

**ABSHIA Set  
To Enrol Public  
School Pupils In  
Free Healthcare  
Scheme** ▲ Pg. 15

**Traditional Prime  
Ministers Pass Vote of  
Confidence on  
Governor Otti** ▲ Pg.3

**Police, NDLEA  
Strengthen  
Partnership on  
Intelligence Sharing,  
Drug Control** ▲ Pg. 13

# NATIONAL Ambassador

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**"Uplift the people, project the nation"**

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## Reactions Trail LP Court Verdict

By Okechukwu Ubani

**T**he recent court ruling sacking Mr. Julius Abure as the national chairman of the Labour Party (LP) and recognising Senator Nenadi Usman as the legitimate leader has generated widespread reactions across Nigeria, with stakeholders in Abia State commending the judiciary's decision.

The General Manager, Abia Newspapers and Publishing Corporation, Hon. Jones Nanna Ike, described the verdict as a victory for democracy, the rule of law, and a strong demonstration of the judiciary's resolve to uphold internal party democracy.

Speaking exclusively from Umuahia, Abia state capital, Hon. Ike noted that the judgment reinforces confidence in Nigeria's legal institutions and highlights the courts' critical role in resolving political disputes fairly and transparently. "This ruling is not just about the Labour Party; it is about the protection of democratic processes in Nigeria. It demonstrates that political disagreements can be resolved within the framework of the law, which is a welcome development for our democracy," he said.

Hon. Ike also appealed to Abians to continue their support for Governor Alex Chioma Otti, emphasizing the unprecedented level of governance and development currently taking place in the state. He highlighted ongoing infrastructural projects, describing them as transformative initiatives aimed at elevating Abia among the leading states in Nigeria.

"From roads to health facilities, from schools to urban renewal projects, we are witnessing a new Abia emerge. These efforts are improving livelihoods and will make the reelection of Governor Otti a natural outcome of good governance," he added.

Continued on P2

## Presidency Re-affirms Fubara As APC Leader In Rivers State

By Daniel Ogidio

**T**he Presidency has publicly weighed in on the lingering political crisis in Rivers State, affirming its support for Governor Siminalayi Fubara as

the recognised leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), in the state.

In a Channels Television's current affairs programme, Hard Copy, which was monitored by our Reporter, the Special Adviser to the President on Policy Communication, Mr.

Daniel Bwala, clarified President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's position on the leadership question within the ruling party in Rivers.

Bwala stated unequivocally that Governor Fubara remains the APC leader in the state in line with established party practice, which

recognises serving governors as leaders of the party in their respective states.

"I agree with the point highlighted by the national chairman that in Rivers State, Governor Fubara is the leader of the APC in Rivers State.

"You made mention of

Wike. Wike is not a member of APC, so he can't speak for APC. He may be the leader of the PDP in Rivers State because he was a former governor and they don't have a governor at the moment, but in APC, the leader of the party in Rivers State is Governor Fubara," Bwala stated.

The presidential aide emphasised that President Tinubu is committed to rule-based party administration and respects established procedures within political parties. According to him, the President aligns with the position earlier stated by the APC National Chairman regarding Fubara's leadership status in the state.

"The president believes in the rule of law and rule-based practice with respect to party affairs. What the national chairman said is the position the President sticks to because he respects party procedure," Bwala noted.

Continued on P2



■ L-R: President of the Nigerian Council of Registered Insurance Brokers (NCRIB), Mrs Ekeoma Ezeibe and Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, as he received a delegation of the Nigerian Council of Registered Insurance Brokers (NCRIB) led by its President and CEO, Mrs Ekeoma Ezeibe in Gov's home in Isiala Ngwa South LGA

## Rivers Crisis Is Spiritual, Not Political – Pastor Ibiyeomie

By Okechukwu Ubani

**T**he General Overseer of Salvation Ministries, Pastor David Ibiyeomie, has described the ongoing political crisis in Rivers State as a spiritual

problem that cannot be solved by any human being.

He made the statement during Day 4 of the Glory Reign service at Salvation Ministries, an event attended by Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara.

According to the pastor, the long-running disagreement between Governor Fubara and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, now Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, goes beyond politics.

"No mortal man can solve the problem of Rivers State. It is not a physical

problem," Ibiyeomie said in a sermon that has since gone viral on social media.

He pointed to what he described as a repeated pattern in the state's political history, noting that former leaders often fall out with their successors or protégés.

"Ada George was governor and Peter Odili

was under him, and they fought. Odili later had Amaechi, and they fought. Amaechi had Wike, and they fought. Wike had Siminalayi Fubara, and now they are fighting," he said.

The pastor warned that the trend may continue even after Fubara leaves office.

Continued on P2

**EDITORIAL:**

**LP Court Ruling: A Plus for the Judiciary**

## News

### Presidency Re-affirms Fubara As APC Leader In River State

Continued from page 1

Addressing the role of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Mr. Nyesom Wike, in the ongoing political tension, Bwala acknowledged that Wike has been instrumental in the Tinubu administration and has delivered significantly in his current role. However, he maintained that Wike's contributions do not translate into party leadership within the APC in Rivers State.

"Wike has been instrumental in this administration. He delivered more than most. But he is not a member of the APC," he said, adding that the president rewards performance but not at the expense of national interest or established rules.

According to Bwala, the dispute between Wike and Fubara has effectively been addressed from the party's standpoint, particularly regarding the question of who leads the APC structure in the state.

On the issue of impeachment threats against Governor Fubara, the presidential spokesman noted that any such process must strictly follow constitutional and legal procedures.

He pointed out that court orders have been secured to halt impeachment moves, reinforcing the need for adherence to due process.

"For the impeachment procedure, it must be consistent with the practice of law and constitutional requirements. They have been taking orders of court that stopped impeachment," he said.

### Rivers Crisis Is Spiritual, Not Political – Pastor Ibiyeomie

Contd. from page 1

Even if Governor Fubara chooses a successor, that person will still fight him. They have tried everything, even involving the president, but it has not worked," he added.

Ibiyeomie said only God can bring a lasting solution to the crisis, stressing that his comments were based on spiritual insight.

The political tension

between Fubara and Wike has continued since 2023, with disagreements over control of the state assembly, local government councils, and party structures. Several attempts to resolve the conflict, including reported interventions by President Bola Tinubu, have so far failed to produce a permanent solution.

### Reactions Trail LP Court Verdict, Hail Judiciary

Contd. from page 1

Similarly, a Labour Party chieftain in Abia, Mr. Harrison Chinyere, urged citizens to remain engaged with the state's developmental progress while emphasizing the importance of upholding the rule of law in political matters. He expressed optimism that the judiciary would continue to serve as a dependable institution, ensuring political disputes are resolved fairly and without bias.

Meanwhile, Governor Alex Otti also lauded the court ruling, congratulating Senator Nenadi Usman, who heads the LP National Caretaker Committee, and Senator Darlington Nwokocha, the Secretary, for their victory at the Federal High Court in Abuja. In a statement, Governor Otti said the judgment would help restore calm, discipline, and unity within the party.

The Governor stressed that the ruling offers the Labour Party a fresh opportunity to consolidate its structures and grow into a more united and democratic party, capable of winning elections and delivering effective leadership at all levels of government. He encouraged party leaders to use the court victory as a chance to rebuild through fair, inclusive, and purposeful leadership that reflects the party's constitution and core principles.

Governor Otti further appealed to individuals involved in lingering legal disputes against the party to accept the ruling and end further litigation, assuring them that those willing to respect the law and work in unity would be reintegrated into the party. He concluded by thanking the judiciary and all supporters of democracy who stood by the Labour Party during its challenging period, reaffirming his commitment to promoting peace, stability, and democratic governance in Nigeria.

## Atiku Accuses Senate Of Delaying Amendments Of Electoral Acts

Former Vice President and 2023 presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Atiku Abubakar, has accused the Senate of deliberately delaying amendments to the Electoral Act 2022, warning that the action could undermine the credibility of the 2027 general elections.

In a post on his verified X (formerly Twitter) account recently, Atiku said weaknesses in the current Electoral Act made it easier for what he described as widespread rigging during the 2023 elections. He also said the loopholes made it difficult for candidates to successfully challenge election results in court.

According to him, the problems seen in the 2023 elections show the need for urgent and wide-ranging



Sen. Akpabio

reforms of Nigeria's electoral laws, starting with key amendments to the Electoral Act.

"But as things stand, it has become clear that the Senate is determined to frustrate the passage of

amendments to the 2022 Electoral Act," Atiku wrote.

He referred to a recent report by the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ), which he said exposed the Senate's delay in considering the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. The

report noted that the bill had already passed the committee stage and appeared on the Senate's order paper but had not been debated in plenary.

Atiku warned that the future of credible elections in Nigeria depends on how quickly the Senate acts on the proposed changes.

"The credibility of the 2027 general elections depends on the urgency with which the Senate treats this bill. If the amendments are not passed in time, it will amount to an attempt to rig the election before voting even begins," he further stated.

NAN.

## 14 Brigade Welcome New Commander

By Charles Ogbonaya

The 14 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Ohafia, has a new Commander as Brigadier General A.M. Dikko takes over leadership of the formation, following the completion of tenure by Brigadier General H.M. Bello.

A farewell reception was held in honour of the outgoing Brigade Commander by the Deputy Governor of Abia State, Chief Ikechukwu Emetu, at his country home in Ohafia. The event drew government officials, traditional rulers, security personnel, and community leaders, who gathered to celebrate Brigadier General Bello's service and welcome his successor.

Speaking at the ceremony, Emetu commended Brigadier General Bello for his dedication, professionalism, and commitment to maintaining peace and security in Ohafia and Abia State at large. He noted that under Bello's leadership, the 14 Brigade played a critical role in fostering stability and strengthening collaboration between the military and civil authorities.

According to the deputy governor, the outgoing commander demonstrated discipline and a people-oriented approach to security operations, which helped build trust between the Nigerian Army and host communities.

"We pray that as you leave here to join other military formations, it will be a step to

greater heights and more responsibilities," Emetu said, expressing optimism that the officer's next assignment would usher him into higher ranks and greater responsibilities.

He also assured him of the continued goodwill and support of the people of Ohafia, Abia State, and the South-East region.

In their goodwill messages, the member representing Ohafia South State Constituency, Hon. Mba Nwoke, and the Mayor of Ohafia Local Government Area, Chief Eleanya Ojuu Kalu (Olu), praised Brigadier General Bello for his co-operation with civil authorities and his inclusive approach to security management. They noted that his tenure strengthened synergy between the military and the local population.

The Director-General of the Greater Ohafia Development Agency, Hon. Obinna Agwu Odum; the Udumaze of Ohafia, Ezie Awa Orji Udonsi; and members of the Ohafia Traditional Rulers Council led by HRH Eze U.K. Ukoha, also lauded the outgoing commander for fostering cordial relations between the Army and host communities. They said his leadership contributed significantly to the relative peace enjoyed in the area.

In his response, Brigadier General Bello expressed gratitude to the Abia State

Government, the deputy governor, traditional rulers, and the people of Ohafia for their support and hospitality throughout his tenure.

"I am sincerely grateful for the warm reception, support, and friendship I enjoyed from the government and the people of Ohafia during my stay. This community has become a home to me," he said.

He emphasised that co-operation between the military and host communities played a key role in sustaining peace and stability in the area, adding that he would always remain connected to Ohafia and Abia State wherever his future assignments take him.

Taking over as the new Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Dikko expressed appreciation for the reception accorded his predecessor and pledged to build on the achievements recorded by Brigadier General Bello.

He assured the state government and the people of Ohafia of his commitment to working closely with all stakeholders to sustain peace and security, stressing that effective security management requires collective responsibility and continuous collaboration.

The 14 Brigade, headquartered in Ohafia, remains a critical military formation in the South-East, with a mandate to maintain security and support civil authorities in safeguarding lives and property across its area of responsibility.

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as Miss Ndidi Comfort Nduka, now wish to be known and addressed as Ndidi Comfort Uwannah. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

**NDIDI COMFORT UWANNAH.**

#### Correction Of Name

This is to affirm that Eme Godswill Ogbonnaya Ogidigbo which was wrongly written/captured in my Retirement Savings Account (RSA) with AccessArm Pensions and Eme Godswill Ogbonnaya Ogidigbo are the same person.

I now wish to be called and addressed as Eme Godswill Ogbonnaya Ogidigbo. All documents bearing my former names remain valid.

AccessArm Pensions and the general public should please take note.

**EME GODSWILL OGBONNAYA OGIDI.**

#### Correction Of Name

This is to affirm that Iwuagwu Celestine Uwakwe which appeared in my BVN and Iwu Celestine Uwakwe is the same person, I now wish to be called Iwu Celestine Uwakwe.

My date of birth was wrongly captured as 18th December, 1949 instead of 4th April, 1947. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. Union Bank and the General Public should please take note...

**IWU CELESTINE UWAKWE.**

#### Change of Name

I, formerly known and addressed as Iwa Obaya Mary, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. IBEZIM IWA MARYJANE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.

**MRS. IBEZIM IWA MARYJANE.**



## News

### Commissioner Inspects Projects At Osisioma Campus

By Chinaza Ansa Onyema

**T**he Abia State Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Prof. Uche Eme, has inspected ongoing projects at the Osisioma Campus of Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, and expressed satisfaction with the pace and quality of work.

Prof. Eme carried out the inspection alongside the Rector of the Polytechnic, Engr. Prof. Christopher Okoro Kalu, members of the Governing Council, management staff, and the Academic Board. The visit was aimed at assessing the level of progress on the projects ahead of the planned commencement of academic activities at the campus.

Projects inspected included the first phase of the 5,000-capacity male and female hostels, the library complex, School of Business Studies, medical building, and the Administrative Complex.

Speaking during the inspection, the Commissioner praised Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, describing him as a results-oriented leader and a history maker. She said the rapid transformation of the campus reflects the governor's strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and sustainable development.

She recalled that during earlier visits, many of the facilities at the campus were abandoned, but noted that massive construction, reconstruction, and repainting of buildings have now been carried out within a short period.

Prof. Eme disclosed that the Governor has broader development plans for Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic and other tertiary institutions in the state. She assured that the government is fully aware of the challenges facing the institutions and is deliberately working to address them.

She reiterated the state government's resolve to strengthen technical education through skills acquisition and quality, industry-driven training. The Commissioner also laid the foundation for another project at the campus and commended the quality of fabricated works produced by the Polytechnic's students.

Prof. Eme further expressed delight over reforms introduced by the institution's management, particularly the elimination of sorting and exploitation, which she said has significantly improved the learning environment. She assured students and staff of the government's commitment to adequate admissions and accommodation.

In his remarks, the Rector, Engr. Prof. Christopher Okoro Kalu, thanked the Alex Otti-led administration for its consistent support to the institution. He also announced the approval of a new salary structure for staff, adding that implementation and payment would commence next week.



