

PDP primary: INEC asks Atiku to go to court

By Abdul-Rahman Abubakar

THE Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has asked former Vice President Atiku Abubakar to go to court over his grievance with the conduct of the presidential primary election of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Speaking on the petition sent to the commission by Atiku raising issues on the primary that produced President Goodluck Jonathan as the party's candidate, INEC Chairman Professor Attahiru Jega said the issues he raised are things that happened "before and during the convention which are really internal matters of the party. We cannot handle such issues.

"Yes we have received the petition by Atiku Abubakar but all the issues in the petition bother on the internal affairs of the political party. The best is to

advise the candidate to go to court," Jega said.

He said 54 out of the 63 registered political parties in the country sent names of candidates to sponsor in the elections while 9 political parties failed to forward a single candidate for election.

He said the PDP, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) have candidates for all the positions nationwide while the remaining 50 parties have candidates for various other positions.

Jega said: "The greatest challenge on the nomination process is the alarming number of court orders. Several exparte orders were served on the commission restraining it from accepting and recognizing some candidates nominated by their political parties.

"There are over 150 pre-election cases filed nationwide against the commission. This morning

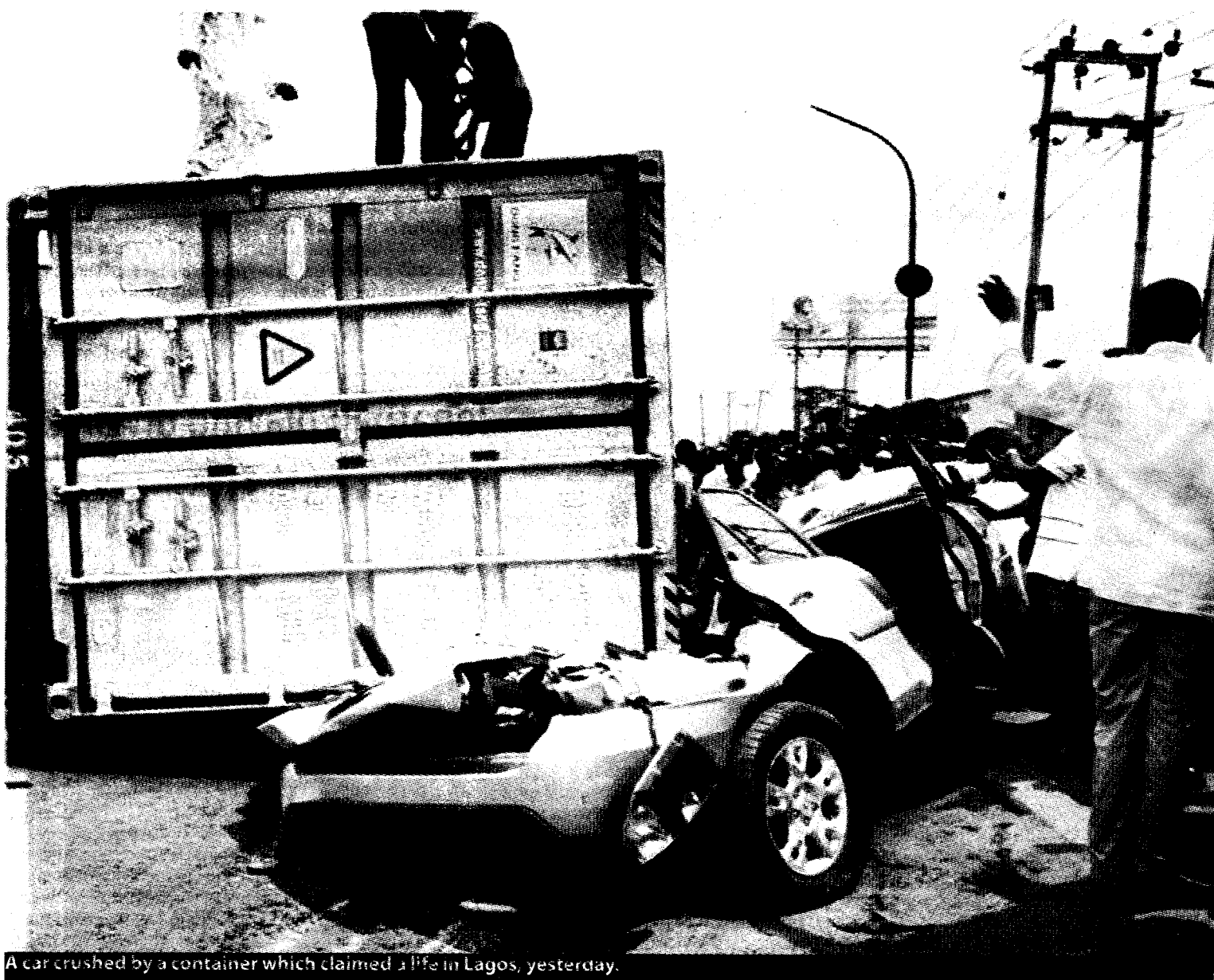
alone 10 new cases were served on the commission with the likelihood of many more yet to be served. The commission is doing everything possible to be represented in court in the cases."

He said the commission has complained the issue of high rate of exparte orders coming out of the courts on the pre-election matters saying, "We hope that the exparte motions do not help to cripple the desire of Nigerians for credible election."

Jega said INEC is considering all complaints by candidates on the issue of substitution by political parties and will send its report to the parties so as to effect corrections.

Jega said 21 presidential candidates are to contest in the polls while INEC is to make public the list of nominated candidates between March 2 and 16, 2011.

PIC: NAN



A car crushed by a container which claimed a life in Lagos, yesterday.