



South-East Governors Unite on Regional Security, Seek Stronger Collaboration

▲ Pg. 15



First Lady Urges Nigerians To Embrace Indigenous Fabrics

▲ Pg.14



Patented Nigerian Food Innovation Targets Hunger, Food Waste, Climate

▲ Pg. 2

NATIONAL Ambassador

N250 VOL. 28 NO.035

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

August 9, 2026

nationalambassadorngr nationalambassadorngr nationalambassadorngr NationalAmbassador NationalAmbassador ireport@nationalambassadorngr.com www.nationalambassadorngr.com

Aguiyi-Ironsi's 60th Memorial

Tinubu, Otti, Obasanjo Renew Call For National Unity

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Sixty years after the assassination of Nigeria's first military Head of State, Major-General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-

Ironsi, prominent Nigerians recently, gathered in Umuahia to honour his memory, with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Governor Alex Otti and former President Olusegun Obasanjo,

urging Nigerians to draw lessons from history in building a more united nation.

Speaking at the International Conference Centre Umuahia, venue of the 60th Memorial

Anniversary of the late first military Head of State, who died on July 29, 1966, President Tinubu described the late Maj-Gen. J.T.U Aguiyi-Ironsi as a patriotic leader whose

sacrifice helped preserve Nigeria's unity. He urged Nigerians to embrace patriotism, discipline and selfless service.

Continued on P.2



L-R: Gov Alex Otti of Abia State and First Son of the family and Former Minister of Defence, Amb Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia

2027: No Rigging Of Election In Abia State - LP Candidate

By Okereke Kate

The Labour Party candidate for Bende Federal Constituency in the 2027 polls, Dr. Chima Anyaso, has declared that there will be no electoral malpractice in Abia State, expressing confidence

that every lawful vote cast in the state will count.

Speaking during a prayer gathering attended by ministers of the gospel, traditional rulers, party supporters and stakeholders in Bende Local Government Area,

Anyaso said the era of manipulating election results was over, insisting that the 2027 elections would be conducted in a transparent and credible manner.

He assured his supporters that his

campaign would continue to focus on engaging the people, presenting his vision and earning their mandate through legitimate means, while emphasising that adequate measures would be in place to safeguard votes throughout the electoral process.

The Labour Party candidate urged his supporters to remain confident and committed to the democratic process, maintaining that the party was prepared to defend every valid vote and ensure that the will of the electorate prevailed.

Continued on P.2

Xenophobia Triggers Labour Crisis In South Africa

From Sophina Ovuike, Abuja

South Africa is facing an acute labour shortage as thousands of migrant workers continue to leave the country, following a wave of xenophobic attacks and intensified immigration enforcement, disrupting key sectors of the economy.

The mass exodus, reportedly fuelled by anti-immigrant protests and a June 30 ultimatum issued by groups demanding the departure of undocumented foreigners, has seen more than 160,000 migrants return to their home countries, according to figures compiled from African governments co-ordinating repatriation efforts.

Zimbabwe recorded the highest number of returnees, with many of those leaving having worked in South Africa's agriculture, construction and domestic services sectors.

The departure of migrant workers has created significant labour gaps, particularly in agriculture. Fruit growers in major producing areas said they are struggling to harvest citrus crops due to a shortage of workers, while vineyards are also experiencing difficulties as the grape harvesting season begins.

The country's sugar industry has also been affected, with farmers in KwaZulu-Natal reporting that they had lost a substantial portion of their cane-cutting workforce within weeks.

Industry operators warn that the shortage could reduce sugar production and disrupt the operations of processing mills.

Continued on P.2

EDITORIAL: Nigeria's Medical Brain Drain

News

Patented Nigerian Food Innovation Targets Hunger, Food Waste, Climate Challenges

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

A Nigerian food innovation developed at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), Abia State, is being projected as a homegrown solution to tackle food insecurity, nutrition challenges, post-harvest losses, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and climate change while creating jobs and boosting rural economies.

The innovation, known as Functional Instant Green Healthy Nutritious Food Flours (FIGHN), was developed through an interdisciplinary research pioneered by Professor Boniface A.C. Agugo and is protected under Patent No. RP: NG/P/2019/84.

The technology converts fresh agricultural produce, including cassava, yam, cereals, legumes, fruits and vegetables, into nutrient-rich, shelf-stable functional flours with a storage life of more than 12 months.

Fielding questions from newsmen in MOUUAU recently, Prof. Agugo disclosed that the FIGHN Initiative is open to partnerships and investment from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), development partners, private investors and other critical stakeholders to facilitate large-scale production, adoption and commercialization of the innovation across Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to the inventor, FIGHN was conceived to address the paradox of widespread post-harvest losses occurring alongside persistent hunger, malnutrition and poor diets across Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa. He said the technology enhances the nutritional quality of traditional foods such as fufu, akpu, pounded yam, ogi, breakfast cereals, complementary foods, snacks and composite flours for bread and pastries without altering their cultural identity or taste.

Professor Agugo explained that the innovation preserves higher levels of dietary fibre, proteins, vitamins, minerals and naturally occurring bioactive compounds, thereby improving nutrition for children, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups while promoting healthier diets capable of reducing the risk of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular ailments.

The importance of good nutrition on a population-wide basis cannot be overemphasized as it provides the bedrock for the economic and social development of nations, given that all of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) both influence, and are influenced, by nutrition.

He noted that FIGHN was designed as an

integrated solution to address multiple national and global challenges, including food security, nutrition security, hidden hunger, post-harvest losses, youth unemployment, import dependence, climate resilience and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases through the use of indigenous crops and Nigerian scientific innovation.

Beyond nutrition, he said the technology offers significant economic and environmental benefits by reducing food waste, increasing farmers' incomes, creating opportunities for agro-processing enterprises, generating employment for women and youths, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions associated with food spoilage and inefficient agricultural value chains.

Using cassava as an example, Agugo observed that although Nigeria is one of the world's largest producers of the crop, conventional processing methods often result in nutrient losses and wastage.

He said FIGHN improves cassava processing through value addition making the outcome products healthier, more nutritious and commercially valuable while strengthening national food security and environmental resilience.

The professor, however, expressed concern that many groundbreaking discoveries made in Nigerian universities fail to reach the marketplace due to inadequate commercialization structures, limited investment and weak collaboration between researchers, industry and government.

He therefore, called on governments, development finance institutions, donor agencies, manufacturers, financial institutions, private investors and other stakeholders to support the commercialization of the patented technology through strategic partnerships, funding and technology transfer initiatives.

Agugo also urged governments to integrate indigenous food technologies into school feeding programmes, nutrition policies, healthcare interventions and agricultural transformation initiatives, while encouraging universities to strengthen technology transfer systems that will enable research findings to become commercially viable products.

According to him, Nigeria already possesses the scientific expertise, agricultural resources and youthful workforce required to build globally competitive agro-processing industries, stressing that greater confidence in local innovations and increased investment in homegrown technologies are needed to

Tinubu, Oti, Obasanjo Renew Call For National Unity

Contd. from Page 1

The president represented by the Minister of Defence, Gen. Christopher Musa (ret'd), said that the late military leader remains one of Nigeria's foremost patriots whose commitment to national service continued to inspire generations six decades after his death.

Tinubu said that Aguiyi-Ironsi's distinguished military career was defined by discipline, courage, loyalty and an unwavering commitment to duty. He added that these qualities earned the late Aguiyi-Ironsi the distinction of becoming the first Nigerian General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army.

He noted that the late Aguiyi-Ironsi assumed leadership during one of the country's most turbulent periods, when Nigeria was confronted with political uncertainty and national anxiety.

Tinubu added that despite the brevity of his administration, the late Head of State remained committed to preserving national unity, restoring stability and protecting the integrity of the Nigerian state.

"Although his tenure was brief, he demonstrated a firm commitment to preserving national unity, restoring stability and maintaining the integrity of the Nigerian state", he said.

The President said that the enduring values exemplified by that late Aguiyi-Ironsi remains essential to Nigeria's development and continued to guide the Armed Forces in safeguarding the nation.

President Tinubu reaffirmed the Federal Government's commitment to protecting Nigeria's unity and strengthening institutions responsible for democracy, security and national development.

The president called on Nigerians to renew their commitment to peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and justice, stressing that the country's diversity remains one of its greatest strengths.

He commended Governor Oti's administration, describing his leadership style as one worthy of emulation and appealed to him to establish a Unity Square in memory of Aguiyi-Ironsi and Lt.-Col. Adekunle Fajuyi, who were both killed during the July 1966 counter-coup.

"I want to appeal, Sir, in honour of both of them, and to show unity in our country, you may wish to consider constructing probably a Unity Square somewhere to remind us and future Nigerian generations that united we stand and we are stronger together as one".

In his speech, Governor Oti of Abia State described the late Aguiyi-Ironsi as a patriot who made the ultimate sacrifice for the unity of Nigeria.

Governor Oti noted that

the late military head of state assumed leadership at the age of 42, urging Nigerians to view historical events within the context of the period in which they occurred.

"We came here to celebrate a man who gave his life for the rest of us. It is not about any other thing; it is about the sacrifice he made for Nigeria", the governor said.

He noted that his administration deliberately immortalised the late military leader by naming the major gateway into Umuahia, Aguiyi-Ironsi Boulevard, after him. He added that it was a decision that reflected the state's resolve to preserve the memory of one of its illustrious sons.

Governor Oti expressed support for the late Aguiyi-Ironsi's vision of a united Nigeria, saying the country's strength lay in its diversity and shared resources.

In his speech, Former President Obasanjo said Nigeria must preserve and teach its history to enable future generations learn from past mistakes and lamented the removal of history from schools, describing it as detrimental to national memory.

He described July 29, 1966, and Jan. 15, 1966, as some of the darkest days in Nigeria's history but stressed that the country should draw lessons

from them rather than dwell on division.

"We should not sweep those black days under the carpet. We must learn the right lessons from them and use them to build inclusion, co-operation and national unity", Obasanjo stated.

Obasanjo who recounted serving under the authority Aguiyi-Ironsi during the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo, where the late general became the first African Commander of the UN Force, described Aguiyi-Ironsi as an exceptional military leader who inspired younger officers through professionalism and courage.

"Aguiyi-Ironsi was a leader who brought officers together. Those were proud days for Nigeria and for the Nigerian Army", he said.

Obasanjo urged Nigerians to transform painful memories into opportunities for national reconciliation and development.

In her remark, the former First Lady of Nigeria, Dame Patience Jonathan, urged Nigerians to remain united, saying Aguiyi-Ironsi gave his life in pursuit of a united Nigeria.

"He stood for the unity of Nigeria and we must continue to believe in what he died for, which is that Nigeria must remain one, and nothing should separate our country," Jonathan said.

Xenophobia Triggers Labour Crisis in South Africa

Continued from Page 1

Farm owners attribute the situation to the difficulty of replacing experienced migrant workers, arguing that many South Africans are reluctant to undertake physically demanding agricultural jobs.

Labour unions, however, reject the claim, insisting that the country's high unemployment rate provides a large pool of potential workers if employers offer fair wages, improved working conditions and adequate employment benefits.

Union leaders further allege that some employers have relied heavily on migrant labour because foreign workers are often paid below the statutory minimum wage, work longer hours and are less likely to demand legal protections.

Beyond agriculture, the labour shortage is beginning to affect the manufacturing sector. Clothing factories in Durban have reported production delays following the departure of skilled machinists from Malawi and Mozambique, forcing manufacturers to recruit and train new employees while struggling to meet customer demands.

Responding to growing concerns over illegal migration, the South African Government has reiterated its "locals first" employment policy, while acknowledging that several industries remain dependent on foreign workers and specialised skills.

To address the challenge, authorities have expanded the Trusted Employer Scheme, which fast-tracks work visa approvals for companies that prioritise employing South Africans, invest in workforce development and operate in strategic sectors of the economy.

Meanwhile, agricultural stakeholders have called for the establishment of a regulated seasonal labour programme that would allow workers from member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to fill temporary labour shortages during peak farming periods.

Industry leaders argue that migrant workers have become an integral part of South Africa's agricultural workforce over the years and caution that replacing them abruptly could have serious economic consequences.

The migration crisis has also raised security concerns. Reports indicate that several foreign nationals have lost their lives in recent xenophobic attacks, while many others have fled amid fears of violence, intimidation and immigration raids.

Change Of Name

I, formerly known as Mrs. Izuchukwu Gift Favour, now wish to be known and addressed as MISS NDUBUEZE GIFT FAVOUR. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

MISS NDUBUEZE GIFT FAVOUR.

I, formerly known and addressed as Alozie Enyichi, now wish to be known and addressed as OHAJA ENYICHI DORIS. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

OHAJA ENYICHI DORIS.

2027: No Rigging Of Election

Contd. from Page 1

Anyaso also reaffirmed his belief in fairness, equity and justice, describing them as essential principles for sustainable political leadership.

He said the rotational arrangement for the Bende Federal Constituency seat, as agreed by stakeholders and traditional rulers, should be respected in the interest of equity and peaceful co-existence.

According to him, the constituency's zoning understanding between the two blocs should not be undermined. He stressed that power-sharing arrangements promote inclusiveness and strengthen

unity within the area.

He further aligned himself with Governor Alex Otti's position that anyone contemplating manipulating the outcome of the 2027 elections in Abia State should abandon such intentions. He expressed confidence that the state would witness a peaceful, free and fair electoral process.

Anyaso further urged the people of Bende to remain resolute and firm in their support for the governor of the state, who, according to him, has redefined governance. He stated that come 2027 polls, the area would deliver the governor and other Labour Party candidates.

News

Abia First Lady Backs World Breastfeeding Week

By Chibunnalkeokwu

The Wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has pledged her support for the 2025 World Breastfeeding Week campaign, promising to lead advocacy efforts to educate nursing mothers on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding.

Mrs. Otti made the pledge while receiving an advocacy team from the Abia State Ministry of Health, the Abia State Primary Health Care Development Agency, and development partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Society for Family Health, at her country home in Nvosi.

She described breast milk as the best food for babies, saying it contains all the essential nutrients needed for healthy growth and development.

"Breast milk is the best form of feeding for our babies because it contains all the essential nutrients they need to grow healthy," she said.

Mrs. Otti praised the Ministry of Health for its commitment to improving healthcare in the state and thanked its development partners for supporting Governor Alex Otti's efforts to strengthen the health sector.

She also called on families to encourage and support nursing mothers to practice exclusive breastfeeding, stressing that no infant formula can match the nutritional value and health benefits of breast milk.

The WHO Representative, Dr. William Bassey Wazangi, said the organization was encouraged by the progress recorded in Abia's health sector under the Otti administration and had come to identify with and support the state's healthcare initiatives.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Health, Prof. Enoch Ogbonnaya, and the Executive Secretary of the Abia State Primary Health Care Development Agency, Dr. Kalu Ulu Kalu, commended Mrs. Otti for her consistent support for maternal and child healthcare.

They appealed to her to mobilize the wives of local government mayors to lead grassroots awareness campaigns and encourage nursing mothers, especially in rural communities, to participate in activities marking the 2025 World Breastfeeding Week.

2027: Tinubu Pledges Credible Elections, Reaffirms Confidence In INEC

From Sophina Ovuike

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has assured Nigerians that the 2027 general elections will be free, fair and credible, insisting that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) remains independent and free from interference by his administration.

Speaking recently, while receiving members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, the President dismissed allegations that the Federal Government was

influencing the electoral umpire, stressing that INEC has continued to discharge its constitutional responsibilities without intimidation or external pressure.

Tinubu said his administration remains committed to upholding democratic principles, the rule of law and the integrity of the nation's electoral process, adding that every eligible Nigerian would be guaranteed the constitutional right to participate freely in elections.

He urged political parties and their leaders to strengthen internal democracy and ensure

transparent primary elections instead of directing unfounded allegations against INEC whenever disputes arise.

The president also commended the Catholic Bishops for their prayers and continued contributions to national peace, unity and moral guidance. He assured them that his administration would sustain engagement with religious leaders and other stakeholders in addressing the country's economic, security and governance challenges.

Earlier, the Catholic Bishops expressed concern over the prevailing economic hardships and security

challenges confronting the country.

They called on the Federal Government to intensify efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, improve governance and implement policies that would enhance the welfare and living conditions of Nigerians.