Cross Section Of Members Of The Abia State Council Traditional Prime Ministers

## Traditional Prime Ministers Pass Vote Of Confidence On Governor Otti

By Okereke Kate

**T**he Abia State Council of Traditional Prime Ministers has passed a vote of confidence on Governor Alex Chioma Otti, citing what it described as his outstanding performance in governance and infrastructural development across the state.

Rising from its quarterly meeting, the council unanimously resolved to adopt Governor Otti as its sole governorship candidate for the 2027 election, regardless of party affiliation.

The body described itself as non-partisan but said the Governor's achievements compelled it to cross political lines in the interest of continuity.

Reading the communiqué, the Traditional Prime Minister of Ajata na Igu Autonomous Community, Chief Okosisi Harbor, said the council was impressed by the transformation of Aba and Umuahia, noting major improvements in road infrastructure, electricity supply, security, and commerce.

The council particularly highlighted Aba's emergence as an ultra-modern commercial city and Umuahia's growing status as a modern capital capable of competing with other state capitals in West Africa.

The council also commended the Governor for the nearly completed Umuahia ultra-modern bus

terminal, reforms in the electricity sector with plans for state takeover of power distribution, regular payment of workers' salaries and pensions, and the over 300 percent increase in the welfare and status of traditional rulers.

Speaking in an interview, the President of

the Council and Traditional Prime Minister of Ibeku Ancient Kingdom, Royal High Chief James Akwukwaegbu, said the adoption of Governor Otti followed a careful review of his performance. He urged the Governor to ignore opposition

criticisms and remain focused on delivering good governance to the people.

The council further pledged support for traditional institutions across the state and called on other traditional prime ministers yet to join the forum to do so. It

reaffirmed its support for the Governor's inclusive governance stance, which recognizes all residents of Abia State as Abians, irrespective of origin.

The meeting further concluded with prayers for Governor Otti's continued success and leadership beyond 2027.

## Abia, Akwa Ibom Intervene In Border Road Dispute

By Charles Ogbonnaya

**T**he Deputy Governors of Abia and Akwa Ibom States have jointly stepped in to restore peace between the people of Akirika Obu in Ukwa East Local Government Area of Abia State and Ikot Udo in Ika Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

The intervention is aimed at ensuring peace and allowing the ongoing road construction project in the area to continue without interruption.

Speaking at a peace meeting held at Akirika Obu, the Abia State Deputy Governor, Ikechukwu Emetu, urged both communities to embrace peace so that the road project could be completed smoothly.

Emetu stated that the meeting was not meant to decide land ownership or boundary issues, explaining that such matters fall under the responsibility of the National Boundary Commission.

He said the major concern of both state governments is the successful completion of the road project for the benefit of the people.

"We are not here to determine boundaries. That is the duty of the National Boundary Commission. Our concern is that this road is completed because once the road is tarred, development and prosperity will follow," he stated.

The deputy governor revealed that both Abia and Akwa Ibom state governments have approved the road construction from their respective ends, noting that the two sections will meet at the disputed area, pending official boundary demarcation.

He appealed to the communities to live peacefully, reminding them of their long-standing social and cultural ties. "You intermarry and live together. Why fight over land that you will one day leave behind?" he asked.

Emetu commended the security agencies for maintaining peace and warned troublemakers to desist from actions capable of disrupting harmony. He assured that both state governments would no longer tolerate any act that threatens peace and development in the area.

Earlier, the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom

State, Senator Akon Etim Eyakenyi, also called on all stakeholders to embrace peace and allow the road project to proceed without hindrance.

She stressed that development cannot take place without good road infrastructure and explained that the intervention of both governments was purely to promote peace, progress, and shared prosperity. The deputy governor also praised the Governors of Abia and Akwa Ibom States for their commitment to development and inter-state cooperation.

In his remarks, the Commander of the 14 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Ohafia, Brigadier General Hassan M. Bello, said the presence of the military in the area was solely to ensure security and support peaceful dialogue. He downplayed the boundary dispute, noting that the two communities share common cultural and family ties.

He emphasized that the Nigerian Army was not deployed to determine boundaries but to support and enforce peaceful resolutions reached by the

appropriate authorities. He warned that any attempt to disrupt peace would be firmly handled, adding that the Chief of Army Staff fully supports the peace process.

Brigadier General Bello urged all parties to cooperate with constituted authorities and see the road project as a shared development that will benefit everyone, regardless of future boundary decisions.

In their separate remarks, the Mayor of Ukwa East Local Government Area, Chief Chibunna Akara, and his counterpart in Ika Local Government Area, Hon. Utibe Nwoko, appealed to their communities to give peace a genuine chance and allow the road construction to continue.

They stressed that the project is meant for the collective good and should not be disrupted.

The peace meeting, which was attended by government officials from both states, community leaders, and security personnel, marked a major step toward strengthening inter-state cooperation and ensuring lasting peace and sustainable development in the area.

## News

### Abia Government Supports Individuals Living With HIV/AIDS

By Chibumma Ikeokwu

The Abia State Government, through the Office of the Wife of the Governor, has embarked a significant outreach to support individuals living with HIV and AIDS, as well as members of the Albinism Association of Nigeria in the state.

About 300 individuals from the Network of People living with HIV/AIDS received bags of rice and a cash donation of ₦50,000, as well as 100 persons of albinism receiving same to assist with their day-to-day needs.

During the event held in her hometown of Nvosi in Isiala Ngwa South LGA, the wife of the governor, expressed her commitment to supporting vulnerable populations in Abia State, emphasising her desire to ensure that no one feels neglected or abandoned.

Governor Otti's administration is focused on advancing the state's development while also addressing the welfare and challenges faced by vulnerable groups in the State.

The Director-General of the Abia State Agency for the Control of AIDS, Dr. Uloaku E m m a - U k a e g b u , acknowledged Governor Otti's consistent support for the agency and highlighted the administration's prioritization of the health and well-being of the state's residents.

She called for continued support for Governor Otti's leadership, noting the positive progress in Abia compared to previous times.

Leaders from the associations, including Mrs. Rebecca Eze, Co-ordinator of the Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Abia State, and Mr. Enyinnaya Nwosu, Chairman of the Albinism Association in Abia, expressed their gratitude for the assistance and commended Mrs. Otti for her compassion and support for vulnerable groups.

Meanwhile, Commissioner for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Mrs. Ngozi Felix, along with Commissioner for Women Affairs, Dr. Maureen Aghukwa, praised the resilience of individuals living with HIV and AIDS.

They encouraged continued adherence to medical guidance and regular health check-ups for improved well-being.



## We're Focused On Fixing Abia, Nobody Is Entitled To Distract Us – Gov Otti

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governor Alex Otti of Abia State has declared that his administration will not be distracted by discussions around the 2027 general elections, insisting that his focus remains firmly on fixing Abia State.

The governor stated this recently, while worshipping at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Umuikaa District Headquarters, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area.

He assured the congregation that his government would remain committed to doing the right thing for the people, stressing that political distractions would not derail the reform agenda of his administration.

The governor cautioned against being swayed by political noise from the opposition, and urged Abians to remain focused on governance and development.

"I assure you that this government will continue to do the right thing. No one, or group of people, whoever they are, none of them is entitled to distract us."

"So when they make noise, like I said last week, we should not be bothered about noise."

"We should just remain focused and do what we have to do," the governor stated.

Governor Otti expressed confidence in Divine Guidance over the state's political future, noting that he was not perturbed by conversations about the next election cycle.

"So sometimes I worry if it is the 2027 election they are talking about, or maybe there's another election coming up."

"But the same way God delivered 2023, the way He will deliver 2027 in Jesus' name," he declared.

Responding to concerns raised by the church members over flooding and drainage

challenges around the church premises and adjoining areas, the governor directed the Commissioner for Works, to extend the ongoing drainage project to Umuikaa Junction.

He also apologised to residents and road users for the dust generated by construction activities along the Umuikaa Junction-Owerri Road, describing the inconvenience as an unavoidable part of development.

The Governor added that similar reconstruction work was ongoing on the Onuimo-Tower axis, emphasising that the administration's objective was to ensure that infrastructural quality reflects the state's identity.

"As you can see, we are at the final stages of dualising this

road. It is a federal road, but we got approval from the Federal Government to dualise the road and reconstruct it."

"And as we are doing this, we are also doing the one from Onuimo to Tower. And the idea is that any time you get into Abia State, you know you've gotten into Abia State," he stated.

The governor reaffirmed his commitment to serving Abia State with integrity and thanked the church and residents for their continued support.

In separate remarks, the Secretary of the Alex Otti Vanguard Movement for Continuity 2027, Dr. Fineboy Ikechi Joseph, an Elder of the church, who co-ordinated its foundation-laying, Elder G.C. Ukaegbu; and a former Head

Elder and co-ordinator of retirees in Isiala Ngwa South Council, Elder E.C. Alozie, commended Governor Otti on his benevolence to the church and his developmental strides across the state.

They expressed confidence that the Governor's achievements would secure his re-election in 2027.

Earlier in his sermon titled, "Living With Eternal Perspective", Masterguide Chidera Mark, who drew his text from Isaiah 40:28-31, reminded the congregation that God neither changes nor grows weary.

He urged believers to place their hope in Christ, assuring them of an eternal kingdom, while praising Governor Otti's leadership style, which he said had restored hope and joy in Abia State.

According to the preacher, challenges that once plagued the state had diminished under the present administration, adding that the governor's re-election would help sustain the gains recorded so far.

The service, moderated by an Elder of the church and General Manager of the Abia State Debt Management Office, Dr. Kingsley Nwaigburu, featured special prayers for Governor Otti and the Abia State Government, as well as presentations by the Pastor-in-Charge, Pastor Friday Izuma.

Wife of the Governor, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, Commissioner for Power and Public Utilities, Mr. Ikechukwu Monday; the Mayor of Isiala Ngwa South LGA, Hon. Nnadozie Nwaogwugwu, were among dignitaries who accompanied the governor to the service.

## NYCN President Disowns Call For Fubara's Resignation

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The President of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), Amb. Sukubo Sara-Igbe Sukubo, has firmly dissociated himself and his office from a viral social media post allegedly calling on the Governor of Rivers State, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, to resign or vacate office on or before February 3, 2026.

In a disclaimer issued by the Media Unit of his office and made available to newsmen, Amb. Sukubo described the claim as false, mischievous, and a deliberate act of propaganda aimed at misleading the public and escalating political tension in Rivers State.

The NYCN President condemned in strong terms a Facebook post credited to Bestman Amadi, whom he described as a political jobber impersonating the authentic Rivers State Chairman of the

NYCN, Amb. Ambrose Sopuruchi Okpor.

According to the statement, the post falsely suggested that Amb. Sukubo was in support of, or in collaboration with, a call for the unconstitutional removal of the Rivers State governor.

"Such a claim is not only laughable but dangerous," the statement read, adding that Amb. Sukubo has never authorized anyone to issue or associate his name with any statement calling for the resignation of Governor Fubara.

The NYCN leadership noted that although it would ordinarily have ignored the post, it was compelled to respond in order to protect unsuspecting members of the public and political stakeholders from being misled, as well as to prevent further escalation of the ongoing political tension in the

state.

Describing the publication as concocted lies, unsavoury innuendo, and cheap propaganda, the statement accused its authors of attempting to sow division within the NYCN in Rivers State, create disaffection between the NYCN President and the governor, and exploit the situation for personal and pecuniary gain.

Amb. Sukubo warned Bestman Amadi and his collaborators to desist immediately from such actions or risk facing consequences in accordance with the law.

He further urged Governor Fubara, political actors, and the good people of Rivers State to disregard and discountenance the social media post, stressing that it represents the imagination of individuals seeking relevance amid the state's political challenges.

Reaffirming the position of

the council, the statement emphasised that the National Youth Council of Nigeria remains committed to peace, unity, and stability in Rivers State and across Nigeria.

Amb. Sukubo also commended Governor Fubara for his youth-friendly policies, inclusive approach to governance, and significant investment in youth development and empowerment, noting that the NYCN President would never be part of any attempt to destabilize an administration widely regarded as supportive of young people.

The statement concluded by reiterating the NYCN's resolve to promote constructive engagement and democratic stability, while rejecting any unconstitutional or provocative actions capable of worsening the political climate in Rivers State.



# Editorial

## LP Court Ruling: A Plus for the Judiciary

**T**he recent ruling by a competent court sacking Mr. Abure as the legitimate leader of the Labour Party (LP) and ordering the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to recognise Ms. Nenadi Usman as the authentic National Chairman of the Party is more than a political development—it is a strong affirmation of the independence and integrity of Nigeria's judiciary. Beyond the immediate implications for the Labour Party, the verdict reinforces public confidence in the judicial system as a credible arbiter in political disputes.

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed several intra-party crises, many of which have remained unresolved due to political interference or protracted litigation. The LP leadership dispute was no exception. With the 2027 general elections approaching, the internal wrangling threatened not only the Party's cohesion but also the broader democratic process. A party embroiled in leadership tussles inevitably struggles with candidate selection, policy direction, and electoral strategy. In this context, the court's decision provides clarity,

restores order, and allows the Labour Party to focus on its core mission: presenting itself as a viable political alternative in Nigeria's MultiParty Democracy.

The Judiciary, often the last recourse for aggrieved political actors, has once again demonstrated its vital role in safeguarding democratic processes. By basing its judgment on the rule of law and the provisions of the Party's Constitution, rather than succumbing to political pressures or popular sentiment, the court has underscored its commitment to impartiality. This is particularly significant in an era where doubts about the independence

It is our strong conviction that the court's decision to validate Ms. Nenadi Usman as the legitimate leader of the Labour Party is a triumph not just for the faction she represents, but for the judiciary itself. It signals that the courts remain impartial arbiters capable of resolving politically sensitive disputes with fairness and adherence to the law. As Nigeria approaches the 2027 elections, this ruling restores confidence in both the judicial system and the democratic process, while giving the opposition a renewed chance to play its essential role in shaping the nation's political future.

The Labour Party's leadership crisis may have ended, but the message is clear: the judiciary stands as a pillar of justice, fairness, and democratic consolidation.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:  
**THE EDITOR**  
**NATIONAL AMBASSADOR**  
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### Dubious Extortion Of Money From Parents By Some Government-owned School Principals During Registration

Dear Editor,

**M**ay, I use your widely read medium to inform our student-friendly governor, Dr. Alex Chioma Otti and the public on what is happening in some government-owned Secondary Schools in Abia State. In secondary schools like Ubakala Secondary School, Nsukwe, in Umuahia South Local Government Area and Ndume Otuka Secondary School. Ahiaeke, in Umuahia North LGA, parents are being asked to pay through their noses when registering their children either in the Junior Secondary School or Senior Secondary School.

