

Commissioner's wife kidnapped, abductors demand N50m ransom

BARRY AGBANIGBI, Asaba

THE newly-acquired crime fighting devices and techniques of the Delta State Police Command were yesterday put to the test, following the kidnap of the wife of a commissioner in the Delta State Oil Producing Development Commission (DESOPADEC). Hon. Michael Diden, a.k.a. Eiele, Agatha.

No fewer than eight prominent Delians have been kidnapped in the last three weeks and released after a heart-breaking ransoms, ranging from N30million to N50 million, were allegedly paid.

Six heavily-armed gunmen, according to report, at about 7pm stormed the DESOPADEC chief's wife's office - Allen Eye Clinic, located at the popular Lions Building, along Nnebisi road, the nerve centre of Asaba, yesterday, fired several shots to scare their perceived enemies before she was driven away in her Range Rover Jeep (Sports).

The kidnappers later abandoned the vehicle few metres away from the Asaba International Airport, before they sandwiched her in their waiting Toyota Camry car and zoomed off.

Family source said few hours later, the kidnappers contacted the family, demanding a N50 million ransom.

The victim's husband has, however, described the incident as 'a tragedy, a set back and unfortunate', particularly when the state Governor at a stakeholders' meeting recently assured Delians that his administration was determined to check the rising crime wave in the state.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPPRO), Charles Muka, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), however, said the command has launched a full-scale manhunt for the perpetrators.

Gunmen kill police officer in Jalingo

EMMANUEL AWARI, Jalingo

A POLICE Sergeant, Ishaya Michael, was killed by unknown persons in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Amos Oloeye, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, DSP, said the incident took place at about 1:45pm where two unknown gunmen who were on motorcycle, shot the officer in the midst of two of his colleagues on duty at Nasarawa area and immediately escaped.

He said the other two policemen are in detention for their failure to track down the suspect despite the fact that they are armed.

In another development, a Magistrate Court sitting in Jalingo has remanded one Police Constable Danasabe Waziri of the Police Area Command Jalingo, in Prison Custody for allegedly killing a middle aged man driving a pick-up van, while on stop and search duty along Sani Abacha Secretariat Junction in Jalingo the state Capital.

In a suite No CMC/83/2012, the 27-year-old Police Constable was charged for negligent conduct and culpable homicide, offence punishable under Section 196 and 221 of the Penal Code.



Police Prosecutor Luka Umaru told the Court that the accuse was apprehended by a team of Police on patrol led by Ambrose Ibokwe, adding that the accused person negligently shot at the deceased, Reuben Iroham, who was driving a pick-up vehicle with registration number XA 410 DGA.

He stated that the Police Constable committed the offence on May 30, 2012 while he was posted on a special duty to Jalingo Local Government Area on revenue generation, adding that the accused used AK2 rifle no 24463 to shoot the deceased on the left side of his stomach.