The meeting also featured discussions on national development, democratic consolidation, security and the complementary roles of government and faith-based organisations in promoting peace, stability and sustainable development across the country.



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Ex-MOUAU VC Defends Recruitment Exercise As University Clears Akanwa Over Staff Disengagement

By Okereke Kate

The immediate past Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUUAU), Prof. Maduebibisi Ofolewe, has defended the university's 2025/2026 recruitment exercise, insisting it was conducted in line with due process and the Federal Government's approval.

In a statement issued by his media aide, Chidiamara G. Uzoh, Prof. Iwe dismissed allegations of irregularities, describing attempts to implicate him as blackmail and misinformation.

He said the Federal Government approved the recruitment of 426 staff to address manpower shortages caused by years of employment embargo, adding that his administration secured about ₦7 billion in personnel funding for the exercise.

According to him, the recruitment followed due process, including advertisement of vacancies, shortlisting, interviews and biometric capture.

He noted that although the process was ongoing when he left office on February 26, 2026, the list of successful candidates for the approved 426 positions had already been compiled and submitted in December 2025.

Prof. Iwe also refuted claims that the current Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ursula Akanwa, was not part

of the exercise, maintaining that she participated in the interview panels and Management and Governing Council deliberations as Deputy Vice-Chancellor. He said documentary evidence exists to support his claims and pledged to present them before any Presidential Visitation Panel.

Meanwhile, MOUUAU had earlier denied reports linking Prof. Akanwa to the disengagement of 127 newly recruited staff.

Addressing journalists recently, the University's Public Relations Officer, Mr. Anyaso Anyaso, said the recruitment process and payroll capture had been concluded before Prof. Akanwa assumed office on March 1, 2026.

He explained that while appointment letters were issued to 618 persons, the Federal Government approved only 426 positions, which were the only ones captured on the Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS).

Anyaso stressed that the Vice-Chancellor had no access to the GIFMIS platform and therefore could not remove or alter any names on the payroll.

He urged the public to disregard contrary claims, noting that no final decision had been taken on the affected workers and that any official position would be communicated by the university.

34 Abia Inmates Sit for First School Leaving Certificate Examination

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Thirty-four inmates in correctional centres across Abia State have participated in the 2026 First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) examination as part of the state government's effort to provide access to education and support the rehabilitation of inmates through learning.

The Commissioner for Information, Prince Okey Kanu, disclosed this recently, while briefing journalists on the outcome of the State Executive Council meeting chaired by Governor Alex Otti.

Prince Kanu said the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, through the Abia State Agency for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, organised the participation of the inmates in the examination as part of the government's commitment to ensuring that everyone has access to education regardless of their situation.

He explained that 15 inmates from the Umuahia Correctional Centre and 19 inmates from the Aba Correctional Centre took part in the examination.

According to him, the programme reflects Governor Alex Otti's commitment to giving people who could not complete their formal education another opportunity to learn and improve their lives.

"This initiative shows Governor Alex Otti's commitment to providing equal and lifelong learning opportunities for every Abian who missed formal education earlier in life.

"The walls of correctional centres are not barriers to education in Abia State. Every citizen deserves a second chance through learning, and this administration is committed to making that possible," Prince Kanu said.

The commissioner also announced that the state government, in partnership with the National Mathematical Centre, Abuja, organised the first edition of the 2026 Abia State Mathematics Kings and Queens Competition.

He said the competition attracted over 600 pupils and students from both public and private schools across the state.

News

Emetu Hails Ohuhu Youths Development Drive

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Deputy Governor of Abia State, Ikechukwu Emetu, has applauded the Ohuhu Welfare Union Youth Wing for its commitment to agriculture, youth empowerment and community development, describing the group as strategic partners in the progress of Abia State.

Speaking while receiving members of the youth body in his office in Government House, Umuahia, Emetu commended their leadership, discipline and developmental initiatives, particularly their large-scale cassava farming project and campaign against drug abuse and cultism.

The deputy governor expressed appreciation to the youths for their support during the 2023 general elections, noting that their commitment contributed significantly to the emergence of the present administration led by Governor Alex Otti.

He said the current administration has opened a new chapter for Abia State and assured the delegation that government would continue to partner with responsible youth organisations that promote peace, productivity and community development.

Emetu stressed the importance of youth participation in governance, saying the future of every society depends largely on the quality of its young people.

According to him, youths have the responsibility of shaping their communities positively through constructive engagement rather than social vices.

He also advised political stakeholders to attach greater importance to national elections, explaining that victory at the national level strengthens a political party's capacity to attract greater developmental benefits for the people.

The deputy governor advocated closer collaboration among elected representatives at the federal and state levels to ensure equitable distribution of projects across communities and eliminate unnecessary duplication of development projects.

Responding to the delegation's invitation to the forthcoming Ohuhu Youth Day scheduled for August 22, Emetu said government support for communities was not dependent on receiving awards, adding that public service should always be driven by the desire to improve the lives of the people.

Earlier, President of the Ohuhu Welfare Union Youth Wing, Mr. Ihenacho Uchenna, congratulated Emetu on his emergence as deputy governor, describing him as a source of inspiration and hope for young people across Abia State.

He commended Governor Alex Otti for appointing a youthful Deputy Governor, saying the decision had reinforced confidence among youths that leadership opportunities are increasingly open to younger generations.

Uchenna praised the achievements of the present administration, noting that the developmental projects across the state were visible and widely appreciated by residents.

He informed the deputy governor that the Ohuhu Youth Day, held every four years, serves as a platform to promote the cultural heritage of Ohuhu people and celebrate youth excellence.

The youth leader formally invited Emetu to attend the August 22 event, where the union plans to honour him with an award in recognition of his contributions to the development of Abia State.

Highlighting the activities of the youth wing, Uchenna disclosed that members collectively cultivate more than 50 plots of cassava farmland using improved stems while providing practical agricultural training for young people in collaboration with experts.

He added that the organisation has also been conducting anti-drug abuse and anti-cultism sensitisation campaigns in secondary schools across Ohuhu in partnership with the National Orientation Agency (NOA), in line with the developmental agenda of the Abia State Government.

In a vote of thanks, Mr. Nkwachukwu Ogwuegbu expressed gratitude to the Deputy Governor for granting the delegation audience, describing the meeting as a demonstration of the administration's commitment to

Abia Has Made Measureable Gains In Governance - Gov Otti

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti has said that Abia State has made measurable gains in governance, public service delivery, healthcare, infrastructure, and other sectors, citing the state's dramatic rise in the latest Phillips Consulting State Performance Index (pSPI) as evidence of the impact of his administration's reforms.

According to the 2025 edition of the pSPI, released in 2026, Abia ranked 3rd among Nigeria's 36 states, marking the most significant improvement recorded by any state in the assessment.

The report showed that Abia climbed 26 places from 36th position in the recent rankings, reflecting notable progress across key governance indicators, including fiscal management, service delivery, economic performance and institutional effectiveness.

Speaking during the July edition of his monthly media parley tagged "Governor Otti Speaks", in Umuahia, the governor said that the state's improved ranking reflects the impact of reforms implemented by his administration since his assumption of office.

According to the governor, Abia moved from the bottom of the national ranking shortly after his administration assumed office to 3rd position in the latest State Performance Index.

He noted that although independent assessments were important, the ultimate measure of government performance remains the impact of policies on citizens.

"I am happy to report



Governor Alex Otti

that we have improved in the 2026 State Performance Index.

"You will recall between 2023 and 2024, our state was rated number 36. And in 2025, we moved from 36 to number 10.

"And with the current report, we are number 3, closely following Jigawa, which came second, and Enugu which came first.

"The most important thing to me is the citizens' report. How does a citizen of Abia rate the state? That is the most important thing. You can do everything, but if the impact is not felt by the citizens, then you have done nothing", Governor Otti said.

The governor further cited changing public attitudes towards environmental sanitation as evidence that government reforms were beginning to reshape behaviour across the state.

He, therefore, urged residents to sustain the

culture of cleanliness, stressing that environmental sanitation remains a shared responsibility.

Governor Otti also disclosed that work was progressing on the state's digital mapping programme, noting that it was a strategic project that would support urban planning, land administration, infrastructure development and investment.

The governor said his administration has continued to record progress across critical sectors, including healthcare, education, infrastructure, security, transportation, science, technology, innovation, arts and culture.

He disclosed that work is ongoing on the development of the state's tourism assets, including the Arochuku Waterfalls project, Ojukwu Bunker among other tourist sites in the State and expressed optimism that the facilities would boost tourism

and economic activities upon completion.

On healthcare, Governor Otti said Abia had significantly reduced maternal and infant mortality, and described the achievement as one of the state's greatest successes.

He disclosed that by the end of the first quarter of 2026, the state recorded the lowest maternal and infant mortality rates in Nigeria, while enrolment into the Abia State Health Insurance Scheme has continued to rise.

According to him, the government has functionalised 144 of the 200 primary healthcare centres across the state, while an additional 77 facilities supported through intervention programmes have also been equipped.

He noted that the facilities were now adequately staffed and equipped with modern medical equipment, adding that rehabilitation of general and cottage hospitals across the state is progressing steadily, while the Cottage Hospital in Ugwuagbo has already started medical services.

On transportation, Governor Otti announced that another batch of 20 electric buses would soon arrive in the state to expand the government's mass transit programme.

He said the buses would serve routes linking Umuahia with Aba, Ohafia, Bende, Abia State University, Uturu, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, and other major destinations.

Governor Otti disclosed that the new buses would be fitted with electronic surveillance systems to monitor compliance with approved routes and improve operational efficiency.

MOUAU Awards Financial Grants to 12 Farmers

By Okereke Kate

The Vice-Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), Prof. Ursula Ngozi Akanwa, has reaffirmed the university's commitment to ensuring that host communities benefit directly from its agricultural innovations, describing effective extension services as central to the institution's mandate.

Speaking at the 2026 Farmers' Summit and Empowerment Programme, organized by the MOUAU Extension Centre (MEC), with the theme, "Placing Value Addition to Agricultural Produce", Prof. Akanwa said the University must ensure its products, technologies and research positively impact farmers and surrounding communities.

She stressed that agriculture has moved beyond traditional practices, urging farmers to embrace modern technologies, smart agriculture and value addition to improve productivity

and profitability. She disclosed plans to retrain Extension Centre staff and beneficiaries to equip them with current skills that will enhance agricultural production.

According to the vice-chancellor, beneficiaries of the empowerment programme will be closely monitored to assess their progress, identify challenges and provide continuous support to ensure lasting impact. She also encouraged young people to embrace agriculture as a profitable enterprise rather than merely a means of subsistence.

Earlier, the Director of the MOUAU Extension Centre (MEC), Prof. Uchechi Apu, said the centre's mandate is to empower farmers through training, improved technologies and practical interventions that increase productivity, improve livelihoods and reduce poverty in rural communities.

He noted that following the success

of last year's programme, where six farmers received ₦250,000 each, the university expanded the initiative this year to support 12 beneficiaries selected after participating in the 2026 Farmers' Summit and other capacity-building programmes.

He added that improved planting materials and farm inputs had earlier been distributed to farmers at the beginning of the farming season.

Prof. Apu commended the vice-chancellor for supporting the initiative and reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture through the university's effective extension services.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of ₦300,000 cheques to each of the 12 beneficiaries from the Umuahia, Aba and Ohafia Agricultural Zones, to strengthen enterprises in cassava production, poultry, vegetable farming, fish farming, agribusiness, oil processing and food processing.

Editorial

Nigeria's Medical Brain Drain

The warning by the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) over the acute shortage of doctors in the country should not be treated as another routine concern from a professional body. It is a serious national alarm that demands immediate and coordinated action from governments, policymakers and stakeholders in the health sector.

The reality facing Nigeria's healthcare system is troubling. Hospitals across the country are struggling with inadequate numbers of medical doctors, while the few available personnel are increasingly burdened by heavy workloads, poor remuneration and difficult working conditions. At the centre of this challenge is the growing migration of healthcare professionals, popularly known as the "Japa" syndrome, which has continued to weaken the country's medical workforce.

The NMA, Akwa Ibom State chapter, recently highlighted the urgent need for more medical schools and expanded training opportunities to address the shortage of doctors. While increasing the number of institutions producing medical professionals is important, it must be accompanied by deliberate measures to retain those already trained within the country.

For years, Nigeria has invested enormous resources in educating doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, only for many of them to leave for countries where they are offered better salaries, improved working environments, modern equipment and clearer career prospects. This situation amounts to a loss of national investment and a setback to the country's healthcare development.

The consequences of this brain drain are far-reaching. A shortage of doctors means longer waiting times for patients, increased pressure on healthcare workers, reduced access to quality medical services and greater risks to public health. Rural communities, where healthcare facilities are already limited, are often the worst affected as many medical professionals prefer to work in urban centres or seek opportunities abroad.

The danger is even more pronounced during emergencies, disease outbreaks and public health crises. A country without enough qualified medical personnel is vulnerable because infrastructure alone cannot save lives without skilled professionals to operate within the

system.

The Nigerian healthcare sector has witnessed significant improvements in infrastructure in some states, but hospitals and medical centres cannot function effectively without adequate manpower. Buildings, equipment and technology are important, but doctors, nurses and other health workers remain the backbone of healthcare delivery.

Addressing the crisis requires a comprehensive approach. First, governments must invest more in medical education by establishing additional medical schools, expanding existing ones and increasing admission capacity while maintaining quality standards. More teaching hospitals and residency training programmes should also be created to provide young doctors with opportunities for professional growth.

However, producing more doctors without retaining them will not solve the problem. There must be a deliberate effort to improve the welfare of healthcare workers. Competitive salaries, timely payment of allowances, better working conditions and access to modern medical facilities are essential incentives for doctors to remain in Nigeria.

The government must also address the issue of professional development. Many doctors migrate because they seek better opportunities for specialisation, research and career advancement. Creating stronger local opportunities through improved postgraduate training, research funding and partnerships with international institutions can reduce the desire to leave.

The private sector also has a role to play. Investment in healthcare facilities, insurance coverage and innovative health programmes can create more employment opportunities and reduce pressure on public hospitals.

Furthermore, there must be stronger policies to encourage doctors who have migrated to contribute to Nigeria's healthcare development. Programmes that promote knowledge exchange, temporary return initiatives and diaspora partnerships can help the country benefit from the expertise of its professionals abroad.

The Federal and state governments must recognise that healthcare is not merely an expenditure but an investment in national development. A healthy population drives economic growth, productivity and social stability.

Nigeria cannot afford to continue losing its best medical talents while its healthcare system struggles under increasing pressure. The warning from the NMA should serve as a turning point. Expanding medical training, improving welfare and creating an environment where healthcare professionals can thrive are necessary steps towards building a stronger and more reliable health system.

The fight against medical brain drain requires urgency, commitment and political will. The lives and wellbeing of millions of Nigerians depend on it.

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

The Need For More Electric Buses On The Aba-Umuahia Route

Dear Editor,

I wish to use your widely read newspaper to appeal to the Abia State Government to increase the number of electric buses operating between Aba and Umuahia. At the moment, only about two or three electric buses serve this busy route, and they are not enough for the large number of people who travel between the two cities every day.

I sincerely commend the Abia State Government for adding 20 more electric buses, bringing the total number to 40. This is a welcome development and shows the government's commitment to improving public transportation across the state. Many residents have already benefited from this initiative by enjoying safer, cleaner, more comfortable, and more affordable transportation.

However, there is an urgent need to assign more of these buses to the Aba-Umuahia route because it is one of the busiest roads in Abia State. Every day, thousands of workers, traders, students, civil servants, business owners, and other commuters travel between Aba and Umuahia. Because there are too few electric buses on this route, many passengers wait for a long time before getting a bus, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. Adding more buses will reduce waiting time, reduce overcrowding, and make travelling faster, easier, and more convenient.

Another major benefit of the electric buses is that they make transportation more affordable. At present, passengers pay about 1,700 Naira to travel between Aba and Umuahia using regular commercial vehicles, while the electric buses charge only ₦800 for the same journey. This means each passenger saves about 900 Naira on every trip. For workers, traders, students, and business owners who travel regularly, these savings are very important. At a time when the cost of living is rising, affordable transportation helps people save money and better support their families.