My neighbour went to register her son in SSS class in Ubakala Secondary School, Nsukwe. She told me how the school authority gave her a list amounting to Twenty-eight thousand, five hundred naira (N28,500.00) only for registration, excluding school uniform.

Another woman complained that she paid twenty-two thousand, five hundred naira only (N22,500.00) to register her child in the JSS class in the same school excluding school uniform. When asked about the subvention given to principals by Governor Otti, the JSS Vice Principal said that the governor do not give them subvention while the person in charge of registration that day in SSS admitted that the governor gives subvention for the day to day running of the school.

A man also visited another school, Amaibo Secondary School, Ubakala, also in Umuahia South LGA. He said that he did not pay a dime to register his two children. He was only asked to provide his children's school uniforms with their lockers and stools..

Also, a colleague went to register her child in JSS 1 at Ndume Otuka Secondary School. Ahiaeke, in Umuahia North LGA, the school authority gave her a list of Forty thousand, six hundred naira only (N40,600.00) only for registration. This list comprised of fuel, container for selling biscuit to the students, chalk, undertaking, change of school - N2,500.00, two (2) pairs of uniform and a jacket, two stockings (2) six hundred naira each, hoe, cutlass, infact, the list is enormous.

Our dear student-friendly Governor, please send your monitoring team to visit some of these government-owned schools in the rural areas where the principals have made it impossible for some parents to register their children and sanction them.

Our governor, please help us and our children.

Chukwuemeka Nkechinyere,  
Umuahia.



## Abuja Digest

with Sophina Ovuike  
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### Nwajiuba Declares Presidential Ambition on ADC Platform

**A**head of the 2027 general elections, former Minister of State for Education and two-time member of the House of Representatives, Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba, has officially declared his intention to run for the presidency under the African Democratic Congress (ADC).

In a statement issued by his office recently, Nwajiuba said Nigeria's current socio-economic and political challenges require leadership grounded in clear policies, practical negotiation skills, and strong grassroots engagement, rather than empty rhetoric.

"I believe that our nation's problems demand leaders with the capacity to implement effective solutions, engage all stakeholders constructively, and restore confidence in governance," he said.

According to the statement, Nwajiuba's experience in both the legislature and executive branches, as well as his service in key national institutions, has equipped him with a deep understanding of governance and public finance.

A seasoned lawyer called to the Nigerian Bar in 1989, Nwajiuba also served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

He stressed that his presidential campaign would focus on education reform, economic stabilization, and rebuilding public trust in government institutions.

"The message I bring to Nigerians is one anchored on a competence-first approach to leadership,"

"This is about positioning experience, policy depth, and institutional knowledge at the centre of national governance."

Political analysts said Nwajiuba's entry into the race under the ADC platform introduces a new dimension to the evolving contest, especially as smaller parties seek to present credible alternatives to voters.

"With his declaration, Nwajiuba joins a growing list of aspirants aiming to shape the national conversation ahead of the next general election, as debates around competence, experience, and inclusive governance continue to gain momentum," the statement added.



Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba.

## Contractors Block Finance Ministry Over Unpaid 2024 Project Debts

**I**ndigenous contractors have shutdown access to the Federal Ministry of Finance in Abuja in protest over the Federal Government's failure to settle billions of naira owed for projects executed under the 2024 budget.

The protesters, drawn mainly from the All Indigenous Contractors Association of Nigeria (AICAN) and other local contractor groups, barricaded the ministry's main entrance, disrupting activities as they demanded immediate payment for completed and certified contracts.

Carrying placards with inscriptions such as "No payment to contractor, no peace," "It's a crime against humanity," and "Contractors deserve payment, not fake promises," the demonstrators accused government authorities of issuing payment approvals without releasing actual funds.

Speaking during the protest, AICAN Secretary, Babatunde Seun-Oyeniyi, said many contractors were facing severe financial distress despite delivering projects according to specifications.

"We delivered these



Federal Ministry of Finance

projects on time and to standard, yet our members have waited endlessly without cash backing for approved payment warrants," he said. "Our members are being pushed to the brink."

According to AICAN leaders, outstanding payments for verified and completed contracts are conservatively estimated at over ₦500 billion, though some industry figures believe total liabilities could run into several trillions of naira when all verified obligations are accounted for.

"They keep telling us payments are approved. We see warrants only on paper, but there is no cash backing," Seun-Oyeniyi

added. "We borrowed heavily to execute these jobs. Now banks are taking over our assets because we cannot repay."

The protest follows a series of earlier demonstrations by contractors, including blockades of the National Assembly last year and rallies at other federal institutions over similar unpaid debts.

In response to mounting pressure from contractors, lawmakers and civil society groups, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu recently approved the establishment of a multi-ministerial committee to fast-track the settlement

of contractor liabilities estimated at about ₦1.5 trillion. However, protesters insist that committee reports and assurances must now translate into actual cash payments.

AICAN leaders said the latest action was triggered by months of unfulfilled promises from officials of the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation.

"We can no longer accept new contracts without upfront mobilisation." Experience has shown that work gets done, and then the government fails to pay."

Although the House of Representatives has repeatedly assured contractors that payments are being processed with claims that over ₦3 trillion has been approved for contractor liabilities, many affected contractors say no funds had been credited to their accounts.

The protesters vowed to sustain pressure on the government until all verified outstanding debts are cleared and a transparent, practical payment framework is put in place to prevent a recurrence of the crisis.

## Fire Rages Part Of Kugbo Furniture Market

**P**anic swept through Abuja recently as a major fire outbreak gutted sections of the popular Kugbo Furniture Market, one of the Federal Capital Territory's largest furniture hubs.

The fire, believed to have been triggered by an electrical surge, broke out in the early hours of the day, threatening lives and large volumes of furniture stock within the bustling market.

The Federal Fire Service (FFS) confirmed that it received a distress call at about 8:37 a.m., prompting the immediate deployment of emergency responders. In a statement signed by its National Public Relations Officer, Deputy Controller of Fire (DCF) Paul Abraham, the service said firefighters were swiftly mobilised to prevent the blaze from spreading across the market.

Two high-capacity ground monitor firefighting appliances were dispatched from the FFS National Headquarters Special Unit, while an additional fire truck responded from the Nyanya Fire Station. The FCT Fire Service also joined the operation, ensuring a coordinated emergency response.

Firefighters battled the raging flames for more than three hours, eventually bringing the situation under control and averting what could have been a far more devastating disaster.

According to the Federal Fire Service, properties valued at approximately ₦1.8 billion were successfully saved, although the estimated total worth of goods and structures within the market exceeds ₦2 billion.

The Controller-General of the Federal Fire Service, Olumode Samuel Adeyemi, commended the professionalism, courage and swift intervention of the firefighters, noting that early reporting played a critical role in limiting losses.

"Timely alerts allow us to act swiftly and deploy resources effectively," Adeyemi said, urging members of the public to promptly report fire incidents and other emergencies.

He also praised the sustained collaboration between the Federal Fire Service and the FCT Fire Service, describing joint emergency response efforts as essential to safeguarding lives and property in the nation's capital.

While the exact cause of the fire is still under investigation, preliminary findings point to a possible electrical fault as the trigger.

Meanwhile, traders affected by the incident, many of whom suffered partial losses, have called on market authorities and government agencies to strengthen fire safety infrastructure, including improved electrical installations and the provision of functional firefighting equipment within the market.



## Spotlight

# Abia Records Major Gains in Basic Education Amid Reforms, Academic Success

By Ekebuisi Precious

**Abia State's basic education sector is recording notable progress under the administration of Governor Alex Chioma Otti, OFR, with recent developments pointing to sustained improvements in learning outcomes, teacher support, institutional reforms and school infrastructure.**

From academic excellence at regional competitions to intensified school mentorship programmes and targeted infrastructure upgrades, activities within the Ministry of Basic Education signal a renewed commitment to raising standards across primary and secondary schools in the state.

Key recent milestones include Abia State's top performance at the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) South-East Senatorial Academic Competition, expanded field engagements by the Education Reform and Innovation Team (ERIT), and the completion of selected school rehabilitation projects across strategic education zones.

Abia Tops South-East NILDS Academic Competition:

A major boost to the state's education profile came with Abia State's first-place finish at the NILDS South-East Senatorial Academic Competition held in Enugu, earning the state the right to represent the zone at the national stage.

The competition, which evaluates students' knowledge of democratic governance, legislative processes and civic responsibility, is designed to nurture young talents with leadership potential. Education stakeholders have described Abia's victory as a reflection of improved teaching quality, stronger curriculum support and growing emphasis on academic enrichment beyond the classroom.

Observers also note that the performance underscores the collective efforts of students, teachers, school administrators and education support teams across the state.

ERIT Strengthens Reform Alignment Through Stakeholder Engagement

In furtherance of ongoing reforms, the ERIT Board of Trustees recently engaged senior officials of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to review progress and strengthen alignment in reform implementation.

The engagement focused on curriculum delivery, teacher performance benchmarks, learning environments and student support systems. Participants emphasized the need for consistent standards across education zones and closer collaboration between the ministry, ERIT and school leadership.

Discussions also highlighted the

importance of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that policy reforms translate into measurable classroom improvements. Stakeholders agreed on scaling up teacher support systems and ensuring that skills acquired during training programmes are effectively applied at school level.

School Improvement Managers Intensify On-the-Ground Support:

As part of reform implementation, ERIT School Improvement Managers have commenced a fresh round of

school visits, providing mentorship, coaching and practical guidance to teachers and administrators.

The visits are aimed at translating policy into practice by offering real-time support within classrooms and school environments. During these engagements, managers assess teaching methods, classroom management and student assessment practices, while offering feedback to enhance learning outcomes.

According to ERIT officials, the current phase of visits focus on

strengthening lesson delivery, improving classroom management, enhancing assessment techniques, supporting school leadership and identifying resource gaps. Schools visited after the August training sessions have reportedly shown improved organization, supervision and more structured learning environments.

Infrastructure Upgrades Improve Learning Conditions:

The Ministry of Basic Education, under the leadership of Commissioner for Basic Education, Hon. Goodluck Chinedu Ubochi, has also recorded progress in school infrastructure development.

Recently completed projects include upgrades at Amakama High School and Ibeku High School in Umuahia North, where improved learning spaces and facilities have enhanced teaching and student experiences. The projects form part of a broader initiative to rehabilitate aging infrastructure, reduce overcrowding and provide safer, more conducive learning environments.

Teachers in beneficiary schools have welcomed the improvements, noting increased morale and better classroom interaction.

Ministry Reaffirms Focus on Teachers and Learning Quality:

Across all initiatives, education officials say teacher development remains central to the state's reform agenda. The ministry, in collaboration with ERIT and other partners, continues to prioritize mentorship programmes, workshops and performance monitoring aimed at improving instructional quality and student outcomes.

Officials note that recent achievements, including the NILDS competition success, demonstrate the impact of coordinated efforts among government agencies, reform partners and school communities.

Current focus areas include strengthening quality assurance systems, expanding supervisory frameworks and improving digital documentation of school evaluation processes.

Outlook Promising for Abia's Education Sector:

With infrastructure upgrades ongoing, school mentoring intensifying and reform coordination improving, stakeholders say Abia State is laying the groundwork for sustainable transformation in basic and secondary education.

As preparations continue for future academic competitions and further reform rollouts, the government maintains that its priority remains delivering quality education supported by modern facilities, motivated teachers and strong institutional frameworks, an outlook many believe positions Abia for continued progress in the education sector.



**Abia State is laying the groundwork for sustainable transformation in basic and secondary education.**

## Feature

# Container-Content Relationships: Why Location Does Not Define Performance in Governance – Abia State Context

By J U Ogbonna

**I**n governance, symbolism often competes with substance. Government houses, official residences, and capital cities are imbued with history and meaning, and they serve as visible markers of authority. Yet, an overemphasis on where governance occurs can distract from the more consequential question of how well governance is performed.

The recent controversy in Abia State, where former governors have reportedly threatened legal action over Governor Alex Otti's decision to function substantially from Nvosi rather than the Umuahia Government House, has reopened a long-standing debate in public administration: does physical location define performance, legitimacy, or legality in governance?

This brief argues that it does not. Drawing from constitutional principles, public administration theory, and emerging governance indicators in Abia State, it contends that leadership performance should be assessed by outcomes, institutional reforms, and service delivery, but not by the address from which executive duties are discharged.

### Container vs Content: A Governance Lens

The container represents the physical and symbolic spaces of governance: government houses, offices, and administrative headquarters. These spaces provide continuity, visibility, and ceremonial legitimacy.

The content, however, is the substance of governance: policy decisions, institutional coordination, fiscal management, transparency, and impact on citizens' lives.

Effective governance depends on content.

Containers may house power, but they do not exercise it. History shows that governments frequently operate from alternative locations during transitions, renovations, emergencies, or security concerns without losing authority or effectiveness.

### Legal and Constitutional Perspective

A critical issue in the Abia debate is legality. Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended) does not prescribe a mandatory physical location from which a governor must perform executive functions daily. Section 176 establishes the office of the Governor, while Sections 191–193 outline executive authority, delegation, and administration, but none condition the exercise of power on residence or continuous physical presence in a particular government house.

### What the Constitution requires is:

- + A valid electoral mandate
- + Oath of office
- + Adherence to constitutional processes
- + Governance through duly constituted institutions

As long as executive actions like appointments, approvals, policies, and directives are lawful and channelled through recognised institutions of state, their validity does not hinge on geography.

Even within Nigeria's federal practice, presidents, governors, and ministers routinely conduct official business from alternative locations: private residences, official lodges, or temporary offices. Courts have consistently prioritised authority and due process over physical setting.

Therefore, legal arguments centred solely on location risk are weak unless they can demonstrate constitutional breach,

exclusion of institutions, or denial of access to governance.

### Abia State: Shifting the Focus to Performance

Rather than reducing governance to symbolism, public discourse in Abia State should interrogate performance indicators. Since 2023, public narratives around Abia governance have increasingly focused on:

- Fiscal discipline and transparency: Reduction in wasteful spending, improved salary and pension payments, and clearer public finance communication.
- Infrastructure rehabilitation: Visible road reconstruction projects, particularly in Aba and Umuahia, addressing years of urban decay.
- Public sector reforms: Renewed emphasis on accountability, verification exercises, and institutional clean-up.
- Ease of doing business: Renewed engagement with traders, SMEs, and industrial clusters in Aba, Nigeria's historic manufacturing hub.

These indicators, whether one agrees with their pace or scale, are the appropriate metrics for assessing governance effectiveness. None is inherently dependent on a governor's physical base of operation.