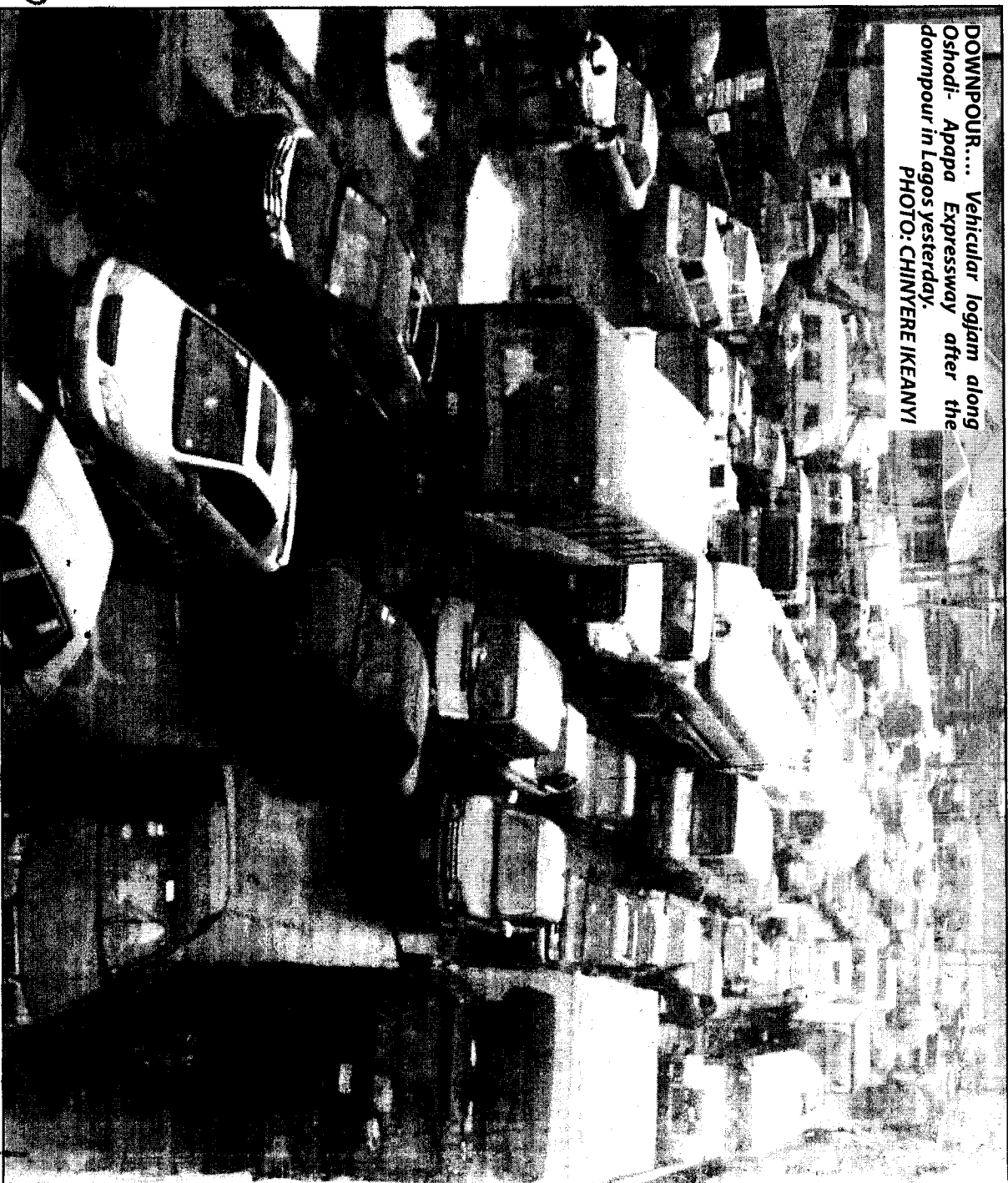
As a result, the victim sustained injuries.

The Police Prosecutor further said the deceased was immediately rushed to the Federal Medical Centre Jalingo for medical attention, but later died while receiving treatment.

In defence, the accused Officer pleaded not guilty of the offence, saying that it was an accident not an intentional act. He said he stopped the deceased but refused to comply with his directive, adding that it was not his intention to shoot the deceased, but expressed shock on how the incident occurred, and blamed the devil for his action.

He pleaded for bail which was turned down by the Court. The presiding Magistrate Yusuf Babasoro ordered the accused to file in proper application for bail and ordered that he (the accused) be remanded in prison custody pending the date for hearing of the case.

DOWNPOUR.... Vehicular logjam along Oshodi- Apapa Expressway after the downpour in Lagos yesterday. PHOTO: CHINYERE IKEANYI



19 in police net over murder of Abia M

STEVE OKO, Umuahia

NO fewer than 19 persons from Ugwu Lere autonomous community in Umuahia Local Government area of Abia State are now helping the states Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Umuahia,

in its investigations over the alleged murder of their traditional ruler, HRH, Eze Iroha Nwankwo.

The son of the late royal father, Prince Samuel Iroha, told newsmen that his father was clubbed to death by youths of the community who accused him of giving

police information about the activities of, criminally-minded elements in the community.

According to him, the ugly incident took place on Monday night after police had earlier arrested some youths who were allegedly scooping diesel from a fallen

JTF impounds oil vessel, illegal refinery

CHINEDU WOSU Yenagosa

Arrests 14 suspects

OPERATIVES of the Joint Military Taskforce, JTF, codenamed operative Pulo Shield, yesterday impounded a vessel laden with over 35 tones of illegal crude oil and arrested 14 crew members of the ship for oil thefts and illegal refinery off the Atlantic Ocean near Brass in Bayelsa State.

