military again brought the civilian government to a halt in 1983. After that, for over four decades, the building stood on Ogbor Hill in Aba, visible to everyone, usable by no one, a monument to interrupted ambition.

On February 25, 2026, Alex Otti walked to that building and changed its story. He flagged off its full reconstruction in partnership with Radisson Blu, one of the world's leading hospitality brands. The first phase, a 120 room, five star hotel with a convention centre capable of hosting up to

by Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe (rtd), a former Chief of Staff during the Babangida era, who himself is a respected figure from the Southeast. Every detail of that occasion was layered with meaning.

Similarly, when Otti commissioned the Omenuko Bridge and the long abandoned 30 kilometre Arochukwu road in early 2026, he did so alongside Lt. General Azubuike Ihejirika (rtd), Nigeria's first Igbo Chief of Army Staff, who he invited to perform the commissioning. The symbolism was unmistakable, the most senior military figure the Igbo have ever produced, standing on a road in Igboland, cutting a ribbon placed there by an Igbo governor who understood the weight of that invitation. These are not coincidental events, but a well premeditated act of cultural awakening and preservation.

Few issues are as emotionally layered for the Igbo people as the memory of the Nigeria/Biafra Civil War. For many Igbo, especially the older generation, the war is not history, it is still a living wound. The Ojukwu Bunker in Umuahia, the underground shelter from which Odumegwu Ojukwu directed the Biafran war effort, is one of the most significant monuments of that experience. For years, it sat in neglect, fraying at the edges, a heritage site that heritage had abandoned. Otti moved to change that from his first year in office. He unveiled plans to restore the Ojukwu Bunker and the National War Museum in Umuahia, and by November 2025, the Abia State Executive Council had approved the comprehensive retrofitting of both sites. An agreement was finalized with the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, and the renovation, described as a key campaign promise, was set to begin. The vision is to transform the Bunker into a world class tourism destination that tells the Igbo story to the world, on the world's terms. Otti's government also identified 55 viable heritage sites across Abia during this same period, signaling that the Bunker was not an isolated gesture but part of a deliberate cultural archaeology.

Among the boldest and most consequential of Otti's ambitions is his push for an Abia seaport. In May 2026, he approved a feasibility study for the proposed Azumini Obeaku Seaport and Inland Waterway, a project that, if realized, would give Igboland its own maritime gateway and fundamentally reshape the economic geography of the Southeast. For decades, the absence of a seaport in the Southeast has been one of the structural disadvantages that has kept the region economically subordinate to coastal states. Entrepreneurs from Aba, one of Nigeria's most productive manufacturing cities, are forced to move their goods through Lagos or Port Harcourt at enormous cost and inconvenience. A seaport in Abia would not just benefit Abians, it would benefit every Igbo trader, every Southeast manufacturer, every entrepreneur from Anambra to Ebonyi who currently pays the price of geographical disadvantage. Otti understands this, and his pursuit of it is as much a Pan Igbo act as it is an economic one.

Even in the way he names his healthcare programme, Otti reveals the depth of his attachment to Igbo history. His flagship primary healthcare initiative, a comprehensive scheme to rebuild and equip 200 primary healthcare centers across Abia State, is called Project Ekwueme. Dr. Alex Ekwueme was Nigeria's first democratically elected Vice President, an Igbo statesman of immense dignity and national significance. Naming a healthcare project after him is not just tribute, it is a teaching. Every time a woman in a rural community in Abia State walks into a newly equipped health center, the name on the sign reminds her that an Igbo man once sat at the highest levels of this republic, and that his name now adorns a building that is healing her people.

Feature

Beyond The Primaries: Uncertainty And Confusion

By Reuben Abati

Thank God it is over”

“Yes oh. Now, Arsenal players and their fans can now allow all of us to rest. They have their Premier League trophy. PSG have taken the Champions League. History made on both sides. Heroes made.”

“Who is talking about Arsenal or PSG? Why is it that you, Nigerians are always so unpatriotic? Before you think of your own country, you are more concerned about what is happening in other parts of the world. When I say it is over, I am referring to the party primaries that have just been concluded in Nigeria's political space. The INEC deadline expired on May 30.”

“Oh, I see. But it is not correct to say it is over. The correct thing to say is that Nigeria is now on a path to a new beginning, a return to high-wire politics that could have serious implications for the future. The end of the primaries is merely the commencement of warfare which Nigerian politics is.”

“Yes. Yes. I know that there will be fall-outs. After all, there have been very loud complaints about the mode of the primaries, consensus arrangements that marginalized many eligible participants and direct primaries that were openly rigged, shamelessly too. And I dare say, no party is innocent.”

“Well, well, well, I have not heard of any complaints from the African Action Congress which chose Omoyele Sowore by popular acclamation, Accord Party which announced Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, the People's Redemption Party (PRP) that selected former Governor Donald Duke, Governor Seyi Makinde's Allied People's Movement, Action Democratic Party where you have Aliyu Bin Abbas, and of course the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) which produced Peter Obi. In these parties, the choice of the flagbearers has been relatively peaceful. It is only in the APC, the PDP, and the ADC that we have had controversies.”

“Not true. There have been issues in all the parties. And this is the point that Minister Wike was making during his media chat on TV yesterday. He said those politicians in ADC and NDC who claim they know how to run Nigeria are all liars, because ordinary party primaries they could not even organize successfully.”

“Are you still taking that one seriously?”

“But he has a point. No opposition party has been able to show that their party is better than the APC. We are faced with the same of the same. Wike is right to laugh at them.”

“Peter Obi, the ADC Presidential candidate has promised to generate 10,000 MW of electricity in 4 years of the single term that

he is proposing. He will also empower MSMEs and address youth unemployment. That is something different.”

“I beg. Is power generation the problem? Electricity is a value chain. How about transmission and distribution? How about tariffs, liquidity? Leakages, wastages. And where were you when failed aspirants in the Democratic Leadership Alliance (DLA) and the Labour Party (LP) were asking for a refund of monies paid into the party's coffers. In Imo State, one APC aspirant wept openly and on social media claiming that he had spent over N100 million to buy forms for the House of Representatives slot only for the party to impose a woman who never bought any form. He said it will never happen.”

“Did you say an APC aspirant?”

“Yes, from Owerri”

“If he knows what is good for him, he will keep quiet and sulk in silence. The ticket belongs to the party. Even the aspirant that challenged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for the APC Presidential ticket is now singing his praise. And what does your Imo friend want the 14 lawmakers in the Lagos State House of Assembly who have been sent away to do, and all the Ministers who resigned their positions to run for one elective office or the other. Maybe only one of them succeeded. The Godfather system that they run in the APC simply means you have to obey and accept whatever you are given by the powers-that-be.”

“But that is not democracy. That is tyranny.”

“Who told you there is a universal model of democracy?”

“There are principles.”

“I know. Take the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) founded by countryman Senator Seriake Dickson. The party is now the beautiful bride. That is why Peter Obi and Dr Kwankwaso left the ADC and ran there.”

“Wike says Peter Obi is a food-is-ready politician! He will run to any party that others have worked hard to build.”

“Don't mind him. They are all the same. What I am saying is that for you to join the NDC, you have to go to Seriake Dickson's house. To get an expression of interest form, you also have to go to his house. Major meetings are also held in his house, except may be the party's convention and that must have been due to reasons of space. That too is democracy. And look at Wike. He gave a directive to events owners and hoteliers in Abuja not to allow any “illegal political groups” to use their premises, otherwise their licenses and land titles will be revoked. The David Mark faction of the ADC fought back but the Turaki faction of the PDP ended up holding their event at an open field. I guess that too is democracy.”

“No, that is against the principles of fair play and equal

access. But what do you think will happen now?”

“To be honest, I see a lot of confusion. So much uncertainty. Out of 22 registered political parties, only 11 have announced their Presidential candidates. I doubt if anyone has made any submissions to INEC

by the deadline of May 30. The deadline for moving from one political party to the other was set at May 10. Long after that deadline, we have now seen politicians moving from one party to the other. Babachir Lawal for example has dumped the ADC. Senator Ovie Omo-Agege has moved out of the APC in protest to join the NDC.”

“I believe this is because of the two conflicting judgements in the Federal High Court. Abuja Division. Youth Party vs INEC by Justice Mohammed Umar and SDP vs INEC by Justice James Omotoso. INEC has since gone to the Court of Appeal and has applied for a stay of execution. Meanwhile, everything is in abeyance. Even the lawyers are taking one side or the other, offering conflicting interpretations.”

“Whether we like it or not, Nigeria's 2027 general elections will be determined by the courts, not by the voters. Look at the confusion in the parties, especially the ADC which has three factions, three Presidential candidates - the Nafiu Bala Gombe faction with Chris Uba, the Kachikwu faction with Dumebi Kachikwu and the David Mark-led faction with Atiku Abubakar. Then the PDP with two factions, two Presidential candidates - the Wike faction with Senator Sandy Onor and the Kabiru Turaki faction with President Goodluck Jonathan.”

“I don't even understand why President Jonathan will allow anybody to drag him into this state of confusion. He is an international statesman. He is a man of stature, widely respected locally and internationally. He should stay above partisan politics.”