### Symbolism vs Development Outcomes

The Umuahia Government House carries symbolic importance as the administrative heart of Abia State. However, symbolism should reinforce governance, not replace it. When debates over buildings eclipse discussions about roads, schools, healthcare, jobs, and security, governance becomes performative.

Policy history is replete with examples where leaders occupied prestigious offices

while institutions decayed. Conversely, reform-minded administrations have delivered impact despite operating from modest or unconventional settings.

In this light, insisting that effectiveness flows from physical presence risks mistaking form for function.

### Risks of Over-Politicising Location

An excessive fixation on location poses several risks:

- + Diverts public attention from substantive policy outcomes
- + Encourages legal theatrics over governance improvement
- + Reinforces elite competition over symbols rather than service delivery
- + Undermines adaptive governance in evolving urban and administrative contexts

For a state seeking recovery, investment, and public trust, these distractions are costly.

However, physical location may support administrative convenience, but it does not confer legitimacy on its own. Governance legitimacy is earned daily through decisions and outcomes.

### Conclusion: Reframing the Debate

The Abia State controversy offers a teachable moment. Governance should not be reduced to architecture or geography. While government houses matter symbolically, they do not deliver development.

The container-content framework reminds us that performance lives in systems, policies, and accountability and not buildings. If Abia State is to move forward, public discourse must pivot from where the governor sits to what the government delivers.

Ultimately, history will judge leadership not by the coordinates of power, but by the quality of governance it produced.

### Abia on the move...

J U Ogbonna, A Proud son of Umungalagu Nvosi and Public Analyst

## Opinion

# Towards 2027: The Futile Gathering Of Vultures In Abia State

By David Chukwu

**T**he political atmosphere in Abia has been heated up following a recent gathering of the political buccaneers who seem bent on returning the state on the path of infamy and perdition after Governor Alex Otti has taken it to higher developmental pedestal in less than three years. These wolves led by former governors of the state, Orji Uzor Kalu and Theodore Orji, who met under the banner of APC Stakeholders at the Umuahia residence of Theodore Orji vowed to reclaim Abia from Otti.

Orji Kalu boasted that he would win the state for his party come 2027. He went further to downplay the matchless performance of Otti by shamelessly claiming that the beautiful roads that Otti, had delivered in all parts of Abia were done by him, Orji Kalu, adding that what Otti was doing was just mere painting of the roads built by his administration between 1999 and 2007. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Orji Kalu's outburst has predictably provoked outrage amongst the people of Abia State who saw through the ruinous 24 years of the combined PDP-led administrations of Orji Kalu, Theodore Orji and Okezie Ikpeazu.

Those were the years of the locust in which the state was looted to the ground with no modicum of infrastructural development to show for it. Those were the years of fetish, diabolical and occultic practices in which only those initiated into the Okija shrines held power for themselves and their families and small circle of cronies, court jesters and sycophants. The state was left to lie prostrate, and the two major cities of Umuahia and Aba were abandoned and allowed to be overtaken

by mountains of garbage. Abia State, under the watch of these men, was rated nationally as the most underdeveloped in the entire Federation.

But in just two and half years, Otti has changed the face of Abia for good. The state has witnessed an unprecedented transformation never seen since its creation in 1991. Otti has returned Aba to its former glory through the incredible works he has done in the areas of urban renewal and massive reconstruction of the terrible roads in the Enyimba city, including the strategic Port Harcourt Road that was criminally abandoned for 24 years by the vultures that gathered at Ochendo's residence in Umuahia when they held sway in the state.

Otti has similarly brought his Midas touch to Umuahia, the state capital. The town is completely transformed and now wears a look that befits a capital city of its status. Prior to Otti's intervention, Umuahia was basically provincial and rural in character. A recent visit to Umuahia shows a city with expanded roads adorned with functional traffic lights and modern bus

stops. Otti has also completed an ultra-modern Central Transport Terminal in Umuahia, the first of its kind in the state. The terminal, which is integrated into the existing railway lines in the town comes with a modern escalator, which helps to quicken the movement of passengers and their goods. The same facility is being replicated in Aba, with a similar proposal for Ohafia.

Last December, the governor introduced electric buses to ply designated routes within Umuahia, Aba, Ohafia and other parts of the state. Abians have been enjoying free rides inside these luxury buses during the Yuletide and the New Year, courtesy of Otti's gesture of goodwill. The people of Abia are full of praise for Otti, whom they have sworn to return to the Government House in 2027 in reciprocation for the great work he is doing in the state. This is what has made the buccaneers jittery and aghast.

In 2027, the votes will count in Aba. The good people of Abia who are impressed with the sterling performance of Otti would return him with an overwhelming mandate and resist any attempt by any person or group of persons to rig elections in the state.

What this means is that the political career of Orji Kalu and his co-travellers are heading for the rocks. The people of Abia North, who never voted for him in the last election, are standing ready to retire Kalu to his Igbere village. Invoking President Tinubu's name, as he is wont to do, is not going to help him.

Abia people had a raw deal in the hands of Kalu and the other visionless leaders during their wasteful years in power. They are not ready to return to the path of infamy. It is Otti all the way till 2031.

Chukwu, a Political Analyst, writes from Aba.

**In 2027, the votes will count in Aba. The good people of Abia who are impressed with the sterling performance of Otti would return him with an overwhelming mandate and resist any attempt by any person or group of persons to rig elections in the state.**



## Local Government News

### Ukwa West Council Chairman Drives Key Defection To Labour Party

By Okechukwu Ubani

**T**he Executive Chairman of Ukwa West Local Government Area, Hon. Pst. Dike Briggs Nwankwo, has led a major political realignment in Asa land with the defection of several influential political leaders to the Labour Party (LP), further consolidating support for the administration of Abia State Governor, Dr. Chiemaka Oti.

The high-profile stakeholders who joined the Labour Party include Hon. Godwin Adiele, a serving member of the Abia State House of Assembly elected on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Rt. Hon. Ngozi Ulunwa, former Deputy Speaker of the Abia State House of Assembly; Chief Henry Nwokemgbede, a former APC chieftain, former Transition Committee Chairman, and former Commissioner in the Civil Service Commission; Hon. Endy Enyioke, Abia State PDP Youth Leader; Hon. Austin Nwari; Chief Quintine Iharaonye (Omereoha); Chief Augustine Enyioke (Joetex), alongside other notable political figures and community leaders.

The political realignment followed a strategic courtesy visit by the delegation to Governor Oti, during which they reaffirmed their shared commitment to the governor's development-focused agenda and vision for a new Abia State.

The development reflects Hon. Pst. Nwankwo's inclusive, consensus-driven leadership style, which prioritizes unity, collaboration, and purposeful governance as instruments for sustainable development. Political observers note that the Ukwa West Chairman's leadership has continued to attract respected stakeholders across party lines, all united by a common commitment to progress, accountability, and people-centred governance.

With this development, support for Governor Oti and the Labour Party has gained considerable momentum across Asa land, particularly in Ukwa West Local Government Area, where political structures are becoming increasingly consolidated and cohesive.

Confidence among party faithful and supporters is rising, signaling a strengthened political base and a solid platform for future engagements.

The latest political shift represents a strategic gain for Asa stakeholders and marks another significant milestone in the expanding influence of the Labour Party in Ukwa West Local Government Area.

## Ikwuano Council Stakeholders Challenge Opposition Against Abia Governor

By Stephanie Nneoma

**S**takeholders from Ikwuano Local Government Area in Abia State have expressed unwavering support for Governor Alex Otti's administration, asserting that any attempts by the opposition to unseat him in the 2027 governorship election are doomed to fail.

The meeting was reportedly convened in response to statements attributed to three former governors—Orji Uzor

Kalu, Theodore Orji, and Okezie Ikpeazu—who were said to be considering a challenge against Otti in the next election.

Attendees included Adolphus Okebugwu, Friday Eluwa, Okezie Chukwuemeka, Emetu Chikezie, Mercy Alamba, Innocent Elogu, Iroabuchi Chukwuemeka, and Christopher Elogu.

Addressing the gathering, Ikwuano LGA Mayor, Anthony Nwaubani, highlighted the noticeable progress under Governor Otti's

leadership across multiple sectors and criticized the opposition for lacking credible alternatives.

"There is no vacancy at Government House in 2027. The opposition will be defeated," Nwaubani said. "Criticism should be constructive and based on facts. Misrepresenting the truth only alienates the public. Some have claimed Governor Otti is merely repainting roads. Such remarks have angered the people. Do we want to return to the past? Certainly not."

He emphasised that the Otti administration's achievements, particularly in infrastructure, are visible across the state.

"You understand the value of light only after living in darkness, Abians endured difficult times before Otti. Anyone who lived here knows how dire the situation was. He is truly a blessing to the state. Without his leadership, many residents would have left. Businesses that once relocated to neighbouring states are now returning. Abia is

attracting positive attention again, and people are proud to call themselves Abians," Nwaubani said.

Deputy Mayor, Lucky Awuwa, led stakeholders in a formal vote of confidence in Governor Otti's bid for a second term.

"Otti is resilient, visionary, and committed. Ikwuano will stand firmly behind him," Awuwa said, urging residents to collect their Permanent Voter Cards in preparation for the 2027 election.



A cross section of Ugwuagbo stakeholders and traditional rulers at a meeting convened by the Executive Mayor of Ugwuagbo LGA, Hon. Chiemela Iheanacho Wagbara, to declare unanimous support for the re-election of Dr. Alex Otti

## Ugwunagbo Declares Support For Gov. Otti's Re-election In 2027

By Okechukwu Ubani

**U**gwunagbo Local Government Area has officially announced its full support for the re-election of Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, in 2027. The council stated clearly that there will be no vacancy in Government House, Umuahia, in 2027.

The announcement was made recently, during a meeting called by the Executive Mayor of Ugwuagbo LGA, Hon. Chiemela Iheanacho Wagbara, at the council secretariat.

The meeting was attended by political leaders, traditional rulers, women and youth leaders, party officials, and other important stakeholders from across the area.

Hon. Wagbara praised the people of Ugwuagbo for their unity and commitment to the progress of Abia State. He urged everyone to keep supporting good governance and to continue backing the current administration.

The mayor described Governor Otti as a transformational leader who has positively impacted the entire state, including Ugwuagbo.

He mentioned major projects such as the rehabilitation of Ohanku Road, Obobia Road, and Port Harcourt Road. He stressed that continued support is needed to build on the progress already made and called for strong grassroots mobilization in favor of the governor.

The members representing Ugwuagbo in the Abia State House of

Assembly, Hon. Chijioke Urakpa, said Governor Otti deserves a full eight-year term to complete his development plans. He formally moved a motion for a vote of confidence, which was unanimously adopted.

Former Mayor of Ugwuagbo, Hon. Nosike Ihiesiaba, stated that the whole local government area is committed to Governor Otti's re-election and promised strong electoral support in 2027.

Speaking for women in the area, a former Chairman of Ugwuagbo Council, Joy Chinasakwu Nnata, thanked the governor for projects that have improved living conditions, especially in transportation and economic activities. She confirmed that women in Ugwuagbo fully support a second term for Governor

Otti.

The Labour Party Chairman, Mr. Dike Achioke, said the governor has widespread support among the people, while the Youth Chairman, Mr. Victor Nwaohamuo, added that the governor's performance in just two years has exceeded expectations, promising the full support of young people.

Traditional rulers, led by Eze Chris Ajuzie, pledged their support and insisted that Governor Otti should complete a full eight-year term. Eze S. N. Nwosu, Second Vice Chairman of the Abia State Council of Traditional Rulers, praised the governor's inclusive leadership and support for traditional institutions.

Abia Arise Co-ordinator in Ugwuagbo, Chief Akachi Ugwualla, commended the governor

for paying salaries and pensions on time, saying it has improved the welfare of workers and retirees.

Mr. Choice Osisike also reminded citizens about the importance of voter registration and urged all eligible residents to obtain their Permanent Voter Cards.

He also highlighted the ongoing registration for National Identification Numbers (NIN), which will be linked to Tax Identification Numbers (TIN), encouraging everyone to register.

At the end of the meeting, all stakeholders and residents of Ugwuagbo LGA passed a vote of confidence in Governor Otti, confirming their support and declaring that there will be no vacancy in Government House in 2027.



# Congratulations

On behalf of the Ministry of Health and entire Abia State, I wish to congratulate His Excellency **Dr Alex Chioma Otti OFR** the Executive Governor of Abia State for winning the **2025 Leadership Challenge Award (South East)** in Primary Healthcare and his numerous strides which has brought tremendous transportation to the Abia State Health ecosystem.

Continue to soar high like eagle you are. Indeed, all Abians are solidly behind you.

May God continue to strengthen and grant you more wisdom for greater achievements in the days ahead.

**Once Again  
Congratulations!  
And compliments  
of the season.**



**HIS EXCELLENCY,  
DR. ALEX OTTI, OFR**  
EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ABIA STATE



**PROF ENOCH  
OGBONNAYA UCHE**  
HON. COMMISSIONER  
FOR HEALTH ABIA STATE.



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## Interview

# Reports of Financial Misappropriation Against MOUAU Are Incorrect- Prof Iwe

**T**he Vice Chancellor of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, who assumed office as the institution's 6th Vice Chancellor in 2021, speaks with National Ambassador Newspaper as his tenure comes to an end in February 2026.

In this interview, with Okereke Kate, he reflects on his five years in office, major achievements, challenges, and recent allegations of financial impropriety against the university.

### Excerpt:

An online report alleged that MOUAU plans to spend **N252 million** on three vehicles for the Pro-Chancellor and two other principal officers in 2026. Is this true, and why would such spending occur as your tenure ends?

First, let me welcome you and appreciate your continued interest in the affairs of this university. I also thank you for the positive feedback you have consistently given regarding how we have managed the university over the past five years. I had just returned from Abuja, but I felt it was important to meet with you because I hold the media in high esteem.

Let me state clearly that the allegation is incorrect. The **N252 million** figure being circulated has nothing to do with the 2026 budget. In fact, the 2026 budget has not even been released. What people are referring to is part of the 2025 appropriation, which was prepared in 2024 based on prevailing market prices at the time.

Public expenditure does not happen overnight, and it is certainly not the decision of one individual. Government first issues an expenditure envelope to the university. From that envelope, we align our needs and prepare a proposal, which is then subjected to several levels of scrutiny. The proposal is defended before the relevant joint committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, after which approvals are granted.

Beyond that, procurement goes through internal processes within the university, including the University Planning Committee (UPPC), which determines realistic costing, including insurance and associated expenses. Contractors submit quotations, which are evaluated before being forwarded to the university's Tender Board. If the amount exceeds what the university is authorized to approve, it is referred to the Ministerial Tenders Board of the Ministry of Agriculture.