Increasing the number of electric buses will also reduce traffic congestion, lower air pollution, and encourage more people to use public transportation. This will support the Abia State Government's vision of providing a modern, affordable, and environmentally friendly transport system. As Aba continues to grow as the commercial centre of Abia State, a reliable and efficient public transport system is essential for economic growth and the well-being of the people.

I strongly believe that giving more attention to the Aba-Umuahia route by deploying more electric buses will greatly improve the daily lives of thousands of Abians. It will make transportation faster, more reliable, and more affordable for everyone who uses this route. More buses will reduce long queues at bus terminals, help commuters get to work, school, markets, and business meetings on time, and reduce the stress of daily travel.

Expanding the electric bus service will also encourage more people to leave their private vehicles at home and use public transportation. This will help reduce traffic on the Aba-Umuahia road, save energy, and keep the environment cleaner. A better transport system will also support businesses by making it easier for traders, customers, and investors to move freely between the two cities.

I therefore respectfully appeal to the Abia State Government to deploy more electric buses to the Aba-Umuahia route and expand the service to meet the growing number of commuters. This will improve public transportation, reduce transport costs, ease the burden on residents, and ensure that more people benefit from this commendable initiative. It will also show that the government listens to the needs of the people and remains committed to improving their welfare through practical and people-centred policies.

Yours faithfully,
Ifeanyi Ogidi
A Concerned Resident.



Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike
+2348037744514

POWA Pledges Support For NAWOJ's Women In Security Summit

The President of the Police Officers' Wives Association (POWA), Mrs. Olufunmilola Mutiat Disu, has pledged the association's support for the maiden Women in Security (WINSEC) Summit and Awards, describing the initiative as a worthy platform for recognising the contributions of women to national security and encouraging greater commitment to public service.

Mrs. Disu gave the assurance while receiving a delegation of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), led by its National Chairperson, Comrade Aisha Ibrahim, during a courtesy visit to the POWA National Headquarters in Abuja.

Expressing appreciation for her nomination as one of the recipients of the WINSEC Awards, scheduled for August 5, 2026, the POWA president said the recognition would motivate her to intensify efforts aimed at improving the welfare of police families and advancing programmes that promote the development and empowerment of women.

She commended NAWOJ for introducing an initiative that celebrates excellence among women in the security sector, noting that such recognition would inspire more dedication and professionalism in service.

Earlier, Comrade Ibrahim said the visit was to formally invite the POWA President to the inaugural Women in Security Summit and Awards, seek the association's partnership and strengthen collaboration on programmes that promote women, peace and national security.

She explained that the WINSEC Summit was conceived to honour the courage, professionalism and sacrifices of women serving in Nigeria's security and law enforcement institutions, while providing a platform for strategic dialogue on contemporary security challenges and the role of women in fostering peace and national development.

According to her, the summit would bring together representatives of security agencies, policymakers, government officials, development partners, civil society organisations, traditional institutions, media professionals and other stakeholders to discuss issues relating to security, leadership and sustainable national development.

The NAWOJ National Chairperson said the initiative also aims to inspire more young women to pursue careers in the security sector by showcasing the achievements of female officers who have distinguished themselves despite numerous challenges.

She emphasised the critical role women play in peace-building, conflict prevention and community engagement. She stressed that increased female participation in security institutions would strengthen efforts to address Nigeria's evolving security challenges.

Ibrahim appealed to POWA to support the initiative through strategic partnership, mobilisation and institutional collaboration to ensure the successful hosting of the maiden summit.

She further disclosed that recipients of the WINSEC Awards were selected through a transparent nationwide nomination process, co-ordinated by NAWOJ State Councils, with honourees chosen in recognition of their exceptional contributions to national security, community safety and public service.

The visit ended with both organisations expressing their commitment to deepening collaboration in promoting women's welfare, strengthening national security and encouraging greater female participation in peace-building and security governance.



FG Steps Up Diplomatic Push Over Attacks On Nigerians In South Africa

The Federal Government has intensified diplomatic engagement with South Africa to seek justice for Nigerians affected by recent attacks and prevent a recurrence of violence against foreign nationals.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, disclosed this after briefing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, following a meeting with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's Special Envoy and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola.

According to the minister, discussions with the South African delegation centred on strengthening bilateral cooperation to curb future attacks.

He said both countries agreed on the need to activate an early warning mechanism and revitalise the Nigeria-South Africa Bi-

National Commission as part of measures to improve collaboration and address emerging concerns.

Enikanolaiye revealed that about 1,490 Nigerians had been evacuated from South Africa following the attacks. He commended President Tinubu for supporting the evacuation exercise, noting that two of the evacuation flights were funded by private individuals.

He added that arrangements were underway to evacuate more Nigerians who had indicated their willingness to return home, while efforts were being made to secure additional funding for the exercise.

The minister described the attacks as Afrophobic, rather than merely xenophobic, explaining that the violence was specifically directed at fellow Africans.

He said President Tinubu shared the view that African nations must work together to end such attacks and promote peaceful co-existence across the continent.

Enikanolaiye further disclosed that the cordial relationship between Presidents Tinubu and Ramaphosa would be leveraged to strengthen diplomatic dialogue and achieve a lasting resolution to the crisis.

As part of efforts to obtain compensation for affected Nigerians, Enikanolaiye said the Federal Government had started the documentation of losses suffered during the attacks.

He explained that victims were being asked to complete official forms detailing damaged property and other losses, which would support Nigeria's claims in its engagement with the South

African authorities.

The minister reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to resolving the matter through diplomacy but stressed that the government was prepared to explore other lawful options should negotiations fail to produce satisfactory outcomes.

He also maintained that every Nigerian, irrespective of immigration status, deserves protection under the law, insisting that no individual should be subjected to violence or extrajudicial treatment.

The Federal Government reiterated its resolve to safeguard the lives, rights and property of Nigerians living abroad, while strengthening bilateral relations with South Africa in pursuit of justice, peace and mutual respect between both

NMA Raises Alarm Over Acute Shortage Of Doctors

The Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Akwalbom State chapter, has raised concerns over the worsening shortage of medical doctors in the state. It called on governments at all levels to establish more medical schools and expand the training of healthcare professionals to address the growing manpower crisis.

The association said Nigeria is losing a significant number of doctors to migration in search of better remuneration, improved working conditions and career opportunities abroad, leaving hospitals overstretched and unable to meet the healthcare needs of

the population.

According to the Akwalbom NMA Chairman, Prof. Aniekan Peter, increasing the number of accredited medical schools and expanding admission capacity are critical to producing more doctors capable of filling existing vacancies in public health institutions.

He stressed that improving medical education must go hand-in-hand with better welfare packages to discourage the mass exodus of health professionals.

The association noted that while governments continue to invest in healthcare infrastructure, the absence of sufficient medical personnel

threatens to undermine those investments. It urged federal and state authorities to prioritise human capital development through the establishment of additional medical schools, teaching hospitals and residency training programmes.

The appeal comes as the Akwalbom State Government intensifies reforms in the health sector. Governor UmoEno recently approved nine health sector reform bills, including proposals to strengthen medical training institutions and provide a legal framework for a University Teaching Hospital, as part of efforts to improve healthcare delivery in the state.

The NMA has consistently advocated improved remuneration

and working conditions for doctors, warning that poor pay and unfavourable conditions are accelerating the brain drain in Nigeria's health sector.

Earlier, the association issued a strike ultimatum to the management of St. Luke's Hospital, Anua, Uyo, over poor remuneration and the failure to implement the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure (CONMESS).

Health experts said tackling Nigeria's shortage of doctors would require a combination of expanded medical education, improved welfare, better funding for the health sector and policies that encourage trained professionals to remain and practice in the country.

For The Record

A Minute Of Silence For A Hero: Gov. Otti Honours A Life Sacrificed For Nigeria 60 Years On Major-General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi (1966-2026)

There are men whose lives become inseparable from the destiny of their nation. Their names transcend tribe, religion and politics, becoming permanent inscriptions on the pages of history. Major General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi belongs to that rare company.

Sixty years after his tragic death, Abia State, under a leader who honours service and sacrifice, pauses to remember and pay tribute to her illustrious son: Nigeria's first indigenous Major-General and Military Head of State. He was a soldier whose career embodied discipline, courage, honour and sacrifice. His story is not merely the story of an Igbo son from Umuahia; it is the story of a Nigerian patriot whose life became entwined with the hopes and tragedies of a young nation struggling to define itself.

Born on March 3, 1924, in Umuahia, in present-day Abia State, J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi came of age during the colonial era. Like many ambitious young Africans of his generation, he enlisted in the Royal West African Frontier Force during the Second World War.

From the beginning, his superiors recognized uncommon qualities in him: discipline, intelligence, courage and exceptional leadership. Those qualities earned him selection for officer training in the United Kingdom.

In 1949, he was commissioned as one of the earliest Nigerian officers in the Nigerian Army, at a time when senior command was still largely in foreign hands. It marked the beginning of a distinguished career that would inspire generations of Nigerian officers.

General Ironsi's brilliance extended beyond the battlefield. He served as Military Attaché in London, representing Nigeria with dignity and professionalism. During the historic visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Nigeria in 1956, he served as Aide-de-Camp, an honour reserved for officers of impeccable conduct and outstanding ability.

He later commanded troops in Enugu, where his reputation as a disciplined and dependable officer continued to grow.

His finest international assignment came during the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo in the 1960s. Commanding multinational forces in one of Africa's most turbulent conflicts, Aguiyi-Ironsi demonstrated calmness under pressure, professional



It was a milestone that symbolized the emergence of African leadership in the highest ranks of the military.



competence and remarkable leadership. His performance earned Nigeria international respect and confirmed his place among Africa's finest military commanders.

In 1965, history was made when Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi became Nigeria's first indigenous Major-General and General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army. It was a milestone that symbolized the emergence of African leadership in the highest ranks of the military.

Only months later, history summoned him again. The political crisis that followed the coup of January 15, 1966, plunged Nigeria into uncertainty. Although he did not organize or participate in that coup, the collapse of constitutional government left him, as the most senior surviving military officer, with the burden of preserving the nation. He accepted that

burden not as a conqueror, but as a soldier called upon by history.

He inherited not peace, but crisis.

Not stability, but confusion. Not celebration, but national mourning. He governed a nation deeply wounded by suspicion and grief. Historians continue to debate aspects of his brief administration, but none can deny the enormous

history. Their bodies were later recovered and given proper burial. That lonely road has since become one of the most haunting symbols of Nigeria's tragic political history.

Power had vanished. The uniform remained. The soldier remained. His dignity remained. The grave could bury his body. It could never bury his legacy.

His death did not heal



challenges confronting him.

Then came July 29, 1966. A counter-coup erupted and the nation descended further into darkness.

In Ibadan, where General Aguiyi-Ironsi was on official duty, destiny caught up with him. History records that he was taken away together with his host, Lieutenant Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, the Military Governor of the Western Region.

Fajuyi was reportedly offered the opportunity to save himself. He refused. With that decision, he immortalized himself as one of Nigeria's greatest patriots. He chose honour above life, loyalty above fear, duty above survival.

Together, the two officers were driven out of Ibadan toward Lalupon. There was no parade, no bugle, no salute. Only silence, and the quiet dignity of soldiers walking into

Nigeria. Instead, it opened the gates to greater sorrow. The cycle of reprisals widened, fear spread, and eventually Nigeria descended into a civil war whose scars remain visible today.

Sixty years later, remembrance must not become an invitation to bitterness. History should unite, not divide. The life of General Aguiyi-Ironsi teaches us that leadership demands sacrifice, that revenge destroys nations, and that peace is always stronger than hatred.

It is therefore both noble and commendable that today, July 29, 2026, the Government of Abia State, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti, OFR, has moved to restore honour to the memory of one of Nigeria's finest patriots.

The Governor's directive for the immediate reconstruction of the road leading to General

Aguiyi-Ironsi's ancestral home at Ndume Otuka is far more than a public works project. It is history reconnected to the present.

The promise to rebuild his former Ibeama Primary School is more than physical renewal. It is the restoration of dignity to the memory of a soldier who once carried the burden of an entire nation.

For far too long, the memory of General Aguiyi-Ironsi faded into silence. Today, that silence has been broken. Governor Otti's decision to commemorate him is a declaration that, Abia State honours excellence, values sacrifice, and preserves the legacy of those who served with distinction.

As Nigerians mark the sixtieth anniversary of his passing, may we remember not only the tragedy of his death but the greatness of his life. He was a decorated soldier before he became a ruler. He was a patriot before he became a statesman. He was a servant of Nigeria before history made him the nation's first military Head of State.

The life of Aguiyi-Ironsi reminds us that true greatness is measured not by the length of one's reign, but by the depth of one's service. The forest of Lalupon has long fallen silent. Yet, history still speaks. It tells every Nigerian that hatred is fleeting, but honour endures. It teaches that power passes away, but sacrifice lives forever. And it reminds us that Major-General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi did not merely die as Head of State. He entered eternity as a soldier whose life became part of Nigeria's everlasting story.

May his memory continue to inspire generations yet unborn. May his sacrifice strengthen our commitment to unity, justice and peace. And may Almighty God grant eternal rest to Major-General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi, Lieutenant Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, and all Nigerians who lost their lives in the political upheavals of those difficult years.

*James Ochunkwo
-The Conscience Writer-*



**ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE**

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) PROCUREMENT OF HOSPITAL/MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

In strict compliance with Section 43 of the Abia State Public Procurement Law No. 5 of 2012, the Abia State Government hereby invites sealed bids from reputable and qualified companies specializing in the supply of hospital and medical equipment for the procurement of the underlisted items.

LIST OF EQUIPMENT

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Ambulance Trolley - 3 Units | 20. Laboratory Incubator - 1 Unit | 39. Massage Chair - 1 Unit |
| 2. Wheel Chair - 3 Units | 21. Infant Incubator - 1 Unit | 40. Examination Couch - 4 Units |
| 3. Hydraulic Surgical Operating Table - 1 Unit | 22. Angle Poised Lamp - 1 Unit | 41. Consulting Table - 6 Units |
| 4. Automated External Defibrillators - 2 Units | 23. Allegor's Mobile X-Ray - 1 Unit | 42. Reception Chair - 10 Units |
| 5. Mindray BS120 Automatic Chemistry Analyzer - 1 Unit | 24. 5 Parts Haematology Analyzer - 1 Unit | 43. Clinical Table - 1 Unit |
| 6. Autoclave - 2 Units | 25. Dental Chair and Delivery Unit - 1 Unit | 44. Diagnostic Set - 5 Units |
| 7. Eden Acclaris Ultrasound with Two (2) Probes - 1 Unit | 26. Blood Bank Refrigerator - 1 Unit | 45. Micro-life Oxygen Concentrator - 3 Units |
| 8. Retinoscope - 2 Units | 27. Slit Lamp Bio-Microscope - 1 Unit | 46. Omron Nebuliser - 2 Units |
| 9. Trial Lens Kit - 1 Unit | 28. Lensometer - 1 Unit | 47. Hospital Monitor with Stand - 15 Units |
| 10. 12 Channels ECG Machine - 1 Unit | 29. Non-Contact Tonometer - 1 Unit | 48. File Cabinet - 4 Units |
| 11. Emergency Patient Stretcher - 2 Units | 30. Direct Ophthalmoscope - 1 Unit | 49. Medical Screen - 5 Units |
| 12. Meditech Monitor - 2 Units | 31. Indirect Ophthalmoscope - 1 Unit | 50. Online Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) - 3 Units |
| 13. Hydraulic Delivery Bed - 1 Unit | 32. Visual Field Analyzer - 1 Unit | 51. Infant Radiant Warmer - 1 Unit |
| 14. Suction Machine - 4 Units | 33. Ultrasound B Scan - 1 Unit | 52. Bedside Locker - 15 Units |
| 15. Hospital Bed - 15 Units | 34. Drip Stand - 15 Units | 53. Diathermy Machine - 1 Unit |
| 16. Medical Dressing Trolley - 3 Units | 35. 8HP Treadmill - 1 Unit | 54. Anaesthetic Machine - 1 Unit |
| 17. Anaesthesia Trolley - 1 Unit | 36. Stadiometer - 4 Units | 55. Ophthalmic Surgeon Stool - 1 Unit |
| 18. Ceiling Mounted Theatre Lights/Bulbs - 5 Units | 37. General Surgery Instruments Set - 1 Unit | 56. Electric ICU Bed - 1 Unit |
| 19. Medical Ventilator - 1 Unit | 38. Exercise Bicycle - 1 Unit | |

BID REQUIREMENTS: Interested companies are required to submit their bids together with a Proforma Invoice and the following documents:

1. Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)
2. Evidence of Three (3) Years Tax Clearance Certificate from FIRS
3. Evidence of Valid Registration with the Abia State Due Process Office
4. Evidence of Payment of Non-Refundable Tender Fee of ₦1,000,000.00
5. Evidence of Technical, Manpower and Financial Capacity

SUBMISSION OF BIDS: Interested bidders are expected to submit their bids within two (2) weeks from the date of this publication.