“Wike says nobody drags anybody into politics. It is only when you show interest that people will come and offer you what they think you want.”

“The way you keep quoting Wike that, Wike that, I hope there is nothing. You better don't waste your time. Wike no send anybody oh. But I agree with you on President Jonathan. He is legally eligible, constitutionally and by all means as recently decided by the Federal High Court of Justice Peter Lifu. But it is not advisable for him to get involved in the PDP crisis. There are two Federal High Court cases in contention: The Court of Justice Uche Agomoh in the Ibadan Division, and the court of Justice Joyce Abdulmalik at the Abuja Division on the basis of which INEC recognized the Wike faction. Wike served President Jonathan as Minister of State over 10 years ago. No. No. No. He cannot be seen to be dragging anything with his own subordinates. He is too distinguished for that.”

The Ottification Of Governance

By Dickson Paul

Truly speaking, the present government in Abia State led by Dr. Alex Chioma Otti has won the hearts and trust of Abians.

Not only that, they have also written the government of the day in their hearts.

This was triggered by the maladministration of the past governments in Abia State, which Alex Otti has been busy, cleaning up their mess.

Looking at the level of infrastructural development in the new Abia State, if properly assessed, one would spot the difference between now and then. Honestly, the Governor Dr. Alex Otti has proved to be a prudent manager of both human and financial resources.

Otti is a focused Leader as we can see. His leadership style as believed by some admirers of good governance, is different. He is development oriented, looking at the projects scattered across the 3 Senatorial zones of the state. As such, his second term in office is guaranteed.

Abians can see the level of transformation, transparency, accountability and the zeal with which he wants to turn the State around. We no longer hear the uncomplimentary remarks about the state. The governor is seriously fixing the roads.

It was believed that when you enter Abia State, you will know, just because of the pot holes and bad roads. But now, the governor is correcting such impression.

Abia State is recording a commendable transformation under His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti (OFR) who considered it imperative to build Abia State of Our dream where all and sundry can be proud of. Otti ensures that the right infrastructures and facilities of a modern state are put in place as well as enhancing the

aesthetics of the environment. Infrastructurally and otherwise, the state is progressive.

Abians saw his competence, administrative dexterity and voted for him in 2015 when he first contested for governorship, repeated it in 2019 and still stood by him in 2023, that shows that the people have uncommon love for the governor—Dr. Alex Otti. They are still in support and loyal to his leadership. The people have confidence that Otti will transform the State and they are happy that he is doing just that. He has enormously transformed the landscape of Abia State and the story of the commercial hub of the South Eastern Nigeria (Aba) has changed.

Aba now has an interesting story and the people of the area are pleased with the administration of Dr. Alex Otti. Abians are now seeing the dividends of democracy and it is something every body is proud of.

Following the governor's performance assessment, people believe that he has done well.

Yes, in the sense that Abia State never had so good prior to 2023 and looking at the mega projects being executed by the present government under the competent leadership of the governor, Dr. Alex Otti.

On that basis, Abians are commending the government for credible performance but on another perspective, they want the government to execute more projects knowing that as a developing state, it needs what it takes to be compared with other states in Nigeria. And for another, knowing the kind of person Dr. Alex Otti is, who wants to change the story of Our state, deploys tools to reinvent excellent Service to Abians as well as Good Governance in order to open up the market that remains largely untapped.

Abia State is fast becoming a destination

of choice for the foreign investors.

The truth is that the journey to development and efficient service was slow until 2023 when there was a political bang. We all are seeing it today. It is now a case of one project, a thousand gain.

There is a revolution that breeds jobs for the Masses because it transforms lives and fortunes of Abia residents. I respect this government because, it overcame the challenges that the previous governments could not, especially infrastructural challenges. Let me say it again, perhaps not until the emergence of the present Chief Executive, Dr. Alex Otti in 2023, Abians wallowed in the world of despondency.

But the governor is abreast with what is good for the state and her citizenry. Otti came in with determination unlike the “I don't care attitude” of the past leaders of the state.

Today, nevertheless, things are fast changing positively, barely 3 years into his administration, most Local Government Councils in the state are showing remarkable progress as long as developmental projects are concerned.

Well, we are aware that everybody has his own style. But I will say that Otti is not too hungry for wealth. Rather he is hungry for development. He wants to put Abia on a level in order to attain threshold marks of other States like Lagos, Rivers etc.

The past leaders were not thinking about wealth creation unlike Otti who saw the need to develop Abia in order to create wealth from the taxes and other means of revenue generation.

They did what they considered best but were not interested in wealth creation and it affected the State. But in this administration, there are sources of tax payments which have also controlled leakage as taxes are paid directly to the government. The present government pays salaries as at when due to all, not select and pay. In Abia State now, financial management has

improved and there is visible difference between Otti and others.

Otti is described as a financial expert by people who understand financial management and having worked in banks, he knows where to Channel resources. He is seen as one who has love for development. He wants to build a modern Abia State.

Fixing the roads makes transportation safer and everybody is commending the Chief Executive of the State.

Otti as a leader armed with acumen, understands that access plays cardinal role in the development of any society, as such, he considered it a priority. The people today are happy with the road constructions going on in every strata of the state.

These roads have too many economic benefits because, some of the LGAs are food baskets. Some of the roads have long been awaited for construction.

Funny as it may sound, some of the roads were constructed by the late premier of the Eastern Region, Dr. M.I. Opkara in 1953-55.

Since then, many of them, have not been done again. The roads have multiple advantages because it will ease the evacuation of farm produce, Foster the development of the areas. It will also facilitate transportation as the people will no longer have the challenge moving around the state with the attendant financial toll on them. If the roads are developed, the people will see reasons to build in their home communities unlike when they are cut off as a result of inaccessible roads.

Looking at the uncommon mega signature projects of the present government, Abians should remain supportive of Dr. Alex Otti who has made us proud. They should return him in 2027 and be part of the revolution in Abia State and also be law abiding knowing that the state is in safe hands.

News

NOAN 2026 Summit: FG, Stakeholders Champion Organic Agriculture

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka

The Federal Government has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing organic agriculture as stakeholders from across Nigeria and beyond gathered, for the 2026 Technical Workshop, Organic Fair and Annual General Meeting of the Association of Organic Agriculture Practitioners of Nigeria (NOAN).

Declaring the event open in Umuahia, Abia State recently, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Aliyu Sabi Abdullahi, represented by the Executive Director of NIHORT, Prof. Atanda Muhammed Lawal, described organic agriculture and agroecology as critical tools for climate resilience, soil restoration, food security and sustainable economic growth. He highlighted key government initiatives, including the National Agroecology Strategy and the Nigerian Farmers Soil Health Scheme, while calling for greater youth participation, innovation and investment in the sector.

Meanwhile, the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, represented by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Clifford Agbaeze, reaffirmed the state's commitment to sustainable agriculture through climate-smart farming, farmer support programmes and environmental sustainability initiatives. Speakers at the summit, including Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Dr. Marcus Ogunbiyi, and Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Prof. Ursula Akanwa, stressed the need for stronger collaboration, research and institutional support to scale agroecological practices nationwide.

In his address, NOAN President, Prof. Jude C. Obi, described the gathering as a landmark moment for organic agriculture, announcing the inauguration of a Technical Drafting Committee for the Nigeria Organic Agriculture Policy and plans for a partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture to drive implementation. He also unveiled initiatives aimed at empowering youths and women, including a Digital Marketplace for organic producers, while acknowledging the support of international partners such as the African Union Commission, Biovision Africa Trust and IFOAM Organics International.

Delivering the vote of thanks, Chairman, Local Organising Committee (LOC), Dr. Blessing Ada Ahamefulu, commended government agencies, development partners, researchers and participants for the success of the three-day event. She paid tribute to Prof. Jude Obi for his leadership and expressed confidence in the new NOAN President, Prof. Olatunji, urging participants to translate the knowledge gained into actions that will strengthen food security, health and economic prosperity.

Highlights of the summit included the inauguration of a nine-member Technical Policy Drafting Committee, the presentation of Awards of Excellence to distinguished contributors to the sector, and the unveiling of an organic agriculture book titled Green Gold.



Gov. Otti

APC Chieftain, Nwaka, Backs Gov Otti's Re-election

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Former Third Republic Senator, Emma Nwaka, has endorsed the re-election bid of Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, for a second term in office, citing the governor's performance and developmental strides as justification for continued support.

Sen. Nwaka, a member of the All Progressive Congress (APC), made his position known in a statement titled "This Is My Stand", which was made available to journalists recently, as political activities and permutations ahead of the 2027 general elections continue to gather momentum across the country.

The former senator said he was compelled to

publicly state his position following persistent enquiries from supporters and political associates who were seeking clarity over his attendance at some Labour Party events in Abia State despite his membership of the APC.

While affirming his support for the APC's position that the governorship should remain in Abia Central Senatorial District in 2027, Sen. Nwaka said Governor Otti's performance had convinced him that the governor deserved a second term.

He added that the Otti led administration has restored pride among Abians and placed the state on the path of sustainable economic growth and development.

According to him, "By every political metric

conceivable, his first term has ushered in a season of unprecedented infrastructural development in every corner of the state.