So, this is not a situation where a Vice Chancellor wakes up and decides to spend **N252 million**. There are checks and balances at every stage, involving multiple institutions and regulatory bodies. Any publication suggesting otherwise clearly misunderstands or deliberately misrepresents the public procurement process. To me, it appears to be an attempt to smear the administration.

Another report alleged that the university illegally spent **N5 billion** and failed to remit **N578 million** to the federal government from its Internally Generated Revenue (IGR). How accurate are these claims?

These claims are misleading. Although some argue that such matters should strictly be handled by Council, I feel compelled to clarify the issues, especially since they have generated public interest. I am a researcher and a scientist, and I usually focus on issues grounded in facts and evidence. However, let me address the IGR allegation. My administration began in 2021, when the world was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic activities were extremely limited, and it is unrealistic to claim that the university generated such a large amount of IGR during that period.

In 2022, the situation was further worsened by the eight-month ASUU strike, during which Nigerian universities were largely shut down. There was no farming, no animal production, no commercial activity, and no academic services running at full capacity. The little IGR that existed came from minor activities such as POS services, photocopying, and small-scale businesses.

Furthermore, charges paid by students in Nigerian universities are service-based, not tuition fees.



Prof Iwe

Undergraduate students do not pay tuition. These charges cover specific services such as identity cards, utilities, and facilities. Treating such charges as IGR and demanding remittance to government undermines the long-standing argument that universities are underfunded.

Given the realities of 2021 and 2022, it is impossible for this university to have generated **N578 million** in IGR during that period. What seems to have happened is that bits of unrelated information were pulled together, stitched into a narrative, and presented in a way intended to incite public sentiment against the university. That is unfortunate and unfair.

### Why do you think there are attempts to incite the public against the university?

Honestly, I do not know. What I can say is that over the past five years, we have remained committed to repositioning this university. We deliberately worked to improve student conduct, staff relationships, and interpersonal harmony. At some point before our tenure, these values were almost nonexistent.

We opened the university to the outside world, attracted goodwill, and strengthened collaborations. This year alone, we successfully facilitated a fully funded scholarship to China for one of our students, which reflects the kind of global engagement we desire.

Our academic staff have published in high-impact journals and secured major research grants because we deliberately created the right environment. One of our landmark achievements is the completion of the Energizing Education Project (EEP2), which provided a solar power system and now guarantees 24-hour electricity on campus, something unimaginable three years ago.

**Do you pay to power the campus?** Yes, we do. We supplement solar power with gas, especially during the rainy season and harmattan when sunlight is limited. We also continue to pay EEDC. In the future, users may contribute to the cost, but that is not yet the case.

**Did you pay your predecessor a N44 million severance allowance?**

I never did. I never met my predecessor on seat for me to pay him. Those payments were made before I assumed office. It's strictly an act of Council. I met no outstanding severance obligations. This is another example of unrelated issues being pulled together to mislead the public.

**You're a human being, the possibility of stepping on toes are there. Will you remember how many times you stepped on toes?**

I do not believe so. I governed strictly within the law and prioritized reconciliation over confrontation. We inherited over 100 litigations, many involving professors. Through dialogue and goodwill, all were resolved peacefully.

Promotions that had stalled for years were regularized, disputes were settled, and peace was restored. Today, the campus enjoys stability and calm, something visitors frequently commend.

There may be few things you did in your administration,

if given another opportunity, would you do them differently?

I have not taken any unilateral decisions in this my regime. Every action followed due process and the university's regulations. I consistently sought advice from principal officers—the Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, Internal Auditor, and Deputy Vice Chancellors, before taking decisions.

**We're aware of the VC selection process, do you have a successor now?**

No. The process is ongoing and remains entirely a Council matter. We were given six months, from September to March to conclude the process, we are still within the stipulated timeframe.

**How were the inherited court cases you mentioned resolved?**

Through sincere dialogue. Our body language showed that we desired peace, and gradually, parties withdrew their cases. Council agreed on fair resolutions, which we implemented faithfully.

**What would you consider your greatest achievements and worst moments?**

Not everyone immediately aligned with the reforms we introduced, but the majority eventually understood our direction and supported the vision.

Our most challenging moment was February 6, 2024, when efforts to streamline university administration were misunderstood and students were mobilized against the management. Our goal was simply to create a system that would run more efficiently.

Despite this setback, we remained focused on positive thinking, productive action, and progressive programmes. We established new academic departments, strengthened between eight and ten non-academic directorates, and expanded infrastructure, including the development of the Olori campus, which we believe will significantly improve within the next few years. Operating with limited capital funding, mostly between **N200-N300 million** annually, we still achieved meaningful progress. Key among our accomplishments was the digitization of student records through biometric registration, which now allows instant access to student data and seamless processing of interventions such as NELFUND payments. In 2025, our capital shot up. We did some hard-work in 2024 to make sure that the capital went up a bit. Despite our effort, we have not received a kobo from that new threshold of capital.

Among other achievements, we also automated bursary, library, senate, and transcript processes, eliminating delays, improving transparency, and restoring order to the system. These reforms have strengthened administration and positioned the university for a more efficient and sustainable future.

**What will you do after leaving office?**

I will proceed on my one-year sabbatical leave and take time to rest after five demanding years of service.

**Do you suspect anyone behind the allegations?**

No. I simply respond transparently whenever questions arise.

**How many students benefited from the China scholarship?**

One student is currently studying Food Engineering up to PhD level at Hainan University, China, on a full scholarship.

**Why was the 2025 Convocation put on hold?**

It was a Council decision. Preparations were largely completed, and the ceremony can proceed once funds are released.

**What does the FG-ASUU agreement mean to you?** It is a welcome development. Having spent over 40 years as a lecturer, I hope it will end recurrent strikes. Once funds are released, implementation will follow. We commend President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and urge patience as the process unfolds.

**Any final words to students and staff?**

To students, remain curious, resilient, and committed to excellence. To staff, thank you for your dedication and service. Together, continue to uphold integrity, innovation, and unity. The future of this university is bright.



## Metro

### Gov Otti Promises Automatic Jobs For Outstanding Corps Members

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has assured that outstanding Corps members who distinguish themselves during their National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) year will be offered automatic employment, urging the 2026 Batch A, Stream 1 members to maximise the opportunities the programme provides. Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of 1,820 Corps members at the NYSC Permanent Orientation Camp, Umunna, Bende Local Government Area, Governor Otti charged them to serve with diligence and patriotism, regardless of their posting.

The Governor highlighted Abia's ongoing Human Capital Development Programmes in ICT, Entrepreneurship, and Agriculture, urging Corps members to leverage them as preparation for life after service. He noted that Abia prioritises capacity and performance over origin, citing the current Head of Service, Mr. Benson Ojehkere from Edo State, as an example of the State's merit-based approach.

Governor Otti also commended the NYSC hierarchy in Abia, especially State Coordinator Barr Mrs. Gladys Adama, for their dedication to Corps members' welfare and pledged continued support, including the second phase of orientation camp rehabilitation covering internal roads, fencing, pavilion works, and the parade ground. He stressed that Corps members' contributions during their service year could lead to long-term career and business opportunities within the State.

In her remarks, Mrs. Adama congratulated the 1,820 registered Corps members—804 males and 1,016 females—urging full participation in the orientation programme and emphasizing the importance of developing skills and values for effective service. The Commissioner for Sports and Youth Development, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba, also encouraged the Corps members to excel in Community Development Services, reiterating that exceptional performance would be rewarded by the State Government.

### Abia Celebrates International Day Of Education, Urges Youth Involvement

By Ekebuisi Precious

The Ministry of Tertiary Education, Abia State, on Tuesday marked the 2026 International Day of Education with a call for greater youth involvement in building a responsive, inclusive, and future-ready education system. The event, held under the theme "The Power of Youth in Co-Creating Education," brought together government officials, education stakeholders, students, and development partners to reaffirm the critical role of young people in shaping educational development.

In her welcome address, the Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Professor Uche Eme-Uche, highlighted ongoing reforms in the state's tertiary education sector, including improved funding, renovation of facilities, staff recruitment, and strengthened academic standards. She emphasized that meaningful youth engagement is key to achieving sustainable educational progress that responds to contemporary realities.

Delivering the keynote, Prof. Regina Ogbonna described the International Day of Education as a global observance aimed at promoting education as a fundamental human right and a vital public good for peace and sustainable development. She called for youth inclusion to go beyond consultative processes, advocating genuine partnerships where young people actively participate in designing education solutions.

Also speaking at the event, the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Uduoma Dick, emphasized the need to establish structured platforms that would enable young people to participate actively in educational planning and innovation. He noted that deliberate collaboration with youths in shaping policies and programmes would unlock fresh ideas and drive the kind of innovation required for Abia State's long-term growth.

In their separate remarks, the Rector of Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Dr. Christopher Okoro, and Mr. Chidiebere Nnanna stressed that genuine youth co-creation is indispensable to building a sustainable and forward-looking education system. They described young people as critical partners in development whose insights and energy must be harnessed to achieve meaningful and lasting reforms in the sector.

The event also featured a panel discussion with Student Union Government (SUG) presidents and Dr. Uduoma Dick, Dean of Student Affairs, providing students with a platform to share perspectives on education governance. Dignitaries in attendance included the Special Adviser to the Governor on Digital Economy, Miss Chibuzor Chijioko; the Rector of Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Dr. Christopher Okoro; representatives from Abia State University and Spiritan University; and students from various tertiary institutions across the state.

Delivering the vote of thanks, the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Barr. Chinyere Okeziem-Nwoko, expressed appreciation to Governor Alex Chioma Otti for his visionary leadership and sustained investment in education, particularly at the tertiary level. She commended Professor Eme-Uche for her youth-centered leadership and urged that the resolutions from the celebration be translated into concrete actions to advance quality, inclusive, and innovative education in Abia State.



The Commissioner of Police Abia State Command CP Danladi

## Police, NDLEA Strengthen Partnership on Intelligence Sharing, Drug Control

The Abia State Police Command has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthened collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) in the fight against drug abuse and related crimes in the state.

The Commissioner of Police, Abia State Command, CP Danladi Isa, on January 14, 2026,

received the Abia State Commander of the NDLEA, CN Chigbu Odomelam Chilee, and his management team on a courtesy visit to the Police Command Headquarters.

The visit, according to the NDLEA Commander, was aimed at familiarising with the Police Command and further deepening inter-agency co-operation, particularly in the areas of

intelligence and information sharing, access to the Command when operational needs arise, and other critical areas of collaboration. He also commended the Abia State Police Command for its sustained efforts in ensuring the safety and security of lives and property across the state.

In his response, CP Danladi Isa congratulated

CN Chigbu Odomelam Chilee on his appointment as Abia State NDLEA Commander and warmly welcomed him and his team. He assured them of the Command's readiness to maintain and further strengthen the existing cordial relationship between both agencies.

The Commissioner noted that drug abuse remains a major social menace, particularly among youths, and is often a key factor driving criminal activities. He explained that many criminal suspects rely on drugs for confidence and aggression during the commission of crimes.

Isa assured the NDLEA Commander that all drug-related cases handled by the Police would be promptly transferred to the NDLEA in line with established procedures. He further emphasized that the NDLEA should not hesitate to call on the Police Command whenever the need for operational or logistical support arises.

He encouraged sustained partnership between the two agencies, expressing optimism that through continuous collaboration, intelligence sharing, and joint operations, both bodies would work effectively towards achieving a drug-free and crime-free Abia State.

## Fed Poly Rector Cautions Students Against Cultism, Exam Malpractice

Lovina Emole

The Rector, Federal Polytechnic Ukan, Akwa Ibom State, Mrs Eduma Essien, has cautioned students of the institution to steer clear of cultism, examination practice or any form of anti social behaviour.

She also encouraged the students to report any form of sexual pressure or harassment from lecturers to the management or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Unit of the Polytechnic for appropriate investigation and sanctions saying that the institution prioritizes discipline.

Speaking during the 12th Orientation Exercise for newly admitted students, the rector also charged them to be conversant with the polytechnic's policies, rules and regulations.

She also stated that the

sale of handouts is prohibited in the polytechnic, saying students should only purchase approved textbooks.

Essien assured the students that as long as she remains at the helm of affairs, learning would be made easy in an environment that promotes discipline, safety and academic excellence.

She said, "I encourage you to report any form of sexual pressure from lecturers to the management or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Unit. This institution frowns at the exchange of gifts for marks."

"We also have zero tolerance for cultism and examination malpractice because we want to produce graduates who can confidently defend their certificates anywhere."

The rector explained that students of the polytechnic would not only graduate with

academic certificates but acquire practical skills through the institution's mandatory skills acquisition programme.

According to her, the world is increasingly focused on what individuals can offer to society.

Essien equally encouraged the students to co-operate with their lecturers by diligently carrying out their assignments to make teaching and learning effective and rewarding.

The orientation also featured resource persons who delivered lectures on various aspects of the polytechnic system. They include the Registrar, Mr Idhigu Lucky, the Bursar, Sir Emmanuel Esomonu, the Polytechnic Librarian, Mr Ehikiya Uduebor, among others.

## News

### Rivers Women Reject Governance Distractions, Commit State to God

From Nzeuzor Jane and  
Maduadigbo Jane, PH

Women under the aegis of Rivers Women Unite for SIM, have handed over the affairs of Rivers State to God, rejecting what they described as distractions capable of undermining effective governance in the state.

The women also condemned what they termed a 'peace of the graveyard, calling instead for genuine co-existence, unity, and collective commitment to peace as the foundation for sustainable development in Rivers State.

They made these declarations recently, during their annual prayer gathering held at the Ecumenical Centre, Port Harcourt, to usher in the new year. The gathering drew women from different parts of the state who converged to pray for peace, progress, and good governance.

Speaking at the event, the Convener of Rivers Women Unite for SIM, Amaopuorubo Sotonye Toby Fulton, urged women to walk in faith, love, and unity, stressing that meaningful achievements are only possible where there is togetherness and shared purpose.

She charged participants to remain steadfast in prayer and unwavering in their commitment to the peace and development of Rivers State.

According to her, while faith in divine intervention is essential, citizens must also actively work toward harmony and mutual understanding, noting that God remains firmly in control of the affairs of the state.

The prayer session featured extended periods of praise and thanksgiving, as the women expressed gratitude to God for His faithfulness despite prevailing challenges. They acknowledged divine guidance over the years and offered prayers for continued protection, wisdom, and abundant grace upon Rivers State and the nation at large.

Special prayers were also offered for peace, prosperity, and good governance, as the women declared God's divine order over the land, its leaders, and people. They reaffirmed their belief in God's supreme authority, expressing confidence that He continues to guide the state and perfect all that concerns it.

The group further reiterated its unwavering support for Governor Siminalayi Fubara, committing his leadership and administration into God's hands for divine wisdom, direction, and success.