Completed bids should be enclosed in a sealed envelope clearly marked: "MEDICAL EQUIPMENT" and addressed to:

The Chief of Staff

Office of the Chief of Staff to the Executive Governor of Abia State

Government House

Umuahia, Abia State.

For further enquiries: caleb.ajagba@abiastate.gov.ng

SIGNED:
MANAGEMENT
ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT

Family Matters

By Nneoma Stephanie

For proper understanding of this our writing let define extramarital affairs. An extramarital affair is a romantic, emotional, or sexual relationship between a married person and someone who is not their husband or wife. It breaks the trust and commitment of marriage and is commonly known as cheating or unfaithfulness. In many cases, it begins when a married person develops a close emotional bond with someone outside the marriage, sharing personal thoughts, feelings, and affection that should be reserved for their spouse. If healthy boundaries are not maintained, this emotional closeness can gradually develop into a full extramarital affair.

Extramarital affairs rarely happen suddenly. In many cases, they begin when problems in a marriage are ignored for a long time. Every marriage is different, but many affairs start when couples become emotionally distant, stop communicating well, or fail to meet each other's emotional and physical needs.

This does not excuse cheating. Every person is responsible for their own choices. However, it reminds couples that they should care for

their relationship and deal with problems before they become serious.

Let us take three key points how Extramarital affairs begin.

When the Marriage Loses Its Spark

A marriage can become dull when life is filled with work, children, bills, and daily responsibilities. Husband and wife may still live together, but they stop spending quality time with each other. Over time, they begin to live more like roommates than loving partners.

A healthy marriage needs love, attention, and time together. Couples should continue to create happy memories. Go on dates, take walks, laugh together, pray together, travel when possible, and have meaningful conversations. Celebrate special occasions, encourage each other, and enjoy each other's company. Never stop being friends, because friendship is one of the strongest foundations of a lasting marriage.

When one partner feels ignored, lonely, or unappreciated for a long time, they may begin to enjoy the attention and kindness of someone else. What starts as a simple friendship can slowly grow into an emotional attachment. If healthy boundaries are not

maintained, that relationship can become a serious threat to the marriage.

When Physical Intimacy Is Neglected

Physical intimacy is an important part of a healthy marriage. It is not only about sex. It is also a way for husbands and wives to express love, affection, care, and emotional closeness. It helps strengthen their bond and reminds each partner that they are loved and valued.

When physical intimacy becomes only a routine, a duty, or something one partner no longer enjoys, emotional distance can begin to grow. One or both partners may start to feel rejected, lonely, or unimportant. If these feelings continue without being discussed, they can create tension and weaken the relationship.

A good intimate relationship is built on love, trust, respect, honesty, and a willingness to understand each other's needs. Couples should talk openly about their feelings and expectations. Physical intimacy should come from love, mutual respect, and willingness, not pressure or obligation.

When Couples Stop Talking

Good communication is one of the strongest foundations of a happy marriage. Every husband and wife wants to feel heard, understood, valued, and appreciated.

When couples stop sharing their thoughts, feelings, and struggles

with each other, they may begin to confide in someone else, such as a friend, a co-worker, or another person who listens and shows concern. If healthy boundaries are not maintained, that emotional closeness can slowly develop into an emotional affair.

Honest and respectful communication helps couples solve problems before they become bigger. Listening with patience, speaking kindly, and understanding each other's feelings can strengthen the marriage and build trust.

Protect Your Marriage

Most affairs do not begin with a plan to be unfaithful. They often start with small problems that are ignored over time. Busy schedules, financial pressure, family responsibilities, stress, and unresolved conflicts can slowly create distance between husband and wife.

That is why every marriage needs regular care and attention. Spend quality time together, communicate honestly, forgive quickly, support each other, pray together, and never stop showing love and appreciation. If your marriage is going through a difficult season, do not wait until the situation becomes worse. Seeking help early from trusted family members, spiritual leaders, or professional marriage counselors can make a big

in one day, and it is not destroyed in one day. It becomes stronger when both husband and wife choose love, trust, respect, forgiveness, and open communication every day. Small acts of kindness, quality time, and genuine care can prevent bigger problems in the future.

Protect your marriage before it needs to be rescued. Keep your friendship alive, guard your hearts, and always make your spouse your closest companion. A happy and lasting marriage is possible when both husband and wife are willing to love, support, respect, and remain committed to each other through every season of life.



A good intimate relationship is built on love, trust, respect, honesty, and a willingness to understand each other's needs.



News

Ibeno Clan Council Hails Mboho Leadership, Warns Against Ethnic Division

From Lovina Emole

The Ibeno Clan Council of Akwa Ibom State has congratulated MbohoMkparawa Ibibio on the successful inauguration of its 12th International President and Executive Council.

The council described the peaceful transition as a good example of responsible leadership, stability, and the organisation's long-standing commitment to unity, peace, and service.

Speaking to journalists on behalf of the Paramount Ruler of Ibeno at Upenekang, the headquarters of Ibeno Local Government Area, recently, the Secretary of the Ibeno Clan Council, Chief OkonUdofia, praised MbohoMkparawa Ibibio for promoting peaceful coexistence among the different ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State. He also commended the organisation for preserving the cultural heritage of the Ibibio people without encouraging conflict or division.

Chief Udofia congratulated the newly inaugurated International President, Akparawalni-AbasiEkanem, and his Executive Council. He wished them a successful tenure guided by wisdom, fairness, and dedication to the organisation's motto, "Oneness for Service."

He noted that the speeches delivered by the representative of Governor UmoEno, the Grand Patron, the outgoing President, and the new leadership all focused on peace, unity, love, and the development of Akwa Ibom State. However, he said one speech stood out for the wrong reasons.

According to the council, the goodwill message delivered by the President of the Eki People's Union (EPU), Dr. Samuel Udonsak, was unfortunate, divisive, and did not reflect the purpose of the event.

The council said it was disappointing that while other speakers encouraged unity and peaceful coexistence, Dr. Udonsak used the occasion to raise divisive territorial issues and make remarks against another ethnic group.

It added that repeatedly presenting the Oro-Obolo people as opponents would only create unnecessary tension among communities that have lived peacefully together for many years.

Chief Udofia also reminded Dr. Udonsak that Governor UmoEno had previously cautioned him against making statements capable of causing division and threatening the peace of the state.

He said the council had expected Dr. Udonsak to be more careful after that public warning but instead used the Mboho inauguration to continue making divisive remarks during what should have been a goodwill message.

The Ibeno Clan Council also rejected Dr. Udonsak's claims about Okposo I and Okposo II, insisting that both communities are Obolo communities in Ibeno Local Government Area and that their identity cannot be changed through speeches or political statements.

The council stressed that issues relating to history and territorial boundaries should be handled by the appropriate authorities and the courts, not at cultural events meant to promote unity and brotherhood.

Chief Udofia, therefore, appealed to the new leadership of MbohoMkparawa Ibibio, to remain alert and ensure that the organisation is not used by individuals or groups to pursue personal or political interests that could divide the people.



Deputy Governor, Ikechukwu Emetu,

Emetu Pledges Govt's Commitment To Strengthen Pharmaceutical Services-

By Charles Ogbomaya

The Abia State Deputy Governor, Ikechukwu Emetu, has assured the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Abia State Branch, of the state government's commitment to strengthening pharmaceutical services, eliminating fake drugs and improving healthcare delivery across the state.

Speaking while receiving the leadership of the society at Government House, Umuahia, Emetu described the proposals presented by the association as timely and strategic, particularly the call for government support and funding of the Co-ordinated Wholesale Centre (CWC) in Abia State.

According to him, establishing the CWC would provide a central distribution point for pharmaceutical

products, curb the proliferation of fake and substandard drugs, and make it easier to identify licensed medicine dealers.

He disclosed that the document submitted by the society would be presented at the forthcoming Abia State Security Council meeting, stressing that tackling illegal drug distribution requires a coordinated strategy involving relevant security and regulatory agencies.

The proposal is an eye-opener. Rather than chasing the problem endlessly, we must adopt a strategic approach that will effectively eliminate the menace of fake drugs and quack medicine vendors," the Deputy Governor said.

On the proposed Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Abia State University (ABSU), Uturu, Emetu acknowledged the importance of producing more pharmacists for the state's healthcare system.

He noted that the present administration inherited

numerous challenges, including the loss of accreditation by several tertiary institutions, but said the government had already restored accreditation in many programmes and would continue investing in education and healthcare.

The deputy governor assured the society that he would discuss the issue with Governor Alex Otti to facilitate the accreditation and development of pharmaceutical education in the state.

Addressing the shortage of pharmacists in public health institutions, Emetu admitted that the pharmaceutical workforce was still inadequate despite recent recruitment of healthcare professionals.

He described pharmacists as indispensable members of the healthcare team, noting that effective diagnosis and treatment depend largely on the availability of quality medicines and professional pharmaceutical care.

The deputy governor

promised to present the society's concerns to Governor Otti and engage the commissioner for health in further discussions with the PSN to develop practical solutions.

Emetu also expressed concern over the increasing cases of kidney failure and other health complications linked to fake and improperly dispensed medicines, attributing the problem largely to the activities of unqualified drug vendors.

He reiterated the government's determination to sanitise the pharmaceutical sector by strengthening regulation and ensuring that only qualified practitioners engage in the sale and distribution of medicines.

Earlier, Vice Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN), Abia State Branch, Nnamdi Amechi, commended Governor Otti's administration for increasing budgetary allocations to the health and education sectors and for recruiting healthcare workers, including pharmacists.

He appealed to the government to support the establishment and accreditation of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Abia State University, Uturu, describing it as essential for producing skilled pharmacists to meet the healthcare needs of the state.

Amechi also urged the government to employ more pharmacists into state health facilities, implement the Pharmacist Consultancy Cadre, include pharmacists on healthcare management boards, establish a Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine (TCAM) Board to regulate herbal medicine practice, and support the establishment of the Coordinated Wholesale Centre (CWC).

He further requested government assistance with a vehicle and a permanent secretariat to strengthen enforcement activities against illegal drug sales, while calling for incentives to attract pharmaceutical manufacturing industries to Abia.

The PSN vice chairman expressed confidence that closer collaboration between the state government and the pharmaceutical profession would significantly improve healthcare delivery and position Abia as a leading centre for pharmaceutical excellence in Nigeria.

FRSC Launches Special Operation To Curb Road Crashes In Akwa Ibom

From Lovina Emole

The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Akwa Ibom Command, has said that it has started operation Shark Smile as strategic measures to curb road crashes in the state.

The Sector Commander, Mrs. Felicia Kalu, disclosed this in a statement in Uyo recently.

Kalu said Operation Shark Smile was a strategic intervention operation initiative of FRSC Zone 6 aimed at clamping down on observed increasing trend in road traffic crashes.

She said the operation was the corps resolve to bring sanity on the roads, and also determined to stop all road traffic infractions and violations through deliberate intervention enforcement.

The special enforcement seeks to focus on the critical offences commonly committed and violated in the state, and shall run simultaneously with the unit commands.

"The operation will be in collaboration with relevant sister

security agencies, while ensuring immediate prosecution of violators of road traffic offences, or option of payment of prescribed fines," Kalu said.

According to her, the target offences to focus on during the special enforcement include, but not limited to; overloading and mix-loading.

Other offences targeted include; number plate violations, dangerous/reckless driving/riding, tyre violation, use of phone while driving, speed limit violations and seat belts use violation, among others.

Kalu stated that the special patrol operation was due to its exigency, and the need to ensure the safety of all road users as well as further deter intending offenders against any act of recklessness behind the wheels.

The sector commander said there would be effective and adequate route coverage, while increasing visibility of FRSC presence on the highways during the operation.

She urged the public to remain active and avoid any form of recklessness capable of jeopardising the safety of oneself and other road users.

Photos Speak



L-R: Gov Alex Otti of Abia, Member Repr Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Federal Constituency, Hon. Amobi Ogah and LP Bende Federal House Repr Candidate, Dr. Chima Anyaso, as the people of Umunneochi hosted Gov Alex Otti of Abia to a grand civic reception at Peace Secondary School, Amuda, Isuochi.



L-R: Gov Alex Otti of Abia State and Former Minister of Mines and Steel, Dr. Uche Ogah, as the people of Umunneochi hosted Gov Alex Otti of Abia to a grand civic reception at Peace Secondary School, Amuda, Isuochi.



Dim Udoka Augustine, a talented Artist from Amuda, Isuochi (R), presented his painting work to Gov Alex Otti of Abia State (L), during the Gov Otti's Civic reception by people of Umunneochi in Umunneochi LGA.



First Lady of Nigeria, Sen Oluremi Tinubu (4th L), Wife of Abia Gov, Mrs Priscilla Otti (4th R), Gov Alex Otti of Abia (3rd L), Speaker, Abia House of Assembly, Rt Hon Emmanuel Emeruwa (2nd L), LP House of Repr Candidate for Bende Federal Constncy, Dr. Chima Anyaso (2nd R), Abia LP Chairman Hon. Peter Azubuike (1st R), as Sen Oluremi Tinubu visited Abia and joined Gov Alex Otti and his wife, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, on a tour of the Akwete Weaving Cooperative Society in Akwete, Ukwa East LGA of the State.



From left: the wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti (second left); Rev. Mosy Madugba (third right); her husband (third left), standing beside Mrs. Otti; and other dignitaries during the 2026 Ministers Prayer Network International Convention at the Gilgal Convention Centre, Obuzi, Asa, Ukwa West Local Government Area, where Mrs. Otti addressed women and youths.



Ministers from Bende Local Government Area gathered at the country home of the Labour Party candidate for Bende Federal Constituency, Dr. Chima Anyaso, as he knelt in prayer while they prayed for him.



Okechukwu Ubani, News Editor of the Abia Newspaper and Publishing Corporation, joins Mrs. Chikodi, a staff member of the Corporation (3rd right), standing beside her husband (4th right), alongside other staff members and guests during the dedication of their child earlier today at Living Faith Church, Ihie Ndume, Umuahia.



Mr. Peter Obi (left) with former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, at the Presidential Wing of Ikeja Airport. Chief Obasanjo was departing for Owerri before proceeding to Umuahia to attend the 60th memorial event in honour of late General Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi, held on Wednesday, July 29, 2026.

Photos Speak



Abia State Gov, Dr Alex Otti (c) pose with 2023 PDP Deputy Governorship candidate in Abia State, Dr. Jasper Uche (3rd L), Abia State LP Chairman Hon Peter Azubuike (2nd L), Umunneochi LGA LP Chairman, Dr. Jude Onwuhanze and other decampes from Umunneochi, as the people of Umunneochi hosted Gov Alex Otti of Abia to a grand civic reception at Peace Secondary School, Amuda, Isuochi.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia (3rd L) pose with LP, Abia North Senatorial candidate, Chief David Ogba Onuoha (3rd R), Former Minister of Mines and Steel, Dr. Uche Ogah (2nd R), LP Bende Federal House Repr Candidate, Dr. Chima Anyaso (1st L) with other Dignitaries as the people of Umunneochi hosted Gov Alex Otti of Abia to a grand civic reception at Peace Secondary School, Amuda, Isuochi.



L-R: Former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, LP Bende Federal House Repr Candidate, Dr. Chima Anyaso and Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



L-R: Former Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development, Dr Uche Ogah, Gov Alex Otti of Abia State and First Son of the family and Former Minister of Defence, Amb Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



L-R: Former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and Former First Lady Dame Patience Jonathan, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



L-R: First Son of the family and Former Minister of Defence, Amb Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi, Former First Lady Dame Patience Jonathan and Abia Deputy Gov, Engr Ikechukwu Emetu, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



L-R: Gov Alex Otti of Abia State, First Son of the family and Former Minister of Defence, Amb Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi and Former First Lady Dame Patience Jonathan, during the 60th memorial anniversary of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson at the Int'l Conference Centre, Umuahia.