"I believe that another four years of Dr. Alex Otti, OFR as governor would have established Abia State on a trajectory of irreversible economic growth and development", Sen Nwaka stated.

The former senator particularly lauded Governor Otti's impact on Isuikwuato Local Government Area, his home constituency, arguing that the administration had delivered more development and appointments to the area than any previous government since the creation of Abia State.

"As a son of Isuikwuato, I can attest that Dr. Otti's administration has done so

much for my local government than any other government since the creation of Abia State, whether in terms of infrastructural development or appointments", he said.

Sen Nwaka argued that denying Gov Otti a second term could upset the state's power-sharing arrangement and potentially delay the return of governorship power to Abia North, particularly the Isuikwuato/Umunneochi axis.

"At the end of Dr. Otti's tenure in 2031, power is expected to revert to Abia North, precisely to Isuikwuato/Umunneochi axis.

"If we deny Dr. Alex Otti a second term and bring in a new person from Abia Central, it means that Abia North might have to wait for all of 12 years to take over

WAEC Cracks Down on Illegal Exam Charges

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has warned school owners, principals, supervisors, and invigilators to stop collecting illegal fees from students writing the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE).

WAEC said it has received reports that some schools and examination officials are asking candidates to pay different charges that are not approved by the council.

According to WAEC, some students have been forced to pay money for the transportation of examination materials, welfare expenses, and so-called "cooperation fees." The council also discovered that some schools were charging students for KAPEK calculators that WAEC had already provided free of charge.

Speaking in a statement WAEC's Head of Public Affairs, Moyosola Adesina, said the practice is wrong and unacceptable. She noted that such actions can damage the credibility of the examination and must be stopped immediately.

Adesina warned school owners, principals, supervisors, and invigilators not to collect money from students or their parents on behalf of examination officials. She also advised parents and candidates to report any demand for money to WAEC's zonal coordinators, branch

controllers, or through the council's official email addresses.

She further cautioned against any form of harassment, intimidation, or unfair treatment of candidates during the examination period. According to her, WAEC remains committed to providing a fair and transparent examination process for all students.

The examination body also warned that any school or official found guilty of collecting illegal fees or breaking its rules would face serious punishment. Such penalties may include the withdrawal of a school's recognition, blacklisting of officials, prosecution, and other disciplinary actions by relevant authorities.

Earlier, the Head of WAEC's National Office in Nigeria, Amos Dangut, announced that 1,959,636 candidates from 24,207 schools registered for the 2026 WASSCE. Out of the total number, 1,001,072 are female candidates, while 958,564 are male.

The 2026 WASSCE started on April 21 with practical examinations and is expected to end on June 19. WAEC said it will continue to protect the credibility of its examinations and ensure that students are not exploited during the exercise.

Photos Speak



Inside and outside views of the two Primary Healthcare Centres in Amaegbuata Nkpa and Amaokwa, Bende LGA, built by Dr. Alex Otti..



L-R: Special Adviser to President Tinubu on Media and Public Communication, Mr Sunday Dare with Abia Newspapers Govt House reporter, Amarachi Uzoukwu, during an inspection tour by Members of the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team to different Abia State Govt projects.



L-R: Special Adviser, Monitoring and Evaluation, Mazi Ugochukwu Okoroafor, DG, Abia State Orientation Agency, Ure Abazie and Special Adviser to President Tinubu on Information and Strategy, Mr Bayo Onanuga, during an inspection tour to different Govt projects sites by a Team from the State Govt in collaboration with journalists and Members of the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team in Abia State



Special Adviser to President Bola Tinubu on Media and Public Communications, Mr. Sunday Dare (9th right), and the Abia State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu (8th left), with other dignitaries during a group photograph at the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team Tour in Abia State recently.

Photos Speak



Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Media and Public Communications, Mr. Sunday Dare CON (2nd right), Abia State Commissioner for Transport, Dr. Chimezie Isaac Ukaegbu (1st right), and other dignitaries engaged in a warm discussion at the Nnenna Oti Bus Terminal during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team Tour of Abia State recently.



Abia State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu (1st right), and the Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Media and Public Communication, Chief Sunday Dare, CON (centre), alongside other dignitaries, during the inspection of projects as part of the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team tour of Abia State recently.



Hon. Ferdinand Ekeoma, Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to Dr. Alex Otti, responding to questions from journalists during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Tour held recently in Abia State.



Prince Okey Kanu, Abia State Commissioner for Information, responding to questions from journalists during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Tour recently held in Abia State.



Chief Sunday Dare, CON, Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Media and Public Communication and leader of the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team, responding to questions from journalists during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Tour recently held in Abia State.



Abia State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu (2nd right), alongside other dignitaries, at the Nnenna Oti Bus Terminal during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Team tour recently held in Abia State.



The Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Media and Public Communication, Chief Sunday Dare, C.O.N (right), and the Abia State Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu (left), in a cordial conversation during the Renewed Hope Presidential Media Tour in Abia State recently.



One of the newly acquired Boeing 737-800NG aircraft, unveiled by Dr. Alex Otti and operated by United Nigeria Airlines, was presented during a ceremony where the planes were named in honor of literary icon Chinua Achebe and the Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe.



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Religion

Steps Into Our Recovery

By Okechukwu Ubani

God is a God of restoration and recovery. No matter what has been lost, His desire is to restore His people. The Bible reveals practical steps that lead believers into divine recovery. As we follow these principles, we position ourselves to experience God's restoring power.

1. Be Born Again

The first step into recovery is salvation through Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin separates man from God's glory and causes spiritual loss. However, God's plan of redemption provides a way back.

Romans 8 teaches that those whom God calls, He justifies, and those He justifies, He also glorifies. Through the new birth, the lost glory is restored. Therefore, the foundation for every genuine recovery is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. When a person is born again, God begins a process of restoration in every area of life.

2. Desire Revelation of Your Right to Recovery

Recovery begins when we understand God's will concerning our situation. Job 14:7-9 declares that even a tree that has been cut down can sprout again at the scent of water. This shows that there is hope for every seemingly hopeless situation.

The Word of God is the trigger for recovery. Whatever appears dead, lost, or forgotten can come back to life through the power of God's Word. Joseph's story is a powerful example. Though he was bound in chains, his situation changed when God's Word concerning him came to pass (Psalm

105:17-22). The king sent for him, released him, and elevated him to a position of authority.

God's Word brings restoration, promotion, and change of story. Therefore, believers must continually seek revelation from Scripture concerning their right to recovery.

Your word has come. It is the will of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for your recovery. Whatever has been taken from you through the wickedness of the enemy shall be restored in Jesus' name.

3. Remain Committed to Serving God and His Kingdom

Another important step to recovery is wholehearted commitment to God and the interests of His Kingdom. Throughout Scripture, those who remained faithful to God enjoyed His protection, provision, and preservation.

King Asa and the people of Judah entered into a covenant with God, and He gave them rest on every side. There was no more war or loss as long as they remained committed to Him. Trouble only returned when they departed from that covenant.

Serving God consistently keeps believers

under His covering and favour. As Psalm 34:10 declares, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." God rewards those who faithfully pursue Him and advance His Kingdom.

May God grant us the grace to remain committed to serving Him all the days of our lives.

4. Seek the Well-Being of Others

One of the mysteries of divine recovery is seeking the good of others. Job's captivity was turned when he prayed for his friends. After he prayed for them, God restored his losses and gave him twice as much as he had before.

Ephesians 6:8 teaches that whatever good anyone does, the same shall be received from the Lord. When we sincerely desire the restoration, success, and well-being of others, God also works on our behalf.

This principle operates through prayer, generosity, kindness, and genuine concern for people. Proverbs 28:27 reminds us that those who give to the poor will not lack. As we become channels of blessing to others, God's recovery follows us.

Seek the recovery of others, and your own recovery will follow.

5. Engage the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's appointed facilitator of recovery. Joel 2:25 contains God's promise: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten." The Holy Spirit

works to bring this promise to reality in the lives of believers.

Isaiah 61 is often called the chapter of the Holy Spirit because it begins with the declaration, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." In this chapter, God promises comfort for those who mourn, beauty for ashes, joy instead of sorrow, and restoration instead of devastation.

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to rebuild wasted places, restore what has been destroyed, and experience divine turnaround. God declares, "For your shame ye shall have double." This is the ministry of restoration at work.

Therefore, believers must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit daily. He is not a distant force but a Person who guides, instructs, and directs. We should continually ask Him for wisdom, guidance, and direction in every situation. He knows the way to recovery and has the power to bring God's promises to pass.

Today, the Father is in Heaven, the Son is in Heaven, and the Holy Spirit is at work on the earth. He is available to help every believer experience restoration and recovery.

He is here for you in the name of Jesus.

God's plan is not for His children to remain in loss, defeat, or despair. Through salvation, revelation from His Word, commitment to His Kingdom, concern for others, and partnership with the Holy Spirit, every believer can experience divine recovery.

No matter what has been lost, God is able to restore it. As you follow these biblical principles, may you experience complete restoration, divine favour, and a glorious change of story in Jesus' name.

