

Nine feared dead in Benue road accidents

From Simeon Nwakaudu, Makurdi

FOR some Benue State residents, this year's Christmas celebration turned to be a period of mourning as nine persons perished in four road accidents.

Occasioned by bad roads and reckless driving, no fewer than 50 persons were injured in the accidents, which occurred at Apir, Abinsi, Aliade and Makurdi.

According to an eye witness, the Aliade incident which claimed three lives, was caused when a luxury bus was attempting to overtake a trailer on a pothole-ridden road and had a head-on collision with an on-coming vehicle.

The other accidents involved commercial motorcyclists and bus drivers.

In Makurdi, the timely intervention of the police saved a bus driver and his conductor after he (the driver) had killed a motorcyclist in an accident.

The dead man's colleagues had then mobilised to club the bus driver and his conductor to death when the police intervened.

The state Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Mr. Mohammed Garuba, confirmed that nine persons had died in accidents during the Christmas celebration.

Ekiti PDP raises reconciliation panel

From Ifedayo Sayo, Ado-Ekiti

FOLLOWING the condemnation of the selec-

NDDC initiates so curb unrest in Nig

THE Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has embarked on several youth empowerment schemes that would drastically reduce youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region.

Chairman of the NDDC, Ambassador Sam Edem, told media executives at an end-of-year dinner in Lagos that the commission had started the full implementation of the Niger-Delta Regional Master Plan geared towards the massive generation of jobs and provision of infrastructure in the oil-rich region.

According to a statement, Edem said that the commission had in recent times shifted emphasis to agriculture, aquaculture and skill acquisition programmes to provide jobs for the youth of the Niger Delta.

He said that NDDC had

Family protests kin's murder by soldiers in Owerri

OWERRI, the Imo State capital's serenity was yesterday laced with melancholy as the Obiekea family protested the death of their United States (U.S.)- based son, Nnaemeka allegedly in the hands of soldiers on Christmas eve.

Thirty six-year-old Nnaemeka, *The Guardian* learnt was on his way from a nightclub in the wee hours of December 24 when he was allegedly accosted by some soldiers.

Nnaemeka, a US-based businessman and graduate of Business Administration was in his *Toyota Land-cruiser* sports utility vehicle (SUV) when he was stopped.

He was allegedly shot in the stomach, hand and arm. His body was also report-

specifically given attention to the massive cultivation of cassava in all the nine states, adding that 495 hectares of its cassava would be ready for harvest between January and February next year.

Also, according to the NDDC boss, the commission has planted rice in 300 hectares in Akwa Ibom State and will soon cultivate another 700 hectares in Delta, Rivers, Cross River and Ondo states.

In order to further boost rice production in the region, the NDDC has completed arrangements for the rehabilitation of the Peremabiri rice project in Bayelsa and the establishment of a 50 tonne per hour rice processing factory in Akwa Ibom State.

Ambassador Edem said the commission has trained

From Charles Ogugbuaja, Owerri

edly taken to the state police headquarters, Owerri by the soldiers. It was later deposited at the Federal Medical Centre in the same Owerri.

The eldest member of the Obiekea family, Ogbuagu Kenneth, told journalists at his Awomama Street, Ikenegbu Layout, Owerri residence, that the late Nnaemeka was on his way home from the nightclub when soldiers killed him.

Deputy Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. G. Orubebe, confirmed the incident, stressing that the matter, which was not entirely caused by the police, is being investigated.