Gov Alex Otti of Abia State performing a wreath-laying ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the death of Nigeria's first Military Head of State, Major-Gen Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi at the Aguiyi-Ironsi Cenotaph in Umuahia

News

Gov Otti Praised Over Digital Skills Programme

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Beneficiaries and facilitators of the Abia Tech Rise programme have praised Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, for providing young people with digital skills that have improved their chances of getting jobs and succeeding in the global digital economy.

They spoke recently during a sensitisation rally in Aba to encourage eligible residents to register for and collect their Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

The rally was also part of the Abia Tech Rise Alumni Homecoming and Community Appreciation Walk.

Abia Tech Rise is one of the state government's major youth empowerment programmes. It is designed to equip young people with digital skills, promote innovation, and improve employment opportunities through technology.

Speaking at the event, the State Coordinator of Abia Tech Rise and Founder of Learn Factory, Mr. Chibueze Ukaegbu, said the programme has equipped participants with modern digital skills needed to succeed in today's technology-driven world.

He thanked Governor Otti for creating the opportunity for young people to learn valuable digital skills.

"The training has given us the knowledge and skills we need to compete in the global digital economy," he said.

Ukaegbu said every participant received quality training and a laptop to support learning and career development. He added that the three-month programme has successfully completed three batches since it began in February 2025.

According to him, over 20,000 youths applied for the third batch of the programme. Out of the applicants, 8,000 were shortlisted for the entrance examination, while 850 participants were finally admitted.

He explained that the first batch started in February 2025, followed by the second in May 2025, while the current participants make up the third batch. He credited the programme's success to Governor Otti's commitment to youth development.

"This opportunity for Abia youths is possible because of the visionary leadership of Governor Alex Otti.

"In the past three years, the governor has transformed Abia through policies and programmes that have positively affected every sector of the state's economy," he said.

Ukaegbu also encouraged residents to obtain their PVCs ahead of the 2027 General Elections.

"The purpose of this rally is to encourage Abia residents to get their PVCs before the 2027 elections.

"We also appreciate the governor for the Tech Rise initiative because good governance deserves continuity," he added.

One of the beneficiaries, Miss Ifeanyi Kalu, a member of the third batch who specialised in UI/UX Design, thanked the state government for giving her the opportunity to learn a valuable digital skill.

Another beneficiary, Mr. Ozoemena Amamba, who participated in the second batch and trained in Digital Art and 3D Animation, said the programme changed his life by helping him establish his own business.

"I am happy because the training has made me self-reliant. I now own a shop where I create animations, and I can proudly call myself an entrepreneur.

"I am also using the skills I acquired to train and empower other people," he said.

Amamba also urged residents to obtain their PVCs and vote for credible candidates in the 2027 elections.

"We are looking forward to showing our appreciation in 2027 by using our PVCs, and we encourage everyone to get theirs," he said.

A facilitator, Dr. Alfred Nwoke, said he joined the programme as a trainee in the first batch and now serves as one of its instructors.

He thanked the Abia State Government under the leadership of Governor Alex Otti for creating opportunities that have changed the lives of many young people.

"This programme has changed the story of many youths in Abia. We will continue to support the government's programmes and policies," Dr. Nwoke said.



The Editor of the Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation (ANPC), publishers of National Ambassador Newspapers and Magazines, Deacon Chukwuemeka Egejuru (centre), with other NYSC members and guests at a sensitisation programme organised by the NYSC Financial Inclusion Community Development Service (CDS) Group in Umuahia, Abia State, recently.

Media Literacy Key to Combating Financial Fraud - Egejuru

By Stephanie Adindu

Nigerians have been urged to embrace media literacy as a critical tool in combating financial fraud and protecting themselves against the rising wave of digital scams.

The Editor, of National Ambassador, Deacon Chukwuemeka Egejuru, gave the charge while delivering a lecture titled "Media, Public Vigilance and Retirement Security" at a community sensitisation programme organised by the NYSC Financial Inclusion Community Development Service (CDS) Group in Umuahia, Abia State.

Egejuru, a cybersecurity expert, said the ability to critically assess, verify and interpret information is essential in preventing financial losses in the digital age.

The communication strategist, who commended

the President, Financial Inclusion CDS, Adegbola Odunayo Isaac for the public awareness, explained that financial literacy goes beyond owning bank accounts or using digital platforms, stressing that it involves understanding how to earn, save, invest, protect and grow wealth responsibly.

He described the programme themed "Building a Financially Resilient Community" as timely, noting that fraudsters now deploy sophisticated methods, including fake investment platforms, phishing links, cloned social media accounts and deceptive calls, to defraud unsuspecting victims.

The editor urged Nigerians to verify information before believing or sharing it, especially financial messages, grant announcements and investment opportunities circulated online.

He advised members of the public to confirm such information through official channels and credible media organisations, while urging them to report suspicious financial activities to banks, law enforcement agencies and relevant anti-graft bodies.

Egejuru warned against scams such as advance fee fraud (419), fake bank alerts, fraudulent loan offers, fake charity appeals, ATM card swapping, QR code manipulation and One-Time Password (OTP) theft.

Citing the collapse of MBA Forex, CBEX Cryptocurrency and the NRC Read-and-Earn platform, he cautioned Nigerians against investment schemes that promise unrealistic returns, demand upfront payments or rely on recruitment of new members.

He also warned against sharing sensitive banking details, including PINs, passwords, OTPs, BVNs and NINs, noting that legitimate

financial institutions do not request such information through calls, SMS or social media.

On retirement planning, Egejuru urged Nigerians to begin preparing from their first income source, encouraging savings, wise investments, emergency funds, monitoring of Retirement Savings Accounts (RSAs) and participation in credible cooperative societies.

He stressed that retirement security is important for everyone, including civil servants, farmers, traders, artisans, entrepreneurs, professionals and students.

Egejuru advised Nigerians to verify investment opportunities with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) before committing funds and reminded them that genuine government grants do not require payment before approval.

Akwalbom Security Trust Fund, NCS Partner To Strengthen Correctional Service

From Lovina Emole

The Akwalbom State Security Trust Fund (AKSTF) has sought stronger collaboration with the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCS) to improve correctional administration and offender rehabilitation in the state.

The Public Relations Officer of the Nigerian Correctional Service in Akwalbom State, DSC Richard Metong, disclosed this in a statement issued in Uyo.

He said the partnership was discussed during a courtesy visit by the Executive Secretary of the AKSTF, Col. Kingsley Umoh (Rtd.), to the State Controller of Corrections, CC Theophilus N. Okoka.

According to the statement, Col. Umoh said the visit was aimed at familiarising himself with the activities and operations of the Command and identifying areas where the Trust Fund could provide support.

He explained that the Akwalbom State Security Trust Fund was established to mobilise resources and support security agencies in the state to enhance public safety and strengthen the state's security architecture.

The executive secretary commended the Nigerian

Correctional Service for its role in maintaining public safety, rehabilitating offenders and supporting the administration of justice.

Responding, the State Controller of Corrections, Theophilus N. Okoka, thanked the executive secretary for the visit and appreciated the Trust Fund for its continued support to security agencies across the state.

He highlighted the core responsibilities of the Nigerian Correctional Service, which include the safe custody, care, welfare, rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration of inmates, as well as the implementation of non-custodial measures.

The controller stressed the importance of collaboration with stakeholders in addressing the operational and infrastructural needs of the command and strengthening rehabilitation programmes aimed at reducing reoffending and promoting public safety.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to sustained collaboration to strengthen security, improve correctional infrastructure, and promote effective offender rehabilitation and reintegration in Akwalbom State.

News

Eno Swears In New Akwalbom State Statistician-General

From LovinaEmole, Uyo

The Akwalbom State Governor, Pastor UmoEno, has sworn in Mr. UduakEffiong Isaac as the new Statistician-General of the state. He charged him with the responsibility of properly managing and coordinating the state's statistical data to support development.

The swearing-in ceremony took place recently at the State Executive Council Chambers, Government House, Uyo, before the State Executive Council meeting began.

Governor Eno said he was pleased with the appointment of Mr. Isaac. He explained that he wanted a competent statistician who would not only prepare accurate statistical reports but also explain and defend the figures whenever necessary.

He said the achievements of his administration under the ARISE Agenda must be properly recorded with accurate statistics. He directed the new Statistician-General to provide him with a monthly report on the state's progress and development.

The governor also said that Mr. Isaac will continue to serve as the Permanent Secretary for Human Capital Development while carrying out his new responsibilities.

Governor Eno recalled that Isaac's work in documenting the state's achievements in human capital development contributed to the visit of Vice President KashimShettima in 2025 to launch the second phase of the Federal Government's National Human Capital Development (HCD) programme. During that event, Akwalbom was ranked as the best-performing state in the country.

He said the appointment was based on Mr. Isaac's proven competence and expressed confidence that he would perform well in his new role.

The governor also called on all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to co-operate fully with the new Statistician-General so that he can successfully carry out his duties.

Speaking with journalists after the ceremony, Mr. Isaac thanked Governor Eno for the confidence placed in him. He promised to serve with diligence, professionalism, and integrity.

He also pledged to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to produce accurate, reliable, and credible data that will truly reflect the current situation and development of Akwalbom State.

Abia Govt Moves To Protect Lives, Asks Amamba Uzuakoli Residents to Relocate

By Blessing Anienwae

The Abia State Government has asked residents of AmambaUzuakoli in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State whose houses, farmlands, and other property have been damaged by gully erosion to move to safer places.

The Commissioner for Environment, Philemon Ogbonna, gave the advice during a visit to inspect the erosion sites. He said the affected areas are no longer safe for people to live or farm because the

gullies are still expanding.

Ogbonna, who visited the community with the Labour Party candidate for Bende Federal Constituency, ChimaAnyaso, said he was deeply saddened by the level of destruction.

He explained that Governor Alex Otti sent him to assess the situation and assured the people that the state government would take steps to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Speaking during the

visit, Anyaso also expressed concern over the damage caused by the erosion. He sympathized with the affected families and promised to work with Governor Otti to find a lasting solution that will stop the erosion from causing more destruction in the community.

He also criticized former members of the House of Representatives who represented Bende Federal Constituency, saying they failed to bring enough government

attention to the erosion problem despite receiving strong support from the people of Uzuakoli during previous elections.

While taking the government delegation around the affected areas, the President General of AmambaUzuakoli, ChigozieOkechukwu, said many residents now live in fear because the erosion continues to destroy houses, farmlands, and other valuable property. He added that many farmers

are now afraid to go to their farms because of the danger.

Okechukwu said several houses and economic trees had already been swallowed by the gullies. To prevent accidents and save lives, he said the community had asked its youths to block the roads leading to the affected areas until a permanent solution is provided.



Dr. Chimaobi Desmond Anyaso, House of Representatives candidate for Bende Federal Constituency ahead of the 2027 general election, addresses delegates during a recent inspection of the Amamba-Uzuakoli erosion site, with the Commissioner for Environment standing to his left.

Fubara Assures Residents of Noticeable Progress

From Nzeuzor Jane and Maduadugwo Jane, PH

The Rivers State Governor, Sir SiminalayiFubara, has assured residents that noticeable progress will be made within four months after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Rivers State Government and the Federal Government to promote tourism, culture, and the creative economy.

The agreement was signed under the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Cultural Project. It is aimed at strengthening cooperation in developing tourism sites, preserving cultural heritage, and creating more opportunities in the creative industry.

Governor Fubara gave the assurance while

receiving the Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, at the Government House in Port Harcourt during the signing ceremony.

He said the state government had already begun taking important steps to make Rivers State a leading tourism destination. One of the major projects, he said, is the development of a tourist beach in partnership with Landmark.

According to the governor, the first phase of the beach project will be completed and opened to the public in December.

Fubara also highlighted the Oyorokoto Road project in Andoni Local Government Area, describing it as a key investment that will

improve access to one of Nigeria's most beautiful coastal areas. He said Oyorokoto has rich wildlife and natural attractions that can draw both local and international tourists.

The governor noted that long-term economic growth depends on investing beyond roads and buildings. He said tourism, hospitality, and entertainment have become major sources of jobs and economic development in many successful countries.

He expressed confidence that Rivers State has the natural resources and human capacity to become a world-class tourism destination.

"If we cannot go to Dubai, let us build our own Dubai in Rivers State. If we cannot go to Qatar or Spain, let us

create our own world-class destination in Oyorokoto," he said.

Governor Fubara welcomed Rivers State's selection as one of the pilot states for the Renewed Hope Cultural Project and assured that the partnership would produce real results rather than remain a ceremonial exercise.

He invited the minister to return to the state in four months to assess the progress made, expressing optimism that the partnership would boost the state's economy, create jobs, and support the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda.

Earlier, the Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism and Creative Economy, Hannatu Musa Musawa, said the Renewed Hope Cultural Project was created to help diversify

Nigeria's economy by unlocking the huge potential of tourism, culture, and the creative industry through stronger collaboration with state governments.

She praised Governor Fubara for his commitment to tourism development and expressed satisfaction with the progress already made in Rivers State.

Musawa assured that the ministry would continue to work closely with the Rivers State Government to ensure the successful implementation of the project, positioning Rivers State among the leading beneficiaries of the Federal Government's tourism and creative economy development programme.

News

Abia Commissions Second Smart School

By Charles Ogbomaya

The Abia State Government has reaffirmed its commitment to revolutionising basic education with the commissioning of another Smart School at Umuomaiukwu Community Primary School, IsialaNgwa North Local Government Area.

The project forms part of Governor Alex Otti's plan to establish 20 Smart Schools across the state, comprising three mega schools and 17 Smart Schools, aimed at transforming public education through modern technology and digital learning.

Speaking with journalists shortly after the commissioning, the Managing Director of Blue Giraffe, the construction firm handling the Smart School projects, Mrs. Orijei Okpara Emole, said the newly commissioned facility is the fourth Smart School completed by the company.

She explained that Blue Giraffe was responsible for building and equipping the school, adding that the company also contributed through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to support quality education in the state.

She noted that additional Smart Schools are under construction in Umuahia-Ibeku, Bende and other parts of the state, while another project at Umuagbai is expected to be completed within the next few weeks.

The Blue Giraffe MD commended Governor Otti for prioritising education, noting that the administration's decision to allocate about 20 per cent of the state budget to education demonstrates its commitment to human capital development.

Also speaking, the Chairman of Blue Giraffe, Rear Admiral Harry Ngalani (Rtd.), described the Smart School initiative as an educational revolution.

In her remarks, the Executive Chairman of the Abia State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), Mrs. Lydia Onuoha, described the commissioning as another milestone in the state's educational transformation agenda.

She said the Smart School would expose pupils to modern digital learning, enabling them to confidently use tablets, interactive smart boards and other technological tools required for global competitiveness.

Mrs. Tinubu Urges Nigerians to Embrace Indigenous Fabric

... Donates N2 Billion To Akwete Textile Hub

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has recently announced a N2 billion intervention to support the establishment of a modern weaving and research centre for the renowned Akwete fabric in Abia State.

Mrs Tinubu made the announcement during an official/civic engagement of Akwete Weaving Co-operative Society in Akwete, Ukwa East LGA, Abia State where she interacted with women weavers, inspected the cooperative's facilities and witnessed demonstrations of the traditional hand-weaving process.

Announcing the intervention at the Township School Akwete, the wife of the president, said that the proposed facility, would serve as both a production hub and a training institution for future generations of weavers and help to modernise the industry without eroding its cultural identity.

She described the centuries-old Akwete textile tradition as a national heritage that must be preserved and promoted across Nigeria and urged Nigerians to embrace indigenous fabric.

"I am here to announce to all Nigerians, that the Igbo should take Akwete to the nation. We all wear tie and dye from Yoruba land. We wear Aso Oke. Why not us wearing Akwete? It's a beautiful fabric."

"On my own, I told the governor, I'm donating N2 billion to the project. I don't know how you want to use it. The funds are easy for me to give to you, and I believe that that fund would be in good hands", she said.