Family Matters

By Nneoma Stephanie

There is no excuse for premarital sex. God's standard has never changed, and His instruction remains clear: sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage. From the beginning, God designed sex as a sacred gift to be enjoyed within the covenant of marriage between a husband and wife. His commands are not meant to limit our happiness but to protect us from emotional pain, spiritual consequences, broken trust, and unnecessary regrets.

Young men and women who desire to honor God should make a firm decision to remain sexually pure until marriage. In a world where sexual immorality is often normalized and even celebrated, choosing purity requires courage, discipline, and a genuine commitment to God's Word. However, God's approval is far more valuable than the acceptance of society.

Remaining sexually pure is a demonstration of obedience, self-control, and respect for both God and one's future spouse. It shows a willingness to trust God's timing and follow His plan rather than giving in to temporary desires or pressure from others. Purity is not outdated,

unrealistic, or old-fashioned; it is a reflection of God's wisdom and His desire for the best in the lives of His children.

Unfortunately, many people try to justify sexual sin by pointing to the mistakes of others or by creating excuses for their own choices. Some even use biblical stories incorrectly to defend a lifestyle that goes against God's Word. Sin does not become right simply because many people practice it. God's standards remain the same regardless of society's opinions.

If you have fallen into sexual sin, the right response is repentance, not rebellion. It takes humility to admit that a mistake was made and to seek God's forgiveness. There is no need to attack, shame, or criticize those who have chosen to remain virgins. Instead, acknowledge the truth, learn from your mistakes, and move forward in obedience to God.

Many people often say, "Virginity is not a guarantee of a good marriage." While that statement may be true, it misses the point entirely. The purpose of virginity is not merely to guarantee a successful marriage. The purpose is to obey God and

honor Him with your body.

A good marriage depends on many factors, including spiritual maturity, character, wisdom, communication, and choosing the right spouse. A virgin who marries the wrong person may still experience difficulties in marriage. Likewise, a non-virgin who genuinely repents and marries wisely can enjoy a healthy marriage. The real issue is not whether virginity guarantees a perfect marriage; the issue is obedience to God and making wise marital choices.

However, virginity remains valuable. It demonstrates self-control, discipline, and a commitment to God's instructions. It also helps build trust and confidence between future spouses. Young people should never be ashamed of choosing purity. In a world that celebrates immorality, remaining sexually pure is honorable and worthy of respect.

Virginity until marriage is God's instruction. It is His design for His children, and it remains the best path. Those who have preserved their purity should continue to guard it carefully. Do not allow pressure from friends, partners, social media, or society

to make you compromise your values. What God honors should never be treated lightly.

If you have lost your virginity through premarital sex, do not lose hope. God's mercy is available to everyone who genuinely repents. While some physical consequences cannot be reversed, God's forgiveness is real, and He can restore your spiritual relationship with Him. Repent sincerely, receive God's mercy, and make a decision never to return to a life of sexual sin.

True repentance produces a changed attitude. A person who has genuinely repented does not fight against sexual purity. Instead, they encourage others to avoid the mistakes they made. They become examples of God's grace and transformation.

It is also important to address the issue of rape. Victims of rape should never be blamed or shamed for what happened to them. Rape is a violent crime, not a willing act of immorality. A person who was sexually violated did not choose to give away their purity; something precious was stolen from them by force.

God sees the heart and

understands the difference between consent and abuse. Therefore, genuine victims of rape should never carry unnecessary guilt or condemnation because of the evil actions of another person.

At the same time, everyone should take practical steps to protect themselves from dangerous situations whenever possible. People should also speak up when they are being sexually harassed, abused, or threatened. Silence often protects abusers and prolongs suffering. Seek help, report abuse, and reach out to trusted family members, leaders, counselors, or authorities when necessary.

Sexual purity remains one of God's greatest gifts to His children. It protects, honors, and glorifies Him. Whether you are still a virgin or you are starting a new chapter after repentance, make a commitment today to live according to God's standards.

Choose purity. Choose obedience. Choose God's way.

In the end, God's instructions are not meant to restrict us but to protect us. Those who honor Him with their bodies will never regret living according to His Word.

God's Standard For Sexual Purity: Virginity Until Marriage



ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU

VACANCY FOR THE POST OF VICE CHANCELLOR

PREAMBLE

The Governing Council of Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria, hereby announces that the position of the Vice-Chancellor will become vacant, effective 1st November, 2026. Accordingly, the Governing Council, in the performance of its statutory duties, as provided for in the Abia State University Law, invites applications from interested, suitably qualified and distinguished academics with vast experience in University Administration, to send in their applications for the post.

(a) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Vice-Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer and the academic head of the University and Chairman of the University Senate. Interested candidates should, therefore, among others:

1. Possess a good Honours degree and an earned academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D);
2. Be an exemplary scholar and a Professor of at least five (5) years at a recognised and reputable University;
3. Possess the capacity to establish linkages, both local and international, to meet emerging needs of the University;
4. Possess entrepreneurial and innovative abilities, capacity to attract funds and create wealth for the sustainable development of the University;
5. Have effective negotiation, conflict resolution and managerial skills;
6. Possess verifiable publications and must have published widely in reputable peer reviewed journals and continuous high level academic productivity at the professorial level;
7. Possess extensive and deep experience in all facets of University administration;
8. Be ICT proficient and commit to driving progressive change through digital transformation and entrenchment of a virtual academic environment;
9. Enjoy good health and both physically and mentally fit with verifiable medical certificate of fitness;
10. Not be more than sixty-four (64) years old, as at the date of possible assumption of duty on 1st November, 2026.
11. Have held senior administrative/academic positions within a University for atleast 10 years and at a level capable of preparing the person for the position of Vice-Chancellor;
12. Be a person of proven integrity, unimpeachable character and courage.

(b) Salary/Conditions Of Service

The salary and Conditions of Service, are as obtainable in similar positions in the Nigerian University system, as the Governing Council may decide from time to time.

(c) Tenure

The Vice-Chancellor shall hold office for a single term of five (5) years only, on such terms and conditions, as may be specified in the letter of appointment.

(d) Method of Application

Interested academics should submit their applications, with detailed curriculum vitae, which should be in twenty-five (25) copies, with the most recent photo-sized photographs attached to each and in a sealed envelope marked "Vice-Chancellor Position"

The curriculum vitae should among others include:

- i. Full names
- ii. Date of Birth/Age
- iii. Marital Status
- iv. Academic Qualifications
- v. Publications and
- vi. Administrative Experience

Each application should bear the names and addresses of three (3) referees. Each referee should be requested by the applicant to forward directly to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, a confidential report in sealed envelope marked "Referee's Report on Vice-Chancellorship Candidate" at the left hand corner of the envelope.

All applications are to reach the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, Abia State University, P.M.B 2000, Uturu, not later than six (6) weeks from the date of this publication.

(e) Vision and Mission for the University

A statement of the candidate's Vision and Mission for the University during the tenure, if appointed, should also be enclosed.

(f) Shortlisting of Candidates

Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview at a date to be duly communicated.

**Dr. Acho Elendu,
Registrar/Secretary to Council.**



ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF REGISTRAR

PREAMBLE

The Governing Council of Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria, hereby announces that the position of the Registrar will become vacant, effective 1st September, 2026. Accordingly, the Governing Council, in the performance of its statutory duties, as provided for in the Abia State University Law, invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the post.

(a) Position and Responsibility

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of the University, responsible to the Vice-Chancellor, for the day-to-day general administrative work of the University. The person is, by virtue of the office, the Secretary to Council, Senate, Congregation and Convocation of the University. The Registrar should command respect and have the ability to provide leadership and offer appropriate advice on matters affecting the University.

(b) Qualifications and Experience

The candidate must possess a good Honours degree, from a recognized University, plus a minimum of 15 years post-qualification experience with at least ten (10) years cognate experience in University administration. The candidate should not be below the rank of Deputy Registrar. Possession of Higher Degree(s) and a formal training in the administration of Tertiary Education Institution will be an advantage. Candidates should also be of good health, sound judgment, pleasant disposition and unassailable Integrity. Membership of recognized professional bodies will be an added advantage. The candidate should be ICT literate and shall not be more than sixty (60) years at the time of appointment.

(c) Salary/Conditions of Service

The salary and Conditions of Service, shall be as obtainable in the Nigerian University system.

(d) Tenure

The appointment shall be for one term of five (5) years on such terms and conditions, as may be specified in the person's letter of appointment and from time to time by the Governing Council.

(e) Method of Application

Interested candidates, who possess the job qualifications/requirements, should forward their applications to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, along with their Curriculum Vitae, which should include the following information:

- (i) Full name
- (ii) Date of Birth
- (iii) Nationality/State of Origin/LGA
- (iv) E-mail address
- (v) Postal Address/Phone number
- (vi) Permanent home address
- (vii) Marital Status
- (viii) Number of children
- (ix) Institution(s) attended (with dates)
- (x) Academic and professional Qualifications obtained (with dates)
- (xi) Membership of Professional bodies
- (xii) Working Experience
- (xiii) Present Employment: Status, Salary and Employer, position held (with date)
- (xiv) Extra-curricular activities
- (xv) Names and Addresses of three (3) Referees, (one of whom must provide professional reference) and request them to forward their reports properly sealed, directly to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council.