The event ended on a joyful note as members born in January were celebrated with birthday songs and prayers for long life, good health, and divine favour.

The group urged Rivers people to remain hopeful, united, and focused on building a peaceful and prosperous state for all.

## MOUAU Records Another Feat In Research, As Lecturer Uncovers Methods Of Using Sawdust As Animal Feed

By Okereke Kate

The Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike (MOUAU), has recorded another resounding feat in research and development, as a Professor of Animal Nutrition/Breeding Genetics, Professor Nnamdi Mbanefo Anigbogu, uncovered methods of using sawdust, rice hulls and other organic waste, as animal feed.

Delivering the 67th Inaugural Lecture of the university recently, titled "Crude Harvest Transformation: Waste to Wealth", Prof. Anigbogu, revealed that materials such as sawdust, rice hulls and other wastes, can be scientifically processed into quality animal feed, thereby, reducing the high cost of feed and the burden of waste disposal in Nigeria and globally.

He said these wastes when treated increase from 0.1 per cent protein content

to five per cent with methionine, lysine and other essential amino acids, adding that animals such as turkeys, goats, pigs and chickens, fed with the processed feed perform excellently, with improved productivity and significantly reduced feeding costs.

The agric scholar revealed that Nigeria spends huge sums on physical organic waste management, with most wastes dumped in open landfills where valuable live enzymes are lost.

He explained that with his research, three methods were discovered to manage and produce live enzymes from organic waste under a controlled environment, which he said are now being used successfully as animal feed, producing benefits for government and farmers.

Prof. Anigbogu further stated that the live enzymes produced are compounded into commercial forms known as "zoo-fortifying"

agents, attracting increasing interest from farmers who now seek partnerships to produce the enzymes locally.

He emphasised that the feeds derived from sawdust, rice hulls and similar wastes are cheaper, readily available and environmentally friendly, with no identified pitfalls.

The professor urged the Federal Government to enact laws promoting the use of organic waste as animal feed, encourage the establishment of bio-productive centres for live enzyme production, and support the development of local chemicals for feed formulation.

He stressed that Nigeria's heavy dependence on imported feed additives has continued to drive up the cost of animal production.

In his recommendations, Prof. Anigbogu called for deeper studies of Nigeria's ecosystem and biodiversity to discover untapped microbes, fine chemicals and metabolites for balanced animal feed production. He also advocated the

establishment of Chemical and Nutritional Analytical Centres through public-private partnerships to reduce foreign exchange spent on overseas laboratory analyses.

Highlighting the broader benefits, he said the utilization of organic waste for animal feed could help fight hunger, improve food and nutritional security, reduce pollution, cut municipal waste management costs, create jobs, boost farmers' income and conserve foreign reserves, adding that it would also reposition farming as a noble and economically viable profession.

He concluded that organic wastes such as rice hulls, sawdust, municipal waste, poultry excreta, water hyacinth, mango kernels, animal by-products, brewer's grains, fish waste, tuberous root waste, rumen content and industrial offal should be fully harnessed to drive Nigeria's animal feed technology and sustainable development agenda.

In his remarks, the Vice-

Chancellor, Prof. Maduebibisi Ofo Iwe, who was represented by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Development, Prof. Ursula Ngozi Akanwa, commended the lecturer for doing justice to the topic.

He noted that limited knowledge often discourages active engagement in such innovations and called on government to encourage farmers through subventions and targeted support, especially for those capable of producing animal feed locally and stressed the need to reduce dependence on foreign feeds by leveraging available research outputs to boost local production.

The lecture, he explained, clearly demonstrated the transition from waste to wealth, highlighting two research procedures used to convert waste materials into inputs for animal production. According to him, the presentation has dispelled the long-held belief that waste has no value.



Dr. Alex Otti is seated on the left, while Mrs. Priscilla Otti is seated on the right, alongside a crowd of worshippers during the District Prayer Conference and Grand Civic Reception Service held in their honor at Assemblies of God Church, Okaiya Nkwoegwu, Ohuhu, Umuahia North LGA.

## We've Started 'Aggressive Development' of Abia - Gov. Otti

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

The Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, has declared that his administration has started an 'aggressive development' phase in Abia State, assuring residents that years of stagnation and regression have permanently been brought to an end.

Governor Otti made the declaration recently, while speaking at the District Prayer Conference/Grand Civic Reception Service held in his honour at the Assemblies of God Church, Okaiya Nkwoegwu, Ohuhu, Umuahia North LGA, with the theme: "Saved for a Greater Tomorrow".

The governor who quoted from John 1:43-46, likened Abia's past reputation to the question, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?", noted that there is much positive progress to see in the state today.

"Before 2023, when you mentioned you are from Abia, people would ask, 'Can anything good come out of Abia?' Now, if they ask you again, tell them, 'Come and see'", he declared.

He stated that his administration is focused on governance that restores the dignity of Abia people, so that identifying as an Abian commands respect anywhere.

Governor Otti said that the progress already

recorded under his administration marks a turning point in the history of Abia State, adding that there would be no reversal of the gains made so far.

"So what we have started is the aggressive development of Abia State. We have just started, we are not three years yet. So you imagine what will happen by the time we are done in 2031.

"You know there is a time and a season for everything. The news that I have for Abia people is that we have broken that curse that held us down. And whoever is going to succeed me will be better than me.

"So when people think we are going to go back to them, they must be dreaming. We've moved", the governor said.

Governor Otti who recalled that although he won the 2015 election, it was not God's appointed time, attributed his emergence and the success of his administration to divine intervention.

He stressed that political power ultimately belongs to God, noting that the success of the 2023 election was divinely ordained and not merely human effort.

"We contested election here in 2015. All of you voted for us. We won that election, but it wasn't God's time. And when it's God's time, even if you are

sleeping, God will wake you up", Governor Otti said.

He thanked the church leadership and congregation for the honour done him and their continued support to his administration, assuring Abians that his administration had only just begun its work of rebuilding the State.

Earlier in his welcome address, the District Superintendent of the Assemblies of God Church, Umuahia Jerusalem District, Pastor Kenneth Ogbudu, described Governor Otti as a transformational leader whose administration has redefined governance in Abia State.

He said Otti's tenure marked "a clear and commendable departure from the past," noting that governance in the state is now driven by competence, transparency, accountability and verifiable results.

Pastor Ogbudu also commended the Otti-led administration for the rehabilitation of long-abandoned roads, revival of economic activities, fiscal discipline and the prompt payment of salaries and pensions.

"Indeed, for the first time since the creation of Abia State, advocates can genuinely point to governance they can see, feel and testify about", he said.

The cleric also commended the First Lady, Mrs. Priscilla Otti, describing her as "a woman of virtue, grace and strength," whose support has contributed to the well-being of Abians.



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## News

### Elder Alice Uzoma Kalu Laid To Rest

By Stephanie Okoroafor

**T**he remains of Elder Alice Uzoma Kalu has been buried at her country-home in Agbogocha Digbo, Ndi Odo, Akanu Ohafia, Ohafia Local Government Area of Abia State, amid tears and glowing tributes from family members, church leaders, government officials and well-wishers.

Elder Kalu, who died on June 5, 2025, at the remarkable age of 104, left behind a legacy of faith, hard work and exemplary motherhood.

In a tribute by her son, Col. Ezichi Kalu (retd.), on behalf of the family, the late matriarch was described as an industrious and accomplished trader who successfully combined business with the responsibilities of caring for her husband and raising her children.

According to him, his mother was a generous, virtuous and disciplined woman, a quintessential mother who deeply loved her children while firmly guiding them on the path of righteousness. He added that she was a devout Christian and committed member of the Presbyterian Church, Ohafia, whose life was anchored on faith and service to God.

Col. Kalu assured that the family would continue to cherish and uphold the values that defined their mother's life, pledging to immortalize her memory by living out the virtues she stood for.

In his condolence message, Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, commiserated with the Kalu family and thanked God for blessing the deceased with a long and impactful life. The governor urged the family not to grieve without hope, noting that Elder Kalu lived a fulfilled life, served God and her generation faithfully, and has gone to rest in the Lord.

On behalf of my family, friends, the members and supporters of the Labour Party, the Government and people of Abia State, I commiserate with you and the entire family on the passage of your matriarch. I pray that God grants you the fortitude to bear the loss," the governor stated.

Earlier, in a funeral homily, the Prelate Emeritus and Moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN), Prof. E. M. Uka, urged Christians to emulate the Godly virtues of the late Elder Kalu. He described her as a true embodiment of a godly mother, whose sacrificial lifestyle and unwavering faith would be greatly missed.

Prof. Uka charged her children and relatives to follow in her footsteps, stressing that her life remains a shining example of Christian living and service.

The burial attracted dignitaries from various walks of life, government officials, church leaders, and community members, who gathered to celebrate the life and times of a woman widely regarded as a pillar of faith and family.



Dr. Christopher Okoro Kalu

### Ogbonnaya Onu Poly: Projects At Osioma Campus Near Completion - Okoro

From Chinaza Onyema, Aba

**T**he Rector of Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba, Dr. Christopher Okoro Kalu, has reaffirmed that the long-anticipated relocation of academic activities to the institution's Osioma Campus is now imminent, as infrastructural projects at the site approach completion.

Dr. Okoro made this known during an expanded management meeting held at the Schools' Council Chamber. He disclosed that several ongoing projects at the Osioma Campus are nearing completion.

According to him, the Polytechnic's current infrastructural development efforts are now fully concentrated on the Osioma Campus, with assurances that all buildings under construction will be

completed and commissioned between March and April.

"The movement to Osioma Campus is no longer a promise; it is a reality," the Rector stated, adding that management remains committed to ensuring that academic activities start at the campus in the shortest possible time.

Dr. Okoro reiterated the institution's policy prohibiting the sale of textbooks to students and urged staff to continue to treat students with dignity, kindness, and professionalism, while avoiding all forms of unethical practices.

He further emphasised his administration's unwavering commitment to staff welfare, noting that a motivated workforce is critical to the delivery of quality academic and administrative services.

"We will continue to fight for the welfare of the staff, and it will please us if they, in turn, fight for the welfare of the students," he said.

The Rector also revealed management's plan to introduce a new programme in Sports and Physical Education, following a proposal by the Abia State Commissioner for Sports. He disclosed that the programme would be domiciled in the School of Business and Management Technology (SBMT).

In addition, Dr. Okoro announced that evening programmes would soon be introduced for students of Mass Communication and Engineering, as part of efforts to expand academic opportunities and improve access to education.

On convocation matters, the Rector assured the Polytechnic community that

graduation ceremonies would henceforth be held annually.

"As long as I remain here, by the grace of His Excellency, convocation will be held every year. We will not deny people what is due to them," he assured.

Dr. Okoro expressed gratitude to members of staff for their massive turnout at his mother-in-law's traditional retirement ceremony and also commended the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti, for approving a new structural salary payment for the institution.

"I want to appreciate His Excellency, Dr. Alex Otti, the Chief Painter, for using the right paints always," he said, while pledging that the Polytechnic would fully align its operations with the state's theme of the year, Acceleration and New Possibilities.

### ABSHIA Set To Enrol Public School Pupils In Free Healthcare Scheme

By Syephania Okoroafor

**T**he Abia State Health Insurance Agency (ABSHIA), has announced plans to start a state wide mass enrolment of pupils and students in all public primary and secondary schools across the 17 local government areas of the state.

The initiative, which will be implemented under the Students Vulnerable Groups Social Health Insurance Programme (SVG-SHIP), is designed to provide eligible students with access to primary and secondary healthcare services at no cost to their parents or guardians.

The Executive Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of ABSHIA, Dr. Chidoziem Ekwuonwu, disclosed this during a recent radio interview on the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia (BCA).

He explained that the programme is in line with the directive of Governor Alex Otti, which mandates compulsory school enrollment for all school-age children in the state.

According to Dr. Ekwuonwu, the health insurance scheme is aimed at removing health-related barriers that

often hinder school attendance and academic performance, particularly among children from vulnerable backgrounds.

"The Abia State Students Vulnerable Groups Social Health Insurance Programme for public primary and secondary schools represents a major step toward ensuring equitable access to healthcare for vulnerable children,"

"By guaranteeing access to essential health services, the programme will not only improve health outcomes but also support improved learning and educational success."

He revealed that the agency had earlier conducted a six-month pilot phase of the programme, during which about 17,000 students from public primary and secondary schools across the 17 local government areas were successfully enrolled. The pilot, he noted, provided valuable insights into the programme's impact, feasibility and sustainability, with encouraging results.

Dr. Ekwuonwu further explained that all enrolled students would be linked to Primary Health Centres closest to their schools, ensuring timely and easy access to healthcare services. He added that the programme would operate on a fee-for-service payment model, rather than the conventional

capitation system, to ensure efficiency and accountability in service delivery.

The ABSHIA boss expressed appreciation to Governor Otti for his strong political will and commitment to the welfare of Abia residents, noting that the release of adequate funds by the state government has been critical to the success and planned expansion of the programme.

He called on key stakeholders—including local government mayors, traditional rulers, the State Ministry of Basic Education, policymakers, educators, healthcare providers and community leaders—to lend their support to the initiative.

Dr. Ekwuonwu emphasised that collective commitment from all stakeholders is essential to achieving the programme's goal of ensuring that every child in Abia State has access to quality healthcare, regardless of socio-economic status, thereby laying a solid foundation for a healthier and more productive future generation.





## Creative Writers Hangout

### Uche and the Sword (12)

**S**tand here" the Principal ordered indicating with his cane where he wanted Uche to stand. The Principal looked at his piece of paper and called "Uzo Matthew!" students shouted because Uzo was least expected to fail. Uzo was embarrassed, he had never appeared before the school for any reason. "Why now?" He thought. Uzo came out and stood beside Uche.

"These two students", the Principal went on "have made our school proud. Their beautiful display of soccer artistry did not only make our school win the shell cup but it has also brought honor to them, their parents and our school. It is my pleasure to announce that these two worthy students of ours..." Uche wondered if he was truly worthy, having failed his first two terms "...will be traveling to Glasgow, Scotland by next week Friday as part of the Golden Eagles for an international tournament."

Students shouted in excitement. Uche did not know that when Mr. Godwin went to submit Uzo's form the Golden Eagles coach had given him another form for Uche as he wanted Uche to be part of his team at all cost.

When Mr. Godwin could not locate Uche he filled the form with the help of Uche's class teacher, who supplied Mr. Godwin all the statistic she needed about Uche.

"I am more excited by Uche Obi" the Principal went on, "who usually appears before us at this time every term to be flogged as the worst student. I've checked his result, he did marvelously well. And today he's appearing before us for a good reason. He is a typical example for all of us that no matter what have happened in our lives, in our studies and in other things we do in life, we can re-write our history, we can right the wrong, we can achieve our dream. Congratulations my sons. Put your hands together for them."