The command also destroyed seven Cotonou boats used by the bunkers in transloading the crude to the seized vessel and apprehended a notorious woman bunkerer, Hajia Ladia and the managing director of the seized vessel, whose name was not made public.

JTF also said the vessel and the crew members including the destroyed Cotonou boats engaged in illegal oil thefts and illicit refinery of crude in Niger Delta, describing the acts as criminal and unlawful.

The seized vessels, he said, were carrying illegal automated gas oil, AGO, and crude oil at the time of interception by the team.

Addressing newsmen on the issue, Lt Col Mukar Adamu of the 343 Battalion of sector 2, JTF, who led the operation, said they arrested the crew members and the vessel at Manson creek near Brass Island.

Adamu said he led the special anti-bunkering team that intercepted the ship, noting that the operation was designed to arrest the culprits as they were transloading crude from seven locally-made boats, Cotonou, to the bigger

the battle against illegal refineries and oil bunkering in the region.

He gave the name of the impounded vessel as Princess Nnenna, belonging to Magnum International Limited.

Adamu said on arrest, the special team discovered some hoses in the vessel used by the bunkers in trans-loading the crude, just as he said no weapon or arms was recovered during the operation.

According to him, after the seizure of the vessel and the arrest, the vessel was tug to Brass Island from Manson creek.

Speaking on the seizure and arrest, Media Coordinator and the spokesman of JTF, Lt Col Onyema Nwachukwu, said the suspects were caught during the routine patrol by the special team off the Atlantic Ocean last Sunday, while indulging in an illegal mission.

Nwachukwu said the suspects would be handed over to the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, EFCC.



3 Soldiers, policeman in Oyo security outfit die in auto crash

DELE OGUNWEMI, Ibadan

FOUR members of the Oyo state security outfit codenamed "Operation Burst", including a former Army officer, lost their lives in a ghastly auto crash involving three vehicles including their patrol pick-up vans along Mokola-Ul Road in the early hours of yesterday. Eye witness accounts said the accident occurred in the early morning about 500 metres to the Sango Motor Park area of the metropolis as a result of

carelessness of the security

The driver of the Toyota Hilux patrol van of the "Operation Burst" was reportedly on a very top speed in an attempt to overtake a private car being driven by a woman going towards the park, but suddenly veered off the road to the opposite direction.

It first knocked down a commercial motor cyclist before ramming into a Sienna space wagon car and subsequently somersaulted several times. According to sources, virtually all the security

operatives in the Hilux van mainly armed soldiers and policemen, were reportedly flung out of the vehicle as it was somersaulting.

In the process, the driver who could no longer control the vehicle, died instantly while six others sustained varied degrees of injuries. It was gathered that four people died in the auto crash, while four others, including two civilians, one army officer and one policeman, had been taken to the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan where they are receiving treatment. One of them is said to be in critical condition. It took commercial vehicle operators along the route hectic time to pass for the period the corpses and those who got wounded in the auto crash were being removed.

Motorists were diverted to the other side of the ever busy road, leaving them to compete for the right of way for several hours with others coming from the University of Ibadan axis. Passers-by also found it difficult to walk through as scores of sympathisers thronged the vicinity and virtually blocked the entire routes. It took the efforts of the combined rescue teams from the 2 Division of the Nigerian Army, the Police, Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and the Nigerian Security and Defence Corps (NSDC) as well as members of the public to clear the just a "lifeless bodies of the two soldiers and the wounded persons have been removed to the morgues and wards of the University College Hospital (UCH) for necessary actions. Confirming the incident, the Oyo State Sector Commander of the FRSC, Mr. Ogaga Oghengene, said the accident was as a result

of over speeding by the driver of the Security Outfit. The FRSC sector commander was of the view that the point of impact would not have been fatal if the driver of the security van had reduced the speed while negotiating the bend.

The State Governor, Senator Isiaha Abiola Ajimobi, immediately abandoned all official engagements and rushed to the UCH to ascertain the level of casualty in the accident. Commenting on the gory incident, a visibly shaken Ajimobi, after emerging from the Emergency Ward of the hospital, said that government would foot their medical bills. The governor, who was accompanied by the General Officer Commanding, 2 Division, Nigerian Army, Major-General M. D. Abubakar, the state Director of State Security Service (SSS), Mr. Charles Ugwu, the state Commissioner for Health, Dr. Muyiwa Gbadegehin, the Chief of Staff, Dr. Adeolu Akande and other top government officials, specifically asked the hospital management what their challenges were, promising that the state government was willing to offer some form of assistance. While at the emergency ward of the hospital to monitor the rate of recovery of one of the patients, the governor specifically promised that government would help the hospital procure some vital signs monitors which the hospital staff said were in short supply.