(f) Mode of Submission of Application

Interested candidates are required to submit twenty-five (25) copies, each of their application letter, comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (attaching photocopies of relevant credentials), under confidential covering an envelope, sealed and marked "POST OF REGISTRAR, ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU", at the top left hand corner and addressed to:

Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council
Abia State University, P.M.B 2000, Uturu, Nigeria

Applications must be submitted not later than thirty (30) days from the date of this publication. Applicants should also request their Referees to send reports on them under confidential cover, direct to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, within the specified period.

Note that only shortlisted applicants will be invited for Interview.

Dr. Acho Elendu,
Registrar/Secretary to Council.



ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY, UTURU

Vacancies

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the following vacant positions in Abia State University, Uturu, Abia state.

1. THE POST OF DIRECTOR, PHYSICAL PLANNING

a) Person and Responsibility

The Director, Physical Planning is the head of the Physical Planning Unit of the University, responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the coordination and supervision of the physical infrastructural development of the University, by ensuring that all such development projects conform strictly with the specifications of the institutions master plan

b) Qualifications

The Candidate must possess the following qualifications:

i. A good Honours Degree/HND in Architecture/ Engineering (Civil, Electrical or Mechanical)

ii. The candidate must be a registered and current member of relevant professional bodies.

- Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA)
- Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and or
- Council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN)
- Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE)
- A higher degree in Engineering and a Fellowship of any of the above-listed professional bodies will be an added advantage

iii. The candidate should be ICT literate and not more than sixty (60) years.

c) Experience

Candidate must have at least ten (10) years post-graduation experience.

d) Salary/Conditions of Service:

The salary and conditions of service are as obtainable in the Nigerian University system

e) Tenure:

The appointment will be for one term of five (5) years only.

2. THE POST OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

a) Person & Responsibility

The University Librarian is a Principal Officer of the University, responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration and management of the University Library and the coordination of Library services in the University.

b) Qualifications

The Candidate must possess:

- A good Honours Degree in Library and Information Science or related field from a recognized University;
- A Higher Degree and membership of recognized professional bodies will be an added advantage;
- Should not be more than sixty (60) years of age.

c) Experience

The candidate must have at least ten (10) years post-qualification academic and professional experience beginning from year of graduation.

d) Salary/Conditions of Service

The salary is as applicable to similar positions in Universities in Nigeria and as may be determined by the Council of Abia State University from time to time.

The appointment will be for one term of five (5) years only.

3) THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF WORKS & SERVICES

a) Person & Responsibility

The Director of Works & Services is the Head of the Works & Services Department of the University, responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the development and maintenance of the infrastructure, equipment and sundry utilities of the University.

b) Qualifications

The Candidate must possess:

- A Degree/HND in Engineering (Civil, Electrical or Mechanical) and be a registered member of the following professional bodies:
 - Council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN)
 - Nigeria Society of Engineers (NSE)
- A higher degree in Engineering and a Fellowship of any of the above-listed professional bodies will be an advantage.
- The Candidate should be ICT literate and not more than sixty (60) years of age.

c) Experience

The candidate must have at least ten (10) years of post-qualification experience.

d) Salary/Conditions of Service

The salary and conditions of service shall be as obtainable in the Nigeria University system.

The appointment would be for one term of five (5) years only.

4) THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES

a) Person & Responsibility

The Director, Health Services is the head of the Medical Services, responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the provision of Medical Services in the University Community.

b) Qualifications

The Candidate must possess:

- The degree of MBBS/MB Bch.
- He must also be a fully registered and current member of the Medical & Dental Council of Nigeria.
- The Candidate should be ICT literate and not more than sixty (60) years of age.
- A higher Degree/Qualification in any specialized area of Medicine will be an advantage.

c) Experience

The candidate must have at least ten (10) years of post-registration experience.

d) Salary/Conditions of Service

The salary and conditions of service shall be as obtainable in the Nigeria University system.

The appointment would be for one term of five (5) years only.

5) THE POST OF CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER

a) Person & Responsibility

The Chief Security Officer of the University is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the security of lives and property in the institution, ensures the effective coordination of security in and around the University and liaises with external security agencies in discharge of the duties of the office.

b) Qualifications

- (i) A candidate must possess a minimum of a first Degree or its equivalent.
- (ii) Professional Qualification.

An interested candidate must be a senior serving or retired personnel of the rank of Major or its equivalent in the Armed Forces, the Police and Civil Defense Corps or Department of Security Services (DSS).

c) Salary/Conditions of Service

The salary and conditions of service shall be as obtainable in the Nigeria University system.

The appointment would be for one term of five (5) years only.

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Interested candidates who possess the job qualifications/requirements should forward their applications to the "Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council", Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State, along with their Curriculum Vitae, which should include the following information:

- (xvi) Full name
- (xvii) Date of Birth
- (xviii) Place of Birth
- (xix) State and Local Government of Origin
- (xx) Nationality
- (xxi) Permanent home address
- (xxii) Current Postal/Contact Address/Phone number
- (xxiii) Marital Status
- (xxiv) Number of children (with names and ages)
- (xxv) Institution(s) attended (with dates)
- (xxvi) Academic and professional Qualification (with dates)
- (xxvii) Honours, Distinctions and Membership of Professional bodies
- (xxviii) Working Experience
- (xxix) Present Employment: Status, Salary and Employer
- (xxx) Extra-curricular activities
- (xxxi) List of Publications, as appropriate, any other relevant information and
- (xxxii) Names and Addresses of three (3) Referees (two of whom must be professionals in the candidate's area of specialization).

MODE OF SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

The Curriculum Vitae and photocopies of claimed credentials must be attached to each application and forwarded in twenty-five (25) copies, to the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council, Abia State University, P.M.B. 2000, Uturu, Abia State, not later than one (1) month from the date of this publication.

Applicants should also request their referees to send confidential reports on them, direct to the Registrar, Abia State University, Uturu. Each submission should be in a sealed envelope with the desired post clearly marked at the top left-hand corner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Only short-listed applicants will be invited for interview.

Dr. Acho Elendu,
Registrar/Secretary to Council.

Joseph Jacob
Joseph.JACOBI@1914
070361698671



Creative Writers Hangout

Dear Step-mother (5)

As Uche jumped down from Sandra's window, he went to Mr. Godwin's house at World Bank Housing Estate from where they travelled to Milverton Avenue, Aba, where they boarded a night bus to Lagos. Uche slept throughout the journey and woke up to a different world of a mega city.

He remembered how flabbergasted he felt the day he came to Umuahia Town with his uncle Asonye. But that was a child's life compared to how he felt when he saw the Centre of Excellence.

The aesthetics, the bustling and the crowd left him stunned for a while. Mr. Godwin took him to a guest house where they took their bath, ate their breakfast and left for the Murtala Mohammed International Airport.

Uche completed the boarding process and waved Mr. Godwin goodbye as he boarded the British Airline bound for Scotland. He located his seat beside the window and was so excited to find himself inside an airplane.

As the airplane taxied, he closed his eyes and prayed to God to help him as he felt he was going to lose his life. He felt relieved when the plane steadied at its cruise level and gradually opened his eyes. He refused to open the window blind as he was scared that he might see God.

After 12 hours of flight, one of the passengers told his child that they are very close to Glasgow. Uche pressed his forehead lightly against the small oval window as the plane descended through a blanket of pale grey clouds. Beneath him, the city stretched quietly under the mist, its rooftops glistening from recent rain. The captain's voice crackled through the cabin, announcing their arrival at Glasgow International Airport, and a strange mixture of excitement and nervousness settled in Uche's chest.

The first thing he noticed after stepping out of the aircraft was the cold. Not the harsh, biting cold he had imagined from storybooks Sandra gave him, but a damp chill that slipped beneath his clothes and rested softly on his skin. The air smelled faintly of rain, coffee, and jet fuel. Around him, people moved briskly through the jet bridge with practiced familiarity, dragging suitcases that rattled against the floor. Uche tightened his grip on his backpack and followed the stream of passengers into the terminal.

The airport felt alive without being chaotic. Bright white lights reflected off polished floors, while large glass windows revealed a gloomy Scottish sky hanging low over the runways. Signs in bold lettering pointed travelers toward baggage claim, immigration, and arrivals. Different accents floated around him like music he could not fully understand — clipped Scottish voices, hurried English tones, and

the occasional laughter of tourists.

Uche paused for a moment near the immigration hall.

For years, airports had existed for him only in storybooks, films and television — places where emotional reunions happened in slow motion and strangers rushed toward adventure. Now he stood inside one himself, thousands of miles from home, watching officers in navy uniforms stamp passports with mechanical precision. The realization struck him quietly: he was truly in another country.

When his turn came, the immigration officer glanced at his passport, then at him.

"First time in Scotland?" the man asked with a mild smile.

Uche nodded. "Yes."

"Well," the officer said as the passport received its heavy stamp, "welcome to Glasgow."

Those simple words lingered in his mind long after he walked away.

The baggage area hummed with motion. Conveyor belts groaned endlessly while travelers searched anxiously for their luggage. Somewhere nearby, the rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee drifted from a café, mixing with the buttery scent of pastries. Uche noticed how orderly everything seemed — even the waiting felt organized. No shouting. No impatient pushing. Just movement, quiet and steady.