The students clapped, but Sandra clapped longer after others had stopped. As they joined the line Uche was highly elated. He left the line as one to be despised but came back as a king.

The Principal signaled the head of the police team and walked away.

Two female police led female teachers into the principal's office, while all the male teachers were led into the staff room by five policemen.

Every male student was asked to pull his shirt at the assembly ground while all the female students were led into the school hall where female police examined them.

The Vice Principal started shouting, "Nobody can make me pull my shirt, to hell with you!" He struggled with two policemen. They overpowered and handcuffed him. When his right shoulder was opened they saw it, the sword tattoo.

It was only the Principal and perhaps Sandra that knew what was happening. Sandra had gone to the Principal's house on Wednesday evening. The gate man told her that the Principal does not allow students to see him at home.

"Please sir, I need to see him, it is very important" she pleaded.

"Come, this girl, that your eye dey hear at all, abi na ordinary design we e be for your head? Oga no dey see children for house. Go school tomorrow go see am." The gate man shut the gate.

Sandra waited not knowing what to do. She considered going home, but, changed her mind when she remembered that it was a do or die affair. She came back and started pounding on the gate hoping that the Principal would hear the pounding and ask her to come in.

The gate man started quarrelling with her from inside the house. "This witch, you no dey hear word? Go!" Sandra persisted even pounding harder on the gate. The gate man opened the gate. Sandra saw that he was holding a cane. She took to her heels; the gate man pursued her as much as he could and retreated.

Sandra pulled off her flip-flop, tiptoed back to the gate and started pounding on it again. The gate man became very annoyed and rushed out. Sandra turned to flee and nearly ran into the Principal's wife's car. The car screeched to a halt.

"What is this? What is happening?" The fat Principal's wife asked as she pound her fist on the steering.

"I'm sorry Madam," Sandra apologized

from the passenger's side of the car. The woman ignored Sandra and turned to the gate man who was standing at the driver's side.

"Sorry Madam," he started, "This girl na winch I don tell am say Oga no dey like make students find am come house she no wan hear."

The beefy faced woman turned to Sandra "Madam, please he told me, but I want to see my Principal, there is something very very important. I want to tell him". Sandra pleaded.

The woman gazed at her for a while, "Let her in." She ordered. The gate man ran back opened the gate for the woman. She drove in and Sandra quickly followed.

The gate man glared at Sandra, who retaliated by pulling her tongue at him. The Principal was watching C.N.N. when his wife came in.

"Good evening darling" she greeted as she walked to him and hugged him

"Welcome darling, how was your day?" He asked smilingly.

"It was fine. Please one of your students wants to see you."

"What is wrong with Okon? I have told him repeatedly that I don't like students coming to my..."

"Please darling," She cuts in, "don't be annoyed. He was chasing her away, when I stopped him and called her in."

"O.K let her come in." Sandra was admiring the beautiful compound. She liked the colorful flowers and the sweet chirps of the birds in a cage hung on one of the orange trees.

"Come in", the woman invited. Sandra went in. The floor was tiled and she felt the cool breeze of an air conditioner. There was set of leather upholstery seats and the Principal was sitting on one of them.

"Good evening sir" Sandra greeted almost trembling.

"Sandra Amadi, come." She walked fearfully towards him her hands clutching a role of papers, held together with a rubber band over her breast as if she was praying. "Sit down." She quietly sat on the edge of one sofa leaving another sofa between them.

It was then Sandra realized that she had not made a mental outline of how to present her case before the Principal.

"Why do you want to see me?" He asked with his eyes fixed on the TV.

"Sir, Uche, no, the missing stamp, no, I mean sorry sir..." The Principal's wife saved Sandra from completely embarrassing herself. She came out with a can of soft drink. "Student, take kola"

"Thank you Madam." Sandra collected the can. She was impressed by the woman's humility and hospitality. That little break gave her the opportunity to put her points together.

"What were you trying to say?" "Sorry sir, I was saying that something is happening in the school and I don't think you're aware of it."

"What is it?" He asked still watching the TV.

"Cultism" He turned quickly and looked at her. Sandra quivered as their eyes met. He picked up a remote control and turned off the TV, "You said cultism?"

"Yes sir"

"How did you know?" Sandra told him what happened. How Nkeiru spoke with somebody, how they called themselves sword. Sandra told him what they saw the previous Friday. Finally she gave him the answer script.

"What is this?" He asked.

"I collected it from where they were burning the script. You may want to confirm what I've said by checking whether the scores recorded in the computer are the same with the marks on the scripts".

"I'll do that. Thank you for letting me know.

I'll protect your identity"

Sandra was happy and relieved when she left the house. At the gate, the gate man opened the gate and told her, "Madam save you, if to say I catch you I for do you wetin tinker dey do pan".

As Sandra stepped outside, she pulled her tongue at him and ran.

The following day, the Principal came to school and sent for Trouble

"Sir, they said you want to see me."

"Yes, Trouble sit down."

The Principal brought out a packet shirt, "I want you to test out this shirt, my younger brother in the U.K sent a lot of them. So I want to give out some of them."

"Thank you, sir." Trouble said happily and got up to leave

"No, test it here so that if it does not fit you I will change it." The Principal bent his head as if he was reading. Trouble fortunately stood in such a way that the Principal could see his right shoulder in the mirror hung on the wall.

The Principal was shocked to his marrow when he saw the sword tattoo on Trouble's right shoulder. He managed to control himself until Trouble happily left his office with the shirt.

"If the security man is involved, then Sandra might have seen Mr. Ukpai. This is beyond me. I'll invite the police," the Principal told himself. He picked the intercom and got Mr. Ukpai on line.

"Send the J.S.I result to me let me see how the green horns are coping."

"Sir they're not doing badly" Mr. Ukpai replied "I'll send it to you immediately"

Before long a student brought a paper wrapped flash drive to the Principal. He slotted it in and opened the computer result. He untied the roll of scripts Sandra gave him and scrolled to J.S.S. 1A. The subject was English.

Some of the figures in the computer have been increased compared to the script. The Principal was mad when he saw a student that scored only 5 percent, but 95 percent was entered for him in the computer.

"Sandra is right" he said as he lolled into his chair, closed his eyes and thought of what to do.

After the police had identified all those with sword tattoo on their right shoulders they were taken away inside the Black Maria. Among those taken away were the vice Principal, Trouble and 58 students, Mr. Umenta was arrested from his computer business center.

It was after the Police had left that the remaining students were trying to find an explanation to what happened. The same confusion was seen in the faces of members of staff.

Uche waited for Sandra under a Melina tree opposite the entrance of the hall, where the girls had gone to remove their blouses. When she came out, Uche went to meet her; she put her hand across Uche's shoulder as they walked home.

"How did you do it?" Uche asked as he tried to remove Sandra's arm from his shoulder because he was shy. But, Sandra held him firmly as she told him how she went to the Principal's house.

Sandra was smiling jauntily when she bid Uche goodbye. She felt accomplished, Uche was finally free and the Sword's activities have been exposed.

THE END

**What will happen to Sandra now that her step-mother is back? Will Kate allow Uche to travel to Scotland? Find out in 'Dear Step-mother.' Coming in our next publication!**

## AUTHOR of the WEEK Lu Xun

**L**u Xun, born Zhou Shuren on September 25, 1881, in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, is widely regarded as the founding figure of modern Chinese literature. He grew up during the final years of the Qing Dynasty, a period marked by political decay, social unrest, and cultural stagnation. These early experiences, coupled with his family's declining fortunes, deeply shaped his critical outlook on traditional Chinese society and inspired his lifelong commitment to intellectual and social

success with other influential short stories, most notably "The True Story of Ah Q" (1921). Through biting satire and dark humor, the story portrayed the psychological weaknesses and self-deceptions of the Chinese national character under oppression. The figure of Ah Q became a lasting symbol in Chinese culture, representing moral complacency and the tragic consequences of social backwardness.

Beyond fiction, Lu Xun was a prolific essayist, critic, and translator. He wrote extensively on literature, art, and politics,



reform.

Lu Xun initially pursued a career in medicine, studying in Japan with the hope of helping to heal his country through science. However, a powerful experience changed the course of his life: he witnessed images of Chinese people being executed while others looked on passively, which convinced him that China's deeper illness was spiritual and cultural rather than physical. This realization led him to abandon medicine in favor of literature, believing that writing could awaken the consciousness of the people.

His literary breakthrough came in 1918 with the publication of "A Madman's Diary," the first major work written in vernacular Chinese (baihua). The story, a fierce critique of feudal ethics and Confucian traditions, exposed what Lu Xun saw as the "cannibalistic" nature of an oppressive social system. This work established him as a bold and uncompromising voice during the May Fourth Movement, a period of intense cultural and intellectual renewal in China.

Lu Xun followed this

using sharp, often caustic prose to challenge hypocrisy, authoritarianism, and intellectual cowardice. He also introduced many foreign literary works to Chinese readers, helping to broaden China's cultural horizons and encouraging young writers to embrace realism and social responsibility. Despite his influence, Lu Xun lived much of his life in political tension and personal hardship. He was frequently at odds with authorities and conservative thinkers, yet he remained independent of any political party, choosing instead to act as a moral conscience of his time. His health was fragile, but he continued to write tirelessly, convinced that silence in the face of injustice was a form of complicity.

Lu Xun died on October 19, 1936, in Shanghai, but his legacy has endured powerfully in modern China. He is remembered not only as a master storyteller but also as a fearless critic who challenged his society to confront its flaws. Today, his works remain widely read and studied, valued for their profound insight, moral urgency, and enduring relevance to struggles for social and cultural renewal.

# Entertainment

 With  
**Akinrujomu  
 Gideon Oluwatobi**


## Razzl Champions Originality: 'Normal is Boring'

### Campaign Sparks Creative Revolution

In a world where everyone tries to fit in, Razzl, Nigeria's bold carbonated soda drink, is challenging the culture of conformity with a powerful message, Normal is Boring. The recently concluded campaign celebrated originality, bold self-expression, and the beauty of being unapologetically different, to bring this message to life, Razzl teamed up with two of Nigeria's most expressive and original entertainers, Brain Jotter and Emmanuella, to lead a youth-driven digital movement that flipped judgment into confidence. Through humour, creativity, and chaos, both creators showed fans what it truly means to embrace their originality, their campaign videos gained thousands of engagements within hours of posting, sparking conversations across social media. That same day, Normal is Boring trended on Twitter (X), with fans and creators joining the challenge to celebrate authenticity in their own unique ways, just like its variety of flavours, Cola, Lemon, and Orange, Razzl stands for versatility and flavourful expression. Each flavour represents the idea that you don't have to fit into one box.

You can be as bold, colourful, and spontaneous as you want to be, across Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X, young Nigerians shared videos and posts that expressed their originality through dance, storytelling, comedy, and lifestyle content that boldly declared, "Why be normal when you can be more?" Razzl's Normal is Boring campaign did not just celebrate creativity, it also rewarded it. Forty most creative entries across Nigeria shared the ₦4 million prize, turning their moments of originality into tangible rewards, according to Toyin Nnodi, Marketing Director, "Razzl is a youthful brand, and the "Normal is Boring" campaign is a call for bold self-expression.

It is a reminder to young Nigerians that they don't need to fit in when they were born to stand out, originality and uniqueness are what define us. We are amazed by the size and quality of entries received. It shows that Nigeria's youth are ready to own their uniqueness and shine through them, in Nigeria, people who think differently are often labelled as "weird." But as this campaign showed, those same people are the ones who start trends, lead conversations, and influence culture. Razzl is giving that boldness a flavour, a taste of authenticity, originality, and creativity, by embracing the unfiltered energy of youth culture, Razzl has built a refreshing connection with its audience, not just as a beverage, but as a badge of confidence.

The campaign demonstrated the power of digital storytelling in shaping youth conversations, turning social media into a playground for creativity, originality, and confidence.

# Ludar Lambert's 2026 Rollout: 12 Hot Questions That Will Set The Music World Ablaze

**A** sneak-peek Q & A with Ludar Lambert to find out what's next, who's joining him on stage, and when the first single drops Fans are buzzing as he prepares to unleash a brand new era in 2026

In an exclusive interview, with Akinrujomu Gideon Oluwatobi, the artist answers twelve (12) headline grabbing questions that promise fresh sounds, surprise collaborations, and a tour that will redefine live performance

Excerpt:

**What's the story behind the title of your upcoming single?**

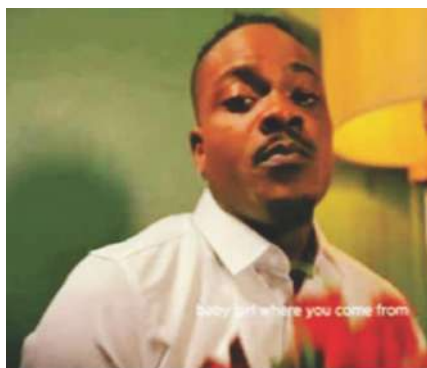
I basically just wanted to do something for my female fans and fans that love to dance, I have dropped a couple of sounds before now but what majority of my fans have been asking me for next is something they can dance to, hence my next release

**Which lyric from your new song means the most to you right now?**

"Make we catch vibe, make we still they get money because it's delicate!"

**You've hinted at fresh material for the 2026 tour - can you tease a line or a vibe?**

Watch out for it in January' How do you balance staying



Michael Lambert Oludayo

true to your sound while experimenting for the next release?

I literally just listen to myself, I listen to the sounds that play in my head and relay them out, it's just a very simple process for me because whatever I put out to the world is ME, truly

**If you could collaborate with any artist (past or present), who would it be and why?**

Bella Shmurda, well basically because we come from the same struggle and I know that once we get to sit in the booth it's instant Chemistry, to be honest I already have some

written down songs for the time when I'd get to pitch to his team

**What's a behind the scenes habit that fans would never guess about you?**

Fans would probably never guess that I am also a Black SoldierFly farmer.

**Which song from your back catalogue do you wish more people would hear live?**

I think the song that holds that special spot is Fears & Tears by me, that's the first official song I ever put out and it's still live on Audiomack

**What does the 2026 world tour mean to you personally?**

Greater Reach in essence

**How do you involve your fans in the creative process for new music?**

I try my best to connect with my community when I need their opinion, sometimes I create random polls on my platforms and social media pages, other times I get to meet a couple of fans, ask them a few questions and tap into what they would like to hear from me

**What's the one thing you want listeners to walk away with after hearing your next track?**

GOOD VIBES

**What can you say about the new generation that's just coming out, you and I know that majority will be looking at you as their mentor?**

To be honest, I don't want to tell anyone how to live their lives but one thing I'd always say is, if you have a dream and you're sure, CHASE it with everything

**Aside from music what else?**

I am also a farmer, I do some remote jobs online as well, with how expensive doing music has become; you really have to incorporate something else with what you do at least give you income while you're trying to be successful in the music industry.

