

Gunmen attack ex-Delta speaker

•2 relations killed

BARRY OSA AGBANIGBI,
Asaba

FORMER speaker of Delta State House of Assembly, Hon. Young

Igbrude, weekend, narrowly missed death in the hands of unidentified gunmen. But two members of his household, including an in-law, Dafe Orife were not as lucky as they were felled by the gunmen's bullet.

The ugly incident which took place at 8.30 pm at the former speaker's Owheologbo, Isoko North local government area of Delta state; home left him in coma. He sustained severe injuries and bruises from the

attack.

The former speaker's attack came less than 24 hours after the convoy of the state governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan was attacked by gunmen while on his way to Warri for the testimonial match of former Super Eagles Captain, Austin Jay Jay Okocha.

As a result of Hon. Igbrude's poor health condition, he was immediately flown to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital where he was admitted at the Intensive Care Unit. Family sources said the attack took place at on Thursday night at Owheologbo in Isoko North local government area of Delta state.

Family sources further confirmed that the gunmen trailed their victims from where they had gone on condolence visit to the home of the former Speaker.

The former Speaker had barely arrived home in the company of an in-law, Dafe Orife, and some political aides when the gunmen opened fire on their victims, killing the former speaker's in-law and a political aide while the former Speaker was seriously injured.

The gunmen were said to have immediately sped off in their car, a Toyota Camry, gagging in triumph.

Close friends and relatives, including the state commissioner for Power and energy, Comrade Ovuozourie Macaulay, as at the time of this report, were making frantic efforts to fly Igbrude abroad for urgent medical attention.

Confirming the incident to our correspondent, the state's public relations officer, ASP Charles Muka, said the command had adopted a new strategy to fight crime wave in the state, but was keeping details close to his chest.

But how well this strategy will reduce the level of crime in the state will now be determined by the test of time.

Barrister Young Igbrude was Speaker of the Delta state House of Assembly between 2003 and 2006, and was impeached following allegations ranging from high-handedness, disrespect to constituted authority, lack of commitment, dedication and arrogance.

Jobless youths, threat to national security-UNN VC

CHUKWUDI ACHIFE, Enugu

VICE chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Prof. Chinedu Nebo, has charged all tiers of government and planning commission to take immediate steps to check youth unemployment to prevent a possible tragic social unrest in the country.

Prof. Nebo, who made the call while declaring open a 3-day undergraduates business conference (UBC) at the Princess Alexandra Auditorium, UNN, yesterday, lamented that the several federal government's economic reforms were yet to impact positively on Nigerian youths as rate of unemployment hits its peak.

"A situation where the Federal Ministry of Education reported in 2007 that over 71 per cent of students, who graduated from Nigerian universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in the last six years were still jobless, is not only a national tragedy but constitutes a serious security risk for the country."

The university don said UNN had established Centre for Entrepreneurship Development and Research (CEDR) as part of aggressive attempt to broaden the educational horizon of students and prepare them for economic independence, explaining that the enormous challenges facing the society over the issue had informed the theme for this years UBE conference: "Be your own boss in search of financial stability."

The founder of the UBC, Obinna Etele, expressed joy that his main purpose of establishing the programme two years ago in London, United Kingdom, was already yielding huge dividends as no fewer than 2000 Nigerian graduates, who had attended its series of training workshops held in different parts of the country, were now millionaires after

floating their individual business ventures using their entrepreneurial skills.

Etele, observed that with the massive entrepreneurial training UNN and UBC are mounting nationwide, Nigerian graduates have no excuse to be poor or to remain jobless, pointing out that his vision for founding UBC remains to increase the awareness of entrepreneurship for wealth creation across the globe and Nigeria in particular with UNN providing the appropriate technical framework for intellectual development.

In his speech, executive director of CEDR, UNN, Prof. Alex. Ikeme, had disclosed that the centre was already operating a business enhancement programme (BEP), for small scale enterprise managers and artisans nationwide, noting that more than 1000 small scale enterprise operators and artisans had been trained under the study programme.

According to him "there is

also a youth empowerment programme (YEP), in which the CEDR collaborates with state governments to re-orientate the youths on the need to become entrepreneurs, especially the unemployed school leavers, and the YEP is taking off in Ebonyi state with a sensitisation workshop billed for July 8 and 10 of this year in Abakaliki."

Prof. Ikeme however, made it clear that the centre's programme itself does not provide direct business financing to its graduates, rather, it ensures the participation and co-operation of financial institutions actively involved in lending to small scale enterprises within the national micro finance policy framework developed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as students would be linked to financial sources at the end of their training.

More than 300 participants, drawn from 15 tertiary institutions in the country, are attending the 3-day conference.

EFCC denies stopping money laundering cases

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has denied reports that it has withdrawn all money laundering cases following a directive from the federal government to do so.

The commission, in a statement signed by its head, media and publicity, Femi Babafemi yesterday, described the cover story of *National Mirror* newspaper of Friday, June 27, 2008 as totally misleading and mischievous.

"It is absolutely not true that President Musa Yar'Adua, in a bid to save former governors from prosecution, has directed EFCC to discontinue all money laundering cases in courts. This is a misrepresentation of fact and this is surely the handiwork of mischief makers.

"As a result of the seriousness with which the chairman of EFCC, Mrs Farida Waziri views the report, she has already summoned the official mentioned in the case to Abuja to explain the details of his presentation in court and if it was found out that he has actually misrepresented the facts of the matter, he would face the consequence," the statement said.

It also explained that "the EFCC was set up to fight all financial and economic crimes, including all money laundering activities and as such, there is no way it can shy away from that responsibility. There is absolutely no directive stopping prosecution of all money laundering cases, let alone saving ex-governors."