

Gunmen Kill Catholic Cleric In Onitsha

BY GBENGA ADETUNJI

A new twist has been added to the Onitsha crisis as a Catholic clergyman to be ordained in three weeks was gunned down at the weekend by suspected armed bandits.

The priest, Rev. Anthony Okechukwu Nwabufe of the Catholic Diocese was shot dead at about 11am on Friday morning around Allen Junction in Onitsha. Rev. Nwabufe, a royal prince of Eze Dun, Dunn's royalty in Ubuluisuzo, Ihiala local council, Anambra State, had gone on a pastoral visit to a family in the area with the mission of distributing invitation cards for his final priestly ordination scheduled to hold in Nnewi on July 15, 2006.

By-standers said that as he alighted from his 505 salon car, with invitation cards meant for the ordination, a vehicle occupied by three men overtook him. The men hopped out of the car and shouted on the reverend to surrender the

money he had with him. Shocked, the clergyman dressed in his Roman collar replied: "I have no money! I am a priest. You can see, what I have are cards for my final ordination!"

Before he could finish his statements, one of the armed men aimed a pistol at him and fired two shots which instantly killed the clergyman as the bandits sped off. He was rushed to nearby St. Charles Borromeo Hospital where he was confirmed dead.

PDP Leaders Shun Ngige's Men, Meet Ekwueme

FROM CHUKS COLINS, AWKA

THE Alhaji Maina Waziri-led peace and reconciliation committee from the PDP's national headquarters visiting the South East to reconcile warring PDP members has commended the

Anambra state chapter for its resilience and initiative. The team's work is however clouded by controversy and doubts as the faction loyal to ex-governor Chris Ngige, led by Ifeatu Obi-Okoye stayed away. The group included about 24 of the state Assembly's 30

members; Senators Ben Obi and Joy Emordi, as well as five out of the 10 members of House of Representatives. Waziri praised the efforts of the Uche Emordi-led faction of the party for building on the peace parley of the Prof. Jerry Gana's panel.

Emordi had reassured returnee and new members to feel free to register at their wards, councils or state levels. He said adequate membership cards are available for all.

He said the party suspended its 2007 campaign rallies, which kicked off during the week, to receive the peace team.

Court Adjourns Trial In NBA Boss' Death

AN Igboere Senior Magistrate Court, Mrs. O. Adedaja, on Friday, adjourned to July 28 further trial of Mrs. Akenyi Retai the driver of the truck vehicle that killed former Director of Administration of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Mr. Charles Onichakor.

Onichakor who came back to Lagos after three months training at the Law Society England was killed on Friday, May 12, 2006.

Adedaja was first arraigned on May 12, 2006 on a three count charge and was admitted to bail. But on Friday he was not in court because his family was yet to fulfil the bail conditions.

The following lawyers held watching brief for the NBA: Chairman, NBA Lagos branch, Mr. Foluso Fayokun; his immediate predecessor, Mr. Akin Aribote; former

Secretary, NBA Lagos branch, Carol Aite; National Assistant General Secretary NBA, Mrs. Ngozi Osadebaye - Akumonu and Mr. Gbolahan Gbadamosi. The adjournment by Adedaja, who is also a

daughter of the former Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Samuel Ilori, was to enable the Investigation Police Officer (IPO) to obtain Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) advice.

NPC Boss Seeks Support For Enumerators

BY ALEX MONYE

TO ensure tenable census result in the country, the National Population Commission (NPC), last week commenced census survey exercise to check the authenticity of data collected in the last census.

The NPC's Lagos State commissioner, Yerima Aliyu Giade, said while the last census exercise covered 25,000 enumeration areas, this survey will cover only, 280 selected enu-

meration areas. Giade added that the enumerators involved are just 3,300 while the last head count involved 60,000 enumerators.

"It is a common practice everywhere in the world to conduct a survey within three months after census to check the accuracy of the data collected in the national census," he said.

Questions that are asked in the survey include additional ones on fertility and mortality, and not on hous-

ing which was asked at the last census. The commissioner stated that the data of the last census are still being processed in seven data centres in the country, namely: Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Enugu, Kano, Yola and Port Harcourt.

He said the result would be out by October.

Giade urged the people living in areas selected for the survey to cooperate with the enumerators to enable government get accurate data for National development.

BUK Students Riot Over Dead Colleague

FROM ADAMU ABUB, KANO

STUDENTS of the Bayero University Kano (BUK) yesterday, in their hundreds staged a violent protest over the death of one of their colleagues who allegedly died in police custody.

The deceased, identified as Jude Alphonso alongside his brother, Romanus were arrested by the police in connection with an armed robbery attack on three university staffers within the BUK campus recently.

But days after the arrest of the duo, news of the demise of Jude filtered into the BUK campus on Friday.

The students thereafter converged at the BUK permanent campus to express their anger over the circumstances of Jude's demise.

They stormed the official residence of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Athanu Jegga and proceeded to the Gwarzo road where they vented their spleen on a police patrol vehicle.

They set it ablaze and made bonfires along the route. No life was lost in the incident, which lasted for about 5 hours on Friday.

The State Police commissioner, Mohammed Abubakar confirmed the death of the student, but absolved his men of culpability in the death of Jude.

Jegga, who described the incident as unfortunate, said the university authorities actually invited the police to investigate the robbery incident.

He said the university is investigating the death of the student and has demanded that an autopsy be conducted on the remains of the deceased.

TOTAL investment in Nigeria's telecommunication sector has risen to \$90b this year, Communications Minister, Chief Cornelius Adebayo, has revealed.

He described the \$100 million loan to MTN, from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2003, as the largest investment in the sector.

He also revealed that the federal government has about N1.8 billion from the four unified licences issued by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) since the introduction of unified licence regime in February.

According to the Minister, the huge success recorded in the sector was made possible by the de-regulation of the industry.

Adebayo pointed out that subscriber base in Nigeria is now over 22 million, with mobile line alone account-

certainly not the best. He said despite the huge success recorded so far in the sector, there is a huge demand for transmission backbone by telecom operators and other related services.

Quoting President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Minister said "although we are starting late, we are determined to develop our ICT infrastructure with Universal Access capability in the shortest time. We shall connect our colleges, schools, universities, research institutions and the entire public to the internet."

Adebayo revealed that foreign companies have indicated interest in operating plants in Nigeria. This is in addition to ZTE, a Chinese company based in Abuja which has already started assembling handsets in Abuja.