# Foreign News

## Inflation, Immigration, Economic Confidence Set Stage for 2026 Midterm Showdown

The 2026 U.S. midterms are shaping up as a showdown over inflation, immigration, and economic confidence, inflation and cost-of-living dominate voter concerns, recent Reuters and Ipsos data shows that if the election were held today, "protecting democracy" leads for Democrats, while "cost of living" tops the list for Republicans and independents, even though headline CPI has stabilized, many households still feel price pressures, keeping the issue front-and-center, immigration remains a partisan wedge, voters favor Republicans on border security by a 46%-to-34% margin, but only 14% name it as their top issue, compared with 26% who prioritize democratic values,



President Donald John Trump

economic sentiment is mixed, consumer confidence has not rebounded, and a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll finds 62% disapprove of Trump's handling of living costs, while the economy overall gets a modest 38% approval, analysts note that

low presidential approval (under 50%) and weak disposable-income growth historically translate into seat losses for the incumbent party, generic ballot & swing-state polls are razor-thin.

Decision Desk HQ's aggregate shows

Democrats at 43.7% and Republicans at 39.4% (Dem +4.3%), individual polls vary, the Economist/YouGov has Democrats 45%, republicans 39% (6-point lead), while Morning Consult reports a tighter 45%-42% split, historical context suggests the president's party typically loses seats, forecasting models that blend presidential approval and personal-income growth predict a net loss of about 28 Republican seats, potentially flipping control of the House, toss-up states (e.g., Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania) are showing margins within 2-4 points, making voter turnout heavily dependent on how the economy and inflation narrative play out in the final months.

Source FP Newsdesk

## Kenya's IEBC Orders Re-Run Of Local Seats After Irregularities, Draws International Scrutiny

Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has ordered a re-run of several local-government seats, after observers flagged widespread irregularities in the November 27 by-elections. The Elections Observation Group (ELOG) reported voter bribery, intimidation, ballot-secrecy breaches, and even "super agents" and plain-clothes security officers inside polling stations, which compromised the credibility of the vote despite the IEBC's technical preparedness, irregularities observed cash hand-outs, distribution of blankets and relief items, unauthorized persons in polling stations, and instances of assisted voting that exposed voter choices, security lapses police and security agencies failed to act decisively, allowing violence and harassment in areas such as Kasipul, Malava, and Nairobi, disinformation fake opinion polls (41% of tracked misinformation) and forged press releases (37%) flooded social media, targeting both candidates and the IEBC, recommendations ELOG urges early environment assessments, stricter ballot-secrecy enforcement, tighter access control, and enhanced voter education before any future polls, in parallel, a high court petition filed by Philip Kipkemoi Langat seeks to halt all elections until the IEBC completes a constitutionally mandated review of constituency and ward boundaries, arguing that proceeding without the review undermines fair representation, the court has scheduled a mention date for 28 January 2026 to assess compliance, international observer teams from the AU, EU, and US have already expressed concern about the integrity of Kenya's electoral process, noting that such irregularities could erode public trust and destabilize democratic institutions.

Source FP Newsdesk



President William Ruto



## Sporting Ambassador



# Nigeria at the 2025 AFCON: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

## Vox Pops

### Nigerian fans react to Nigeria's performance at the 2025 AFCON

By Regina Nneoma Onoh

"To be honest, I didn't believe in the team. I told my colleagues that they will crash out in the group stage. But, when I saw their match against Tunisia, I changed my mind. This team ought to be at the World Cup"

-Kingsley Abiodun

"The Super Eagles did well at the 2025 AFCON. I loved their togetherness, and I believe they will do even better at the next AFCON."

-Dominion Ezesimbi

"Nigeria did well from the first match to the last. The only issue was the lack of support in the semi-final."

-Emmanuel Kalu

"Nigeria's match against Morocco was something else. I'm proud of the team. They did an amazing job; support was just not enough."

-Ibrahim Yarima

"The Super Eagles were amazing in all their matches. I'm proud of them for defeating Egypt in the third-place match."

-Mr Kay

"The Super Eagles surprised us, and I'm proud of them. They are wonderful players and I believe they will win the next AFCON."

-Mr Kalu Amadi

"The team performed beyond my expectation. My fear is whether NFF will keep the coach. I learnt that Tunisia is willing to double Chelle's salary. NFF should do everything to retain the coach and keep the team together. Though they did not qualify for the World Cup I want the NFF to keep the team busy by organizing grade A friendly matches for the team."

-Idara Asuquo

The Super Eagles of Nigeria secured a record-extending ninth third-place finish at the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations after a 4-2 penalty shoot-out victory over the Pharaohs of Egypt. Fans had expected the West Africans to go a step further by winning the competition, having finished runners-up in the penultimate edition.

However, Nigeria's overall performance at the tournament can be summarised as the good, the bad and the ugly.

#### The Good

The Super Eagles played seven matches and did not lose any during regulation time. They kicked off their campaign with a 2-1 victory over the Taifa Stars of Tanzania, before defeating their toughest group opponents, the Carthage Eagles of Tunisia, 3-2 to qualify for the knockout stage with a game to spare.

Despite resting key players in their final group match, Nigeria defeated the Cranes of Uganda 3-1 to become one of only two teams to win all three group matches, setting up a round-of-16 clash with the Mambas of Mozambique.

The Super Eagles made mincemeat of the Mambas, thrashing them 4-0 to set up a quarter-final encounter with the Desert Foxes of Algeria – the other side to have won all their group matches.

The Eric Chelle-coached side overwhelmed the Algerians, scoring twice in the second half to book a place in the semi-finals. Nigeria then faced the host nation and, against all odds, held Morocco scoreless for 120 minutes before losing 4-2 on penalties.

Beyond the results, the Super Eagles played attractive, expressive football. Unlike the penultimate edition, when José Peseiro shoehorned the team into a

defensive setup that relied heavily on counter-attacks. That previous Super Eagles nervy, with creativity stifled and Nigeria second best in most attacking statistics.

The flair and creativity that made Nigeria the second most entertaining team at the 1994 World Cup have returned. Nigerian

responsibilities such as the timely threatened to boycott their quarter-final clash with Algeria.

Super Eagles captain Wilfred Ndidi was reported to have offered to pay the bonuses from his own pocket in order to persuade his teammates to honour the fixture.

The NFF should not be found wanting in basic administrative

avoid negative headlines at future international competitions.

#### The Ugly

Morocco deserves commendation for its heavy investment in sports infrastructure and its hosting of top-class competitions. However, the desperation of host nations to win tournaments – often reflected in questionable officiating – must be condemned in the strongest terms.

While many host nations have gone on to win AFCON titles, including Ivory Coast in the penultimate edition, such triumphs should never be tainted by officiating controversies.

In Nigeria's semi-final against Morocco, Ghanaian referee Daniel Nii Laryea made several questionable decisions in favour of the hosts. Most notably, he booked Calvin Bassey for an alleged foul on Brahim Diaz, despite replays showing the Moroccan player pulling Bassey's jersey.

The final between Senegal and Morocco was even more concerning, further fuelling debates around officiating standards at the tournament.

In contrast, officiating at the penultimate AFCON was widely praised for its fairness, with referees rarely becoming the centre of post-match discussions.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) must take decisive action to ensure that the poor officiating witnessed at this edition does not raise its ugly head in future continental competitions.

Another ugly incident was the taking of Nigeria's goalkeeper's towel by Moroccan stewards and act they repeated in the final. There is no justification for that and as Morocco prepare to host the 2026 WAFCON we hope to see a tournament where every participating team is given a level playing ground.



Alex Iwobi dribble pass two Moroccans

football is not just about results, but about the panache, creativity and swagger with which victories are achieved.

Former Super Eagles captain and head coach, Sunday Oliseh, summed it up perfectly:

"The way these Super Eagles have played their last three games is the best I have seen Nigeria play in 20 years since 2006. Nigeria now forces the opposition to defend non-stop."

#### The Bad

Once again, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) was found wanting in the payment of players' match bonuses and failed to adequately communicate with the team until players reportedly

disbursement of match bonuses. If there were unexpected challenges, proper communication with the players would have prevented the embarrassment that followed.

Issues of unpaid bonuses have become a recurring decimal in Nigerian sports. Similar situations arose before Nigeria's World Cup qualifying play-off against DR Congo. This culture must be addressed and eradicated.

Beyond sports, Nigeria has seen lecturers, doctors and teachers repeatedly threaten or embark on strikes over unpaid entitlements. Treating the welfare of athletes and workers as a favour rather than a right must end if the country is to

## Abia State Sports Council Targets Victorious Outings in 2026

The Abia State Sports Council is set to engage in numerous sporting activities in 2026 and is leaving no stone unturned in its quest to record strong performances across all competitions.

This cheering news was disclosed by the Abia State Director of Sports, Comrade Obioma George, during a media chat in his office.

Top on the Council's calendar is the hosting of the maiden Abia State South-East Shooting Seminar and Championship, scheduled to take place at the Umuahia Township Stadium. The seminar will hold from January 25 to 27, while the championship proper is slated for January 28 to 30, 2026.

The competition will feature Under-15 male and female categories, as well as senior male and female events.

Hosting the championship will enable Abia State to raise a formidable shooting team that will represent the state at zonal and national competitions, thereby increasing its chances of winning more medals, as shooting is a multi-medal sport.



Comrade Obioma George

Furthermore, the Sports Council is working round the clock to ensure Team Abia is adequately prepared for the forthcoming Niger Delta Games, scheduled to hold in Edo State.

In March, the 3rd National Para Games will take place in Abuja, and the Director of Sports assured that Team Abia will not only participate but will also put up a strong challenge for laurels.

The Council is equally gearing up for

impressive outings at the National Youth Games and the National Sports Festival.

The newly introduced National Intermediary Games has also been factored into the Council's plans. The competition is aimed at bridging the gap between the National Youth Games and the National Sports Festival by engaging and nurturing young athletes into well-prepared senior competitors capable of performing favourably at elite levels. Team Abia is expected to participate in the competition later in the year.

Beyond competition, Abia State continues to play an active role in sports administration at the national level, with Abians elected into the boards of six sports associations, including Shooting, Athletics, Kung Fu, Boxing, Scrabble and Rugby.

Comrade Obioma George attributed these achievements to the immeasurable support of the Governor of Abia State, Dr. Alex Otti, and the Honourable Commissioner for Sports, Sir Nwaobilor Ananaba. He assured that Abia State will continue to be counted among the top sporting states in Nigeria.

# NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation"

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## Royal Father, Others Hail Emelandu's Sporting Legacy

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru & Stephanie Okoroafor

**T**he Unity Cup football tournament and the commissioning of newly renovated classroom blocks at Umuagu Central School were concluded in grand style in Umuagu community, Ohuhu, Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State, amid commendations for the Emelandu family's commitment to education, youth development and community unity.

Leading the encomiums, the Royal Father of Umuagu, His Royal Highness Eze Engr. John Amaghereonu Ekeoma, expressed deep gratitude to High Chief Dr. Ikechukwu Samuel

Umuagu) for renovating two classroom blocks that were previously in a deplorable condition. The monarch described Umuagu as a pro-education community and noted that the intervention would significantly improve teaching and learning.

He invoked ancestral and divine blessings upon Dr. Emelandu and his family; praying God to bless the works of his hands and reward his philanthropic efforts.

Also speaking, the President-General of Umuagu Community, Mr. Ahukanna Ndubuisi Chizaram, thanked Dr. Emelandu

affected students' psychology and hindered effective teaching and learning.

He described the projects as timely and transformative, and called on other well-meaning individuals, philanthropists and corporate organisations to emulate Dr. Emelandu's gesture, stressing that government alone cannot meet all infrastructural and development needs of communities.

Commissioning the renovated classrooms, the Chairman, Abia State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB), represented by Mr. Chigozie Ogbonna, lauded the Emelandu family for their sustained commitment to educational development. He disclosed that this was the second major renovation and retrofitting project Dr. Emelandu had executed for the benefit of his community.

Mr. Ogbonna also commended the family for instituting scholarships for indigent students and assured the community that ASUBEB would deploy more teachers to the school upon request.

In his speech, High Chief Dr. Ikechukwu Samuel Emelandu said the Unity Cup, instituted in honour of his late father, Chief Godwin N. Emelandu, was conceived as more than a football competition. He explained that the tournament was designed to promote unity, discipline, sportsmanship and character formation among young people, values his late father strongly upheld.

He noted that the successful completion of the Unity Cup and the commissioning of the classroom blocks represented a powerful intersection of sports, education and community values, adding that the Emelandu family remains committed to supporting both youth development and education.

Dr. Emelandu also paid glowing tribute to his grandmother, Daa Agnes Emelandu, describing her as a woman of compassion and quiet



strength whose belief in education laid the foundation for the family's legacy. Inspired by these legacies, he undertook the renovation of two separate four-classroom blocks: one in loving memory of his late father, Chief Godwin Nlewedim Emelandu, commissioned on October 4, 2025, and another in honour of his late grandmother, Daa Agnes Emelandu, commissioned on December 31, 2025.

He announced the establishment of the Chief Emelandu Educational Fund and Scholarship, aimed at supporting students from primary to tertiary levels and ensuring sustainable community development.

The event also featured the final match of the Unity Cup, which saw Aguebi Village defeat Umukonu Village by a lone goal, scored by Tobechukwu Ndubuisi in the second half.

Dr. Emelandu also thanked players, coaches, officials, teachers, parents and students who participated, with a renewed call for collaboration among government, private individuals and organisations to advance

education, sports and youth empowerment in Umuagu.

High Chief Dr. Ikechukwu Emelandu (Akuruo I) of Umuagu Autonomous Community, Ohuhu, Umuahia, Abia State, is a respected medical doctor, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. Born in the early 1970s into the esteemed family of the late Chief Godwin Emelandu, he has upheld a legacy of integrity, leadership, and community service.

Educated at Umuagu Central School, Government College Umuahia, and Ansar-ud-Deen Grammar School, Lagos, he earned his medical degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Dr. Emelandu has dedicated his life to improving lives, empowering communities, and advancing charitable initiatives, earning multiple awards and wide admiration.

A devoted husband to Lolo Chioma Anyasodor Emelandu and father of three, he draws strength from his family. His life stands as a beacon of purpose, humility, and leadership, inspiring excellence and service in Umuagu and beyond.



Emelandu (Akuruo Uno I of

for donating fully renovated and well-equipped classroom blocks as a way of giving back to society. He lamented that the former dilapidated state of the classrooms had negatively

### SUDOKU

Puzzle By: Prince Blessing Lazarus

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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.