Mrs Tinubu explained that her visit was inspired by a documentary she watched on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), where she first learnt about the craftsmanship of the Akwete women.

She disclosed that she had initially mistaken the fabric for one from Ghana before



First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu,

discovering that it originated from Abia State, which prompted her determination to visit the community.

The First Lady praised the unique texture and cultural significance of the fabric, saying it deserved wider national and international recognition.

She also urged the weavers to preserve the authenticity of the craft while adapting it for contemporary uses, noting that Akwete fabrics could be transformed into a wide range of products beyond the traditional wrappers.

In his speech, the Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti, while welcoming the First Lady, revealed that she initiated the visit after becoming fascinated by the Akwete weaving tradition.

"The truth is that you invited yourself. This is your initiative, and you followed up with us to ensure that this visit happened. I want to thank you", the governor said.

Governor Otti said that his government had been working to revitalise the Akwete weaving industry since assuming office in 2023, by dismantling long-standing barriers that limited its growth.

The governor warned that without embracing innovation and technology, the indigenous textile industry could lose market share to machine-produced imitations already being manufactured in countries such as India and China.

He disclosed that the Abia State Government had already designed a comprehensive development plan for the industry and proposed a partnership with the First Lady to deliver a world-class production hub for the women.

"We want to build a production hub, a hub for Akwete women in that cooperative society place."

"For us, we have also been engaging with Akwete as far back as 2023, after I was sworn in, and we believe just like you do, that there's a lot that Akwete can do", he said.

Governor Otti also commended President Bola Tinubu for undertaking what he described as difficult but necessary economic reforms, including the removal of petrol subsidy and the floating of the naira. He added that the reforms has increased resources available to federal, state and local governments for infrastructure development and productive investments despite the temporary economic challenges.

In her welcome address earlier, the Wife of the Governor, Lady Priscilla Otti, who described the maiden visit of the First Lady as a historic milestone had commended Senator Tinubu's leadership of the Renewed Hope Initiative, saying its interventions in women's empowerment, support for small businesses, care for the elderly, assistance to persons with disabilities, food security and other social investment programmes has positively impacted lives across the country.

Mrs Otti highlighted the cultural significance of the indigenous Akwete fabric, noting that it is one of the oldest and most distinguished textile traditions of the Igbo people, handwoven by women in Akwete, and pointed out that the First Lady's decision to spotlight the Akwete cloth tradition reflects her commitment to creating lasting economic opportunities for ordinary Nigerian women.

She pledged the state's continued partnership with the Renewed Hope Initiative to ensure that the intervention would strengthen enterprises, preserve the weaving heritage and improve the livelihoods of Akwete women.

In a goodwill message, the former Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development, Dr Uche Ogah, emphasised that empowering women was critical to national development and expressed optimism that the visit would elevate the profile of Akwete cloth beyond Nigeria's borders as well as position it as a globally recognised cultural symbol and a source of economic growth for the community.

He praised both President Tinubu and Governor Otti for what he described as purposeful leadership, adding that Abia residents were witnessing unprecedented development under the Otti led administration.

Also speaking, the member representing Ukwa East and Ukwa West Federal Constituency, Hon. Chris Nkwonta, described the occasion as a defining moment in the history of Akwete and Abia State, adding that the presidential visit has brought national attention to the centuries-old handwoven fabric and offered renewed hope for its preservation and commercial expansion.

Nkwonta stressed the need to scale up production, internationalise the fabric and establish a modern weaving and research centre to preserve the craft for future generations and warned that without deliberate efforts to train younger women in the art of weaving, the tradition could gradually go into extinction.

The APC chieftain commended Governor Otti for what he described as the administration's remarkable infrastructural transformation of Abia State. He said that the state had "never had it this good," and pledged to work with the First Lady of Abia State, Mrs Priscilla Otti, and other stakeholders to establish a befitting Akwete Weaving and Research Centre that would serve as both a production hub.

Highlight of the event was the conferment of the chieftaincy title of "Ugonwanyi" on the First Lady by the Abia State Traditional Rulers Council.

Otti Warns Owners of Buildings Used By Kidnappers

By Blessing Anienwe

The Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has warned that any uncompleted building found to be used by kidnappers or other criminals will be pulled down. He said his government will not allow criminals to use abandoned or uncompleted buildings as hiding places.

The governor gave the warning during his

monthly media chat with journalists. He said security agencies are keeping a close watch on uncompleted buildings and forests across the state to stop criminals from using them as hideouts. He stressed that no part of Abia, including the forests, will be allowed to become a safe place for kidnappers or other criminals. Governor Otti said the safety of the people remains a top priority for his administration. He added that anyone who commits a crime in Abia and escapes to another state will

be traced, arrested, and brought back to face the law. He said, "We are monitoring all uncompleted buildings. If anyone allows kidnappers to use their building to keep victims, that building will be demolished." He added that his government prefers to act instead of talking too much about its security plans. Speaking on the request by workers for a higher minimum wage, the governor said his administration would like to improve workers' salaries. However, he

explained that the government also has many other important responsibilities that require funding, making it difficult to increase wages for now. Governor Otti also promised to find out why the roads in Amaio Okpo Community in Arochuku Local Government Area are still in bad condition despite an earlier contract awarded by his government. He assured the people that the matter would be investigated and the necessary action taken.

News

Parents, Guardians Advised, Over Attitude To Students Of The School For The Blind

By Chijioke Chukwuemeka

The management of the School for the Blind, Afaraokwu, Umuahia, has expressed concern over the neglect of some children with visual impairment during school holidays, urging parents and guardians to provide proper care, instill sound moral values and complement the school's efforts in nurturing the children.

The management lamented that some parents return their wards to school unkempt after holidays, stressing that disability should never be an excuse for poor character.

It reaffirmed the school's commitment to rehabilitating, equipping and empowering learners with visual impairment to become confident, self-reliant and productive members of society.

In her keynote address, the Principal, Mrs. Emelike Ngozi Bridget, described the occasion as a celebration of courage, resilience and the limitless potential of persons living with disabilities.

She expressed appreciation to Governor Dr. Alex Otti, the Abia State Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, ASUBEB, parents, teachers, development partners and non-governmental organisations for their unwavering support towards the growth and development of the institution.

Mrs. Emelike also commended the dedication of Braille instructors, orientation and mobility trainers, and other staff members whose patience, professionalism and commitment have continued to shape the lives of the learners.

Addressing the graduating pupils, she encouraged them to remain focused and ambitious, reminding them that "their vision is not in their eyes but in their minds."

She urged them to pursue careers in education, technology, music, law, business and leadership, while continuing to develop their talents and believing in their abilities.

The principal further called on parents and society to continue advocating for inclusive education, accessible infrastructure and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Chairman on the occasion, Mr. Onwumere Christian, commended the management and staff of the school for their unwavering commitment to the education and rehabilitation of visually impaired children.

Speaking on behalf of the graduating class, the overall best graduating student, Master Ikechukwu Ugochukwu, attributed his outstanding academic performance to the dedication, love and tireless efforts of his teachers.

He described the rehabilitation and training he received at the school for the Blind as exceptional, saying the institution had equipped him with the confidence, knowledge and life skills needed to excel.

Master Ugochukwu appealed to the Abia State Government and the Federal Government to expand vocational and creative learning opportunities for visually impaired students by introducing training in music, crafts and other practical skills that would enhance their self-reliance and global competitiveness.

The ceremony featured special prayers offered by parents for the graduating class using candlelight as a symbol of hope, guidance and a brighter future. Other highlights included drama presentations, a newscasting performance, and the presentation of gifts to the graduating pupils.



The Principal, School for the Blind, Mrs. Emelike Ngozi Bridget.

South-East Governors Unite on Regional Security, Seek Stronger Collaboration

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governors of the five South-East states recently converged in Umuahia, Abia State, for the maiden South-East Regional Security Summit aimed at evolving a coordinated response to the worsening security challenges confronting the region.

The summit, organised by the Federal Ministry of Defence in collaboration with the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Community Engagement (South-East), was convened by the Minister of Defence, Major General Christopher Gwabin Musa (retd.), under the theme, "Collaborative Approaches to Strengthening Security and Regional Stability." The meeting provided a platform for the Federal Government, South-East states, security agencies and community leaders to deliberate on practical measures for tackling cross-border crimes through intelligence sharing, coordinated security operations and enhanced community participation. Opening the summit, the Minister of Defence said President Bola Tinubu's administration remains committed to restoring lasting peace across the South-East, stressing that security requires



Gov. Alex Otti.

collective action by governments, security agencies and local communities. Musa described the South-East as a region renowned for enterprise and economic productivity but lamented that kidnapping, attacks on security personnel, violent enforcement of illegal sit-at-home orders and other criminal activities have continued to threaten lives, businesses and development. He urged governors and other leaders

in the region to work closely with the Federal Government by providing credible intelligence and practical recommendations that would address insecurity and youth restiveness.

According to him, the summit was designed to strengthen cooperation among stakeholders and develop coordinated strategies capable of restoring peace, improving intelligence gathering and enhancing regional stability.

Host Governor, Dr. Alex Otti of Abia State, reaffirmed the commitment of South-East governors to ensuring a peaceful and secure region, noting that his administration has continued to work closely with security agencies to make Abia increasingly hostile to criminal elements.

Otti called on residents to regard security as a collective responsibility by supporting law enforcement agencies with useful information and shunning all forms of criminality.

In separate goodwill messages, Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State, represented by his deputy, Ifeanyi Ossai; Governor Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State, represented by Deputy Governor Dr. Onyekachukwu Ibezim; Governor Francis Nwifur of Ebonyi State, represented by Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Moses Ije Oduwa; and Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State, represented by his Special Adviser on Security, Brig.-Gen. Joseph Chima Ogbonna (retd.), pledged continued collaboration with the Federal Government, security agencies and traditional institutions to improve security across their states.

Abia First Lady Urges Women, Others To Rise Above Personal Challenges

By Chibumma Ikeokwu

The wife of the Abia State Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, has encouraged women, young people, and delegates to rise above personal and societal challenges and fulfill the purpose God has for their lives.

She gave this charge while delivering the keynote address at the 2026 Ministers Prayer Network International Conference, held at the Gilgal Convention Centre in Obuzo Asa, Ukwu West Local Government Area of Abia State.

Speaking on the theme, "Break Forth Beyond Old Limits," Mrs. Otti described the conference as a powerful platform that has, for the past 17 years, promoted spiritual revival, personal growth, and transformational leadership.

She welcomed participants from different parts of Nigeria and other countries, saying their presence reflects the increasing impact of the apostolic movement across the world.

The First Lady urged the congregation to reject fear, doubt, and mediocrity. She encouraged them to believe that they can achieve greater things through faith and determination.

"Every meaningful breakthrough begins when someone refuses to remain limited by fear, excuses, or difficult circumstances," she said.

"To break forth beyond old limits means refusing to believe that your best days are

behind you. It means trusting that God is still writing greater chapters of your life."

Speaking on the role of women, Mrs. Otti stressed the need for women who are spiritually strong, intellectually prepared, and emotionally resilient.

She said society needs women who can build strong families without giving up their dreams and who can raise children with good character and values.

The First Lady also reaffirmed the Abia State Government's commitment to empowering women, noting that lasting development cannot be achieved if the talents and abilities of women remain unused.

"We believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved when the potential of women remains untapped. Every woman who discovers her purpose becomes a powerful force for positive change in society," she said.

Mrs. Otti further advised young women and youths to combine faith with vision, discipline, prayer, and hard work, reminding them that these qualities are essential for a successful future.

She also praised the founders and leaders of the Ministers Prayer Network International, Rev. Mosy Madugba and Rev. Chinyere Madugba, for remaining committed to the vision of the conference and for creating a platform where women from different backgrounds can seek God together.

In his remarks, Rev. Mosy Madugba offered Otti and the First Lady as prayers for God's continued guidance and protection, wisdom, and State on the path of progress.

BCA Honours Retiring Staff

By Ebere Tasie

The Broadcasting Corporation of Abia (BCA) has honoured two retiring members of staff, Mrs. Ada Okore and Mrs. Betty Friday-Okezie, in recognition of their outstanding contributions and dedicated service to the corporation.

Speaking during the retirement ceremony, the Television Director, Mrs. Ikechukwu, described the retirees as exemplary officers who distinguished themselves through diligence, professionalism and unwavering commitment to duty.

According to her, Mrs. Okore and Mrs. Friday-Okezie served as dependable team players, role models and mentors to younger colleagues throughout their years of service.

She noted that the legacy of hard work, integrity and professionalism they had built would continue to inspire members of staff long after their retirement.

Mrs. Ikechukwu urged the retirees to embrace retirement with optimism, describing it as the beginning of another rewarding phase of life that offers opportunities to spend more time with family, pursue personal interests and enjoy the fruits of their years of meritorious service.

She prayed that God would grant them good health, long life, peace and abundant blessings, while thanking their families, friends, colleagues and other guests for joining the corporation in celebrating the occasion.

In his goodwill message, Rev. Blessed Amalambu encouraged the retirees to approach the next phase of their lives with gratitude, faith and renewed purpose.

He reminded them that retirement is not the end of service but the beginning of another season of meaningful impact. He urged them to remain active in God's work, continue sharing their wealth of experience with younger generations and serve as positive role models in their families, churches and communities.

The cleric also prayed that God would bless them with sound health, long life, divine protection and abundant peace.

Responding separately, the retirees expressed profound appreciation to the management of the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia for the opportunity to serve the organisation throughout their careers.

Mrs. Okore and Mrs. Friday-Okezie also thanked their colleagues for the support, cooperation and cordial working relationship they enjoyed over the years, describing their time at the corporation as fulfilling, rewarding and memorable.

They pledged to remain available whenever their services or professional experience might be required, assuring the corporation of their continued willingness to provide guidance, mentorship and support towards its growth and development.

Discourse

TRAGEDY OF GEN AGUIYI IRONSI: 60 YEARS AGO

By Eze Uwadiogwu Ogbonnaya

How time does fly. It still looks like yesterday. But it is already 60 years in the history of Nigeria. On July 29, 1966, Nigeria's first military Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Major General Johnson Thomas Umunnakwe Aguiyi Ironsi was killed in a counter-coup staged in Ibadan, capital of the defunct Western Nigeria by Northern Nigerian Army Officers and men to avenge the January 15, 1966 first military coup.

For the post 196 new generation of Nigerians, who do not know General Aguiyi Ironsi held a record of many "FIRST" in the history of the Nigerian Armed Forces and Military Governments before the present 27 years uninterrupted democratically elected Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Born in 1922 at Umuana Ndume, Ibeke, the land owners of Umuahia, the Abia state capital, he was living in Kaduna with his Sierra Leonean brother-in-law and railway worker, Johnson Thomas when he joined the Royal West African Frontier Force in 1944, towards the end of the Second World War as a young man of 22 years.

He continued with his military career after the war with encouragement from his British senior non-commissioned and commissioned officers. With further trainings in Nigeria and Teshie, Gold Coast (Ghana) he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal West African Frontier Force 1948 with his name as No 2 among the Nigerian officers. The No. 1 was Brigadier Samuel Ademulegun, from Ondo town.

With his brilliance and dedication to Military duties, Umunnakwe Aguiyi-Ironsi rose rapidly with promotions and in 1956, he was already a Major. During the visit of Queen of England to Nigeria in 1956, the Ibeke-born Army officer was the ADC to the British Monarch. His kinsmen were proud seeing their son standing behind the Queen as she came to commission the British Protestant Churches (CMS Methodist, Church of Scotland Mission) built hospital named after her, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, now the FMC Umuahia.

With independence of former Belgian Congo in 1960 and the killing of Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba through the conspiracy of Joseph Mobutu, Moise Tshombe and Joseph Kasavubu, and the secession of the Katanga province, a civil war broke out in February 1961 for which the United Nations had to intervene. With the setting of a UN Peace Keeping Force, the head of the Nigerian contingent, Brigadier Aguiyi Ironsi was appointed on merit as the Commander of the UN Keeping Force in Congo. Then United Nations Secretary General, Dag Hammargoeld died in a plane crash in the Congo, following which Mr. U Thant took over. J. T. U Aguiyi came back to Nigerian

in 1964 with the rank of Major General and became the first two-star General of the Nigerian Army.