Outside the arrivals terminal, grey skies, wet pavements, rows of taxis waiting beneath glowing signs. A cold breeze swept across his face as automatic doors slid open behind him. People hugged loved ones tightly, some holding flowers, others waving excitedly from behind barriers.

Uche stood still for a brief second, taking it all in.

The sliding doors had barely closed behind Uche when he heard his name spoken in a thick unfamiliar accent.

"Uche?"

He turned quickly.

The man approaching him was tall and broad-shouldered, dressed in a dark wool coat that reached his knees. He looked to be in his late forties, with reddish-brown hair thinning near the temples and a neatly trimmed beard flecked with grey. His face carried the weathered look of someone accustomed to cold mornings and football fields. Sharp blue eyes studied Uche carefully, though there was warmth behind them.

"I'm Alistair McKenna," the man said, extending a large hand. "From Celtic F.C. academy operations. Welcome to Scotland, son." His handshake was firm enough to command respect without intimidation.

Uche introduced himself quietly, still slightly overwhelmed, and Alistair relieved him of one of his bags before leading him toward the parking area outside.

The cold struck harder now. Rain fell in a fine mist that seemed to float sideways in the wind rather than descend from the sky. The car park shimmered beneath yellow streetlights, reflections dancing across wet asphalt. Cars moved silently through the drizzle, their tires hissing softly on the rain-soaked ground.

Alistair's vehicle was a dark Range Rover with traces of mud around the tires, the sort of car that looked built for rough countryside roads. The interior smelled faintly of leather, peppermint, and old coffee. A low Scottish folk song played softly from the radio as they pulled away from the airport.

For a while, Uche simply stared through the window. Glasgow unfolded before him like a moving painting. Rows of old stone buildings lined the streets, their dark walls blackened slightly by age and rain. Bridges arched over narrow roads. Streetlights glowed amber against the mist, while pedestrians hurried along pavements wrapped in thick coats and scarves. Every few minutes, Uche spotted flashes of football culture — murals painted on brick walls, scarves hanging inside pub windows, children kicking balls on damp patches of grass despite the cold.

"You'll get used to the weather," Alistair said with a small laugh after noticing Uche rubbing his palms together. "Nobody truly likes it here. We just survive it."

Uche smiled politely.

The drive eventually carried them beyond the busy city centre into quieter surroundings where modern buildings stood beside open green fields. Tall floodlights rose into the cloudy night sky like giant silver towers. Finally, large gates slid open automatically before them.

The training facility looked nothing like the football centres Uche knew back home.

It was enormous.

Perfect green pitches stretched endlessly beneath brilliant white lights, the grass trimmed so evenly it looked artificial. Glass-fronted buildings reflected the rain like mirrors. Players in training gear jogged across one pitch despite the cold, their voices echoing faintly through the night air. Everything appeared clean, precise, and expensive.

Uche stepped out of the vehicle slowly, his eyes wandering across the complex in disbelief.

"This," Alistair said proudly, "is where your real work begins."

Inside, the building was warm and smelled of fresh polish, detergent, and cooked food. Framed photographs lined the walls — legendary players frozen in moments of triumph, captains lifting trophies, historic black-and-white images of teams from decades past. Somewhere deeper

inside the building came the distant sound of laughter and clattering plates from the dining hall.

Several staff members greeted Uche warmly as Alistair guided him through the corridors.

"There's the Nigerian lad," one of them joked kindly. "Hope you brought sunshine with you."

Uche laughed nervously.

A young staff assistant named Fiona eventually escorted him upstairs to the residential quarters reserved for academy players. The hallway carpets muffled every footstep, and soft yellow lights gave the place a calm, hotel-like atmosphere.

"This one's yours," Fiona said, opening a door.

The room was simple yet beautiful. A neatly made bed sat against one wall beneath a large window overlooking the training pitches. There was a study desk with a reading lamp, a wardrobe of polished oak wood, a small television mounted on the wall, and a compact bathroom tiled in white and grey. Outside the window, rain continued falling gently over the floodlit fields.

Uche stood silently in the middle of the room for several seconds.

Back home in Nigeria, he sleeps in the parlour. Here, for the first time in his life, he had a space entirely to himself.

After settling in, he was taken downstairs for dinner.

The dining hall buzzed with low conversations from players speaking different languages and accents. Uche ate slowly, still absorbing everything around him. The food tasted unfamiliar — roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables soaked in butter — but hunger made it comforting.

Later, after taking a long hot shower that filled the bathroom with steam, he finally collapsed onto the bed.

The mattress sank softly beneath his tired body.

For the first time since leaving Nigeria, silence truly found him. He stared at the ceiling while the faint sound of rain tapped gently against the window.

And then, like a door quietly opening inside his chest, thoughts of home returned.

He saw his mother encouraging him to be a good boy. He remembered the way she held his face in both hands and prayed softly in Igbo before letting him go with his uncle Asonye.

Then Sandra entered his thoughts. Her smile. Her voice. Her encouragements during their junior school days at Wellington Junior Secondary School.

Thousands of miles away, home suddenly felt painfully close.

The next day would see Uche undergo medical examinations. Will he pass? Or will he fail and be returned back to Nigeria? Find out in our next publication.

'Greatness Grows from the Soil'

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

Greatness Grows from the Soil: Inspired to Excel - Discovering Soil Science, a book authored by Professor Mabel Ifeoma Onwuka, has been unveiled as an innovative educational resource aimed at simplifying soil science concepts for children and non-specialists.

Written in an engaging storytelling format, the book follows the experiences of three young characters whose curiosity and determination lead them on a journey of discovery in the world of soil science. Through their adventures, readers are introduced to key concepts such as soil structure, soil texture, major and micronutrients, biochar and compost production, climate change, environmental conservation, and



sustainable agricultural practices.

Beyond its scientific content, the book is enriched with moral lessons and practical activities designed to help readers apply their knowledge in real-life situations. It also serves as a source of inspiration, demonstrating how the characters grow from school pupils into accomplished professionals, reinforcing the message that dedication, hard work, and perseverance can help young people achieve their dreams.

As part of efforts to promote science education and environmental awareness, Professor Onwuka and her team have embarked on a book outreach programme to schools. The initiative has reached institutions such as Amaowom Secondary School, Amaowom, and Evangel Secondary School, Old Umuahia. Copies of the book have also been donated to schools outside Abia State, including Highflyers Christian Academy, Onitsha, Anambra State.

The outreach programme is expected to stimulate greater interest in soil science among young learners while encouraging future careers in agriculture, environmental management, and related fields. It also underscores the importance of sustainable soil management in ensuring food security and protecting the environment for future generations.

Foreign News

Trump Says Promenade Will Be Built Connecting Lincoln Memorial To Potomac River

President Donald Trump said that a new walkway will be built connecting the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, to the Potomac River.

"We're going to call it the promenade," he told reporters in the Oval Office.

"They want to call it the Trump Promenade," the president said. "But I don't know if I want to do that. But it's going to be beautiful."

Trump said the project would revive what he described as the memorial's original intended design.

"The Lincoln Memorial — the front was supposed to be the back. The back was supposed to be the front. It never got built, because they built two roadways behind it after it was built, and it shut off the gateway to the water," he said.

That was really going to be the main entry, and we're going to be doing that," the president said, adding that "we have a way of beautifully going over those two roads."

Asked for additional details, the White House referred CNN to Trump's comments.

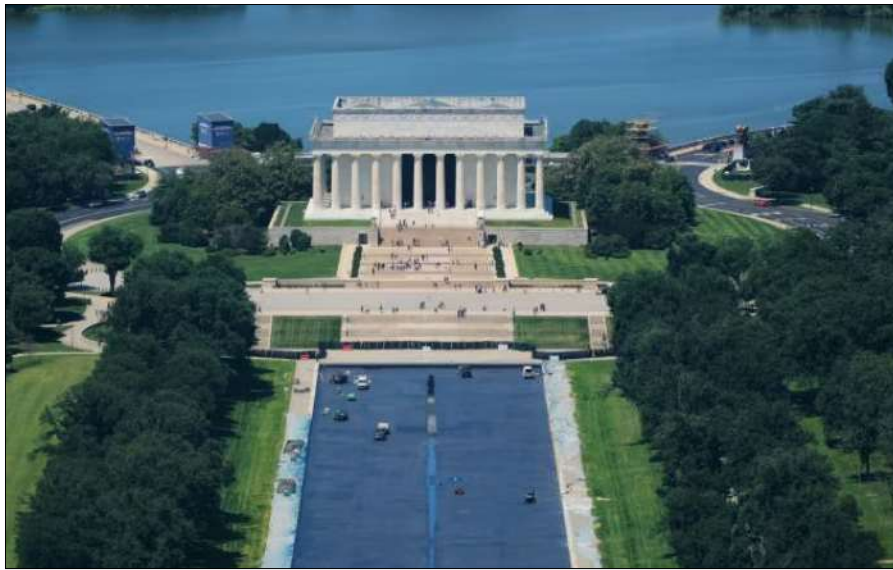
The announcement is just the latest of Trump's efforts to renovate Washington, DC. He's pushing forward with a controversial overhaul of the Reflecting Pool, which he also touted in the Oval Office on Thursday.