"Even though UCH is a federal health institution, because it is in Oyo State and it is for the benefit of the people of the state, we will assist you in the procurement of some of the equipment," said the governor.

Oshiomhole's convoy crash: Court arraigns, remands 2 in prison

EBOLIE AKHERE PATRICK, Benin

BARLEY two months after an auto crash involving the B-convoy of the Edo State Governor Adams Oshiomhole in which three journalists lost their lives, an Afuze Magistrate Court has remanded two persons, John Michael, 36, and Salisu Danjuma, 52, in prison custody in connection with the incident.

The incident, which drew worldwide sympathy, *Daily Champion* recalled, occurred on April 28, 2012.

Three correspondents from the privately-owned Independent TV, Benin City, Messrs. Olatunji Jacobs, a reporter and George Okosun, a cameraman and Fidelis Ohar of the African Independent Television (AIT), Benin City, died in the road crash involving the official convoy of the State Governor who was returning from a campaign rally. Several others on the convoy of the state governor, were seriously injured.

The two accused persons were arraigned by the Edo State Police on a three-count charge of murder of the journalists along Auch-i-Warake Road, Jettu, and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 3(19) (1) of the Criminal Code 48 Vol. II of the defunct Bendel State of Nigeria applicable to Edo State.

The accused, who were specifically charged with the murder of Olatunji Jacob, George Okosun and Fidelis Ohari, pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Chief Magistrate William Azeigbemw, however, ordered that the accused persons be remanded in Auch-i Prison till the case comes up for hearing.



Gov. Oshiomhole

ICPC inaugurates Fed Poly Nekede ACTU

EMEKA IHIEGBULEM, Owerri

THE Owerri Zonal Office of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has inaugurated the Anti-Corruption & Transparency Monitoring Unit (ACTU) of the Federal Polytechnic Nekede (FEDPONEK).

Sworn-in were: M. C. Chukwuma, a lawyer, as Chairman; Mr. T.U. Aioke (Secretary); Malachy Madu (Asst. Chairman) and Mrs. N.S. Ogbue, Mrs. I. C. Onyechere, Mr. Nnamdi Akefiondu, Mrs. C.U.N. Eke and Mrs. Raymond Obioha, members.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony, which was conducted by the Head, Owerri Zonal Office of ICPC, Ifeanyi Nwaigwe, at the Senate Chambers of the Polytechnic, the Rector, Dr. (Mrs.) Celestina Ugochi Njoku, said the newly-formed executive of ACTU/ICPC of the Polytechnic Chapter are people of impeccable character drawn from different offices in the institution.

Assuring the Owerri Zonal Office that they will live up to the standard expected of them, the Rector noted that the inauguration was long overdue, adding that before the inauguration, the Polytechnic has been ACTU-compliant.

She said the choice of lawyers to man the affairs of the chapter was for them to direct the Management well due to their legal inclination, as to avoid unnecessary litigations.

"Since the present Polytechnic Management fervently aims at fighting corruption and respecting Due Process, we have provided the Polytechnic ACTU with a functional office in order for them to carry out their responsibilities without hitches," she said.

In his comments, Nwaigwe said ACTU was a mini-ICPC in organizations or MDAs, which has powers to investigate matters on corruption but not to prosecute.

He stressed on the importance of establishing ACTU chapters in higher institutions in the state, adding that they are among the major MDAs.

Nwaigwe, who also delivered the lecture entitled: "The Role of Anti-Corruption & Transparency Monitoring Unit (ACTU) in the Crusade Against Corruption in Nigeria", charged all Nigerians to partner with ICPC to rid the country of corruption.

In his acceptance speech, Chukwuma assured them that they will discharge their duties without fear or favour towards bettering the Polytechnic in particular and Nigeria at large.

While thanking the Rector for her giant strides in the Polytechnic, he pleaded with her to support the ACTU/ICPC chapter of the Polytechnic as he added that they will sacrifice their time, experience and money to achieve the objectives for which they were inaugurated.