In May 1965, with the exit of the last British General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army, Major General Evarrad back to Britain, Aguiyi Ironsi set a record as he was appointed by the Balewa Federal Government in Lagos as the First Indigenous General Officer Commanding the Nigerian Army of 10,000 man strength, with just two Brigades, of five battalions and other service units such as Engineering, Medical, Artillery, S & T etc.

Less than a year of assumption of office as GOC of the Nigerian Army, the 5 Majors of the Army led by Emmanuel Ifeajuna, staged a bloody coup on January 15, 1966, that claimed the lives of the Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Premier of Northern Nigeria Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Western Nigeria, Samuel Akintola. Aguiyi Ironsi and others foiled the coup in Lagos. In Kaduna, Major Nzeogwu stormed the Premiers lodge and killed the Sardauna of Sokoto.

The coup was a failure in the East and Mid West as the presence of Archbishop Makarios, President of Cyprus made the 1st battalion of the Army, Enugu, with Lt. Col. David Ejoor from striking the Premier Lodge, Enugu.

Some senior Northern Army officers like Brigadier Zachari Maimalari and Col. Kur Mohammed were also killed while the Quarter Master-General of the Army, Lt. Colonel Arthur Unegbu from Ozubulu, Anambra state was killed for his refusal to release arms to the coupists led by Ifeajuna in Lagos.

The Federal parliament moved a motion and handed over the reigns of power to the Nigerian Army with Aguiyi-Ironsi as the most senior officer as GOC. The assumption of office as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces by General Aguiyi Ironsi, an Igboman got misinterpreted by other Nigerians, especially in the North, where British Lecturers at the Ahmadu Bello University started lecturing the Northern Students that the coup was an "Igbo coup" as no prominent Igbo politician such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dr. Michael Okpara were killed. Only just in 2025 General Ibrahim Babaginda admitted in his autobiography that the January 15 coup 1966 was not an Igbo coup.

The Unification Decree of May 1966 was the last straw that broke the camel's back as it abolished the former regions with the hope of uniting the country where there would be no East, West or the North. Ironically since August 1966 Nigeria has been running a unitary government disguised as federation till date for which Ironsi was killed.

From the Ahmadu University Zaria, the first attack against Easterners started and spread to other Northern cities. Hundreds of thousands of Easterners fled

the North, but on the persuasion of Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, the Ironsi appointed Military Governor of Eastern Region (now a Eastern States) they went back. Ojukwu, who foiled the Ifeajuna / Nzeogwu coup in Kano was Commander of the 5th Battalion. Many of them went back to the North. He even appointed the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, as Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Newly wedded Major John Ihedigbo of Umuokpara Umuahia was the 5th battalion 21/c under Ojukwu in Kano. He was executed in Wudil Kano by Captain Gorah.

Then on July 29, 1966, the worst happened. General J.T.U Aguiyi Ironsi on a tour of Western Nigeria was kidnapped from the Agodi Ibadan Government House by Northern Troops led by Major T. Y. Danjuma in a counter-coup.

The coup was plotted by Lt. Col. Murtala Mohammed, Majors T. Y. Danjuma and Martin Adamu. Ironsi was kidnapped by Danjuma along with his host, Military Governor of Western Nigeria, Lt. Col. Adekunle Fajuyi. The Brigade Commander, 2nd Brigade Ibadan, Col. Hilary Mbililitam Njoku, escaped the Government House, Ibadan with bullet wounds, and admitted at the UCH where he was treated by two Igbo doctors Prof. J. C. Ogbonnaya and Dr. S. U. Onukaogu.

Danjuma handed Ironsi and Fajuyi to Lt. William Walbe and other Northern soldiers who executed them at the Moore Plantation Ibadan and buried them in shallow grave. All over Nigerian Army establishments, Eastern Officers and men were attacked and killed to avenge the killing of January 15, termed "Igbo Coup". Eastern civilians in the North were not spared. The killings continued through August - October 1966. Thirty thousand Easterners (30,000) lost their lives in the genocide.

For six months, the whereabouts of Ironsi and Fajuyi were unknown. On August 1, 1966 Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon, Chief of Staff, Army, was appointed as the new Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces after the intervention of the British High Commissioner Mr. Cunning Bruce who urged Murtala Muhammed, then 28, to allow Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as the most senior northern officer to take over. Gowon was just 32 years of age. Lt. William Walbe later became the ADC to Yakubu Gowon for nine years in Dodan Barracks as Military Head of State. Lt. Sanni Bello, a northerner as Aguiyi Ironsi's ADC could not resist Ty Danjuma at Agodi Ibandan government house when they came to kill Aguiyi Ironsi.

In Kano, Eastern Officers of the 5th Battalion were taken to Wudil, where they were taken to be executed by Captain Gora on daily basis until the Emir of Kano, Ado Bayero intervened. 2nd Lt. Shehu Yar'dua even stationed himself at the Markudi

bridge where he was shooting and throwing into River Benue the bodies of his former comrades in arms who were escaping to the East from the North through the railway and road transport. General Alexander Madiebo, escaped to the East after he was hidden in a railway petrol tanker by an Igbo locomotive driver across River Benue.

It was not until January 1967 after the failed Aburi Accord in Ghana that the body of Aguiyi Ironsi was brought home to Umuahia and given military burial. The Western Region Governor, Colonel Adeyinka Adebayo was the highest military personnel that attended the burial from Lagos.

On July 6, 1967, the Nigerian-Biafra war started and ended on January 12, 1970 which claimed over 3 million lives of former Eastern Nigerians through bombs, kwashiorkor, bullets etc. mainly Igbos.

Since the death of Ironsi 60 years ago, no national institution like Airport, Stadium or national institution or honours had been conferred on Ironsi. He died the poorest Nigerian Head of State with just £76, (N152) in his account remaining from the £5000.00 overdraft he took from the ACB in May 1966.

In 1974, the African Continental Bank, ACB, with headquarters in Lagos dusted up its pre-war files and took the family of Aguiyi-Ironsi to court over the £5,000.00 overdraft the general took in May 1966 at State House, Marina. The widow, Lady Victoria Aguiyi Ironsi came to court and tendered his bank account which showed that only £76 (N152) was remaining in it when life was snuffed out of him at Moore Plantation, Ibadan. The presiding judge dismissed the case and pleaded with her to go and take care of her children. Aguiyi Ironsi died without dipping his hands into the Nigerian treasury and the poorest Nigerian Head of State.

Aguiyi-Ironsi should be bestowed with the country's highest national honour as Grand Commander of the Federal Republic, GCFR, while the University of Abuja, should be named after him and a major national land mark also established in his memory.

The Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia, which the Military Government in Owerri named Ramat Specialist Hospital Umuahia in 1976 in memory of late General Murtala Mohammed should be renamed Aguiyi Ironsi Specialist Hospital. Thanks to the former President Olusegun Obasanjo who appointed Ironsi's son as Minister of Defence 2003 to 2007.

By
HRH Eze Dr. Uwadiogwu C. Ogbonnaya
 Veteran Journalist, Historian, was
 Defence Editor, Defunct Concord
 Newspaper Group, Lagos
 He is now the traditional Ruler of
 Umuanyi Uturu in Abia State

Joseph Jacob

 Joseph JACOB1914
070361698671


Creative Writers Hangout

Dear Step-mother (9)

You are a very fine girl," he said softly while moving closer.

Fear exploded inside her instantly. She stepped backward, "Sir... I want to go."

But the man grabbed her wrist suddenly.

Sandra screamed.

The tray of plantain chips nearly fell as she struggled violently against him. He tried pulling her toward the building while whispering desperate filthy promises into her ear.

Panic gave Sandra strength. She bit his hand hard. The man shrank in pain.

That single moment was enough. Sandra yanked herself free, grabbed the tray tightly against her chest, and bolted toward the gate. Her slippers slipped wildly against the concrete as she ran out into the street without looking back.

People turned briefly to stare as she sprinted down the road, breathing hard, and tears streaming down her face. She did not stop running until she reached home.

When she finally entered the compound, trembling and drenched in sweat, her stepmother frowned immediately, "Why are you back early?"

Sandra burst into tears.

Words poured from her mouth between sobs as she explained everything – the man, the compound, the locked gate, the attempted assault.

For one brief second, even her father looked disturbed. But the sympathy vanished quickly. "So what now?" her stepmother snapped impatiently. "Did he rape you?"

"No..."

"Then thank God and stop crying."

Sandra stared at her in disbelief.

"I don't want to hawk again," she pleaded weakly. "Please... I'm afraid."

Her stepmother folded her arms coldly, "And who will feed you if you stop?"

Sandra looked toward her father desperately, hoping for protection. He avoided her eyes, "You will continue tomorrow," he said flatly.

The decision crushed her. That evening, Sandra refused to eat. Partly from anger. Partly from fear. Mostly from hopelessness. Nobody cared.

For nearly twenty-four hours she remained hungry inside her room, lying awake while pain and humiliation swallowed her thoughts. Yet hunger always wins eventually.

The next afternoon, weak and emotionally drained, Sandra lifted the tray of plantain chips onto her head once again.

And despite the terror still living inside her, she returned to the streets.

Five months changed Uche in ways he barely noticed himself. The boy who had arrived in Scotland shivering beneath airport rain was slowly disappearing.

Now his shoulders looked broader. His reflexes sharper. His body had adapted to the brutal rhythm of academy football – freezing morning runs, endless tactical sessions, gym work, goalkeeper drills under sleet and rain. Even his accent had begun to soften slightly around certain words after months of hearing Scottish voices every day.

But despite all the progress, he still had not become first-choice goalkeeper for the Rangers F.C. Under-17 side.

Every weekend, Uche sat on the bench watching another goalkeeper – Callum Bryce, a tall blond Scottish boy with excellent distribution – start matches ahead of him. Uche trained relentlessly, yet match opportunities remained frustratingly rare.

The disappointment ate at him quietly. Still, he never complained. Douglas Fraser noticed that.

One bitterly cold evening in November, rain hammered sideways across the training grounds while floodlights cast ghostly beams through the mist. The goalkeeper unit had just completed nearly two exhausting hours of high-intensity drills.

Uche's jersey clung tightly to his body from sweat and rainwater. Mud stained his gloves and knees. His chest rose heavily with exhaustion after repeatedly diving across the soaked turf.

Douglas stood near the goalpost holding a ball beneath one arm. The old coach's sharp eyes followed Uche carefully for a moment before he finally spoke. "You've changed."

Uche looked up, breathing hard. "Sir?"

"You stop thinking after mistakes now," Douglas said bluntly. "Before, one bad save ruined your confidence for ten minutes. Now you recover immediately."

Uche remained silent.

Douglas bounced the ball once against the wet grass. "Tomorrow," he said calmly, "you start."

For a second, Uche thought he heard wrong. His heartbeat quickened. "Against Aberdeen?"

Douglas nodded once. "Don't make me regret it."

That night, sleep abandoned Uche completely. Rain battered the hostel windows while he lay awake staring at the ceiling, replaying countless possibilities inside his mind. His first real chance; his first start. Months of

frustration, homesickness, and silent determination had finally opened one small door.

And he knew opportunities in football rarely knocked twice.

The next morning arrived cold and grey. The match against Aberdeen F.C. Under-17 took place at the academy stadium before a modest crowd of parents, scouts, staff members, and youth coaches wrapped heavily in winter jackets.

The air smelled of wet grass and coffee.

Uche stood inside the tunnel adjusting his gloves repeatedly while nerves churned violently inside him. Around him, teammates bounced lightly on their feet, trying to stay warm in the freezing weather.

Then came the walk onto the pitch. The stadium lights felt brighter than usual. The crowd louder. The grass impossibly green beneath the dull Scottish sky.

As Uche jogged toward the goalpost, he glanced briefly around the stadium and whispered a quick prayer beneath his breath.

The whistle blew. The match began furiously. Aberdeen attacked aggressively from the start, pressing high and forcing Rangers deep into their own half. Within ten minutes, Uche faced his first serious test.

A low cross whipped dangerously into the penalty area before an Aberdeen striker connected cleanly from close range. Instinct took over. Uche exploded sideways. His gloves met the ball with a sharp thud before he pushed it around the post spectacularly. The small crowd gasped.

Douglas Fraser, standing near the touchline beneath a black raincoat, showed no reaction outwardly. But inside, something shifted.

Minutes later came another attack. A powerful long-range shot skipped wickedly off the wet turf toward the bottom corner. Again Uche reacted instantly, diving low through mud and water to claw the ball away with his fingertips.

Confidence began growing inside him. Every save sharpened him further. Every touch settled his nerves.

Then Rangers scored. Midway through the second half, a quick counterattack ended with their winger smashing a shot into the far corner. The small home crowd erupted loudly as Rangers took a 1-0 lead.

Now the pressure truly began. Aberdeen attacked relentlessly during the final twenty minutes. Crosses rained into the box. Corners swung dangerously through crowded bodies. One striker broke through one-on-one late in the match after a defensive mistake.

The stadium seemed to freeze. Uche charged off his line fearlessly. The striker shot low. Uche spread himself instinctively, blocking the effort with his chest before scrambling desperately onto the loose ball as boots flew around him.

The whistle finally came minutes later, full time. Rangers won 1-0.

Teammates rushed toward Uche immediately, slapping his shoulders and shouting excitedly while rain continued pouring across the pitch. Even supporters behind the barriers applauded loudly.

From the sideline, Douglas Fraser simply nodded once toward him. But that single nod meant everything.

The following week changed Uche's life completely. It happened suddenly.

The senior Rangers F.C. team was preparing for the Scottish Cup final when disaster struck their goalkeeping department. First-choice goalkeeper Elias Gunnarsson suffered a fractured wrist during training. Second-choice keeper Ryan Kerr remained suspended after receiving a red card in the semi-final. Third-choice goalkeeper Liam Boyd woke up violently ill with a severe stomach bug and could barely leave his room.

Panic spread quickly through the club. Inside the senior training complex, phones rang constantly while coaches argued urgently near tactical boards. The senior manager looked furious.

"We need cover immediately," someone insisted.

Within minutes, the head of goalkeeping operations stormed toward the academy section searching for Douglas Fraser.

He found the old coach beside the youth pitches watching training beneath freezing rain.

"Douglas," the man said urgently, "we need keepers."

Douglas frowned immediately.

"How bad?"

"Bad enough that we're pulling from the academy."

Without hesitation, Douglas turned toward the training field where Uche stood adjusting cones after drills.

The old coach pointed directly at him, "Him."

The staff member looked surprised. "The Nigerian lad?"

Douglas nodded firmly, "He's ready."

An hour later, Uche sat inside a conference room so stunned he could barely process words properly. Beside him sat Jamie McBride, the experienced goalkeeper from the U-23 squad.

Senior team staff moved around briskly handing them schedules and training kits.

Is this finally the breakthrough?

AUTHOR of the WEEK Seinde Arogboba

Bashorun Seinde Arogboba, OFR, born on 23 March 1939 in Oka-Akoko, Ondo State, is a distinguished Nigerian educationist, author, elder statesman and politician. Widely respected for his contributions to education, literature and public service, he has spent decades shaping intellectual and political discourse in Nigeria.

Arogboba received his early education at Christ School, Oka-Akoko, before attending Victory College, Ikare, where he obtained the West African School Certificate. He later studied at the University of Ibadan, laying the foundation for a lifelong career in education and public administration. His passion for learning and leadership earned him recognition as one of Nigeria's most accomplished educators.

As an educationist, Arogboba served as a school principal and rose to become the National President of the All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS). Throughout his career, he championed educational excellence, discipline and sound moral values, leaving a lasting impact on secondary education in Ondo State and across Nigeria.

Beyond education, Arogboba established



himself as a prolific author with several notable publications, including *Trapped*, *Agidi Sours: Discipline on Trial*, *The Socialite*, *Wives and Mothers*, *Nigeria: The Path We Refused to Take*, and *To the Stars Through Bows and Arrows*. His writings address themes of education, morality, governance, leadership and national development, earning him respect within Nigeria's literary community.

In politics and public affairs, Arogboba became a prominent leader of the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, *Afenifere*, serving as its Secretary-General. Known for his principled leadership and commitment to democracy, he has consistently advocated good governance, national unity and the protection of democratic values while playing important mediating roles during political crises in Ondo State.