"The water is pouring in as we speak, and maybe we'll show what it looks like," Trump said, directing attention to a laptop on his desk that played footage of the water.

"Nice, clean water," he added. "That's the longest pool anywhere in the world."

For the second consecutive day, he also displayed a large chart titled "Our Pool is Bigger than Skyscrapers" that he used to compare the length of the Reflecting Pool to the heights of iconic buildings, including New York's Empire State Building.

Trump's attempts to put his imprint on the nation's capital suffered a blow however, when the Kennedy Center instructed staff to begin removing his name from the performing arts center to comply with a recent court order.



Alabama Family Pleads For Return Of Son Missing On Family Trip In Japan

Higginbotham wasn't worried when her 20-year-old son got on a train by himself during their family vacation in Japan. James, who goes by Weston, is an experienced traveler and often goes exploring alone. But when his phone's location turned off, she knew something was wrong.

The Alabama family had been traveling in Japan for a week by then. But travel frictions arose: Weston, a passionate naturalist, had butted heads with his mother over her use of ChatGPT — and the natural resources such AI requires — to navigate their journey. Needing some space, he decided to explore Kyoto on his own while the rest of the family visited a nearby temple, Higginbotham said.

That was May 29. They haven't seen Weston since, sparking a frantic search by authorities in a mountainous, forested part of Japan during a typhoon.

It's not unusual for Weston to blow off steam going to the woods and just exploring. That's his happy place," Higginbotham told CNN. "I'm thinking ... he's just off in the woods, and he got lost."

"We're not going to leave (Japan) until we find Weston," she added, nodding to a search that now also includes Japanese police, civilian volunteers and the FBI.

The family from Birmingham started its Japan vacation on May 22, Higginbotham said. Before Kyoto, they visited several other cities, including Tokyo, in a trip celebrating the high school graduation of Weston's 18-year-old younger brother.

Weston is a junior at Auburn University studying environmental engineering.

His mom described him as "the lover of Mother Nature," a vegan who has plenty of experience outdoors, including solo hiking the Pyrenees mountains in Europe. It runs in the family, she said, and they often go mountain biking, hiking and white water rafting together.

Weston typically shares his location with his family on the app Life360, which offered some clues to his whereabouts before he went missing.

While we were visiting a temple, Weston gets on a train," Higginbotham said. "We're texting him, saying, 'Hey, where are you?' You know, 'What are you doing?'" The family saw through the app that Weston stopped by a few stores before jumping back on the train then his location was turned off.

That was alarming and "so out of character," Higginbotham said. He had never turned off his location before. By 2 a.m., with no sign of Weston, the family reported him missing to local authorities.

He had about 10,000 Japanese yen (about \$62.50) on him, and a phone at 34% battery before his location was lost, his mom said.

Israel sent troops to Azerbaijan during Iran war as part of secret network across region, sources say.

Israel secretly deployed elite military and intelligence units to Azerbaijan during the war with Iran as part of a network of covert sites across the Middle East to facilitate operations against Iran, four sources familiar with the matter said.

The forces operated out of several locations in southern Azerbaijan, two of the sources said, adjacent to Iran's

northern border and, at its closest point, only about 60 miles from the Iranian city of Tabriz, which Israel struck during the war.

Special commando units were also deployed to the location and carried out intelligence-gathering missions and drone operations, the other two sources said, giving Israel a valuable perch from which to see into northern Iran during the war.

The secret deployment to Azerbaijan, reported by CNN for the first time, was one of several military positions Israel maintained across the Middle East that gave its military unprecedented reach, highlighting the role Iran's neighbors played some with permission, some likely without — in facilitating operations against Tehran and becoming entangled in the conflict.

The locations in Azerbaijan were among numerous covert military sites and bases in multiple countries, the sources told CNN, including in Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, and

Somaliland. The forces, initially planned as potential rescue teams in the event of an emergency, expanded in scope to become military and intelligence gathering positions.

Together, the deployments described by the sources placed Israeli forces along Iran's southern, western, and northern periphery during the war, extending the military's range by hundreds of miles, deep into Iranian territory. The forward positions helped Israel sustain repeated waves of strikes against targets across the country.

The Azerbaijan operation consisted of several dozen troops, including members of Israel's special operations forces, its elite helicopter combat and rescue force, and Mossad personnel, one of the sources said.

A spokesperson for the Azerbaijani embassy in the United States said in a statement to CNN, "We firmly reject unfounded claims regarding the alleged use of Azerbaijan's territory for operations against third countries."



James

House Approves Ukraine Aid

More than a dozen GOP lawmakers defied their own leadership and President Donald Trump by voting with Democrats to approve a major bill to deliver billions of dollars in aid to Ukraine while imposing steep sanctions on Russia.

The House voted 226 to 195 to approve the package, which cracks down on Russia with new oil and gas sanctions, in its first big pro-Ukraine measure of Trump's second term.

Speaker Mike Johnson has urged his members to oppose the measure, arguing in a closed-door meeting Wednesday that they should give Trump space to negotiate with Russia, according to a person in that meeting.

But ultimately, 18 Republicans — and one independent who frequently votes with Republicans — voted to pass the bill in what amounts to a rebuke of Trump's posture toward Russia's war in Ukraine, eager to send a message to their leadership after the party with Trump at its helm has drifted in recent years away from backing Ukraine as staunchly as it once had. The party is now fractured over the issue, with many Republicans arguing that the US should not send further aid to the war-torn country.

To even bring the bill to the House floor for a vote required a revolt against House GOP leadership.

California Rep. Kevin Kiley, an independent who frequently votes with the GOP, was the final signature on a discharge petition — a procedural tool used to circumvent leadership and force votes on the floor. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a GOP centrist and co-chair of the Congressional Ukraine Caucus, spent months working with Rep. Greg Meeks, a Democrat from New York, to land the 218 signatures needed to fast-track the bill to the floor without Johnson's approval.

The measure includes strict sanctions on Russian leaders and institutions, including top banks, oil and mining companies. It also includes 500% tariffs on all Russian goods imported to the US and a ban on Russian crude oil from being imported into the US.

Sporting Ambassador



L-R: Sponsor of the competition Hon. Amobi Godwin Ogah, Former Super Eagles player and Chairman of Enyimba FC, Kanu Nwankwo and the Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Hon Nwaobilor Ananaba, during the final

Abia Sports Commissioner to Meet Newly Inaugurated Sports Association Chairmen

By Joseph Jacob

As part of ongoing efforts to reposition sports development in Abia State, the Honourable Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Sir Nwaobilor Nwadinma Ananaba, will on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, hold a strategic meeting with the newly inaugurated chairmen of the 35 sports associations in the state. The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Bishop Nwaedo Banquet Hall, BCA Road Umuahia, beginning at 10:00 a.m. prompt.

According to information made available by the Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George, the meeting will focus on charting a new course for the holistic development of sports across the state. Discussions are expected to center on sustainable funding mechanisms for sports associations, effective administration of various sporting disciplines, talent discovery and development, grassroots sports programmes, and enhanced participation in national competitions.

The Commissioner is expected to outline the vision of the administration for sports development and provide guidelines that will enable the newly inaugurated association executives to align their programmes with the government's broader objectives of youth empowerment, talent development, and sporting excellence.

The meeting is also expected to foster stronger collaboration between the Ministry and the various sports associations, creating a framework for improved planning, accountability, and efficient utilization of available resources.

All chairmen and secretaries of the 35 sports associations have been directed to attend the meeting without fail. Participants are advised to be seated before the arrival of the Honourable Commissioner to ensure the timely commencement of proceedings.

Sports stakeholders have described the meeting as a significant step towards revitalizing sports administration in Abia State and building a sustainable structure capable of producing elite athletes while promoting grassroots participation across all sporting disciplines.

Agu Na-echeibe Football Tournament: Ogah Unites Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Youths

By Okereke Kate, Charles Ogbonnayai

The Agu'necheibe Youth Football tournament organised by the member representing Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, Hon Amobi Godwin Ogah, has ended with Amuda Ward of Umunneochi Local Government Area emerging champions.

The tournament, which was designed to unite young people across the constituency, promote grassroots sports development, as well as, discover football talents, culminated in an exciting final match, where Amuda Ward defeated Isiala Ward 3 of Isuikwuato 2-1 after 60 minutes of action.

In the third-place match, ABSU/Umuanyi Ward 10 defeated Ezingodo Ward 2-0 to secure third position.

Speaking during the grand finale, the Abia State Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Hon Nwaobilor Ananaba, commended Hon Ogah for organising what he described as a unifying platform for young people.

According to him, football competitions help keep youths productively engaged and away from crime and other social vices.

He disclosed that the state government would monitor outstanding players from such competitions and integrate them into professional clubs, including Abia Warriors and Abia Comets, noting that a similar opportunity

had already been extended to one of the participants by the chairman of Enyimba FC.

The Sports commissioner disclosed that the state government is intentional about youth development, adding that through sports, ICT and other empowerment programmes, opportunities are created for the young people, stressing that the government would continue to identify talents and provide platforms for them to excel.