Ar alleged monarch

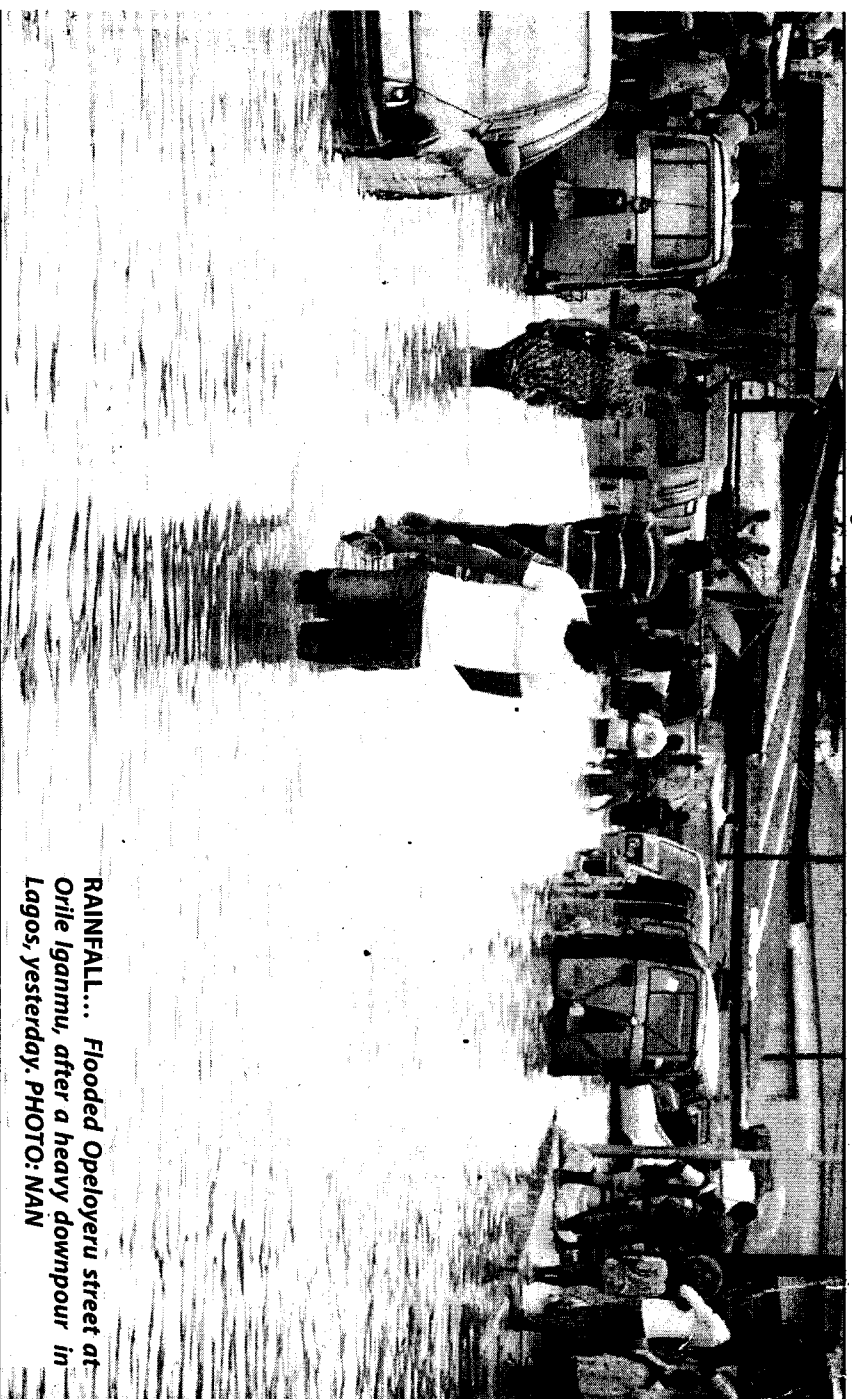
death.

Confirming the incident, the Abia State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO),

Mr. Ezekiel Onyeke, told *Daily Champion* that the late monarch was actually beaten to death by a mob

who accused him of leaking information to the police about the activities of criminals in the area.

He, however, added that investigations into the matter were on-going, and that the suspects would soon be arraigned in the court.



RAINFALL... Flooded Opoloyeru street at Orile Igannu, after a heavy downpour in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO: NAN