His outstanding service has earned him numerous honours. He was conferred with the national honour of Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) and holds the traditional title of *Asiwaju* of Oka-Akoko. In recognition of his literary achievements, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame and invested as a Fellow of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), while Ondo State has also celebrated him as one of its distinguished citizens.

Today, Bashorun Seinde Arogboba remains one of Nigeria's most respected elder statesmen, admired for his integrity, intellectual depth and unwavering commitment to education, literature and public service. His enduring legacy continues to inspire younger generations, while his works and public engagements remain valuable contributions to Nigeria's educational, cultural and political development.

Foreign News

AI Devices That Can See and Listen

Imagine going to work with a tiny recording device attached to your clothes.

The smart glasses on your face can instantly recognize the people and objects around you, while a bracelet on your wrist listens to conversations and uses artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze what is being said.

This may sound like science fiction, but it is the future many technology companies are working to create, whether people are ready for it or not.

Major technology companies and startups are developing wearable devices that can see, hear, and understand the world around users. Meta Platforms is already selling millions of its Ray-Ban AI smart glasses, which come with built-in cameras and microphones. Samsung Electronics is also expected to launch its own smart glasses in the near future.

These devices are designed to give AI assistants direct access to what users see and hear in their daily lives. Technology

companies believe this will allow AI to provide more helpful and personalized support. In the future, they hope these assistants will be able to complete tasks for users with little or no instruction.

To understand how this technology works, users can spend time testing different AI wearable devices in both professional and personal settings. In some cases, the devices can be helpful and make everyday activities easier. However, they also create uncomfortable situations, especially when asking friends, family members, or coworkers for permission to record conversations.

Privacy experts have raised concerns that these devices may collect information not only from the person wearing them but also from everyone nearby.

Unlike smartphones, which are usually easy to notice when recording, AI wearable devices can be much more difficult to detect. Irina Raicu, Director of the Internet Ethics Program at Santa Clara

University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, said this creates challenges because people may not know when they are being recorded or have the chance to give consent.

She explained that as these devices become smaller and more discreet, the traditional idea of asking for permission before recording someone could become less common.

Testing the New Technology

For many years, technology companies have collected data about people's online activities, including their searches, shopping habits, locations, and fitness information. AI-powered wearable devices take this data collection further by capturing parts of the physical world — what people see, hear, and experience in their everyday lives.

As these devices become more common, society will have to find a balance between the convenience of advanced AI technology and the need to protect personal privacy.

SOUTH AFRICAN COUPLE MAKE HISTORY AT WOMEN'S AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

South Africa's first match against Tanzania at the 2026 Women's Africa Cup of Nations created a special moment in football history.

Married players Robyn Moodaly and Gabriela Salgado played together for Banyana Banyana, becoming the first married couple to appear in the same WAFCON match.

The historic moment happened during South Africa's Group B opening game on Monday, July 27, when the two players shared the field for the

first time in the history of the tournament.

The Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), organised by the Confederation of African Football (CAF), is the biggest women's football competition in Africa. The tournament started in 1991 and has continued to grow, attracting more attention from fans across the continent.

Moodaly and Salgado are among South Africa's most recognised female footballers. Both players have represented Banyana Banyana in

major international competitions and have openly spoken about their relationship with supporters.

Their participation in the same match is another important moment for women's football, showing the sport's growth and increasing acceptance of different backgrounds.

The pair remain key members of the South African team as the reigning African champions continue their journey to defend their WAFCON title.

France Issues Heat Warnings as Wildfires Spread; Over 63,000 Evacuated Near Madrid

France and Spain are battling extreme heat and destructive wildfires as soaring temperatures continue to affect large parts of both countries. Weather experts say there is no rain expected in the coming days, leaving forests and dry vegetation vulnerable to more fires. The combination of high temperatures, dry conditions, and strong winds has made it difficult for firefighters to contain the blazes.

In France, authorities have issued heat warnings as an intense heatwave is expected to reach its peak. The extreme temperatures are likely to make the wildfire situation even worse. Health officials have also warned people, especially children, the elderly, and those with existing health conditions, to stay indoors as much as possible, drink plenty of water, and avoid outdoor activities during the hottest hours of the day.

Residents in areas affected by heavy smoke have been given face masks to help protect them from harmful air pollution. Thick smoke from the fires has reduced air quality in several communities, raising concerns about breathing problems and other health risks. Emergency services are closely monitoring the situation and providing support to affected

residents. In the southwest Gironde region of France, local authorities said the wildfire remained stable overnight, giving firefighters some hope of preventing further spread. However, the fire has not yet been fully brought under control. Hundreds of firefighters, supported by military engineers and firefighting aircraft, continue to battle the flames around the clock to protect lives, homes, and forests.

In Spain, the wildfires burning west of Madrid are gradually improving, according to local authorities. Even so, the situation remains serious. More than 63,000 people have been evacuated from towns and villages near the Spanish capital as a safety precaution. Many families have been forced to leave their homes while emergency workers continue efforts to contain the fires and prevent further destruction.

Authorities have opened temporary shelters for displaced residents and are providing food, medical care, and other essential assistance. Firefighters, police officers, and emergency volunteers remain on high alert as they work to protect communities threatened by the advancing flames.

In eastern Spain,

emergency teams are facing another dangerous challenge. Unexploded ordnance left behind from the Spanish Civil War nearly a century ago has been discovered in some wildfire-hit areas. The intense heat can trigger these old explosives, making firefighting operations more dangerous and forcing crews to work with extra caution.

Scientists say climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of heatwaves across Europe. Hotter temperatures and prolonged dry weather create ideal conditions for wildfires to start and spread rapidly. As a result, many European countries are strengthening their emergency response systems and encouraging people to take steps to reduce the risk of fires.

Authorities in both France and Spain have urged residents to follow safety instructions, avoid unnecessary travel to affected areas, report any signs of fire immediately, and remain alert as the extreme heat and dry conditions continue. They have also appealed for public cooperation, stressing that preventing new fires is essential while emergency services work tirelessly to bring the existing wildfires under control.

THE NIGERIA POLICE

ACPOL UMUAHIA



OFFICE OF THE AREA COMMANDER
THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE
AREA COMMAND HEADQUARTERS,
UMUAHIA, ABIA STATE

EXTRACT FROM CRIME DIARY

DATE	TIME	C/RE	DETAILS OF ENTRY
41 OF 21 / 07 / 2026	1600 HRS		RE: AFFIDAVIT OF LOSS OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENT: Today being 21 day of July, 2026, one Mr Romanus Madu, a native of Umelem Isuochi in Umunneochi Local Government Area of Abia State, came to the office of the Area Commander Umuahia with sworn affidavit from the High Court Umuahia dated 21st July, 2026, that he is the bonafide owner of the original copies of Memorandum of agreement between him and Isuochi Garden Estate Cooperative Society Ltd, Nkwel-Ezunaka Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State in respect of two (2) plots of land Nos. 0152 and 0153, that he bought it from them between the year 2013 and 2014 respectively, that incidentally the said document got lost on 16th March, 2018 at BCA Road, Umuahia Abia State that all efforts made to recover the said document proved abortive. Hence the affidavit. ACTION: A copy of Police Extract issued to the applicant for records purpose and for the information of the authority Concerned ASP CHRISTY ONEM, ADMINISTRATIVE NIGERIA POLICE, UMUAHIA

Sporting Ambassador



2026 FIFA World Cup: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

By Joseph Jacob



Vozinha

The 23rd edition of the FIFA World Cup has come and gone, with Spain emerging champions after defeating Argentina 1-0 in the final.

It was the biggest FIFA World Cup ever, with 48 teams competing for glory. A total of 308 goals were scored in 104 matches, while referees issued 277 yellow cards and 15 red cards. It was also the first World Cup to be co-hosted by three nations: Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Four players scored hat-tricks during the tournament. Lionel Messi netted three goals as Argentina defeated Algeria 3-0. Canada's Jonathan David scored a hat-trick in a 6-0 victory over Qatar. Ousmane Dembélé grabbed three goals as France defeated Norway 4-1 in their final group game, while Bukayo Saka scored a hat-trick as England beat France 6-4 to secure the bronze medal.

England finished as the tournament's highest-scoring team with 20 goals, while champions Spain registered the most attempts on goal with 140. Algeria recorded the best passing accuracy at 90%, while Spain kept the most clean sheets, conceding only one goal in eight matches.

Iraq conceded the most goals, letting in 12, while Spain also enjoyed the highest average possession with 58%.

France's Kylian Mbappé finished as the tournament's top scorer with 10 goals and also provided four assists. He registered the most shots with 41 attempts, while teammate Michael Olise finished as the leading assist provider with seven.

Spain's Rodri completed the most passes with 799 and covered

the greatest distance, running 90.2 kilometres during the tournament.

Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez played the most minutes, spending 934 minutes and 44 seconds on the pitch.

However, the tournament produced a mixture of memorable moments, controversies and disappointments.

The Good

The three host nations did an excellent job of staging the tournament. Concerns that a World Cup hosted by three countries would create logistical problems were quickly dispelled by their outstanding organisation and hospitality.

The tournament also entered the record books as the most attended FIFA World Cup, attracting 6,810,966 spectators.

Its success has strengthened FIFA's confidence in awarding hosting rights to multiple nations and could encourage similar arrangements for other FIFA competitions in the future.

Although no African nation reached the semi-finals as Morocco did in 2022, the continent's representatives delivered impressive performances.

Debutants Cape Verde made an immediate impact by holding eventual champions Spain to a goalless draw in their opening match, with 40-year-old goalkeeper Vozinha earning the Player of the Match award. They also stretched the defending champions to extra time in their Round of 32 encounter.

Nine of the 10 African teams that qualified for the World Cup reached the knockout stage, an impressive success rate compared

with the other confederations.

The performances of the African teams have strengthened the case for increasing the continent's allocation of places at future FIFA World Cups.

The Bad

Despite the extensive use of technology—including the Video Assistant Referee (VAR), Connected Ball Technology, Semi-Automated Offside Technology and Goal-Line Technology—there were still several controversial officiating decisions throughout the tournament.

These incidents fuelled widespread speculation and conspiracy theories. For example, in Egypt's Round of 16 match, Mostafa Zico's 62nd-minute goal was disallowed following a VAR review, even though later analysis suggested there was no clear reason to overturn the goal.

Argentina's quarter-final against Switzerland also generated controversy. Breel Embolo received a second yellow card for simulation in the 72nd minute, moments after Dan Ndoye had cancelled Alexis Mac Allister's early opener. With momentum shifting towards Switzerland, many believed the referee should simply have allowed play to continue instead of reducing the Swiss side to 10 men.

In the Round of 16 clash between Paraguay and France, Paraguay committed 13 fouls without receiving a single card, while France received three yellow cards despite committing only 11 fouls.

While referees are human and capable of making mistakes, the purpose of technology is to improve decision-making and

produce more accurate and widely accepted officiating.

Somali referee Omar Abdulkadir Artan was also unable to officiate at the tournament after being denied entry into the United States despite holding a valid visa.

Artan, who was named CAF Men's Referee of the Year in 2025, is one of Africa's most respected officials.

FIFA has consistently maintained that football should be separated from politics. However, when political issues prevented Artan from entering the United States, the world football governing body remained silent.

The Ugly

United States President Donald Trump's reported phone call to FIFA President Gianni Infantino, which allegedly led to the cancellation of Folarin Balogun's suspension and cleared the way for the American striker to feature in the Round of 16 against Belgium, generated widespread controversy. Although the United States still lost 4-1, FIFA's decision was viewed by many as yielding to political pressure.

While every national association has the right to appeal disciplinary decisions, many questioned why the United States Soccer Federation did not handle the appeal itself instead of the intervention reportedly coming from Donald Trump.

The conduct of Paraguay and Argentina in their matches against France and Spain respectively also left a sour taste.

Paraguay's players appeared more interested in physical confrontations than playing football, repeatedly kicking and shoving French players, even when the ball was out of play. Such behaviour was unacceptable.

The controversy extended beyond the pitch when Paraguayan senator Celeste Amarilla posted racist comments on social media targeting Kylian Mbappé, describing him as a "colonised Cameroonian" and making derogatory remarks about his background and education.

Mbappé responded on X by describing Amarilla as "a despicable woman" who was unworthy of holding public office, while the French Football Federation strongly condemned her remarks.

Argentina also adopted an overly aggressive approach against Spain in the final, making several reckless challenges that culminated in Enzo Fernández being sent off.

Football has enormous power to influence millions of supporters around the world. It should promote sportsmanship, respect and fair play, especially among young people who look to the game as an example of how to compete with honour.



Rodri

Fury, Joshua One Step from Showdown

The long-awaited heavyweight showdown between Britain's Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua has moved a significant step closer after both men emerged victorious in their respective comeback fights, although neither victory came without drama.

Fury was the first to step into the ring, producing a composed display to stop 46-year-old Polish veteran Mariusz Wach in the seventh round in Pattaya, Thailand. The former world champion looked sharp and in control throughout the contest.

Joshua's outing in Saudi Arabia proved far more dramatic. The former unified world champion was unexpectedly knocked down just 20 seconds into the fight by little-known Albanian Kristian Prenga before hitting the canvas again later in the opening round.

Despite the shocking start, Joshua showed remarkable resilience. He recovered impressively to overwhelm Prenga and sealed a stunning stoppage victory in the second round, keeping alive hopes of an all-British super fight with Fury.

With both heavyweights winning and a legally binding contract reportedly already



Tyson Fury



Anthony Joshua

that has precedent in British boxing.

Historic fights involving Ricky Hatton and Joe Calzaghe both started after midnight to suit overseas broadcasters, proving that unusual start times are not uncommon for major international boxing events.

Cardiff's Principality Stadium has also expressed interest in staging the contest, although scheduling conflicts with Wales rugby internationals limit the available dates later in the year.

Hearn remains adamant that the agreement specifies Britain as the venue. He revealed that Joshua personally insisted the fight should take place in England, describing it as "a British fight" that belongs at Wembley Stadium.

Joshua echoed those sentiments after defeating Prenga, stating that Wembley would be his preferred venue because of its rich boxing tradition and historic atmosphere.

Fans have waited years for Fury and Joshua to meet. Many had hoped the clash would happen when both men were undefeated world champions, but repeated negotiations, changing circumstances and defeats delayed the historic encounter.

Even so, both fighters remain among Britain's biggest sporting stars. Fury has built a worldwide following through his trilogy with Deontay Wilder, WWE appearances and Netflix series, while Joshua continues to attract huge global audiences.

Joshua's dramatic comeback victory demonstrated tremendous courage but also exposed familiar defensive weaknesses. Fury, meanwhile, has shown vulnerabilities of his own after successive defeats to Oleksandr Usyk, despite returning to winning ways against Wach.

The debate may no longer be about who is the better heavyweight, but rather who has declined the least. Joshua still possesses devastating knockout power, but Fury's superior movement, ring intelligence and adaptability make him the slight favourite heading into what promises to be one of the biggest fights in British boxing history.

SUDOKU

Puzzly By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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

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

signed, British boxing's biggest dream fight now appears closer than ever. Reports suggest both men could earn around \$100

million (£75 million) each for the blockbuster contest.

Many expected Fury to travel directly from Thailand to Saudi Arabia for a face-to-face confrontation with Joshua after the fight. However, the "Gypsy King" stayed true to his word by remaining in Thailand despite widespread speculation.

Confusion briefly erupted outside the arena when reporters mistook a Fury lookalike for the former world champion. The misunderstanding only added to the excitement surrounding the proposed mega fight.

Joshua's promoter, Eddie Hearn, dismissed any doubts about the contest taking place. According to the Matchroom boss, both camps signed a legally binding agreement several months ago, making Fury the next opponent for Joshua.

The only major questions that

remain are the date and venue. Streaming giant Netflix is expected to broadcast the fight worldwide to its more than 325 million subscribers, ensuring one of the biggest audiences in boxing history.

New York's Madison Square Garden has emerged as one of the leading candidates to host the bout, with Saudi organisers reportedly keen to maximise the event's commercial appeal in the American market.

British fans, however, are overwhelmingly hoping the fight will be staged at Wembley Stadium. Many believe such a historic all-British contest deserves to be held on home soil.

Saudi boxing chief Turki Alalshikh has previously suggested that a UK event may require an early-morning start to satisfy the lucrative American television audience, a schedule