Former Super Eagles captain and Chairman of Enyimba FC, Nwankwo Kanu, said the tournament was a valuable avenue for talent discovery and youth development.

Kanu praised Hon Ogah for creating opportunities for young footballers, recalling that such platforms were not readily available during his playing days.

"We are here to hunt for talents. If I had this kind of opportunity while growing up, I would probably have achieved even more. It is not easy to organise youths and sustain a competition of this nature. These opportunities can be the beginning of great football careers", he said.

He advised participants to take the competition seriously and continue working hard to achieve their dreams.

A major highlight of the tournament was the discovery of young football talent Emmanuel Okwuobasi, who featured as a left winger for ABSU/Umuanyi during the third-place match against

Ezingodo.

Impressed by his performance, Kanu handed the youngster an automatic signing opportunity with Enyimba FC, providing him with a pathway into professional football.

Addressing the gathering, Hon Ogah reiterated that human capital development remains one of his key priorities as a lawmaker.

He noted that while empowerment programmes such as vehicle distributions, tricycles and sewing machines were important, investing in the potential of young people through sports and talent development offers long-term benefits.

"Football is a serious business globally. If not for this competition, many of these young stars discovered today would not have had the opportunity to showcase their talents. This is part of the mandate the people entrusted to us, and I assure them it will never be wasted", Ogah noted.

He urged his constituents to continue supporting Governor Alex Otti and other Labour Party candidates in the 2027 elections so they can record victory, stressing that collective support would accelerate development across the state.

In his remarks, Labour Party's Abia North Senatorial Candidate, Chief David Ogbuonuoha (Bourdex), described the tournament as a powerful demonstration of unity, noting that football teaches discipline,

perseverance and teamwork.

The Chairman of Enyimba Feeders, Kanu Nwankwo, assured participants that the full list of players selected during the competition would be released soon.

He emphasised the importance of giving back to society and creating opportunities for younger generations.

The tournament, which was held at the Isuikwuato Central field, under the theme "Mobilising Youths and Building the Future", featured grassroots mobilisation, sensitisation, empowerment initiatives and strategic partnerships aimed at fostering youth development across Isuikwuato and Umunneochi Local Government Areas.

At the event, the Face of Umunneochi organisation presented an award to Hon. Ogah in recognition of his numerous achievements and contributions to the development of the constituency.

At the end of the competition, Amuda Ward emerged champions and received a cash prize of N2.5 million, while Isiala Ward 3 finished second and received N1.5 million. ABSU/Umuanyi Ward 10 secured third position and was rewarded with N1 million, while Ezingodo Ward finished fourth.

Trophies and cash prizes were later presented to the winning teams amid celebrations by supporters and community leaders who attended the event.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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2026 FIFA World Cup: Africa's Performance After Opening Matches

By Joseph Jacob

The ten African representatives at the ongoing 2026 FIFA World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, have all completed their opening group-stage fixtures, recording a mixed set of results comprising two victories, four draws, and four defeats.

Africa's campaign began on a disappointing note as South Africa suffered a 2-0 defeat to co-hosts Mexico. South Africa's task became even more difficult after Yaya Sithole and Themba Zwane were both sent off in the second half, leaving the team with nine men as Mexico comfortably secured all three points.

In Group C, Morocco's Atlas Lions produced one of the continent's most impressive performances, holding five-time world champions Brazil to a 1-1 draw. Ismael Saibari gave Morocco a deserved lead with a brilliant strike before Vinicius Junior equalized in the 32nd minute. Morocco dominated large periods of the contest and demonstrated why they remain one of Africa's strongest contenders.

Cape Verde also earned widespread admiration after battling European giants Spain to a goalless draw in their Group H opener. Veteran goalkeeper Vozinha, at 40 years of age, delivered a heroic performance, making several crucial saves to frustrate the 2010 world champions and secure a valuable point for his side.

Egypt's Pharaohs were equally impressive in Group G, settling for a 1-1 draw against Belgium. Emam Ashour opened the scoring for the North Africans before an unfortunate own goal by Mohamed Hany, six minutes after the hour mark, restored parity for the Europeans.

Tunisia endured a difficult start to their campaign, suffering a heavy 5-1 defeat to Sweden. Senegal's Teranga Lions also stumbled in their opening fixture, falling 3-1 to former world champions France despite showing flashes of their renowned attacking quality.

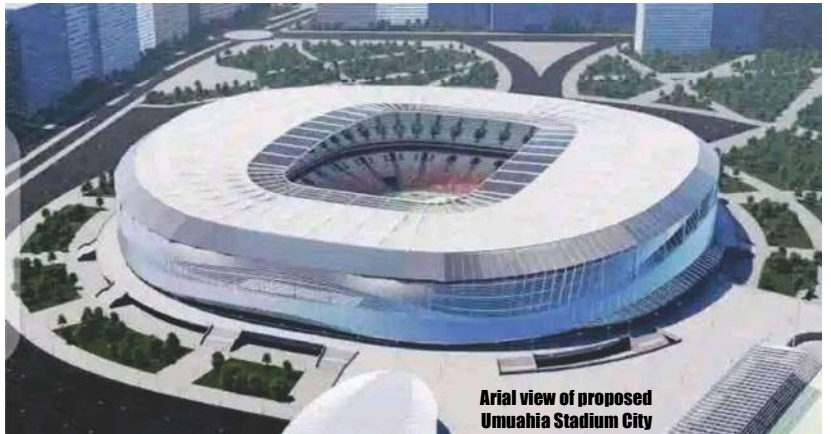
Africa recorded its first victory of the tournament when Côte d'Ivoire's Elephants edged Ecuador 1-0 in a hard-fought encounter.

The DR Congo continued Africa's encouraging run of performances by securing a 1-1 draw against Portugal. The Leopards remained organized throughout the match and earned a deserved point against the European side led by Cristiano Ronaldo.

Defending champions Argentina, inspired by captain Lionel Messi, recorded a convincing 3-0 victory over Algeria. Messi was in scintillating form, scoring all three goals to hand the South Americans a comfortable opening win.

Ghana provided Africa's second victory of the competition after a dramatic late winner to secured maximum points. Caleb Yirenkyi's stoppage-time strike sparked celebrations among the Black Stars and broke the heart of Panamanians.

Following the first round of group matches, Africa's overall record stands at two wins, four draws, and four defeats. Africa's representatives have every opportunity to improve their fortunes and strengthen the continent's quest for a historic FIFA



Aerial view of proposed Umuahia Stadium City

Umuahia Stadium City Project: Set for Flag Off Before Year-End

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, has disclosed that construction of the proposed Umuahia Stadium City will commence before the end of the year, saying the project is designed to become a major sports and economic hub for the state.

Governor Otti made the disclosure recently when he received Super Eagles winger Samuel Chukwueze and members of his entourage at his office in Nvosi, IsialaNgwa South Local Government Area.

Chukwueze had visited the Governor to express appreciation for his support and solidarity during the burial of his late mother.

Speaking during the meeting, governor Otti revealed that the state government had already acquired the land required for the project and was currently undertaking feasibility studies ahead of the commencement of construction.

"I'm sure before the end of the year, we will flag-off the construction of the new Umuahia stadium.

"The land is already acquired, and we are at feasibility stage. Because we are not just building a stadium, we are building a stadium city, like a sports village", the Governor said.

According to him, the proposed facility will go beyond sporting activities and include complementary developments aimed at stimulating economic growth and attracting private investment.

"There will be hotel, there will

be estates. There will be other attractions just to develop that path.

"We will like our people to come and invest here. Pick whatever that is of interest to you. You may be interested in one thing or the other, and we will give priority to our people", he added.

The Governor congratulated Chukwueze on his accomplishments in international football and described him as a worthy ambassador of Abia State and Nigeria.

"Let me also congratulate you for the great feat and for representing the State very well.

"We can assure you of our support. If there are things that we can do, you also let us know. We like to support our own anywhere they are", governor Otti said.

He also sympathised with the football star over the death of his mother, describing the loss as monumental and urged him to remain strong despite the difficult experience.

The Governor encouraged Chukwueze to continue maintaining ties with his roots and not allow the pain of bereavement to discourage him from returning home.

Earlier, Chukwueze commended the developmental strides recorded by the Otti administration, describing the transformation taking place across the state as evidence of purposeful leadership.

The Fulham FC forward said he had closely monitored developments in Abia and was

particularly impressed by the scale of infrastructure projects being executed by the government.

On his recent visit to Umuahia, Chukwueze noted that the state capital had undergone remarkable changes, especially in road infrastructure and urban development.

"I have been seeing the good works the Governor is doing. When I came back and saw Umuahia, it was completely different.

"The roads have improved greatly, and the transformation is visible. He deserves every accolade for the good work he has been doing", Chukwueze stated.

The football star also hailed the proposed Stadium City project, describing it as a strategic investment that would strengthen sports development, create opportunities for young talents and position Abia as a destination for sporting activities.

He further pledged to contribute to youth and sports development in the state as part of efforts to give back to the community that shaped his career.

"I intend to invest in sports development for the youth, and I am already working on it gradually, step by step.

"It is my hometown and where I grew up. It made me who I am today, and I cannot forget where I came from", Chukwueze said.

SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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