

•Gunmen kill doctor, Speaker's aide •Catholic Church looted

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Benin City, LUKKEY ABAWURU,

IT was a black weekend in Benin City, Edo State capital and Lagos State as a medical doctor and three students were killed in different circumstances.

This is as rampaging armed robbery gang attacked again Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Okokomaiko, Lagos carting away unspecified amount of money, while another gang raided houses about 500 metres away from the church.

In Benin City, a prominent medical doctor, Dr. Augustine Isemina was murdered by unknown gunmen last Friday at about 9.00 pm.

He was reportedly abducted from a church premises in a village near of the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR) Benin-City by armed youths before he was murdered in cold blood.

At Lagos State University (LASU), Ojo main campus, three students of the university have been confirmed dead in a clash involving two outlawed secret cults, namely Eiye Fraternity and Buccaneer Fraternity.

A spokesman of the Edo State Police Command, Mr.

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Black weekend

Peter Ogboi, who confirmed the murder of Dr. Isemina said the killers would be caught, noting that assassination was strange to the state.

The late Dr. Isemina until his death was attached to NIFOR Health Clinic and his murder was coming barely a month after former Minister of Solid Minerals, Elder Moses Ugbesia's son escaped assassination by whisksers in Benin city.

The young man had recently graduated from the Igbinedion University, Okada Town, Edo State and was lucky to have escaped the gunmen, when they were contemplating on how to carry out the evil plot.

Throwing light on the murder of the late Dr Isemina, the Edo State Police spokesman said. It was a bad development and because of the way it happened, the command shall do everything possible to ensure that those heartless killers are arrested and made to face the bitter wrath of the law.

"The information available indicated that the medical doctor called Dr Augustine just closed from one of the churches located within the vicinity of the NIFOR and was about driving out of the premises when some gunmen, riding on a motorcycle popularly called *okada* halted him and abducted him.

Continuing, Oboi said "report said he was stocked inside the booth of his car and driven to a remote part of the village where the gunmen murdered him and dumped his lifeless body on a footpath.

"Assassination in whatever form is a strange development to Edo State and the Edo State Police command is seriously worried about the latest incident and has beefed up security within and outside the village. Enough men have been mobilized to commence full scale investigation into the incident and within the next few days something positive shall be heard in the investigation carried out," the police spokesman said.

Daily Champion gathered during a visit to the village last weekend that in reaction to fear and tension within the community residents have imposed a dusk to dawn curfew in the area, while some government officials living in the village have relocated to Benin for fear of being the next victim of the ravaging gunmen.

Following the incident, Edo State Police Commissioner, Mr Bala Hassan has summoned a meeting of politicians in the state, where he read the riot act and harped on need for them to keep their followers in check during electioneering campaigns.

In the LASU secret cults' bloody clash, the identities of dead students could not be ascertained at press time.

However, Lagos State Police Command said three persons have so far been arrested in connection with the dastardly act.

An eye witness said the cults attacked each other for undisclosed reasons.

We gathered that Iba village, Agboroko, Igbolerin, Oke-Odan and other places where the students reside were thrown into confusion as residents ran for dear lives as a result of the incident.

At PPL bus stop, a corpse of a young man believed to be a student of the institution was found in his own pool of blood.

Confirming the incident, Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr Olubode Ojajuni said the cause of the clash between the two cultists have not been established.

According to him, both group confronted themselves and attacked each other for yet to be identified reasons.

Ojajuni, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) said the corpses of the deceased have been taken to the mortuary.

He gave the names of those arrested as Ogunobi Oluwasesan, Ogunyemi Oluwafemi and Babaleke Feyi, noting that they were undergoing interrogation before the police.

On the raiding of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, we reliably learnt that suspected armed robbers attacked the church shortly after it held a mini-fund raising for its forthcoming harvest.

An eye witness told our correspondent that the fleeing suspects, based on information, stormed the premises, late at night demanding for the huge sums of money realized on the

day.

He stated that the suspects broke into the house and quickly headed to the Parish Priest's room in search of fund, noting that luck ran against them as the Parish Priest was said to have earlier taken the money outside the church for safe keeping.

The robbery suspects were said to have threatened to set the church ablaze if nothing tangible was recovered from the church. They were also said to have threatened to kill their source, who was said to have been a member of the church.

Our correspondent also learnt that a senior member of the church had immediately informed his gang of the fund and asked them to commence action so as to get the whole money meant for supposedly God's work.

Also at Chief Esan Way, New Okoko Layout, robbery suspects broke into several shops and carted away several valuable items including cash.

At No 56 of the street, the suspects stole about 20 bags of rice and at Dele Jagun Street, the suspects also wreaked havoc in the areas.

Addressing the community over the incident, chairman of Community Development Committee, Mr Dele Jagun

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of raw materials, machinery and finished products from the Nnewi economic cluster to the rest of the world.

Prince Ayabazu identified epileptic supply of electricity to Nnewi, as a major challenge facing the real sector even as he attributed high production costs to equally high cost of

Stock market

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NSE all-share index closing at 30,925.24 points in contrast to 35,068.84 points it closed the previous week.

Investment analysts attributed the financial drop to the losses suffered by the highly capitalised stocks.

Meanwhile, an aggregate turnover of 1.2 billion ordinary shares valued at N17.59 billion was traded within the week ended 42,299 deals, as against 1.083 billion ordinary shares worth N14.60 billion transacted in 36,802 deals the previous week.

There were no transactions in the Federal Government Development Stocks, State Government Bonds and Industrial Loans/Preference

Stocks sectors.

The NSE's stock market report for the week ended Friday, August 25, 2006 showed that the banking subsector was the most active during the week as measured by turnover volume, with 913.81 million ordinary shares worth N11.7 billion exchanged in 26,205 deals.

The report further showed that volume in the banking subsector was largely driven by activities in the shares of Access Bank Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Plc and Fidelity Bank Plc.

According to the report, trading in the shares of the three banks accounted for 407.7 million ordinary shares, representing 44.6 per cent of the subsector's turnover.